



EASTERN CATHOLIC LIFE

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SUBDEACON RYAN LIEBHABER ORDAINED TO THE SACRED ORDER OF THE DIACONATE

Photos by Right Reverend James G. Hayer and Mike Gimon



On October 10, 2020, at 10:00 AM at Saint Mary of the Assumption Byzantine Catholic Church in Trenton, NJ, Subdeacon Ryan Liebhaber was ordained to the sacred order of the diaconate by Bishop Kurt. Deacon Ryan was the last member of his Deacon Formation Program class from the Eparchy of Passaic to be ordained; these new deacons began their studies in June 2015 and finished them in May 2019. Despite the COVID-19 epidemic and the full

The Hierarchical Divine Liturgy was celebrated by Bishop Kurt and included the full vesting service for Bishop Kurt prior to the start of the Divine Liturgy. Concelebrating the Divine Liturgy were Father Yuri Oros, the pastor of Saint Mary Parish and Deacon Ryan's pastor, along with Father John Zeyak, Father Jody Baran, Father Martin Vavrak, and Father Frank Rella. Father Edward Higgins, pastor of Holy Ghost Parish in Philadelphia and Pro-

from the nearby parish of Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Levittown, PA. Deacon Ryan's three sons (Ryan, Jr., Peter, and Joseph) and Seminarian Colin Patrick were the altar servers. Seminarian Colin was a cadet at West Point while Ryan was assigned to the faculty, and he is currently studying for the priesthood at Mundelein Seminary in Illinois with the intent of becoming an army chaplain. Also in attendance from the Eparchy of Passaic were Father Dave

color corps from the Knights of Columbus led the procession into the church and stood guard during the liturgy.

Father John Zeyak, who has served as Deacon Ryan's spiritual director since he came to Saint Mary Parish, delivered the homily at the invitation of Bishop Kurt. Father John detailed the reasons for the different times during the Divine Liturgy that ordinations occur, depending on whether the individual is being elevated to the diaconate, the priesthood, or the episcopacy. Father John also provided two saints that he encouraged Deacon Ryan to develop a devotion to: Saint Nicholas of Myra and Saint Francis of Assisi. Saint Nicholas, being the patron of the Byzantine Catholic Church, and Saint Francis, also a deacon, who was instrumental in reforming the Church.

Deacon Ryan's road to the diaconate was especially challenging due to the fact that he is an active-duty army officer who has moved every two to three years during the past two decades. While he was assigned to West Point as a military member of the faculty from 2011 to 2014, he and his family at-



Subdeacon Ryan prostrates as he is led to the altar by Father Yuri



Subdeacon Ryan kisses the four corners of the altar as he is led around it three times.



"Divine grace, which heals all ills and supplies what is lacking..."



"Approach with fear of God, and with Faith!"

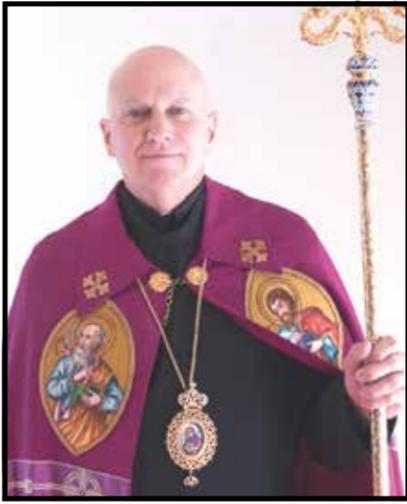
use of the CDC mitigation protocols, it was a beautiful ceremony that was well attended by laity and clergy alike. Deacon Ryan's family in attendance included his wife, Niccole, and their six children: Ryan, Jr., Peter, Gianna, Joseph, Genevieve, and Helena; along with Niccole's parents, Warner and Anna Rogers; and Deacon Ryan's brother, Timothy.

topresbyter of Southeastern PA Protosybyterate, served as liturgical master of ceremonies, assisted by Father Paul West, administrator of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in Levittown, PA. Assisting at the liturgy were Deacons John Harden, Robert Knapp, and Richard Terza, all classmates of Deacon Ryan, along with Subdeacon Tim Fariss

Baratelli, Father James Badeaux, and Deacon Michael Senoyuit. Father Jonathan Morse, a Ukrainian Catholic priest from the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Saint Nicholas of Chicago, was also in attendance. Father Jonathan had served as Deacon Ryan's Army chaplain from 2006-2009 while they were both assigned to Fort Drum, NY. A 14-man

tended Holy Spirit Parish in Mahwah, NJ. It was here that Father Jody Baran, the assistant pastor, along with Father Marcel Szabo, the pastor, encouraged Ryan to enter the Deacon Formation Program. In the summer of 2014, the Army reassigned the Liebhaber family to Hohenfels, Germany. From Germa-

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I LIFT UP MY EYES...

Pastoral Reflections of Bishop Kurt



GOD OF ALL CONSOLATION

“Comfort, give comfort to my people, says your God. Speak to the heart of Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her service has ended, that her guilt is expiated.” In 2013, I read these words to the people of the Eparchy of Passaic, and said, “I believe the Church is entering a new era with our new Pope Francis. Most people already know whether they have something wrong with themselves. Pope Francis says that we don’t need to tell people what is wrong with them, they already know that; we need to tell them about God’s mercy.” For the past seven years, Pope Francis has continued his message of God’s love and compassion, and every time he opens his mouth, there is a pious critic waiting by a microphone to warn us against his message.

In my life experience, and I will be 65 by the time you read this, people do know deep in their souls when there is something wrong, no matter how much they deny it with their mouths, but they don’t know there is a way out. If they have heard about the way out, they believe it is a lie for some reason, perhaps because they were prejudiced by something or perhaps because they were betrayed. Our remarkable Pope Francis seems to be obsessed with helping people get past their prejudices and betrayals, so that they can see the divine person of Jesus Christ obscured by the sins and mistakes of the teachers of the Gospel. If you go to the trouble to learn about his personal history, he is the most unlikely pope in modern history. A very self-effacing man, he avoided Rome and all power in the Church. As the Metropolitan Archbishop, and later Cardinal, of the capital of Argentina, he always flew economy class when required to go to Rome. The other bishops of Argentina (I heard) always flew on a different day because they were embarrassed to fly in business class while their archbishop flew in economy. When he became archbishop, a wealthy Catholic gave him a business class ticket for his first trip to Rome. Jose Bergoglio walked across the plaza to a travel agent and traded it for an economy ticket. He worked quietly as a good shepherd during the time of the Gesta-like police rule in Argentina risking his own life, and when it was over, he was slandered by both Marxists and rich people, and never defends himself. In 2001, Pope John Paul created 44 new cardinals. The other cardinals naturally ordered scarlet vestments from the tailors in Rome, but Jorge Bergoglio had his predecessor’s robes refitted by nuns and wore them instead of new ones. In 2013, at the age of 76, he was expecting

his retirement to be accepted by Pope Benedict and was planning for a quiet, hidden ministry like any other retired clergy. After his election as pope when the attendants were dressing him, he turned down one flashy garment after another saying, “the carnival is over.” If you are a student of worldly power and politics, he was truly the last bishop in the Catholic Church that might ascend to the highest office in a Church of one billion people.

The longest, and perhaps most beautiful, book in the Bible is the prophecies of Isaiah. If you can visit the Holy Land, you will be able to see an exhibit showing the complete Book of Isaiah as it was found in the Dead Sea Scrolls. The Jews are justifiably proud of this ancient artifact. The second half of the Book, beginning with Chapter 40 in today’s numbering, begins with the words above, “Comfort, give comfort to my people.” Some people call this half of the Isaiah, the “Book of Comfort” or the “Book of Consolation.” The first half of Isaiah, although it also contains passages of surpassing beauty and hope, is primarily concerned with history, including the history of sin and its consequences, but the second half of Isaiah is concerned with God’s response of mercy and salvation. The first half isn’t all terror, after all, it contains the most famous prophecies about the birth of the Messiah, and the second half isn’t all pleasant since it contains the most vivid and convicting prophecies about the suffering of the Messiah. I suppose it’s a reminder that the greatest writings defy simple categories. Nevertheless, there is some basis for dividing Isaiah into these two parts. One remarkable coincidence is that, in today’s numbering system, the first half contains 39 chapters, and the second half contains 27 chapters. In the Bible, the Hebrew Tanach contains 39 books, and the Greek New Testament contains 27 books. (The Catholic and Orthodox churches all have more than 39 books in the Old Testament, but it’s still a fun observation.)

Comfort my people! The prophecies of Isaiah contain many more passages of comfort for us. To list a few, “The people who walked in darkness, have seen a great light. Upon those who lived in darkness, a light has dawned.” You might remember that Saint Matthew quotes that for the beginning of the public life of Jesus. In the time of the Messiah, Isaiah says, “The wolf will be guest of the lamb, and the leopard will lie down with the young goat. The calf and the lion shall browse together with a young child to guide them.” Isaiah describes the coming of the Lord God in power as, “Like a shepherd he feeds his flock; in his arms he gathers the lambs, carrying them in his bosom, leading the ewes with care.” In his prophecies about the Messiah, Isaiah says, “the lowly shall find fresh joy in their Lord, and the poorest rejoice in the Holy

One of Israel.” Indeed, the words of comfort throughout the prophecies of Isaiah are primarily for the poor and afflicted, but words of warning for the rich and successful. Even the apparent injustice in this world gives way to comfort in God’s larger plan, witness: “The just have perished, but no one takes it to heart. The steadfast are swept away, while no one understands. Yet the just are taken away from the presence of evil and enter into peace. They rest upon their couches, the sincere, who walk in integrity.” Throughout the prophecies there is a message of hope and comfort for the lowly, and a warning for the haughty: “Thus says the high and lofty One who dwells forever, whose name is holy: I dwell in a high and holy place, but also with the contrite and lowly of spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, to revive the heart of the crushed.”

the tagline on all my emails, “The Lord is close to the brokenhearted, and saves those who are crushed in spirit. Many are the trials of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him from them all.” (Of course, I’m not brokenhearted every time I send an email, but I thought perhaps someone reading one of my emails might be in a bad way and needed to hear those words.) Many of the psalms were written in times of extreme hardship yet are full of consolation, for example: “Though you have made me see many bitter troubles and calamities, you will restore my life again. From the depths of the earth, you will bring me up again. You will increase my honor and comfort me once more.” (That passage sounds like a prophecy about the Resurrection of Jesus, doesn’t it?) King David, who was himself a good shepherd and a prefiguring of Christ the Good Shepherd, says, “The Lord



Detail of the Icon: Joy Of All Who Sorrow

Consolation is found throughout the Scriptures, but another place of special comfort is the Book of Psalms. If you don’t read the Psalms every day, you are missing out on God’s special message to you. Books are constantly making the best seller list that promise a new way to pray or find peace of mind or physical health and beauty. Sitting inside your Bible is a book of prayers that God has already written for you. If you just read one psalm each day, you will be astonished as if God wrote that prayer just for you today. For many years I used the following verses from Psalm 34 as

shepherds me. There is nothing I shall want.” And then he says, “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil. For you are with me. Your rod and your staff comfort me.”

When Saint Paul begins his great fourth epistle to the Corinthians, he says, “Blessed be God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and God of all consolation.” You are probably thinking that I made a mistake there—there are only two letters to the Corinthians in your Bible. As a

matter of fact, we know that Saint Paul wrote at least four to this troubled and troublesome church because he tells us so. In the first letter, he mentions that he already wrote to them before. His first letter is like a papal encyclical, masterful and lengthy, it summarizes the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the theology, the morality, the ecclesiology, marriage and the Eucharist, the Resurrection of Christ, and our own resurrection, in words of surpassing beauty and poetry about love. Like papal encyclicals, it had absolutely no effect on its intended audience. Although it is a blessing and a complete textbook for us, it was ignored by the rambunctious Corinthians. So, in the next letter we read that Saint Paul not only sent them a delegation and visited them himself, but he also wrote a third letter which he calls a letter of tears and sorrow. That makes our “second” letter to the Corinthians at least his fourth letter—the first and third did not survive. Maybe the Corinthians put them in an ancient shredder. He even says he won’t visit them again because he can’t take the pain, but he hasn’t given up on telling them that God loves them. Although theology, logic, sacraments, warnings and threats, and profound hymns of love haven’t worked, Saint Paul makes a last-ditch effort by talking to them about God’s tender mercy and their true worth underneath their sinful surface. He begins this letter with that beautiful blessing where he calls God, “the God of all consolation.” Keep in mind, the Greek word is translated in some Bibles as “consolation” and in other Bibles as “comfort.” The advantage of “comfort” in English is that it can be a noun or a verb, but then in other translations they have to use “console” and “consolation.” It doesn’t matter. Whichever word works for you, that’s the word you should remember. In only five verses, Saint Paul uses the word “comfort” ten

times! If you read verses 3 through 7, he sounds like a broken record. Perhaps after so many years of Christian ministry, Saint Paul realized that when people are severely damaged, they don’t respond to threats anymore, they just need to be encouraged. Indeed, the New American Bible translates this passage using “encouragement” over and over instead of “comfort” or “consolation.”

Saint Paul begins, “The God of all comfort, who comforts us in our every affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those afflicted with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.” He proceeds with something far more profound: “For as Christ’s sufferings overflow to us, so through Christ does our comfort also overflow.” Imagine that! That as we suffer, we receive the consolation from God that Christ received in his passion. We live in an era that despises suffering. Every hardship is cursed as injustice, and the prophets of materialism promise us lives free from pain if we turn over our freedom to their sinful programs. Saint Paul taught a different path. He says to the Corinthians, “we proclaim Christ crucified” and “the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.” In his letter to the Colossians, Saint Paul says, “Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ on behalf of his body, which is the church.” In more and more formerly Christian societies, the false teachers of our age offer a pain-free death, even a death of opioid ecstasy, to anyone who will renounce God’s law and worship their idols. Children and old people are put down like dogs. It is no coincidence that people in the wealthiest countries are unable to accept pain and suffering,

while people in the poorest countries bravely continue on their life’s journey with joy unknown to the rich. Christian tradition tells us that your suffering has infinite value when united with the passion of Christ. Jesus said, “My soul is consumed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me.” Kneeling next to Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane, we say with Jesus, “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not my will, but as you will.” Then we understand the words of Saint Paul, “For as Christ’s sufferings overflow to us, so through Christ does our comfort also overflow.” Imagine, receiving the comfort from God that He gave to Jesus in the garden! As Saint Luke tells us, God sent an angel to comfort Him. When we join our suffering to Christ, God sends us the same angel to comfort us as well.

Comfort appears throughout the scriptures, and in the Greek New Testament, the word that is used is the word “*parakaleo*” in many different forms. You may recognize it as the word “Paraclete,” a title of the Holy Spirit. We pray to the Holy Spirit, “Heavenly King, Comforter.” This title comes from the Last Supper in the Gospel of Saint John. Chapters 13 through 17 are about the Last Supper, most of it is the words of Our Lord. I believe it is the longest passage in the entire New Testament. It is five chapters long, and the last four are the words of Jesus. While preparing for His own passion and death, Jesus speaks his final words of advice, encouragement, and even dogma. In this intimate speech, Jesus says, “I no longer call you servants but friends.” He also promises them the Holy Spirit, “The Paraclete, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name, He will teach you everything and remind you of all that I told you.” What does this word really mean, this word

that Jesus uses to describe the third person of the Holy Trinity? In its etymology, it means someone who speaks next to you. As such, it is easy to see why it means comforter. When you are at the end of your strength, the comforter is someone who stands by your side, perhaps puts an arm around you, and says, “You’re going to be OK.” But in ancient Greek, paraclete can also mean an “advocate.” The advocate is the person who takes your side in a legal fight. I think there is no passage in the scriptures more comforting than this one. If the Holy Spirit is our advocate, what do we have to fear? On judgment day, we know that the devil is our accuser, but God Himself is our advocate. If our defense lawyer is the third person of the Holy Trinity, we have nothing to fear from the accuser. Of course, our advocate and our comforter are sometimes the same person. I remember a man who was tried for some very shameful crimes. He told me his lawyer was his best comforter, and the lawyer told me later, “I often have to be both a lawyer and a surrogate father to these poor fellows.” How wonderful is it that Jesus promised the third person of the Holy Trinity as both our Comforter and our Advocate!

The letters of Saint Paul abound with words of comfort and beautiful blessings. We began with his blessing from the second Corinthians: “the Father of mercies and all consolation.” Towards the end of Philippians, we find another blessing of comfort for our difficult times: “Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God. Then the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.”

+Kurt Burnette



FROM THE OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

EPARCHIAL APPOINTMENTS

Rev. Dr. Joseph Bertha, PhD, is relieved as Administrator of St. John the Baptist Church in Trumbull, Connecticut and appointed Administrator of St. John the Baptist Church in Bayonne, New Jersey and Administrator of St. Mary Church in Jersey City, New Jersey.

Rev. Dr. Hrihoriy Lozinsky, SSD, is relieved as Administrator of St. John the Baptist Church in Bayonne, New Jersey and Administrator of St. Mary Church in Jersey City, New Jersey and is appointed Administrator of St. John the Baptist Church in Trumbull, Connecticut.

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PRESSEAMT DES HEILIGEN STUHL

BOLLETTINO
SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE

The Holy Father has accepted the resignation from the pastoral care of the Eparchy of Saints Cyril and Methodius of Toronto of the Slovians of Byzantine Rite, Canada, presented by Bishop Marián Andrej Pacák, C.S.S.R., and has appointed as apostolic administrator sede vacante of the same circumscription Bishop Kurt R. Burnette of Passaic of the Ruthenians, United States of America.

—Bishop Kurt remains the eparchial bishop of Passaic.—

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PEOPLE YOU KNOW AROUND THE EPARCHY

IN MYRTLE BEACH...

Parish Celebrates the Special Service of Miraculous *Mary, Helper of Mothers* Icon.

Recently, Father Ihor Voronstov celebrated a Divine Liturgy and Paraklesis service at Blessed Basil Hopko Byzantine Catholic Mission in Conway, SC. Father Ihor received permission from Bishop Kurt to bring the Miraculous “Mary Helper of Mothers” Icon to the Mission so that the parishioners of Blessed Basil Hopko would be able to pray for her intercession. The parishioners were thrilled to be able to share in the worship service and prayers that were offered.



CARPATHO-RUSYN SOCIETY

MANIFESTING CARPATHO-RUSYN CULTURE AND HISTORY

“Who are the Rusyns?” is a DVD presented by John Righetti, President emeritus of C-RS. It was released in 2019 for the 25th Anniversary of the Carpatho-Rusyn Society. This professional presentation clarifies the confusion and complicated history of the Rusyns and how they almost became extinct. Not only will it be watched more than once, it is great to share with family and friends. The DVD can be ordered by making a check payable to: Carpatho-Rusyn Society for \$25, which includes postage and handling. Please mail with name of recipient(s) to Bonnie Burke, 1101 Tanner Crossing Lane, Indian Land, SC 29707. Orders will be processed immediately upon receipt. The information can also be found on www.c-rs.org at the bottom of the homepage. Visit Carpatho-Rusyn Society YouTube for our most recent educational videos.

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

Divine Liturgies at the Byzantine Catholic Mission of Fort Mill, SC for the month of September will be broadcast online. Please contact Ron Somich by email at ron.somich@gmail.com for the link and dial in information. <https://carolinabyzantine.com/>

November: 7, 14, 21, 28

IN WESTBURY...

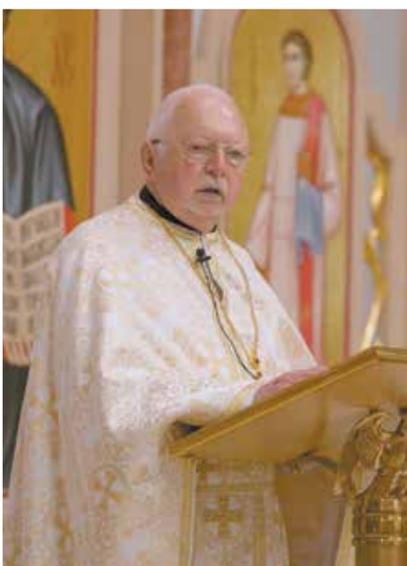
Blessing of Pets

On Saturday, October 3, 2020, in honor of the Feast Day of Saint Francis (October 4) Father Nicholas Daddona asked all the parishioners of Saint Andrew Byzantine Catholic Church in Westbury, NY, to bring their pets to the church for the traditional blessing of animals. A variety of little creatures came: dogs, cats, and a little bunny. Along with the pets present, Father Nick blessed all the owners, asking God not only to take care of His little creatures but also those taking care of them.



Subdeacon Ryan Liebhaber Ordained to the Sacred Order of the Diaconate

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Father John Zeyak, spiritual director to the ordinand, gives the homily.



Bishop Kurt presents a kadilnitsa (censor) to Deacon Ryan and exclaims, “AXIOS!” (“He is worthy!” in Greek) He is worthy!

ny, Ryan began his application process to the Deacon Formation Program and was accepted into the class that began in the summer of 2015. Because Dea-

con Ryan was living in Germany for his first year of the program, Bishop Kurt, under the recommendation of Father

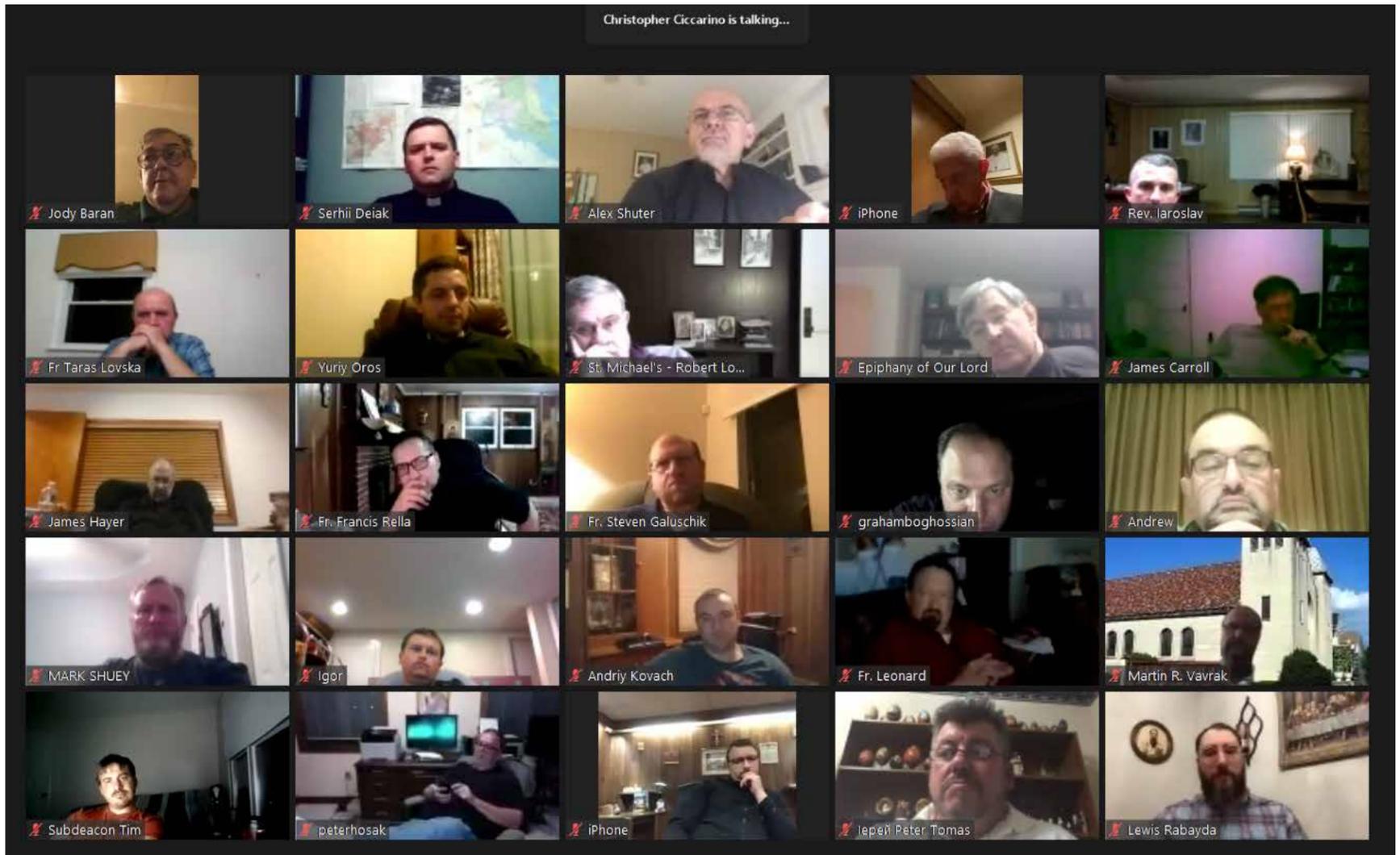
Nicholas Daddona, the Deacon Formation Director, exempted him from attending the first two-week in-residence portion at Saints Cyril and Methodius Seminary in Pittsburgh that summer, although he completed all the course requirements via distance learning.

While Deacon Ryan and his family lived in Germany, they were fortunate to be within an hour’s drive from the only Pontifical Eastern Rite Seminary outside of Rome, the Collegium Orientale in Eichstatt. It was here the Deacon Ryan and his family attended Divine Services and their youngest daughter, Helena, who was born in Germany, was baptized. Living in Europe also afforded many pilgrimage opportunities, to include celebrating Easter at the Russian College in Rome, and visiting many Byzantine Catholic parishes in Slovakia, Hungary, and the Czech Republic.

The Liebhabers returned to the United States in the summer of 2016 where Ryan was assigned to Ft. Meade, MD,

and the family joined the Patronage of the Mother of God Parish in Arbutus, MD. Father Conan Timoney, of blessed memory, was the pastor, and mentored Ryan during his second and third years of the program. Just before his last year of studies, Deacon Ryan was reassigned to Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst in NJ. It was here than Ryan and his family joined the Saint Mary Parish in Trenton. Also during this final year of studies, Ryan deployed to Afghanistan with the Army Rangers, and it was from this remote location that he actually finished and submitted his final course requirements.

The journey was long, but Deacon Ryan and his wife, Niccole, and their children are extremely grateful for the immeasurable love, support and prayers they received along the way from their family, friends, fellow parishioners, and clergy. A new chapter has begun for Deacon Ryan’s ministry in the Byzantine Catholic Church and he prays that he will live up to his calling.



COMING TOGETHER AT A DISTANCE: 2020 PRESBYTERAL RETREAT

By Father Paul Varchola West

It goes without saying that 2020 has to be one of the most unprecedented years in recent memory. As a society we have been asked, or in some cases required, to change many, many things about the way we carry out our daily lives. With all that has changed since the first time the phrase “COVID-19” was uttered at the turn of the year, one thing has certainly not changed. That is the human need for social interaction and the comfort that comes with being with those about whom we care. If anything, this need has become all the more apparent given the amount of social distancing and limitations that have been placed upon us, causing us to miss out on significant events such as birthdays, ordinations, anniversaries, and holidays, or even the seemingly mundane things like a cup of coffee out with a friend. These days have seen many events simply canceled or put off till next year in hopes that things will be more manageable. Fortunately, one thing that was not put off till next was the annual retreat for the priests of the Eparchy of Passaic!

Although it was not possible to have priests from all over the Eparchy travel to New Jersey, quarantine for two

weeks, then live in close quarters for several days simply hoping that no one became ill, this did not stop Bishop Kurt from ensuring that his priests receive the spiritual care and comradery that is very much needed in a time such as this. This year, as with many activities, the retreat took place via Zoom. While this does not necessarily replace physically being together, it proved to be beneficial and spiritually uplifting nonetheless.

The retreat master for this year was Father Christopher Ciccarino, SSL, STD, who is the Associate Dean for Seminary and Academic Studies and Assistant Professor of Biblical Studies at Seton Hall University. Father Christopher put together an absolutely wonderful program for the priests of the Eparchy of Passaic which ran from the evening of October 5 through the morning of October 8. Entitled “Conversion in Our Lives,” Father Christopher presented a series of talks centered on the idea that our relationship with God is intensely personal and that it needs to be perpetually cultivated through our own efforts. The topics of these spiritual conferences ranged from practical aspects of prayer and battling dis-

traction, discipleship, ascetical efforts through prayer and fasting, and culminated with the important role gratitude plays regarding a prayerful relationship with Christ, such that “a grateful heart is the beginning of discipleship.” Father Christopher encouraged and directed us to pray throughout the day, focusing on both the divine office as well as on silent/meditative prayer.

As an added bonus, Bishop Kurt opened the Zoom sessions early so, although separated by some distance, the priests could socialize and enjoy some of the more light-hearted aspects of the aforementioned much needed camaraderie. Considering we were not hindered due to travel, the retreat was also open to the priests of the Eparchy of Pittsburgh making for a very full virtual retreat house. At times we had upward of 70 active participants! It was very encouraging to see so many priests from so many locations gathered to take some much-needed time to recharge our spiritual batteries.

On a personal note, I was a little disappointed that we were unable to gather together in person as this would have been my first priestly retreat. Never-

theless, this was an extremely uplifting time and simply made me more eager for next year’s retreat with hopes that we will be able to be together in person. On behalf of the priests of both the Archeparchy of Pittsburgh and the Eparchy of Passaic, I would like to thank Bishop Kurt for organizing the retreat and Metropolitan Archbishop William for making this joint effort a wonderful and prayerful experience for all who participated. We extend an enormous thank you to Father Christopher is in order for his prayerful conferences and for his beautiful, uplifting, and heartfelt words. *May God grant him many happy and blessed years!*

Father Christopher was able to remind us just how very important prayer is and gave us the following advice: “Don’t take time to pray – MAKE time to pray!” That is advice we all need to hear, priest or not. Let us all *make* the time to close out 2020 in a prayerful way, *making* the time to cultivate our personal relationship with Christ that we may truly recognize the moments of conversion in our lives.

When traveling to the South, please visit our churches

All Saints

10291 Bayshore Road
North Fort Myers, FL 33917
1-239-599-4023

Epiphany of Our Lord

2030 Old Alabama Road
Roswell, GA 30076
1-770-993-0973

Holy Dormition

17 Buckskin Lane
Ormond Beach, FL 32174
1-386-677-8704

Our Lady of the Sign

7311 Lyons Road
Coconut Creek, FL 33073
1-954-429-0056

Saint Therese

4265 13th Avenue North
Saint Petersburg, FL 33713
1-727-323-4022

Saint Anne

7120 Massachusetts Ave.
New Port Richey, FL 34653
1-727-849-1190

Saint Basil the Great

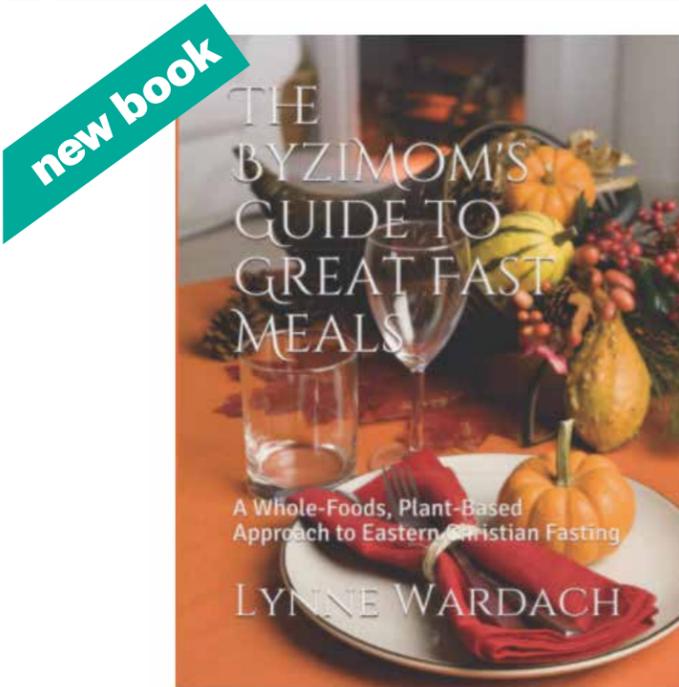
1475 N.E. 199th Street
Miami, FL 33179-5162
1-305-651-0991

Saints Cyril and Methodius

1002 Bahama Avenue
Fort Pierce, FL 34982
1-772-595-1021

Saint Nicholas of Myra

5135 Sand Lake Road
Orlando, FL 32819
1-407-351-0133



The ByziMom's Guide to Great Fast Meals

A Whole-Food, Plant-Based Approach to Eastern Christian Fasting

Have you ever wished for a little support as you attempt to keep the Eastern Christian fast? Healthy and delicious ideas and family-approved recipes for every meal of the day!

Breakfasts: Smoothies, oil-free granola, pancakes, puddings, casseroles fit for potlucks, and coffee hours too!

Kid-friendly Lunches: Lynne's family has listed their favorites, including Macaroni and Cheese, lenten style, without dairy, but not without taste! Even the homeschool co-op kids couldn't tell the difference!

Dinner Entrees: Over 50 different delicious recipes and adaptations for your some of your favorite dishes like Lentil Loaf, Enchiladas, Curries, Holupki, Sauerbraten, Stuffed Shells, and more!

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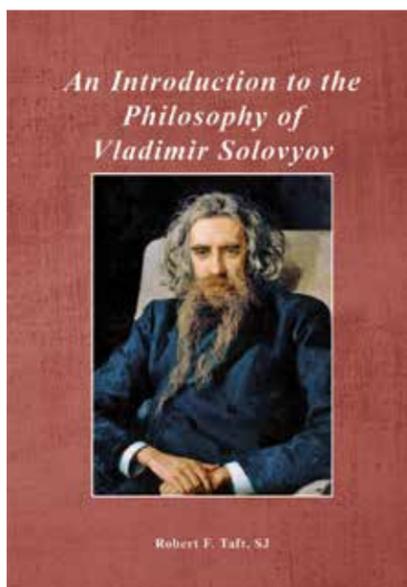
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NEW BOOKS FROM EASTERN CHRISTIAN PUBLICATIONS



Did you know that Archimandrite Robert Taft, SJ, of blessed memory, first wrote his master's thesis in 1956 on the topic of philosophy, long before he became interested in liturgy? In the early 2000's, Father Taft asked ECP to publish it, after he would edit the text and add an updated bibliography. The work is titled *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Vladimir Solovyov*, a 19th century Russian philosopher and theologian. Unfortunately, Father Taft never completed the project but ECP has asked Father Robert F. Slesinski, Ph.D., a retired priest of the Eparchy of

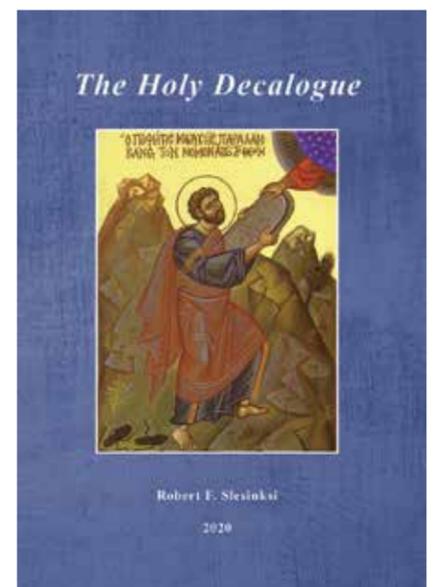
Passaic, to review the text and edit it for publication. He is a world-renowned Russian scholar who has published over a dozen books in English and Russian.

This project has been completed and we are pleased to announce its publication on the second anniversary of Father Taft's passing, November 2nd. For friends and followers of Father Taft, many may not know of the existence of this, his first academic work. It does not even appear in Father Taft's extensive bibliography (also published as a 100+ page volume by ECP). But now, everyone can examine the first and previously unknown work of one of the great Byzantine liturgists of the 20th century. With this new book, ECP has now published the "bookends" of Father Taft's career: his first on Solovyov, and his last just as he fell asleep in the Lord, *Worship Is What Liturgy Does*, a collection of his 8 most favorite essays from *Worship* magazine.

In recent months, Eastern Christian Publications has also published two other books by Father Slesinski. The first of these is *The Holy Decalogue*, a mystagogical treatment of the Ten Commandments, linking the worship of Almighty God, One in the Holy

Trinity, with the faithful observance of God's "ten holy words" to the People of Israel. This book was written as an adult catechesis during the first months of the pandemic now afflicting peoples worldwide.

The second work is *The Philosophy of Semyon Frank: Human Meaning in the Godhead*, which examines the religious philosophy of Frank through his many works, considered to be the finest Russian philosopher of the twentieth century. First writing in Imperial Russia, he was providentially exiled by Lenin along with many other anti-Marxist intellectuals in 1922, first settling in Germany, then later in France and finally in England where he died in 1950, thus being able to continue his philosophical probing. In his postscriptum to Father Slesinski's monograph, Brandon Gallaher, DPhil, a senior lecturer in theology at the University of Exeter (England) and an Orthodox deacon of the Archdiocese of Thyateria, writes: "It is the great virtue of the present volume that Robert Slesinski has woven a narrative that illuminates the interrelationship of metaphysics and Orthodoxy with characteristic analytical acuity, deep knowledge of modern Russian religious thought and sensitivity to the unique



vision of Frank. This monograph will stand for years to come as the single most important introduction to Frank, who was widely acknowledged by his peers as the most outstanding modern Orthodox Christian philosopher."

All of these books are available through the ECP website on the **Featured** books page here:

<https://ecpubs.com/featured-products/>



The Pokrov Icon

2020 Bishop's Appeal

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The 2020 Bishop's Appeal will run from October 1, 2020
through December 31, 2020. Contributions will be accepted
through the fiscal year ending June 2021.



LIFE, LOVE, AND THE HUMAN PERSON

By Ann M. Koshute, MTS

THANKSGIVING THAT IS PROPER AND JUST

Writing a column about “giving thanks” in November may be a bit too obvious and not very original. After the last bit of Halloween candy is eaten our thoughts turn to the holiday season, and Thanksgiving is the first big event we look forward to. Of course, in “COVID times” the holidays will look different, but that might not be a bad thing. It will be painful not having the usual houseful of guests, and we may still be separated from loved ones who are aged or immuno-compromised. That is a particular suffering the effects of which will be longstanding in our memories and in reality. The Great Fast is many months away, yet the “Lenten spirit” of sacrifice which the pandemic has introduced into our lives shouldn’t be put to waste. If this virus has taught us anything, it’s that life is precious and mustn’t be taken for granted. We must be grateful for the health of ourselves and our loved ones and lean into the spirit of sacrifice that comes when everything we *want* isn’t immediately accessible to us. That said, I’d like to take this reflection not in the obvious direction for the season (thankfulness around the feasting table, time with family, etc.), but to reorient our minds and souls toward the Source of our thankfulness; the One to Whom all “glory, honor and thanksgiving” rightfully belong. Lest you think an article about thanking God is “obvious” and unoriginal, I invite you to go a little deeper by considering not only the people or things for which you are grateful, but the nature of that gratitude itself. Do we thank God primarily because He *gives* to us? Is that enough?

Have you ever been offered something you didn’t want, something that you felt wasn’t worthy of your time or attention? Maybe you became annoyed or offended by what was given – and by the giver – and sharply responded,

in this life – and we certainly can’t cheat death. One of the reasons I love praying the Psalms is their gritty realism, the fearless Psalmists at times crying out to God in desperation or anger, pleading their case for relief and wondering

in Heaven, Jesus retains those wounds, which remain open to receive every pain, disappointment or suffering we bear in our bodies and on our souls. In ways that are mysterious and perhaps not always perceptible, He buries our wounds in His, offers them to the Father, and through them transforms, purifies, and making us more like Him.



“Thanks, but no thanks.” Of course, your “thanks” isn’t a genuine expression of gratitude, but a sarcastic dig at the person and perceived offense. Even if we don’t always *say* it, we probably *feel* it inside more often than we realize. Now imagine that the “giver” is God. Scan your memory for those times when you thanked Him in the midst of some suffering, the loss of a job, the death of a loved one – being quarantined and unable to worship in your parish on a Sunday. This might seem ridiculous. Isn’t it disrespectful or dismissive of the seriousness of one’s misfortune to *give thanks* for it? Why would we thank God when someone dies, when something unforeseen turns our life upside down, or when the world is in chaos? Here’s a question that might throw us off balance, but which we should seriously consider: why *wouldn’t* we give thanks in those situations?

If there’s anything the Psalms teach us it is that we cannot escape misfortune

aloud just what God is up to. But even when the Psalmist’s throat is parched and raw from all the crying and shouting, he ends with a prayer of thanksgiving and praise to God. The Psalms show us how easy it is to thank God when things are going well (doesn’t our own experience reveal just how easy it is to *forget* God, too?), but how necessary it is to express gratitude in the midst of our pain as well. God certainly doesn’t expect us to go looking for suffering. Our pain is not “satisfying” to Him, as if we are pieces being manipulated in a sick game played by Someone with power over us. God not only feels or understands our pain, but He takes it as His own so that He might reshape our hearts through it. God understands our pain viscerally, not simply because He created us and knows every nuance of our bodies, every thought, and every hope we carry. Jesus Christ became man and suffered mental and physical anguish – and death! – for our sakes. Even after the resurrection and ascen-

sion into Heaven, Jesus retains those wounds, which remain open to receive every pain, disappointment or suffering we bear in our bodies and on our souls. In ways that are mysterious and perhaps not always perceptible, He buries our wounds in His, offers them to the Father, and through them transforms, purifies, and making us more like Him.

In the Anaphora (Eucharistic Prayer) of our Liturgy, the priest speaks directly to God on our behalf, and we should be attentive: “It is proper and just to sing to You, to praise You, to thank You, to worship You in every place of Your dominion.” *In every place of Your dominion.* I’m not an expert in the Liturgy, but when I stand in my pew and shake off the sleep and complacency that keep me from truly engaging the hymns and prayers, I’m reminded that I must be grateful and praise God for all His good gifts, and (perhaps *especially*) in the depths of my pain and sorrow. God did not create evil, and He does not rejoice in our suffering. But He *is* in every place we are: in our joy and in our tears. *Every place* is within His dominion, and so is *every one of us*. And whatever is in God’s dominion is in His care, is deeply loved by Him. It is right and just for us to give Him thanks; thanks for holding us in being, for holding us close at heart as His own dear children. The interesting thing about gratitude – about praising, blessing and thanking God in every and all circumstances – is that it quickly crowds out the negative thoughts and lightens our heavy hearts. It becomes harder to *curse* when our mouths are filled with *praise*. That’s truly a thanksgiving we should feast on every day of our lives. **ECL**

MIRACULOUS “MARY, HELPER OF MOTHERS” ICON

Services will be celebrated at 7:00 PM

At the initiative of Bishop Kurt, a miraculous Marian icon will make a tour of all the Byzantine Catholic parishes in New Jersey, including the state active duty military base, and Saint Nicholas Parish in White Plains, NY, throughout 2020. It is especially beloved by women who struggle with infertility or difficult pregnancies. Several miraculous births have been attributed to this icon in the Byzantine Catholic community of Albuquerque, NM, where a copy has been venerated for twenty years.

The icon, known as the *Albazinskaya* from its place of origin on the borderlands between Russia and China, is also called “Mary, Helper of Mothers.” The original icon is credited with defending the Russian Orthodox outpost against Chinese invaders on several occasions from the 17th to the early 20th century. It depicts a calm and prayerful Virgin Mother looking directly at the faithful. She displays for us an image of

her Son, newly born or perhaps yet unborn, resting over her torso.

A large, hand painted icon of the *Virgin Helper of Mothers* will be present in each Byzantine Catholic parish in New Jersey for two weeks or more. Bishop Kurt will personally preside over a devotional service in each parish. There will be opportunities for the faithful to venerate the icon, to engage in personal prayer, and to take home holy cards depicting the Virgin Helper of Mothers.

The *Albazinskaya* icon celebrates how God became Man, and a Virgin became His Mother. It celebrates the mysteries of conception and birth by which God has shared His creative power with married couples. It reminds us that every human life has its origin directly from God, and it offers hope to the despondent and the oppressed.

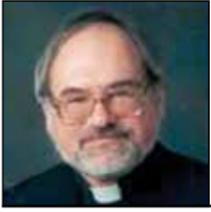
The Byzantine Catholic parishes of New Jersey welcome our Latin Rite Catholic and Orthodox neighbors, as well as all Christians who honor the Lord’s Mother, to join in the worship service of Psalms and Scriptural readings that will be offered in each parish.

More specific information about service times can be obtained from the individual parishes. *Due to quarantine for coronavirus, this schedule is subject to change.*

- Saint Nicholas, White Plains, NY: October 22-November 5
768 North Street, White Plains, New York
Wednesday, October 28, 7:00 PM



- Cathedral Chapel, Woodland Park. November 19 - December 3
415 Lackawanna Ave., Woodland Park, NJ
Wednesday, December 2, 7:00 PM



THE BYZANTINE LITURGY

By Archpriest David Petras, SEOD

YOUR OWN FROM YOUR OWN

After the commemoration of the event of the mystical supper, which becomes our present saving reality and after the end of the narration and after the blessings of God have been proclaimed, we enter the beginning of the liturgical action. The gifts are raised by the deacon (or priest if there is no deacon) and the sign of the cross is made with them as an act of offering. The priest says, "Offering You, Your own, from Your own. Always and everywhere." Then, they are blessed as a sign of invocation, which we call the epiclesis. This part of the Anaphora is one liturgical action.

The anamnesis (remembrance) was an explicit expression of what the whole anaphora is: the commemoration of God's salvation, which is real because God remembers as we also remember. The priest's word, "Offering You, Your own, from Your own" is really a Greek triple and holy word play. It can be understood on three levels: 1) that since the bread and wine are created elements, we offer to God what He Himself has created; 2) that since the bread and wine are becoming the body and blood of Christ, we offer the Father His only Son, whom He has given for the life of the world; and 3) as we eat the created gifts, we are also united with the uncreated Son in the uncreated Holy Spirit, so that we become "God's own," and therefore offer what we are ourselves becoming. St. Paul said, "I urge you, brothers, by the mercies of God, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, your spiritual worship." (Romans 12:1)

In addition, it should be noted that the gifts we offer are not the raw gifts of wheat and grapes from nature, but the "artificial" gifts of bread and wine that have already been worked by human hands. In the same way, the eucharist is truly the Body of Christ, but it is also us, for we form the Church, which is the Body of Christ. (Ephesians 1:22-23) The offering of bread and wine takes the eucharist out of historical time, and makes the sacrifice of Christ both sacramental (a reality-symbol, not only a symbol in words) and eschatological, that is, referring to the end and goal of the human race. In the Gospel of Luke, we find this formula for bread, "Happy is he who eats bread in the kingdom of God." (Luke 14:15) The cup is the symbol of the fullness that is becoming in our presence, overflowing with abundance.

With the formula, "offering you, your own, from your own," we are in the presence of very ancient liturgical words. The question has been raised by some that perhaps "Yours of Your own," refers not to the eucharistic gifts, but other charitable gifts that were also offered simultaneously with the liturgy. The reason for this opinion is that what immediately follows is: "Moreover, we offer You this spiritual and unbloody sacrifice," as

if it were something different from the first offerings. However, as early as the second century, in the writings of our holy father Irenaeus, we already find these words describe the eucharist, the Body and Blood of Christ we are to receive in Holy Communion. St. Irenaeus writes: "For we offer to Him His own, announcing consistently the fellowship and union of the flesh and Spirit. For, as the bread, which is produced from the earth, when it receives the invocation of God, is no longer common bread, but the Eucharist, consisting of two realities, earthly and heavenly; so also, our bodies, when they receive the Eucharist, are no longer corruptible, having the hope of the resurrection to eternity."

The rest of the phrase, in Greek, "*kata panta kai dia panta*" is very difficult to translate. Most translators try to render it word for word like "in behalf of all and for all." We usually attach it to "offering you, your own, from your own," since

it is the formula that the celebrant says aloud, before the people join the prayer. However, a professor at the Oriental Institute in Rome, Father Louis Ligier said that these words should instead be joined to what follows, that is, "In behalf of all and for all, we praise You, we bless You...." This is, in fact, where it is found in the Syrian, Maronite, Coptic and Armenian liturgies. The celebrant said these words aloud precisely to lead the faithful to respond, "We praise You...." Moreover, Father Ligier pointed out that grammatically these words are in the accusative case in Greek, which is not usual, and indicate that they are to be interpreted as the circumstances in which our praise is given. They can have the meaning that they tell us the time and place in which we offer our sacrifice. Therefore, the phrase would mean: "In all times and all places (or, as we have translated it, "always and everywhere") we praise You, we bless You, we glorify You." These words are very ancient, dat-

ing from the time when the Eastern and Western Churches would have similar formulas, and therefore are the same as the Roman Church's Anaphora, which says "*nos tibi semper et ubique gratias agere.*" ("we give thanks to You always and everywhere.")

Sometimes, in doing translation, we have to choose the wording that is more meaningful for our faith. To say that the offering of our sacrifice is now done in all places and for all time is important for our understanding of the Eucharist. It is actually based on Scripture. It is the Christian expression of the prophecy of Malachi, "From the rising of the sun to its setting (that is, "always"), My name is great among the nations; Incense offerings are made to My name everywhere, and a pure offering; For My name is great among the nations, says the Lord of hosts." (Malachi 1:11) By doing this, we witness that in our own church, at this time, we are being joined to the eternal and infinite sacrifice made to God for our salvation. In offering up our gifts of bread and wine, which have become the Body and Blood of Christ, we are joined in the universal sacrifice of praise that we, together with all peoples and nations, and the whole world lifts up to God. **ECL**

THE COUNCIL OF HIERARCHS OF THE
BYZANTINE CATHOLIC METROPOLITAN
CHURCH OF PITTSBURGH

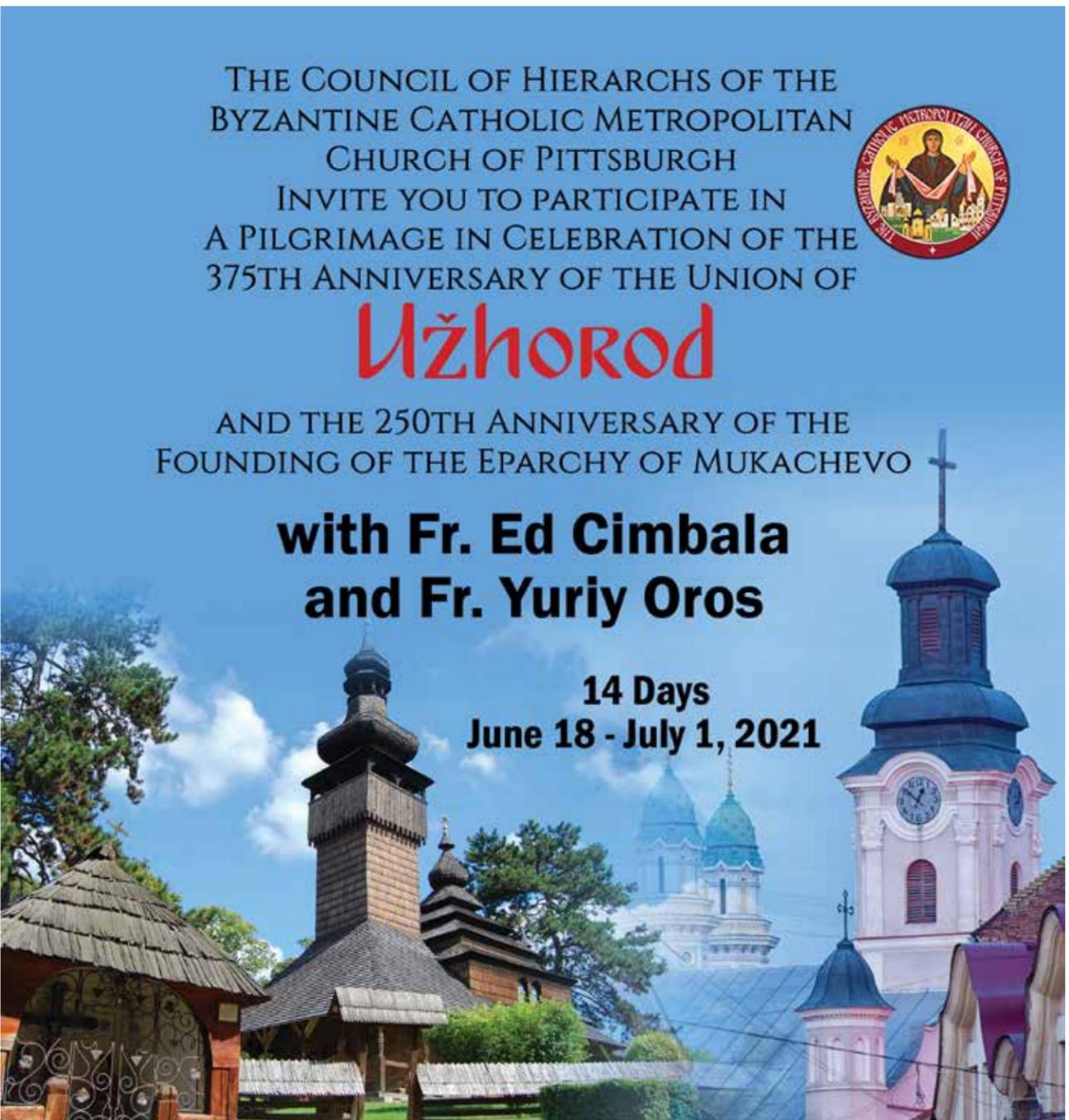
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SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

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

JACOB'S LADDER



Icon of Jacob's Ladder

One of the prophecies read at Vespers for just about every feast of the Mother of God is Genesis 28:10-17. Jacob, grandson of Abraham, is a young man setting out on the journey that will shape the rest of his life. He camps for the night at a place called Luz and puts a stone under his head as a pillow. He dreams of a ladder joining earth to heaven, with angels ascending and descending, and the Lord standing above it. Speaking to Jacob, the Lord renews with him the covenant He had made with Abraham and Isaac. Upon awakening, Jacob realizes that “the Lord is in this place” and decides “this is the house of God and the gate of heaven.” He renames the place “Bethel” (Hebrew for House of God) and sets up his pillow-stone as a memorial marker, consecrating it with oil.

Bethel did, indeed, become a shrine after the Exodus from Egypt (Judges 20:18). The Ark of the Covenant was kept there for a time (Judges 20:27) and the prophet Samuel visited it regularly (1 Samuel 7:16). In the breakup of Israel after King Solomon's death, King Jeroboam made it one of the two main shrines for the breakaway northern kingdom of Samaria, even setting up a golden calf for worship, around the year 930BC (1 Kings 12:28-33). Scripture tells us that the shrine was destroyed three hundred years later by King Josiah as part of his religious reform of the nation that centralized all worship in Jerusalem (2 Kings 23:15).

Bethel had thus ceased to be of any real importance for more than six hundred years by the time Jesus was born. Still, the text insists on the significance of

this “place” (the word is repeated five times in seven verses) where heaven and earth were connected and the Lord was present. Since God's word cannot become meaningless, we must therefore look for a deeper meaning.

There are two clues that invite us to see this event as a prophecy about the Son of God becoming man. For one, Jesus Himself quotes these verses in his testy first encounter with His soon-to-be disciple, Nathaniel, and applies them to Himself: “You will see the heavens open and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man” (John 1:51). The second clue is detail about anointing a stone, a gesture mentioned nowhere else in the Bible. Jesus applied the words of Psalm 118:22 to Himself: the stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone” (Matthew 21:42; Mark 12:11, Luke 20:17; see also Acts 4:11; Ephesians 2:20). Saint Peter assembles for us a handy list of a number of “stone” images all applying to Jesus (1 Peter 2:6-8). And, although Genesis 28 doesn't use the same Hebrew verb for “anointed,” an anointed stone must certainly remind us of God's Anointed Messiah—Jesus Christ.

Hippolytus of Rome (around 250AD) is the oldest written source that invites us to see the Mother of God in this vision too. The Akathist Hymn, composed sometime around 431, says to Mary “Rejoice, heavenly ladder by whom God came down.” An angel of

God descended from heaven to Nazareth to invite Mary to become the Mother of God's son (Luke 1:26-38). Mary's humble obedience to God's plan opened the “gate” for the Incarnation to happen; she became the “ladder” by which the Son of God descended and assumed human nature. Her womb literally became the “place” in which God, the second person of the Holy Trinity, was contained for nine months. “Behold I am with you,” God had said to Jacob in his dream (Genesis 28:15). Mary's virginal motherhood makes real the promise of Emmanuel—God with us (Isaiah 7:14).

After His Passion and Resurrection, our Lord ascended, taking a glorified human body and a complete human nature to sit at God's right hand (Hebrews 10:13). After her death, He assumed the Theotokos bodily as well, making her the only other human being to enjoy heaven before the final judgment in body as well as in soul (1 Corinthians 15:50-54; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17). In her Dormition and Assumption, the Lord demonstrates in Mary what He wants for all of us. It is not too much to say that Mary is also symbolically the Heavenly Ladder who blazes the trail for our own ascent to heaven. **ECL**

THE LUMEN CHRISTI INSTITUTE AND THE GODBEARER INSTITUTE PRESENT

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Free and Open to the Public. All events are scheduled for 7 p.m. CDT (5 GMT), and will be held online. This series is co-sponsored by the Bratrice Institute, Calvert House, the Catholic Theological Union, the Harvard Catholic Forum, the Institute for Faith and Culture, the Nova Forum, the Orthodox Christian Studies Center at Fordham University, the Saint Benedict Institute, and the St. Paul University Catholic Center.

September 3	Introduction to Liturgical Mystagogy Daniel Galadza <i>University of Regensburg</i>
September 10	A Theology of Wonder: An Introduction to the Poetry of Ephrem the Syrian Andrew Hayes <i>University of St. Thomas, Houston</i>
September 17	Christ the Lover of Mankind: Philanthropia, Mystery, and Martyria in Eastern Christianity Robin Darling Young <i>Catholic University of America</i>
September 24	Eastern Churches, Latin Territories: Ecclesial Catholicity and the Notion of Diaspora Alexander Laschuk <i>Sheptytsky Institute of Eastern Christian Studies at University of St. Michael's College</i>
October 1	Expanding the Archive: Syriac Literature and the Study of Early Christianity Today Erin Walsh <i>University of Chicago</i>
November 12	Quo Vadis: the Direction of Eastern Catholic Theology, a Pastoral Perspective for the 21st Century Archbishop Borys Gudziak <i>Ukrainian Catholic Archeparchy of Philadelphia and Metropolitan of the Ukrainian Catholic Church in the USA</i>

Distinct in their liturgy, theology, spirituality, and discipline of Church life, 23 Eastern Churches are in communion with the Roman Catholic Church. The Second Vatican Council urged the Eastern Catholic Churches to cultivate and promote their unique share of the tradition. This series responds to that mandate and features leading scholars in the field to offer their theological perspectives drawn from the wisdom of Christian East. In view of broadening our understanding of the Catholic intellectual tradition, this series draws attention to the vantage points of Christians who worship, think, and pray in continuity with the first 1,000 years of the undivided Church.

REGISTER AT: WWW.LUMENCHRISTI.ORG/EASTERN-CATHOLIC

At this season, we once again enter into the Philippian Fast, and prepare ourselves to journey spiritually to the cave at Bethlehem and encounter our God, Who has taken on our flesh, become human in every way except sin, to show His love for Mankind, and to open the kingdom of Heaven to all who believe.

How fitting that we celebrate the feast of the blessed Theotokos into the Temple in the midst of the Philippian Fast as a deeper preparation for the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord. Although we also celebrate her conception in the womb of Anna on December 8, this feast should be just as important to us in our celebration of our salvation.

The Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple is an historical feast. According to Tradition, the Theotokos was taken – presented – by her parents, Joachim and Anna, into the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem as a young girl, where she lived and served as a Temple virgin until her betrothal to Saint Joseph. One of the earliest sources of this tradition is the non-canonical Proto-evangelion of James, also called the Infancy Gospel of James. Mary was solemnly received by the temple community which was headed by the priest Zachariah, the father of John the Baptist. She was led to the holy place to become herself the “holy of holies” of God, the living sanctuary and temple of the Divine child who was to be born in her. The Church also sees this feast as a feast which marks the end of the physical temple in Jerusalem as the dwelling place of God. Many hymns are offered for the Vespers

SEASONAL REFLECTIONS

Father Ronald Hatton



ENTRANCE OF THE THEOTOKOS INTO THE TEMPLE

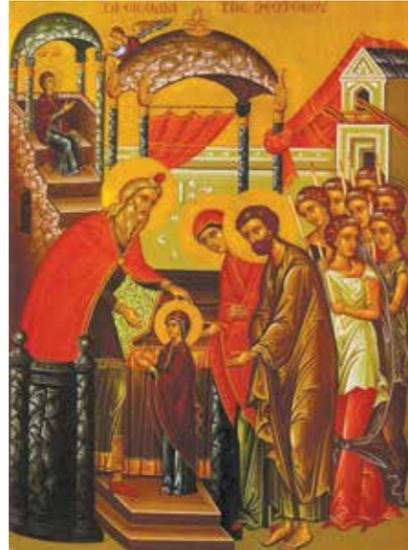
and Matins of this feast, which highlight the glory of the Theotokos replacing the glory of the Temple: “O faithful, let us leap for joy today, singing psalms and hymns of praise in honor of Mary, His Mother, the holy Tabernacle and Ark that contained the Word Whom nothing can contain. She is offered to God as a child in a marvelous way, and Zechariah the high priest receives her with great joy, for she is the dwelling place of the Most-High.”

“O Virgin Theotokos, you are the one foretold by the prophets. You are the glory of the apostles and the pride of the martyrs and the cause of renewal for the entire human race. Through you we have been reconciled to God. Therefore, we honor your entrance into the temple of the Lord. Together with the angels, all of us who are saved by your prayers sing to you: Rejoice O most holy one!”

“The most praiseworthy Anna cries out in great joy: ‘O Zechariah, receive the One Whom the prophets of God foretold through the Spirit. Escort her into the holy temple, since she is to be the sublime Temple, the palace, throne, and wondrous abode of our God.’”

“Today the Theotokos, the Temple that is to contain God, is being escorted into the temple of the Lord, and Zechariah receives her. Today the Holy of Holies

greatly rejoices and the choir of angels mystically celebrates this feast. Let us also celebrate with them today and cry out with Gabriel: ‘Rejoice, O Full of Grace, the Lord is with you, and He grants us great mercy.’” (Selections from Vespers of the Feast)



Icon of The Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple

At every Marian feast, we hear a reading from the Letter to the Hebrews (9:1-7) describing the “regulations for worship and an earthly sanctuary.” I am sure that many people who hear this read wonder how this is relevant to our blessed Mother. But when we realize that we once again are presented with the concept that what took place in the Old Testament is a prefiguration

of what will find its fullness in the New Testament, it all makes sense! In verses 8-10, the writer states: “...the Holy Spirit indicating this, that the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing. It was symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered ... concerned only with foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation.” The temple in Jerusalem was an “imperfect,” if you will, prefiguration of what God had in store when the Ever-virgin Mary was manifested as the Temple of the Living God. Her womb actually superseded this temple made by human hands from stone. Indeed, in verse 11, it states that “...Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands...” Our great High Priest does not offer the blood of goats and calves, year after year, but offers His own Body and Blood, once and for all. And Mary “is to be the sublime Temple, the palace, and the wondrous abode of our God.” In this light, we see how important it is for us to celebrate this glorious feast, to see our Lord fulfilling what before had only prefigured.

ECL



SCHOOL OF PRAYER

Father G. Scott Boghossian

PRAY FOR PATIENT ENDURANCE

In the Gospels, Jesus seems to delight in fixing problems for people. He heals the lame, opens blind eyes, casts out demons, cleanses lepers, miraculously feeds hungry people, and even raises the dead. Christ continues to fix problems for His people today. Many of us have heard of, or even experienced, an amazing cure wrought through prayer, or seen an addict who was delivered and freed from their addictive behavior overnight, or some other dramatic answer to prayer or unexpected divine intervention. “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever” (Heb. 13:8), and thank God, miracles still happen. Miracles are signs that God is real, and that He mercifully intervenes to draw us back to Himself, to call us to repentance, and to increase our faith.

But once we decide to follow Jesus Christ and take our Faith seriously, our Savior says it is time to grow up. Jesus calls healing and miracles the “children’s bread” (Mt. 15:26). The quick fix of signs, wonders, and dramatic answers to prayer, i.e., “children’s bread,” is for the beginner who isn’t sure God is real,

or the unbeliever who needs to come to Faith, or for evangelizers to establish the credibility of Christian claims, as happened with all the miracles in the book of Acts, and throughout Church history.

But for “grown-ups,” serious believers, the order of the day is trials, tribulations, hardships, frustrations, inconveniences, persecutions, and temptations, all endured with patient endurance for the love of Jesus Christ. God doesn’t want to spare us from tough times, for they are our path to conformity to Jesus Christ, personal holiness, and entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven. Jesus says, “Blessed are you poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are you that hunger now, for you shall be satisfied. Blessed are you that weep now, for you shall laugh. Blessed are you when men hate you, and when they exclude you and revile you, and cast out your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man! Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets” (Lk. 6:20-23).

Saint Peter tells us, “Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal which comes upon you to prove you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice in so far as you share Christ’s sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when His glory is revealed. If you are reproached for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the spirit of glory and of God rests upon you” (1 Pt. 4:12-14). Jesus says, “If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me” (Lk. 9:23).

Facing a big problem? Go ahead and pray for a miracle. But God may be calling you to something greater than a quick fix. He may be calling you to martyrdom, to sainthood, to union with Jesus Christ Crucified (Phil 3:10). In that case, pray for patient endurance. ‘Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces patient endurance. And let patient endurance have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing’ (Js. 1:2-4).

As we approach the end of the Age and the Final Advent of Jesus Christ, we will enter into a time of Great Tribulation. “For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be” (Mt. 24:21). “Brother will deliver up brother to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death; and you will be hated by all for My name’s sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved” (Mt. 10:21-22). Are you ready?

“Here is a call for the patient endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus” (Rev. 14:12). Remember Job! (Js. 5:11) and the “Hall of Faith” in Hebrews 11. The daily hardships, trials, frustrations, and inconveniences that we endure patiently now will help us prepare for the future “Great Tribulation.” But more than anything else, let us prepare ourselves by praying for the virtue of patient endurance. **ECL**

EPARCHIAL PARISHES LIVE-STREAM THE DIVINE SERVICES

Below are just a few examples from our eparchy

Below is a list of many of the Parishes of the Eparchy of Passaic which are Live streaming Divine Liturgy on Saturday, Sunday, and Holy Days. You may access the links to their streaming sites (Facebook, Youtube, etc,) on our website: www.eparchyofpassaic.com.

CONNECTICUT

Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church—Danbury, CT

NEW JERSEY

- Cathedral of Saint Michael the Archangel—Passaic, NJ
- Assumption of the Virgin Mary (Saint Mary)—Trenton, NJ
- Our Lady of Perpetual Help—Toms River, NJ
- Our Lady of Perpetual Help—Toms River, NJ—Radio
- Saint Michael Byzantine Catholic Church—Perth Amboy, NJ
- Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church—Perth Amboy, NJ
- Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church—Hillsborough, NJ
- Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church—Dunellen, NJ
- Saints Peter and Paul Byzantine Catholic Church—Somerset, NJ
- Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church—Jersey City, NJ
- Saint John Byzantine Catholic Church—Bayonne, NJ
- Nativity of Our Lord Byzantine Catholic Church—East Brunswick, NJ
- Saint Thomas the Apostle Byzantine Catholic Church—Rahway, NJ
- Saint Elias Byzantine Catholic Church—Carteret, NJ
- Saint George Byzantine Catholic Church—Linden, NJ
- Saint George Byzantine Catholic Church—Newark, NJ

NEW YORK

- Saint Andrew Byzantine Catholic Church—Westbury, NY
- Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church—White Plains, NY
- Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church—New York, NY
- Holy Spirit Byzantine Catholic Church—Binghamton, NY
- Resurrection Byzantine Catholic Church—Smithtown, NY

PENNSYLVANIA

- Saint Michael Byzantine Church—Mont Clare, PA
- Saint Mary Byzantine Church—Wilkes-Barre, PA
- Saint Mary Pokrova—Kingston, PA
- Saint John Byzantine Church—Wilkes-Barre, PA
- Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic—Mahanoy City, PA
- Saint John Byzantine Church—Wilkes-Barre, PA
- Saint John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church—Lansford, PA
- Saints Peter and Paul Byzantine Catholic Church—Bethlehem, PA
- Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church—Old Forge, PA
- Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church—Taylor, PA
- Saints Peter and Paul Byzantine Catholic Church—Minersville, PA
- Saint Michael Byzantine Catholic Church—Dunmore, PA
- Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church—Hazleton, PA
- Saint John Byzantine Catholic Church—Hazleton, PA

- Holy Dormition Friary—Sybertsville, PA
- Holy Ghost Byzantine Catholic Church—Jessup, PA
- Our Lady of Perpetual Help Byzantine Catholic Church—Levittown, PA
- Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church—Scranton, PA
- Saint Ann Byzantine Catholic Church—Harrisburg, PA

GEORGIA

Epiphany of Our Lord Byzantine Catholic Church—Roswell, GA

VIRGINIA

- Ascension of Our Lord Byzantine Catholic Church—Williamsburg, VA
- Our Lady of Perpetual Help Byzantine Catholic Church—Virginia Beach, VA
- Epiphany of Our Lord Byzantine Catholic Church—Annandale, VA

FLORIDA

- Saint Nicholas of Myra Byzantine Catholic Church—Orlando FL
- Saint Anne Byzantine Catholic Church—New Port Richey, FL
- Saint Cyril and Methodius Byzantine Catholic Church—Fort Pierce, FL
- Our Lady of the Sign Byzantine Catholic Church—Coconut Creek, FL

NORTH CAROLINA

- Saints Cyril & Methodius Byzantine Catholic Church—Cary, NC
- The Mission Community of Greater Charlotte

SOUTH CAROLINA

Charlotte, NC, Byzantine Catholic Mission at Fort Mill, SC

MARYLAND

- Patronage of the Mother of God Byzantine Catholic Church—Arbutus, MD
- Saint Gregory of Nyssa Byzantine Catholic Church—Beltsville, MD

Theosis in Action 2020 events

Save the dates!

November 15
Philip's Fast afternoon of recollection

December 12
Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church in NYC; Christmas social

Open to all young adults ages 18-35.

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UPCOMING EPARCHIAL AND PARISH EVENTS

NOVEMBER, 2020

- 8 Holy Archangel Michael and All Holy Bodiless Powers of Heaven
Solemn Holy Day
- 14 Christmas Fast begins at sundown
- 21 Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple
Solemn Holy Day
- 26-27 Thanksgiving Holiday
Civic holiday • Chancery closed

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:

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All Wedding Jubilarian Celebrations are moved to next year.