



# EASTERN CATHOLIC LIFE

Official Publication of the Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Passaic

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## SAINT MICHAEL, THE KREMLIN, AND THE POPES Pastoral Reflections of Bishop Kurt

When I was born, one third of the population of the world lived under Marxism. Vast systems of slave labor camps, or—for many people—death camps, operated throughout the Soviet Union and China. Thirty years ago, on December 8, 1991, a document was signed that changed the history of the world. The document was signed in secrecy, and only recently received publicity. The document was signed in secret because the men who wrote their names on it knew well that they could be arrested, convicted of treason, and sent to Siberia themselves. The presidents of Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus met at an obscure hunting lodge in Belarus near the Polish border. The head of the KGB for Belarus was present and assured them they would not be arrested. In this hidden place, they signed a document breaking all ties between their three countries and the Soviet Union. Boris Yeltsin was a construction worker from central Russia who joined the Communist Party, which had total control of the government and economy. However, in 1987, he resigned from the Politburo and even resigned from the Communist Party itself. Gorbachev was speechless. No one had resigned from the Politburo in history. No one had criticized the First Secretary in front of the central committee since Trotsky in the 1920's. The communist authorities began a campaign to destroy his reputation as in the Stalinist era, which only made him more popular with the people. He was elected then as the first freely-elected President of the Russian Republic. On December 8, 1991, he met with two other presidents to bring down the Soviet Union and free his people from atheistic materialistic communism. Within weeks of signing this dangerous document, other republics withdrew from the Union, and on Christmas Day 1991, Gorbachev officially ended the existence of the Soviet Union, and the hammer-and-sickle flag was lowered from the Kremlin, never to be flown again.

When these events were unfolding without any bloodshed, first with the withdrawal of Soviet troops from eastern Europe, followed by the non-violent collapse of the Soviet government, my thoughts were on the Psalm we sing at Easter, "As smoke vanishes, so let them vanish, as wax melts before a fire." When smoke vanishes, who can say where it went? It's not like a rock that moves someplace else, it just disappears. The Soviet Empire that had terrified the world since the end of



Icon of the Theophany of Our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ — January 6

World War II simply vanished, seemingly overnight.

Part of Yeltsin's slow conversion took place when he toured a Randall's supermarket in Houston, TX, in 1989. His aides described that, on the plane from Houston, he sat for a long time quiet with his head between his hands. Then he kept saying, "What have we done to our poor people?" He wrote later about it that he felt "the pain for all of us, for our country



Saint Basil Cathedral, The Kremlin, Moscow Russia

so rich, so talented, and so exhausted by incessant experiments."

When I was able to spend a long time in Russia in 1996, I was fascinated that no one thought communism was a good idea. It was as though the entire nation woke up from a seventy-year nightmare. No one knew what the future would bring, but they all knew the past was gone forever. I met a man who was a career military officer, an avid hunter from Siberia and part Cossack. As a senior officer, he taught at a military academy and specialized in the writing of Vladimir Lenin. When the Communist government vanished like smoke, the Academy was closed, and the staff was sent home. People like him were allowed to take anything they liked as a souvenir. In his case, he had the complete works of Lenin in his office and was going to take it home to remember his career teaching them. Then he realized, there was not a single line in all those books that had any worth to him, so he abandoned it to be thrown in the dumpster. I felt sorry for him. I still treasure the books I used as a professor of mathematics. His entire teaching career was teaching the writings of a discredited

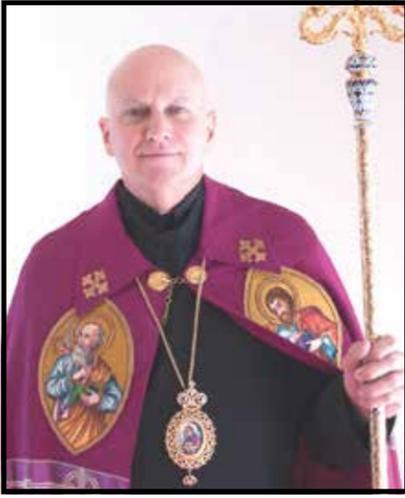
fraud who murdered vast numbers of his own countrymen. Although atheism and materialism ruled their nation for over 70 years, when God arose, His enemies vanished like smoke, like wax melting before a fire.

Gorbachev was an urbane, highly-educated man, with great knowledge of international affairs, and he was outflanked by a construction worker who believed in the Christian faith of his grandmother. The three brave men who met on December 8, 1991, overthrew the Soviet government without a gunshot and without bloodshed. There were no long negotiations by skilled diplomats, and none of them demanded any more for their individual countries than the right to exist without interference from their neighbors.

When I was in Russia in 1996, Boris Yeltsin was running for re-election. It was exciting to be there for the first really free election of a head of state in the history of Russia. I noticed that Yeltsin tried to appear in public as often as possible with the Patriarch of Moscow. Some would say he was cynically using the Church. I believe that he was also trying to give legitimacy and stability to an entire government that was only five years old. No one really knew the future. One wrong move and the country might collapse again into anarchy and civil war as it had done seventy-five years earlier. I think Yeltsin sincerely wanted to establish a democratic republic and also restore the faith of the Russian people in their Christian heritage, but that's just my opinion. None of us knows the heart of another, which is why Jesus told us, "Stop judging each other."

While I was in St. Petersburg in 1996, I saw a demonstration that showed the state of mind of the people. My friend pointed to some people and said, "Look, a communist demonstration." He told me to keep my mouth shut, and we would walk over closer for a good look. The communist demonstration turned out to be a small crowd of twelve or fifteen extremely old people. They were holding signs that said in Russian, "We don't need American sex videos." Although they were right, it was ironic that none of their issues were economic. The fantasy world economics of Marx, Engels, and Lenin, none of whom ever had a real job, had vanished like smoke, had melted like wax before a fire.

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## I LIFT UP MY EYES

Pastoral Reflections of Bishop Kurt



### SAINT MICHAEL, THE KREMLIN, AND THE POPES

...continued from page 1

For a Catholic believer, these events unfolded against the backdrop of a century of prayers to Saint Michael and to the Mother of God, to protect the world from the trickery of the devil. In the nineteenth century, the Catholic Church elected a young pope, Pius IX, who reigned for the longest tenure in the history of the Church, thirty-one and half years, though tradition says that Saint Peter's term was longer. When he died, he had appointed most of the bishops in the Catholic Church, and people were not sure what to do next. As often happens in these situations, the Cardinals elected an elderly academic whom they considered a safe candidate who probably would not live very long. They could not have been more wrong. Leo XIII reigned for the next 25 years and was one of the most influential popes in modern history. He used the encyclical as his teaching tool. In public affairs, his encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, was most influential in legitimizing labor unions. The teachings of *Rerum Novarum* go far beyond labor unions and give a blueprint for sane Christian social doctrine in every area of life, but that is a topic for another column. In the Church, he raised the intellectual level of seminaries by requiring philosophy studies. He also began the modern study of scriptures in the Catholic Church. Perhaps, in God's view of history, the rebirth of scripture study in the Catholic Church

was his most important and long-lasting contribution to the world. The scientific study of scriptures in the nineteenth century was devastating to Protestantism, creating a split between the "liberal Protestantism" as they called themselves, and the reactionary group called themselves "Fundamentalist." The split between these two factions persists to this day, and we read about it in our news media regularly. Leo XIII welcomed the scientific study of scriptures with the simple observation that, if we are indeed the true Church started by Jesus Christ, then we have nothing to fear from the truth. In his second encyclical, Leo XIII warned against "socialism, communism, and nihilism." When Pius XI wrote his great encyclical about socialism during the time of the Nazis, he called it "Forty years later" because it was forty years after the encyclical of Leo XIII. Leo also warned against the plan of the socialists and communists to destroy marriage. Most people associate these movements with economics and are not aware that their goal is to destroy all social and sexual relationships and turn children against their parents. Their goals are not just economic.

In all, Leo wrote 88 encyclicals, letters to the universal church. Most people associate him with social or intellectual movements, but did you know he wrote 25 encyclicals about the Rosary? Being the first pope after the destruction of the papal states, living through an era of chaos and revolutions, Pope Leo turned constantly to spiritual solutions. As the Letter to the Ephesians says, "Put on the full armor of God so that you may stand against the trickery of the devil." Pope Leo promoted prayers to the Mother of

God and to Saint Michael. In the 1880's, he ordered prayers to be said after every "low Mass" in the Catholic Church, asking Saint Michael and the Mother of God for protection from the modern enemies of the human race. Historically, the prayers were largely motivated by the situation of the Church in Italy after the revolution of 1870. Interestingly enough, when Pope Pius XI revised the prayers and confirmed their use in the 1930's, he asked that everyone pray for the people of Russia suffering under communism. Here in the United States, the Church promoted prayers to the Mother of God for Russia. It seemed that in 1991, at the meeting in the hunting lodge, God answered all those prayers, and the great Soviet empire vanished like smoke with no weapons fired and no bloodshed.

Many years ago, I read a story that Pope Leo had a vision in which Satan was given power over the earth for one hundred years. When the Soviet Union vanished, I thought it was a fulfillment of that prophecy. However, when I was researching for this column, I found that the story of the pope's vision has a somewhat murky history. The popular story of the vision was not recorded until 1933 by a German writer. It still circulates today with many additional details including a dialogue between God and Satan as in the Book of Job. Another German writer in 1934 tried to find the origins of the story and could not find much evidence. He comments that the story continues to spread "like a virus." I find that fascinating that a story was called "viral" back in 1934. I thought "viral" started with social media in recent years. It shows that a captivating story has always spread at high speed, even before any electronic communications. It is no surprise that a story like this one would spread like a virus in Germany in the 1930's when the German people were starting to realize that their country was falling into the hands of the Nazi party. As a matter of history though, there may be some basis for the story. A Cardinal wrote in his pastoral letters for Lent that he heard from Pope Leo's own private secretary Rinaldo Angeli. The secretary says that while the Pope was celebrating Mass he seemed to be staring off into the distance and then went immediately to his private office. His staff asked him if he was unwell. After a half hour he had written his famous prayer to Saint Michael. Some of the popular versions of the story even say that the Pope passed out during his vision, but all these extra details seem to be later creations.

As you may know, here in our own Eparchy, we have distributed prayers to both Saint Michael and the Mother of God which are taken from our own ancient services and are printed on the back of a protection icon, the Icon of the Unburnt Bush. A few years ago, Pope Francis asked that we pray the hymn, *Beneath Your Compassion We Take Refuge*, at the end of every Mass for one month. In our Eparchy, we now sing that hymn at the end of every Divine Liturgy to this day, thanks to the

promptings of Pope Francis. In fact, that prayer is the second oldest Marian prayer in the Church. Only the "Hail Mary" is older. As you know, that prayer is in the Bible itself.

The first pope, Saint Peter warned us that the Devil roams the world seeking whom he may devour. I encourage prayers for divine protection to everyone lest we fall prey to sin and perish. As Saint Paul says, "We do not wrestle with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers and cosmic rulers of this present darkness, with spiritual forces of evil in heavenly places." Our Lord warned us, do not be afraid of the one who can kill only the body, but be afraid of the one who can kill both the body and soul as well in hell.

The people who lived under Marxism in the 20th century learned their bitter lesson. Yet, in our country, the education and entertainment industries work relentlessly and subtly to bring the same misguided system here.

As a final story, in my last parish there was a young man who came out of the military. He was a gregarious young man who made friends everywhere and also invited them to our parish. When he was unable to find a job, he re-enlisted and was sent to Afghanistan. His friends in the parish asked me if they could put an icon of Saint Michael in the parish church and keep a



Pope Leo XIII

candle burning until he returned. The icon was a popular focal point for the parish who all worried about the young warriors on the other side of the world. After a while, we purchased a hand painted icon to replace the reproduction on the wall. A woman visited our parish while traveling through town and asked me for prayers for her son in the police. Since I had just taken the icon down, I gave it to her for her son. The new icon stayed on the wall, and the youth kept the candle burning until their friend returned safely from the war zone two years later. The parish kept the candle burning even after he returned, but we were all grateful and relieved when he returned unharmed.

+Kurt Burnett



Antique Icon of Saint Michael Conquering Sin and Evil

## +RITA HOSPODAR, MOTHER OF PRIEST, REPOSES IN THE LORD

**+R**ita Theresa Hospodar, 95, mother of Father Robert Hospodar, fell asleep in the Lord on Monday, November 15, 2021 at Brightview Senior Living in Wayne, PA, where she had been residing with her husband, John.

She was born in Beaver Meadows, PA, daughter of the late Michael and

Anna (Watro) Hollick. She was a member of Holy Ghost Byzantine Catholic Church, Philadelphia.

She was preceded in death by her brothers and sister, Emil Hollick, Thomas Hollick, Father Leonard Hollick, and Mary Brazzo.

She is survived by her husband, John Hospodar, Jr.; children, Father Robert John Hospodar, New York City; Thomas Paul Hospodar and his wife, Janice, Mississauga, Ontario, Canada; Edward David Hospodar and his wife, Dana, Wayne, PA; Sharon Ann Major and her husband, Shawn, Welland, Ontario, Canada; two sisters, Claire Lorince, Beaver

Meadows, PA; Kathy Moro, Beaver Meadows, PA; three grandchildren, Ashton, Theodore, and Sarah Hospodar; four great-grandchildren; and several nieces and nephews.

*May her memory be eternal! Vičnaja jej pamjat'!*

## THE BYZANTINE CATHOLIC OUTREACH IN THE VILLAGES, FL, IS ALIVE AND WELL

By Dr. Barbara Yastishock Lutz

**F**all was a busy time for the Byzantine Catholic Outreach in The Villages, FL. While enjoying sunny days with gentle breezes and cool nights, and now, seeing “icicles” hanging from rooflines and waving snowmen next to palm trees, we welcome our regular attendees and new faces each Saturday at 2:00 p.m. for the Vigil Divine Liturgy (in person and online at Facebook: Byzantine Catholic Mission The Villages). Divine Liturgy is celebrated by Father Oleksiy Nebesnyk, who serves the outreach and Saint Anne Byzantine Church, New Port Richey, FL. Father Robert Evancho also celebrates Divine Liturgy and offers guidance as Syncellus of the Southeastern States.

Our praying the Divine Liturgy and “taking it with us” contributes to the first call of “being” Church: *Metanoia* or a ‘conversion experience.’ We take what we hear, what we learn, reflect individually asking God, One in the Holy Trinity, to help us convert to the person God wants us to be.

The second call of “being” Church is: *Koinonia* or Community Build-

ing. Our churches which have been in existence for many decades can attest to this, that is “being one family.” A closeness we develop in our Byzantine Churches is precious, as we do not count thousands on the rolls in one parish but are of a size where we come to know, care about and help each other.

Working on community building, we had two special dinners, on November 6 and on December 4. Divine Liturgy and the Dinners were held at the Water Oak Club House in Lady Lake, FL. Parishioners Frank and Marie Fronterio who are residents of the community sponsored our use of this wonderful facility.

On November 6, we enjoyed an ethnic Thanksgiving pot-luck dinner which followed Divine Liturgy. All enjoyed a variety of “ethnic foods” including halupki, pirohi, kielbasa and sauerkraut, beef stroganoff, paprikash, and Italian sausage with peppers, plus a plethora of desserts. The food and fellowship on this day was enhanced by cantor, Dr. Trisha Siroky-Konavalov, and her husband, Yuri, dressed in authentic Slovak

wear. There was ethnic fun and laughter as Drs. Trisha and Barbara greeted each person with a “spirited sip and song” in Rusyn followed by *Mnohaja L'ita*.

On December 4, we honored Saint Nicholas with Divine Liturgy, singing of *O kto, kto*, presents for the children and a buffet dinner. This was truly a great day of community spirit as everyone enjoyed the food, lingered, and talked with each other, reminiscing about their former parishes and celebrating prior Saint Nicholas Days.

We look forward to more dinners and community building opportunities in the coming months as our ‘snow-bird’ members return and regular members are home from their visits to families “up north.” If you, family or friends are in this

area, please join us. We will be happy to meet you.

In the coming months, we look to develop a Long-Range Plan assessing where we are after two years and six months in existence, determining where we hope to be in the future and planning benchmarks to reach our goal. We pray the Holy Spirit assist us in this endeavor, and may this be our guiding principle: “Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain.” Psalm 126:1 (127). “May Your mercy O Lord be upon us, who have placed our hope in You.” Psalm 32.

THE BYZANTINE CATHOLIC OUTREACH

625 W. Lady Lake Blvd., Lady Lake, FL 32159

Phone: 352-530-9631 or 570-640-5120

Priest: Father Oleksiy Nebesnyk  
Contact: Dr. Barbara Yastishock Lutz

Facebook: Byzantine Catholic Mission The Villages FL





# PEOPLE YOU KNOW

## IN BALTIMORE...

### Celebrating Veteran's Day

On Sunday, November 7, 2021, Father Serhii Deiak, Administrator of Patronage of the Mother of God Byzantine Catholic Church in Baltimore, MD, celebrated a Veteran's Day Commemoration and read aloud the names of 47 family members who had served in the United States Armed Forces. A flag was placed in front of the church for each veteran, in remembrance of their service to our country. We thank all of our veterans for serving our country and protecting our freedoms! God bless our Veterans!



## IN NEW PORT RICHEY...

### Couple Celebrates 70th Wedding Anniversary!

On Sunday, November 21, 2021, Michael and Suzanne Rabayda, parishioners of Saint Anne Byzantine Catholic church in New Port Richey, FL, celebrated their seventieth wedding anniversary. Many happy and blessed years to our Jubilarians!



Father Olexsiy Nebesnyk-Pastor, and Mary and Michael Rabayda

## IN BEAVER MEADOWS...

### 3rd Grade ECF Gives Alms

The third grade ECF students at Saints Peter and Paul Church in Beaver Meadows, PA, recently learned about Philip's Fast – the 40-day preparation period before the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ. They learned to prepare for the Nativity by praying, fasting, and giving alms. They learned that, by giving alms, we share with others the love God has for all of us. Shown in the picture are (left to right) students, Thomas M., Douglas L., Stephen D., Andrew V., and Isaac P. with a collection of over 200 new hats, gloves, scarves, and socks that were donated to the West Hazleton United Charities' Cold Hands Warm Hearts drive. Father James Demko is pastor at Saints Peter and Paul Parish and Dr. Marisue Rayno and Mike Komishock are third grade ECF teachers.



Mary and Michael Rabayda at their wedding reception



Mary and Michael Rabayda are crowned in marriage at Saint John the Baptist, Lansford PA in 1951

## IN PASSAIC...

### Cathedral Celebrates Patronal Feast

The Cathedral of Saint Michael the Archangel observed its patronal feast and the 131st anniversary of its foundation on Sunday, November 7, 2021. Divine Liturgy was served by Father Jack Custer, Rector, and the Rt. Rev. Canon Felix Marciniak, a bi-ritual priest from neighboring Most Sacred Heart RC Church in Wallington, NJ. A luncheon followed in Saint Michael's Hall. Guests included Sisters Servants of Mary Immaculate who once staffed Saint Michael's Parochial School. A basket raffle and door prizes added a touch of excitement to the day. Father Jack Custer is the rector of Saint Michael Cathedral. (Photo: Scott Berry)



# AROUND THE EPARCHY



## IN ROSWELL...

### Mary and Martha Group Give to the Needy

A new women's group began in November at Epiphany of Our Lord Parish in Roswell, GA. The Mary and Martha Group provides a monthly opportunity for women of the parish to engage in spiritual and corporal works of mercy, while enjoying one another's company. The November gathering began with praying the Akathist to the Theotokos, led by Deacon John Reed. Twelve women prayed together, then afterwards the group assembled care packages for the needy from supplies generously donated by parishioners during the previous month. Twenty large "Senior Holiday Baskets" containing hearty soups and other gifts, and about three dozen cute "Mommy Gift Bags" containing pregnancy snacks and vitamins and fun and cute surprises were completed and decorated, and later delivered to two local Roswell charities (North Fulton Community Charities and Pregnancy Aid Clinic, respectively). Participants had a great time and are looking forward to the second meeting! Epiphany parish is served by Father Lewis Rabayda as Parochial Administrator, Deacon James Smith, Deacon John Reed, and Deacon Candidate Alex Adekambi.



## IN ROSWELL...

### Saint Nicholas Delights All

The annual Saint Nicholas Banquet of Epiphany of Our Lord in Roswell, GA, soared to new heights this year! Many new parishioners, catechumens, and children were present to share fellowship with each-other and to celebrate this important feast. The parish supplied the main meat dishes, while parishioners offered some of their favorite foods and deserts for the enjoyment of all. There was a craft station for children to make religious crafts, and a 500-piece puzzle of the Nativity Scene for everyone to put together. Then, Father Lewis Rabayda read the story of Saint Nicholas to the children, and, just as he finished the story, Saint Nicholas appeared to greet the children; to listen to what they wanted for Christmas; and to give them chocolate gold coins and clementine oranges. Epiphany Parish is served by Father Lewis Rabayda as Parochial Administrator, Deacon James Smith, Deacon John Reed, and Deacon Candidate Alex Adekambi.





# 2021 BISHOP'S APPEAL

Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Passaic

445 Lackawanna Avenue – Woodland Park, NJ 07424

[www.eparchyofpassaic.com](http://www.eparchyofpassaic.com)

PLEDGE NOW THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2021

**Pledges accepted through June 30, 2022**

**BYZANTINE CATHOLIC EPARCHY OF PASSAIC  
2021 BISHOP'S ANNUAL APPEAL**

Please pledge online at [eparchyofpassaic.com](http://eparchyofpassaic.com)  
or mail check payable to Eparchy of Passaic  
in the envelope provided.

*As challenges continue to affect us, please take care of yourself, your family and your parish first.*

- \$2,500.00     \$1,000.00     \$500.00
- \$250.00 \_\_\_\_\_     Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

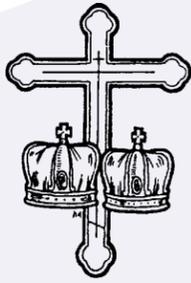
- full payment enclosed
- first payment enclosed, bill me for 4 additional payments

The 2021 Bishop's Appeal will run through December 31, 2021. Contributions will be accepted through the fiscal year ending June 2022.

New Address or Correction

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Street: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Parish: \_\_\_\_\_

SAVE THE DATE



# Crowned in Love

A Byzantine Pre-Cana Program

Sponsored by the Syncellate for the State of New Jersey

Saturday, March 5, 2022. 9am to 4pm.

Via Zoom

**SATURDAY, MARCH 5  
9AM - 4PM**

You bring the gifts that Jesus Christ will transform to make your relationship a sacrament where He Himself is present. Discover how the "ordinary" ways you share your life as a couple and a family can participate in this mystery. A hot luncheon will be served. There will be time for individual counseling and the Sacrament of Repentance. Couples planning to marry before spring 2023 are urged to attend. The cost is \$75.00 payable to St Michael's Cathedral Syncellate.

For more information, contact your pastor or call Father Jack Custer at 973-777-2553.

## Presenters



Father Thomas Shubeck, PhD, a father of three with Caroline are navigating the pandemic with a young adult daughter and a teen-aged son. After many years of diaconal ministry at St Thomas the Apostle parish in Rahway and at Seton Hall University Fr. Thomas will be ordained to the priesthood in December 2021. Much of his more than 30 years as a licensed psychologist has been spent providing therapy services to married couples and families.



Michael and Lisann Castagno were married in 1994 and have three daughters. They have been involved in marriage preparation and youth ministry in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia for many years, speaking especially about the beauty of God's design for marriage, by proclaiming the good news of Natural Family Planning.



Ann Koshute, MTS, earned a Master's degree at the Pontifical John Paul II Institute for Marriage and Family in Washington DC. She teaches theology at St Joseph's College of Maine and co-founded Springs in the Desert, an infertility support ministry. She and her husband Keith have been married for 10 years.



Father Jack Custer has delighted in preparing couples for marriage over four decades of priesthood. He holds degrees in Scripture and Theology and currently serves as Rector of St Michael's Cathedral.

## The Carpathian Cookery cookbook for sale

The Carpathian Cookery cookbook, has entered its 19th printing, having sold over 17,500 copies, is available for sale. This cookbook was requested by the Library of Congress to be in their ethnic cooking collection. The 330-page cookbook has a new look and features a protective plastic cover. The book includes sections on Christmas and Easter customs and recipes, traditional Rusyn and Slavic foods, other ethnic dishes, and many other tried-and-true recipes of St. John's pa-

rishioners. There is a variety of paska bread and kolachi (filled roll) recipes, as well as meatless dishes and Lenten recipes, suitable for the Great Fast, as well as the Pre-Christmas Fast. The cost of the cookbook is \$14.00 plus \$4.00 postage and handling (\$18.00). If ordering from Canada, please send a \$28.00 U.S. Postal money order payable in U.S. dollars to reflect the difference in the exchange rate and postage cost. To order please send a check or money order to: Ethnic Craft Club, St. John Byzantine Catholic Church, 201 E. Main Street, Uniontown, PA 15401, or call 724-438-6027 (M-F 9AM-3PM - leave message), for more information. You may contact us at: carpathiancookery@gmail.com.



## Byzantine Catholic Outreach The Villages, Florida

Served from Saint Anne Byzantine Catholic Church, New Port Richey, Florida

**"A loving, praying community giving  
Glory to Jesus Christ!"**

**VIGIL DIVINE LITURGY EVERY SATURDAY, 2:00 P.M.  
HOLYDAYS OF OBLIGATION ON THE HOLYDAY, 12:00 NOON  
Served by Father Oleksiy Nebesnyk**

Location: Saint Alban Church, 625 W. Lady Lake Blvd, Lady Lake, FL  
Next to the American Legion, CR 466 & Rolling Acres Road

**MEET, GREET, AND MUNCH FOLLOWING ALL LITURGIES**

Slavic dinners being planned

Outreach Contact /Phone: 352-530-9631

Dr. Barbara Yastishock-Lutz, Lay Representative, drbylutz@comcast.net

## When traveling to the Mid-Atlantic, please visit our churches

### Maryland— Patronage of the Mother of God

1265 Linden Avenue  
Baltimore, MD 21227  
Phone 410-247-4936  
Web www.patronagechurch.org  
Sunday Divine Liturgy 9:15 AM

### Patronage at Abingdon meeting at: Stone Chapel at Saint Francis de Sales Church

1450 Abingdon Road  
Abingdon, MD 21009  
Sunday Divine Liturgy 5:30 PM

### Patronage at Hagerstown meeting at: Saint Ann Catholic Church

1525 Oak Hill Avenue  
Hagerstown, MD 21742  
Saturday Vigil Liturgy 6:45 PM 2 per month  
Call Baltimore for schedule

### Saint Gregory of Nyssa

12420 Old Gunpowder Road Spur  
Beltsville, MD 20705  
Phone 301-953-9323  
Web www.stgregoryofnyssa.net  
Sunday Divine Liturgies  
Church Slavonic 8:00 AM  
Sunday Matins 9:30 AM  
English Liturgy 10:30 AM

### Epiphany Mission

9301 Warfield Road  
Gaithersburg, MD  
Web www.eolmission.org  
Sunday Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am

### Virginia— Epiphany of our Lord

3410 Woodburn Road  
Annandale, VA 22003  
Phone: 703-573-3986  
Web www.eolbcc.org  
Sunday Divine Liturgies 8:00 AM & 10:30 AM

### Ascension of our Lord

114 Palace Lane  
Williamsburg, VA 23185  
Phone 757-585-2878 (rectory)  
Web www.ascensionva.org  
Sunday Divine Liturgy 11:00 AM

### Our Lady of Perpetual Help

216 Parliament Drive  
Virginia Beach, VA 23462  
Phone 757-456-0809  
Web www.olphvb.org  
Sunday Divine Liturgy 8:00 AM

### North Carolina— Saints Cyril and Methodius

2510 Piney Plains Road  
Cary, NC 27518

Phone 919-239-4877  
Web www.sscyrilmethodius.org  
Sunday Divine Liturgy 9 and 11 AM

### District of Columbia— Byzantine Ruthenian Chapel Basilica of the National Shrine

400 Michigan Avenue, NE  
Washington, DC 20017  
Phone 202-526-8300  
Web www.nationalshrine.org  
No regularly scheduled Sunday Liturgy.

To reserve a date and time, priests must call the Liturgy Office and submit a current letter from their eparchy's Safe Environment Office.



## Visiting New York City?

**Come Worship With Us!**

Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church

Father Edward G. Cimbala, D.Min.—Pastor

246 East 15th Street, Manhattan, New York  
212-677-0516

**Sunday Divine Liturgy**

**10:00 AM**

## ONLINE CHURCH SINGING CLASSES

OFFERED BY THE

### METROPOLITAN CANTOR INSTITUTE

The Metropolitan Cantor Institute offers an online, 2-year program in church singing for both new and experienced cantors. Tuition is \$75 for each eight-week class, which includes feedback to help you improve your singing and cantorial skills. Initial classes on liturgy and church singing are free. For details: <https://mci.archpitt.org/classes> or call Deacon Jeffrey Mierzejewski at (412) 735-1676. Classes are offered at no charge to qualified students from any parish with no current cantor.



## LIFE, LOVE, AND THE HUMAN PERSON

By Ann M. Koshute, MTS

### HEAVEN AT HOME

A new year is upon us, and as we're nursing our Christmas cookie hangovers and deciding on the resolutions, we'll try to fulfill over the next twelve months, we may just breeze by the two holy feasts that open up each new year. On January 1 we celebrate the feast of the Circumcision of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and we commemorate our holy Father, Basil the Great. While these two feasts might seem an odd coupling there is actually a beautiful connection between them, and an opportunity for us to enter more deeply into the mission and vocation each of us was given at our Baptism.

As was prescribed by the Law, on the eighth day after His birth, Mary and Joseph took the baby Jesus to the Temple to be circumcised in humble obedience to God, and as a sign of confidence in God's fidelity to His Covenant with Israel. Though He need not have fulfilled any requirements of the Covenant because *He is* God's true and definitive Covenant with all His people, Jesus willingly entered into His creation in all vulnerability, within a family, in order to save us. Salvation and defeat of sin and death were His primary objectives, but that He chose to do so in a way that would teach us the meaning of our humanity, elevating the family to a place of prominence and a way of sanctification. He made the family a model for how we are to love God and each other, and this is a gift we shouldn't lose sight of or take for granted.

While "the Great" was not Saint Basil's last name, it rightly could have been. Basil came from a family of "great" men and women, most of whom are themselves now revered as saints. We know him mostly because we pray his Divine Liturgy on

Sundays during the Great Fast, but he led a life of thoughtful prayer, was a fierce defender of the Faith, and had a deep love for and generosity toward the poor. He is also regarded as the Father of Monasticism in the East and was a model almost two centuries later for Saint Benedict, the Father of the monastic tradition in the West. These two saints have an interesting link, in that the first to join Basil's monastic community were members of his own family, specifically his mother Emilia and sister Macrina. When Benedict wrote the Rule for his monastic community, he did so with the belief that living in service to God in community should be structured *like a family*, in which the members worked and prayed together, loved and served each other. The Rule of Saint Benedict is built on the foundation of *relationship*: with God and with our brothers (and sisters) in Christ.

What connects the Feast of the Circumcision of Our Lord with the feast of Saint Basil – and with Benedict, for that matter? It is that our home (whether it shelters us and our spouse, children, extended family, or where we live on our own), is meant to be a sign of God's love and mercy to the whole world, and a place where He continues to make His dwelling on Earth. Mary and Joseph understood that, and so they created a home that honored God's word, kept His commandments, and created a space to do the daily work of the home in love, as an offering back to God. Mary kept the house, Joseph worked as a carpenter, and both together raised the Christ Child in a way that taught Him how to worship, work and serve others. Certainly, the seed of what we now call the *domestic church* was present in the humble abode of the Holy Family.

The Son of God literally made His home with Mary and Joseph, in the flesh, but He is to be no less present in each of our homes. In our prayer, our daily chores, in everything we say and do, and how we open ourselves in hospitality and presence to others, we should be mindful that *God is with us*. He must not simply be a guest, but the Head of our household and our lives. If we see the Holy Family as an unattainable ideal of holiness, we should recall the obstacles they had to overcome, and the suffering they endured. Their real-life experience is not reflected in Christmas cards and Renaissance paintings! They faced danger, ridicule, and the daily struggles to keep a home and provide all that was necessary to maintain the health and well-being of the family. Yet all of this was possible because God was at the center of their home.

Given this model of living out what is mostly a routine, mundane daily life, it's no wonder that the first people to enter Saint Basil's monastic order were his family members. From them the future saint learned who God is, how to love Him, and the duty to love and serve others – especially the poor. It seems natu-

ral that he should build his rule of monastic life on the foundation of family, and this most certainly influenced Saint Benedict two centuries later. All three models of living – from the Holy Family to Saints Basil and Benedict – are not to be seen as unattainable ideals, or the way of life for a chosen few. *We are the chosen* who have been called by our Baptism and sent forth in the Holy Spirit through Chrismation to live out every moment in thanksgiving to God and service to others. Our homes – be they large dwellings with a spouse and children, or one room where we live alone – are *little monasteries* where we learn to worship God, honor the dignity of work in and out of the home, and serve our neighbors, parish family, and those in need. We laypeople aren't called to live just like religious, because our duty is to live in the world. But that's only part of it. We are to work to sanctify the world, too, bringing the light of Christ to it. Thus, our *home monasteries* will look and operate differently from religious houses, but their goal is the same: to be a place where God is the center of all we do, and a beacon of His love to all who enter in. **ECL**

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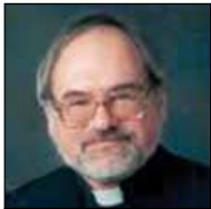


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# THE BYZANTINE LITURGY

By Archpriest David Petras, SEOD

## THE SEVEN SACRAMENTS

In our basic Catholic education, we are taught that there are seven sacraments. This fact is accepted also by the Eastern Church, both Orthodox and Catholic. In the Byzantine Church, the word *mystery* (Greek, *mysterion*) came to designate the seven special liturgical rites that have a particular importance in the life of the Church. The question is: how did the term “mystery” come to be applied to liturgical rites? The basic reason is clear: under the form of sacred acts and words we find the reality of God’s salvation. The sacramental system reveals the mystery. John Chrysostom wrote: “It is called *mystery* when we do not consider what we see but see one set of things and consider another.” (In 1 Corinthians Hom. 1, 7)

Therefore, the proper term for a “sacrament” in the Byzantine tradition is *mystery*, in the sense that the word *mystery* is applied also to God’s plan of salvation (economy) and the Church, that is, something hidden from the eyes of unbelievers but revealed now in Christ, God and man, through his incarnation, to those who believe and are enlightened. Sacraments (particularly the Eucharist) are the incarnation of Christ acting in the community. All sacramental mysteries, therefore, are the Gospel in action, not only revealing, but also effecting the plan of God.

As incarnate realities, the sacramental mysteries are a union of our life in

the physical world we inhabit, and the spiritual reality that is present in our celebration. The mysteries, therefore, are often anchored in material elements: water, bread, wine, and oil. What would seem to be common acquires a powerful divine presence. This was perhaps expressed most clearly by a Western theologian, Saint Augustine, Bishop of Hippo in the fourth century. He explained sacraments by saying that a word approaches an element, and a sacrament happens. The element is the physical element, and the word is the divine gift of understanding by which the truth and the meaning of what we are doing is revealed. Saint Gregory of Nyssa wrote, “Rightly do we believe that now also the bread which is consecrated by the Word of God is changed into the body of God the Word.” (*The Great Catechism* 37) He does not speak of the changing of water, but does speak of it in similar terms as the eucharist, “the prayer and the invocation of the Divine power over the water is the fountain of life in those who have been initiated.” (*Ibid.*, 33) He emphasizes more the power of the bread. Water touches us, but bread enters into us and transforms us. Bread is the leaven, which transforms the whole of the person who eats it. He then goes on to explain in detail how apt each element is in the mystery it represents. Likewise, Saint Cyril of Alexandria speaks of the water of baptism, “Cyril of Alexandria is clear on this point: ‘In the same way,

as water, as water boiling in the kettle by the touch of the heat of the fire out of which it draws its power, so is the water changed by the energy of the Spirit into an infinite divine might, which sanctifies those who descend into it.” (*Commentary on the Gospel of John* 2,1)

The seven sacramental mysteries in the Byzantine rite are: Baptism, Chrismation, Eucharist, Anointing of the Sick, Penance, Marriage, and Holy Orders. There are actually more services, since Holy Orders comprises the Episcopate, the Presbyterate, and the Diaconate. Though not the current opinion, some liturgical theologians considered Monastic Profession a part of Penance. Likewise, except for exceptional cases, Baptism and Chrismation are celebrated in the same service. Seven was considered a perfect number. Mathematically, seven is a prime number, the sum of three and four. Four is the world, the physical sphere, air, earth, fire and water. It represents the first testament, the old man, movement, and immanence. Three is the Spirit, the Trinity, the psychic world, the second testament, the new man, rest and transcendence. Seven therefore represents the perfect combination of infinite and finite, of God and the human race.

The greatest of the sacramental mysteries is Holy Communion. It is often called by the Fathers the “mystery of mysteries.” Nicholas Cabasilas says,

“When he has led the initiate to the table and has given him his body to eat, he entirely changes him, and transforms him into his own state. It is impossible to conceive of anything more blessed than this. It is, therefore, the final Mystery as well, since it is not possible to go beyond it or add anything to it.” (*The Life in Christ*, IV, 1) This is the genius of the Christian ritual. The basic foundation of all salvation is not found in some great mythic story of salvation, but in the simple and ordinary sharing of a meal at table.

Because Communion is “the mystery of mysteries,” all other sacramental mysteries are joined to it, not only ideally, but in actual practice. Saint Simeon of Thessalonica wrote, “Holy Communion is the perfection of every sacrament and the seal of every mystery.” The noted Orthodox theologian, Paul Evdokimov, especially emphasized this point. For him, the Eucharist is not simply one sacrament among others, but the sacrament and the Church itself, from which the sacramental life of the Church flows as from a source. He wrote: “Where the Eucharist is celebrated, there is the Church, and whoever is a member of the Church takes part in it, for in the Eucharist is Christ – the true promise that was made – ‘with us until the end of time.’” This is why we can also say that the system of sacraments is a seven-fold mystery of the presence of Christ in his Church. **ECL**

By the time this article makes it to the reader, the commercial world will have all-but-moved on from Christmas, unwanted gifts blissfully returned, with attention now moved to the upcoming Super Bowl. With the whirlwind of Christmas “over,” many will have collapsed on their couches on the evening of December 25 thinking the ever common “all that preparation for one day, and now it’s over,” while being silently annoyed that, once again, their coworkers wished them “Happy Holidays” and not “Merry Christmas.” While, yes, as Christians, we often feel slighted, or perhaps even under attack, when someone wishes us “Happy Holidays” as a means to politely remove the Christocentric ideal from Christmas, I have to wonder: Is the phrase “Happy Holidays” such a bad thing?

As I stated in last month’s reflection on the “reason for the season,” we, as Byzantine Catholics, are called to live a liturgical life in accordance with Church teaching and the ecclesiastical calendar. We are to fast when the Church calls us to fast, and feast when She calls us to feast. Some often joke that the penitential fasting season of Filipovka begins on November 15 but is nearly immediately inundated with several significant liturgical feasts. A brief view of the calendar will enlighten us to this fact.

Nov. 15 Filipovka Begins  
Nov. 21 Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple  
Dec. 6 Feast of Saint Nicholas  
Dec. 8 Feast of the Maternity of Anna  
Dec. 25 Christmas (Nativity of Our Lord)  
Dec. 27 Feast of Saint Stephen  
Jan. 1 Feasts of the Circumcision of Our Lord and Saint Basil the Great  
Jan 6 Theophany

Then things cool down a bit until February 2, with the Feast of the Meeting of Our Lord with Simeon and the official end of the liturgical season of Christmas.

It becomes very evident that Christmas is not simply a day in and of itself. Rather, it is the focal point of an entire season of fasting and feasts referred to as the Winter Pascha—a time to pause during the darkest days of the year to reflect on the Light of Christ coming into the world. These certainly are *Holy Days* indeed.

## PRIESTLY REFLECTIONS

Father Paul Varchola West



### “HAPPY HOLY DAYS TO YOU!”

Interestingly enough, the Online Etymology Dictionary ([etymonline.com](http://etymonline.com)) states the following regarding the origin and use of word “holiday”:

*1500s, earlier haliday (c. 1200), from Old English haligdæg “holy day, consecrated day, religious anniversary; Sabbath,” from halig “holy” + dæg “day”; in 14c. meaning both “religious festival” and “day of exemption from labor and recreation,” but pronunciation and sense diverged 16c. As an adjective mid-15c. Happy holidays is from mid-19c., in British English, with reference to summer vacation from school. As a Christmastime greeting, by 1937, American English, in Camel cigarette ads.*

I find it quite thought-provoking that the term “Happy Holidays” was introduced to us in America in its modern meaning not by “political correctness,” but rather commercialism.

While many of us find the phrase to be subversive and a cause for consternation, I think we, as Byzantine Catholics,

should perhaps amend our way of thinking. We need not let commercialism dictate what we consider Holy Days by reducing this blessed season simply to Christmas as a singular day. Yes, Christmas is Christmas, the Nativity of Our Lord, but we also need to realize that the Winter Pascha (aka “The Christmas Season”) means much, much more. This is a season of liturgical celebration, of feasts with loved ones, or sharing in the joy of Christ!

It has become almost expected for “good” Christians to become combative when wished a “Happy Holiday.” Well, I say, “Let’s change that!” Let us call these days, this festive time, these hallowed days of the Winter Pascha exactly what they are: truly Holy Days! When someone wishes you a “Happy Holiday,” don’t get upset. Simply rejoice in the Light of Christ, return a smile and respond, “Happy Holy Days to you!” **ECL**



## SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

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

### THE ODES OF MATINS

There is a rich layer of Scripture hiding just beneath the surface of many of our liturgical services. Have you ever been at a funeral home to pray Parastas and wondered why you were singing about 'Israel walking on the deep sea as on dry land' while 'Pharaoh their pursuer' drowned? Has your celebration of Resurrection Matins ever been interrupted by the thought:

'Habakkuk? Who's he and what does he have to do with Pascha?' Have you ever noticed that the Three Youths in the Babylonian furnace get mentioned in the Paraklis to the Theotokos, at Resurrection Matins, and in the Parastas? Why them? Why there?

What these services have in common is a long hymn called a "Canon." There is always a Canon at Matins and so too at services patterned after Matins, such as *Parastas* and *Paraklis*. In Byzantine terms, Canons are a novelty: they first appeared only in the 8<sup>th</sup> century, composed by such great saints as John Damascene; his brother, Cosmas of Maiuma; Andrew of Crete; Theodore the Studite; Joseph the Hymnographer; and others.

Prior to the introduction of the Canon, hymns taken directly from the Bible were chanted each day. To distinguish them from the Psalms, these ten hymns (eight from the Old Testament and two from the New) were called "Odes." They are the songs of Moses at the Sea (Exodus 15); of Moses at the border of the Promised Land (Deuteronomy 32); of Hannah, the mother of Samuel (1 Samuel 2); of Habakkuk (chapter 3), of Isaiah (chapter 26); of Jonah (chapter 2); of Azariah (Daniel 3:26-45) of the Three Youths (Daniel 3:52-88); of Zachariah (Luke 1:68-79); and of the Theotokos (Luke 1:46-55). Protestant editions of the Bible lack both of the Odes from Daniel. The second Ode (Deuteronomy 32) is considerably harsher in tone than the others, so that the second Ode of any Canon is omitted except during the Great Fast.

These are by no means the only biblical hymns other than the Psalms. The prophecies of Isaiah are largely poetic in form and, in the New Testament, there is the song of Simeon (Luke 2:29-32; chanted daily at Vespers) and a number of hymns in Revelation (4:8,11; 11:15-18; 12:10-12; 15:3-4; 16:5-7; 19:1-8). These ten were selected early in the history of Christian worship for reasons

we cannot always identify for certain. It is quite likely that these Odes have been part of the Church's worship from its earliest days. On two occasions, Saint Paul encourages Christians to "address one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs (Greek: *ôdais*; Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16). Jonah and the Three Youths in the fiery furnace are depicted in some of the earliest Christian art in the catacombs of Rome. In different ways, both point to the Resurrection, as does the clear statement of Isaiah 26:19: "the dead shall rise, and those in the tombs shall be raised up, and those in the earth shall rejoice."

The sacred poets who composed the Canons for Sundays and feasts followed the pattern of the biblical Odes which their new poems were meant to complement. They wove all sorts of biblical references into their new compositions but they were generally very careful to include some allusion to the corresponding biblical Ode especially in the first stanza (the *Irmos*) of each Ode of the Canon. Eventually, the new poetic Canons almost totally replaced the biblical Odes on which they were patterned.

The connection between the biblical Odes and the various Canons is often somewhat superficial. The first Ode of any Canon may refer to crossing the Red Sea (as at Parastas), or to a hymn of victory (as at Pascha), or to some version of Exodus 15:1 ("he has been glorified;" as in the Canon for Christmas). The fourth Ode almost always refers either to Habakkuk's keeping vigil (Habakkuk 2:1; as at Pascha) or the "overshadowed mountain" (Habakkuk 3:3) that prophesies the Lord's Incarnation from a virgin mother.

In the coming months, we will explore each of these biblical Odes individually and rediscover both what they express on their own and how they reveal a deeper meaning in the Church's Liturgy. In addition to commentaries by Fathers of the Church on the various biblical books where the Odes are found, we are blessed to have a commentary by Hesychius of Jerusalem, a fifth-century priest, specifically on the Odes as a group. **ECL**

## SCHOOL OF PRAYER

Father G. Scott Boghossian



### CONVERSATION WITH CHRIST

Sacred Scripture presents God as a person who wants a relationship with us, His creatures. There can be no relationship without communication. Usually, communication takes the form of speaking. In human relationships, we talk to one another freely, sincerely. Thus, we come to know one another and appreciate one another. It is the same with God. We speak to Him and come to know Him and love Him more and more.

When we talk to a friend, we usually do not read a prepared statement. We don't read to them out of a book or a carefully edited manuscript. In a familiar conversation with a close friend, it might seem strange to count how often we say things using a rope or a string of beads. Yet sometimes, this is the only way we talk to God.

It is possible to say many prayers and not really be praying. To read formal prayers from a prayer book or to say prayers that we have previously memorized is a good thing. Formal prayer can be valid and effective, especially if we pay attention to the words we are saying and sincerely try to direct them to God,

Our Lady, and the saints. At the same time, we may say a lot of prayers and yet not connect with God on a deep and personal level.

Have you ever thought something like this: "I say so many prayers every day, in church and at home, out of my prayerbook, the psalter, with the rosary or prayer rope, and still have many sinful behaviors and attitudes like hatred, strife, jealousy, anger, selfishness, envy, and a lack of self-control (Gal. 5:19-21)? I receive holy communion frequently, confess monthly, do some spiritual reading, etc. Still, my heart often seems hard and far from God. Why isn't this working?"

What is the solution? Perhaps we are not talking to God as we should be. We read Him prayers from a book or recite memorized prayers to Him. Still, we are not having a familiar conversation with Jesus Christ our Lord, at least not very often or for any extended period of time.

Saint Gregory of Nyssa (335 – 395) defines prayer as a familiar conversation with God. Saint Teresa of Avila (1515

– 1582) says that prayer "is nothing else than an intimate friendship, a frequent heart-to-heart conversation" with God.

In this intimate and friendly heart-to-heart conversation, Our Lord conforms us to Himself in a way that we can never accomplish through any "spiritual practice" or effort of the will.

Father Peter Thomas Rohrbach, in his book, *Conversation with Christ: The Teaching of Saint Teresa of Avila about Personal Prayer*, explains in more detail what this familiar colloquy looks like:

"The soul begins to talk slowly to Christ, telling Him of its love for Him, its desire to serve Him, its willingness to do anything for Him. He adores Christ...; he expresses his love for Him; thanks Him for past gifts; petitions Him for new favors in the future."

Father Rohrbach relates a story about a little girl who went back to her pew after receiving her first Holy Communion to make her thanksgiving. Her parents later asked her what she was praying about. She replied, "I prayed to Our Lord for Mommy and Daddy, and

for my sister Helen, and my brother George, and then I recited the alphabet to Our Lord and told Him a ghost story." Now, at first glance, that might seem almost silly. But in reality, this little girl was truly praying, and perhaps praying better than most of us, because, as Father Rohrbach points out, "she was actually talking to Our Lord."

He goes on to explain: "What she said to Christ was relatively unimportant, what she did was decidedly important: she entered into immediate contact with her Friend, Christ."

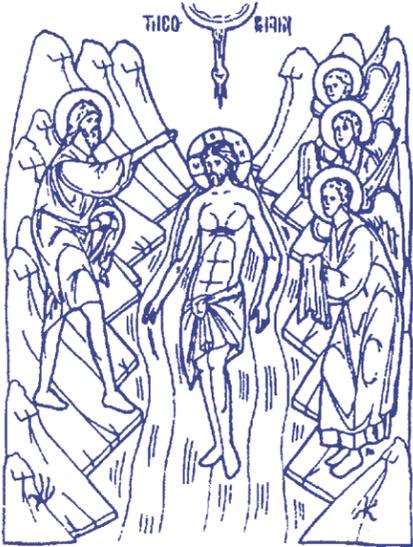
Don't stop praying your prayers from your prayer book or using formal prayers. Instead, pray them well, and use them to propel you into a heart-to-heart and familiar conversation with Christ. **ECL**

# SEASONAL REFLECTIONS

Father Ronald Hatton



## OUR CELEBRATION IS NOT OVER



As we enter into the year AD 2022, we reflect not only on the continued upheavals in our lives, but also on the blessings bestowed on us. Family and friends have continued to strain under separation, but endure with our continued love for one another. If we have the true spirit of the Nativity and God-with-us in our hearts, we still have the joy in the knowledge that God has come to earth in the flesh and dwells among us. Unfortunately, for most of the world and our society, Christmas has ended, and the world has moved on to other things. But not so the Church. We have a definite timeline that continues, for the most part, for 40 days after the Feast of the Nativity, and this month contains very important feasts.

No sooner do we celebrate the Nativity of our Lord, while the rest of the world (those who follow the Gregorian Calendar) celebrates the coming of the new year, the Church celebrates the feast of the Circumcision of Our Lord, eight days after His birth. Circumcision is an important ritual in Judaism,

as it makes the male child a child of the Covenant between God and Abraham: "And God said to Abraham, 'As for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. This is My covenant, which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised. You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you. He that is eight days old among you shall be circumcised; every male throughout your generations, whether born in your house, or bought with your money from any foreigner who is not of your offspring.... So shall My covenant be in your flesh an everlasting covenant. Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant'" (Genesis 17:9-14). On the eighth day, the child was also formally named: "And at the end of eight days, when He was circumcised, He was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb" (Luke 2:21). We see this also with the birth of John the Baptist: "And on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child; and they would have named him Zechariah after his father, but his mother said, 'Not so; he shall be called John.' And they said to her, 'None of your kindred is called by this name.' And they made signs to his father, inquiring what he would have him called. And he asked for a writing tablet, and wrote, 'His name is John'"

(Luke 1:59-63). Both these names have great significance for us, as "John" (Gr. *Ioannes*, from the Heb. *Yochanan*) means "YHWH is Gracious," and "Jesus" (Greek *Iesous*, Aramaic, *Yeshu'a*, from the Heb. *Yehoshu'a*; Anglicized as, "Joshua") means "YHWH is Salvation." So, just as Joshua in the books of Exodus and Joshua is identified with the successor to Moses who brought the Israelites into the Promised Land, showing the fulfillment of God's promise and His grace to His people, so, too, our Joshua, Jesus, is the fulfillment of God's promise to be our Salvation.

January 1 is also the feast day of Saint Basil the Great (one of the Three Holy Hierarchs celebrated on January 30), Archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia (in present-day Turkey), and is traditionally the author of our Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great, which we celebrate on this day as well as Sundays of the Great Fast and other major holy days.

ostolic times, and it is mentioned in *The Apostolic Constitutions* (Book V:13). From the second century, we have the testimony of Saint Clement of Alexandria concerning the celebration of the Baptism of the Lord, and the night vigil before this Feast. The name itself refers to a manifestation of God. In the Western tradition, this day is devoted to the Visit of the Magi, and thus His manifestation to the Gentiles. In the East, it is devoted to Jesus' manifestation as the Son of God at His Baptism in the Jordan by John the Baptist and, further, the manifestation of the Holy Trinity (cf. Matthew 3: 13-17, Mark 1: 9-11, and Luke 3:21, 22). Thus, it is an important day for us both as an affirmation of the dogma of the Trinity and as the day when we traditionally celebrate the Great Sanctification of Water, in some parishes not only with the Blessing of Water in the parish on the eve of the Feast, but also with the blessing of a nearby body of water, usually a river, on the day of the Feast.

*In His love for the human race, the Savior condescended and willed to be wrapped in swaddling clothes. Eight days old according to His mother and eternal according to His Father, He did not look down upon the circumcision of the flesh. Therefore, O believers, let us cry out to Him: You are our God; have mercy on us!*  
—Vespers for the Feast

*The True Light has appeared to bestow enlightenment upon all. The all-pure Christ is baptized with us; He sanctifies the water and it becomes a cleansing for our souls. All that which appears outward and visible is earthly, and that which is understood by the mind is greater than the heavens. Salvation is bestowed through washing, and the Spirit is received through water. By descending into the water, we ascend to God. How wonderful are Your works, O Lord; glory be to You!*  
—Matins for the Feast **ECL**

The great feast, of course, is the Theophany of our Lord on January 6. The origin of the Feast goes back to Ap-

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**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](http://www.eparchyofpassaic.com).

**CONNECTICUT**

Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church—Danbury, CT  
 Saint John the Baptist—Trumbull, 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 Catholic Church—Mont Clare, PA  
 Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church—Wilkes-Barre, PA  
 Saint Mary Pokrova Byzantine Catholic Church—Kingston, PA

Saint John Byzantine Church—Wilkes-Barre Twp., 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 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**

Holy Dormition Byzantine Catholic Church—Ormond Beach, FL  
 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 Outreach 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

**Are you called to the Priesthood?**  
**Are you afraid of College Debt?**

Is God calling you to be priest? Are you worried about college debt? Why not study in Europe and avoid college debt? Would you like to study in Vienna in the heart of Europe at the International Theological Institute in your own English Language? You can receive a university degree approved by the Pope. Contact the Director of Vocations for the Eparchy of Passaic, the Very Reverend Michael Kerestes at Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church, 695 N Main Street, Wilkes-Barre, PA 18705, phone: 570-822-6028



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**UPCOMING EPARCHIAL AND PARISH EVENTS**

**JANUARY, 2022**

- 1 Circumcision of Our Lord  
*Solemn Holy Day \* Chancery closed*
- 2 Sunday before Theophany
- 6 Holy Theophany of Our Lord  
*Holy Day of Obligation \* Chancery closed*
- 9 Sunday after Theophany
- 30 Sunday of Zaccheus  
*First Pre-Lenten Sunday*

**FEBRUARY, 2022**

- 2 Holy Encounter of Our Lord with Simeon  
*Solemn Holy Day*
- 6 Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee  
*Second Pre-Lenten Sunday*
- 13 Sunday of the Prodigal Son  
*Third Pre-Lenten Sunday*
- 20 Sunday of Meatfare  
*Fourth Pre-Lenten Sunday*

27 Sunday of Cheesefare  
*Fifth Pre-Lenten Sunday*

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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