



EASTERN CATHOLIC LIFE

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LENTEN FLOWERS—PRAY, FAST, GIVE ALMS

Lenten Pastoral Reflection of Bishop Kurt



“Charity covers a multitude of sins,” according to the holy Apostle Peter. Prayer is the first of our tasks in repentance. There are many kinds of prayer, and all of them are good. Sometimes we pray in time of extreme need, perhaps even in great danger. In those cases, we say whatever comes to our lips, and we say it with great feeling and total honesty. Saint Peter himself cried out, “Lord, save me!” when he was sinking in a stormy sea and Jesus put out His hand and lifted him up. Perhaps you have had one of those experiences yourself. In the West, people are always analyzing things. It is as though the scientific method has taken over everything, from art to family relations. And in the West, the spiritual life is divided up into parts which they call *purgative*, *illuminative*, and *unitive*. There is no need to explain those terms, because I will tell you a still better way. Our own saint, Blessed Miriam Teresa, wrote that, when we pray, we are living all three of the parts of these ways. When we pray, we are purging our sins, filling our souls with virtues, and uniting ourselves to God Himself. What could be better than that?

There are many different kinds of prayers. There are short heartfelt prayers. There are long prayers written by someone else. There are silent, contemplative prayers. Even the Book

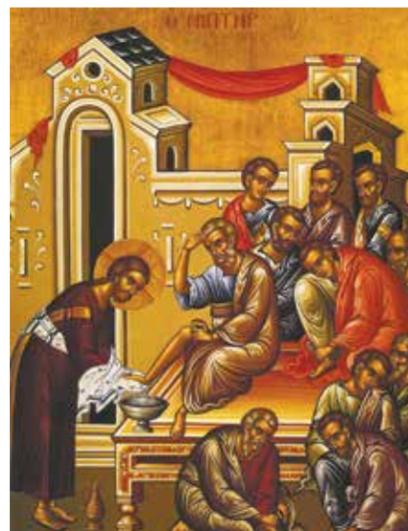
of Psalms, our spiritual textbook, has many different kinds of prayers. There are prayers that contemplate the beauty of God and His love for us: “The Lord is my Shepherd... He leads me by green pastures.” And in another Psalm, “Forget your people and your father’s house. The king is enthralled by your beauty.” In many Psalms, King David complains to God about his many enemies, or his sorrow. Some Psalms are joyous, and some teach. So, you see, praying is what you make of it. Once you open the lines of communication to God, the sky is the limit (so to speak).

One of the greatest prayers is when we pray for someone else. Nothing is more precious to God than charity, and Saint John says, “God is love. He who abides in love, abides in God, and God in him.” Jesus told us, when you give, do not announce it in the street; do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing. Prayer is the most hidden act of charity as well as the most precious and the most powerful.

A great American preacher told the story of his own salvation. He was a chronic drunk and was unable to stop. One evening he made a decision to end his life, and was walking through Chicago to Lake Michigan. As he passed a tavern, he heard a song that his mother used to sing to him. That was the mo-

ment of grace for him. He never took another drink. Some years later, he looked in a book that belonged to his mother. In it there was note in which she wrote down her sorrow. “Oh, my son,” she wrote, “For how many years have I prayed that the good God would deliver you from your painful affliction.” He realized that it was her prayers that delivered him to God’s grace, and that is why God’s hand turned him back from self-destruction when he heard his mother’s voice in that popular song during his walk to the lake.

Prayer can be tedious for many people, even the most experienced. Prayer



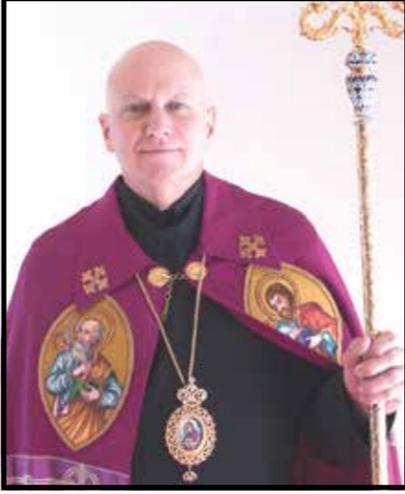
Icon of Jesus Washing the Feet of the Disciples

with a purpose is always more fervent and easier to continue. For this reason, when we pray for someone else, it is both sweeter and virtuous. It is an act of charity and generosity. Saint Paul says, “God loves a cheerful giver.” What better gift can we give someone else than prayer. Only in heaven will we realize the power of our prayers, and what a reunion it will be with those we prayed for! Recently I heard a speaker use the phrase, “our secret life of grace.” Prayers for other people are part of that secret life of grace, our private garden flourishing inside our souls that only God sees and admires. Mary Magdalene mistook Jesus for the gardener after the Resurrection, and Saint Teresa often referred to prayer as watering our garden. We water our private garden when we pray.

Speaking of gardens, a beautiful garden doesn’t just need watering, it also needs weeding. One of the ways that we can weed the walled garden, or our soul, is fasting and other penance. Jesus Himself told us some ground rules for fasting when He said, “When you fast, do not look glum like the hypocrites.” By the way, “hypocrite” is just the Greek word for an actor in a play. He says that they have received their reward, that is, public recognition. Our Lord goes on, “When you fast, comb your hair and wash your face, ... and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.”

We know that the earliest Christians fasted because there are rules in one of the oldest Christian books. The *Didache* is a book of Christian doctrine as old as parts of the Bible. It says, “Do not fast on Tuesday and Thursday as the Pharisees, but on Wednesday and Friday.” Today, we probably would not consider that a very good reason for choosing those days, but now you know that the earliest Christians did fast on Wednesday and Friday, just as people did in our church until the newest generations. How did people lose a tradition that was so ancient and continuous? Some say it is because of the modern Western heresy that the flesh is not important. In recent years I have heard well-meaning people repeat the misleading slogan, “You are a spiritual being having a human experience.” In other words, your spirit is important, but your flesh is hiding your spiritual

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I LIFT UP MY EYES

Pastoral Reflections of Bishop Kurt



LENTEN FLOWERS—PRAY, FAST, GIVE ALMS

...continued from page 1

nature. That slogan is simply incompatible with our beliefs as Christians. God made us from the beginning with a body and a soul, and both of them together make us who we are. Just as we must discipline our spirit and our mind, we must also discipline our flesh. Our most basic desires are the desires to breathe, to drink, and to eat. We can't stop breathing, though we can train it. We can't stop drinking for very long without ruining our health. So, we follow the example of Jesus and we fast to discipline our flesh. If we can control this most basic of our desires, then it becomes easier to tame the other passions. Although our faith teaches that our flesh is important and essential, we cannot allow it to rule our whole person.

In our tradition, each year we celebrate Meatfare Sunday, and then a week later, we celebrate Cheesefare Sunday. They are called that for a reason. Meatfare Sunday is the last day to eat meat before Easter. Cheesefare Sunday is the last day to eat dairy products before Easter. How many people in our society are promoting a "plant based" diet nowadays? It is even promoted in our schools. Yet, these same leaders mock Christian discipline. They call us kill-joys, and then they promote the same discipline for worldly reasons. The reason that we have our Easter baskets is that those are the very foods that were avoided for the fast of Great Lent: meat, butter, cheese, and eggs. When we all fast as a group, we are fasting as the Body of Christ which is the Church.

Before Lent starts, we read several passages from Saint Paul in which he says

that it doesn't matter what we eat as long as we thank God for it. He is correct, of course. Eating certain foods and avoiding other foods is not magic. Especially in his day, some Christians were committing sins against charity with their dietary gossip. Some food was contaminated because it was sacrificed to pagan gods. Saint Paul says that the pagan gods are not real, so that food has nothing wrong with it, but it could cause scandal to someone else who is not as mature in faith. In the end, it all comes down to charity—putting the good of others before my own. But however we fast, or don't fast, Saint Paul says, don't judge each other. Don't turn your diet into an occasion of sin by lack of respect for others. Remember, the purpose of fasting is to tend the garden in our souls. The fast is a time for weeding the garden, removing sins and vice. If fasting causes new weeds to grow, then we are doing it wrong.

The traditional formula for Lent is prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Almsgiving means giving things away to the poor. In the United States, we discourage begging, but there are many opportunities to give things away to others. The important thing is that a spirit of generosity grows inside of us. I heard someone say once that, when I get the urge to do something good for someone else, I try to give in. He was always afraid of how he might look to others — "Someone might get the wrong idea." One of the best things we can give to others is encouragement. Flattery is even a sin—but flattery implies something false, a type of hypocrisy or manipulation. Saying good things about others is never a sin when it is true. Padre Pio said, "Discouragement is never from God." So, it seems that encouragement is usually something that is from God. As Saint Paul says, "Encourage one another and build each other up." He also says, "Let no corrupt speech proceed out of your

mouth, but only what is good for building up others as the need may be, that it may give grace to those who hear." And in Hebrews it says, "But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called 'Today', so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin." He means that while we are alive, we should use our words for building up. How sad it is when someone is dead and we think to ourselves, "I should have said this...but I never got around to it." Someday we will be unable to say things good or bad, so Hebrews instructs to say those good things while we still can.

When Easter comes, our Byzantine Churches turn into the most beautiful party of all, a true feast for the senses. We stand up because Jesus conquered sin and death. We sing because of the joy of liberation. We sing, "Christ is Risen!" over and over. My uncle and aunt visited my parish once for Easter. Afterwards, my aunt, a fundamentalist Christian, commented, "If they didn't get the message at your service, they must be deaf." One of the things that we do to show our joy of life at Easter is to fill up the church with beautiful living flowers of every color. In our church, we are reminded that the body is important because our rituals dazzle all the senses: smells, sounds, motion, and bright colors.

Those flowers are also a symbol of the more important garden, the secret garden inside our souls. In that garden,

God plants fantastic flowers more exotic and varied than the spring bulbs we see in church, the tulips and daffodils and hyacinths and crocuses and lilies. In the garden of our souls, God plants flowers in colors beyond the rainbow that we cannot imagine even in dreams. God only asks us to tend the garden, so the flowers grow and the weeds do not take over. During the Great Fast, we water the garden with prayers and tears, especially prayers of repentance and generous prayers for others. We weed the garden with fasting and other penances of self-denial. And we fertilize the garden with almsgiving—generosity to the less fortunate. We can give monetary gifts to the most needy, or thoughtful gifts, or the most sought after gift of all, a generous word, attention to someone who is lonely or discouraged or whom no one else wants to talk to. How much it means when we call someone up or ask someone, "How are you doing?," and we actually listen and don't try to talk over them. Modern Americans are the loneliest people on earth. How precious it is to actually listen to someone else and not try to talk over them or correct them! The living flowers that we decorate the altar with for Easter wilt in a few weeks. The hidden garden of our souls is God's garden for all eternity.

+Kurt Brunette

AXIOS! AXIOS! AXIOS!

Deacon Thomas Shubeck was ordained to the Presbyterate by Bishop Kurt on Saturday, December 18, 2021. Photos and an article will appear in an upcoming issue.

DIRECTIVES FOR THE GREAT FAST

From the Office of the Bishop



FASTING REGULATIONS

+Our Tradition is to abstain from meat after Meatfare Sunday and from dairy products after Cheesefare Sunday until Easter. *The following are the minimum requirements:*

+All who receive Communion in the Eparchy of Passaic are required to abstain from meat on Wednesdays and Fridays of the Great Fast.

+All adults who receive Communion in the Eparchy of Passaic are required to abstain from meat, eggs, and milk products on the first day of Lent, Monday, February 28, and on Great and Holy Friday, April 15.

Dispensation

+Pastors and Administrators may, for a just cause, grant to the individual faithful and to individual families, dispensations or commutations of the fasting rules into other pious practices.

LITURGICAL DIRECTIVES

The Divine Liturgy of Saint Gregory, the Pope of Rome, also called the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts.

+All Pastors and Administrators are encouraged to celebrate the Divine Liturgy of Saint Gregory on Wednesdays and Fridays of the Great Fast.

+On other weekdays during the Great Fast, Holy Communion may be distributed at other liturgical services.

We ask you to pray for peace throughout the world, and for the victims of war. Please pray for those suffering from the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic and other diseases, as well as the health care professionals, family members, and others who are caring for them. Please remember also in your prayers all those in the military who are serving our country throughout the world.



PEOPLE YOU KNOW AROUND THE EPARCHY

IN DANBURY..

Meeting of Eastern Catholic Clergy in Connecticut

Saturday, February 12, 2022, saw the initial meeting of the Eastern Catholic Clergy for the State of Connecticut. The meeting was held at Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church, Danbury, CT. The clergy and members of Saint Nicholas started by praying a Moleben for the Protection of the Unborn, followed by lunch and fellowship in the parish hall. Afterwards, everyone introduced themselves and discussed ways that the various parishes could meet and pray together, as well as clergy meetings, “just to keep in touch with one another.” They have decided to meet once per quarter, with the possibility of the parishes gathering during the Great Fast for prayer. The overarching theme for the group are the words of our Lord, taken from the Gospel of Saint John, chapter 17: “... that they may be one even as we are one.”

The meeting was conceived by Father Ronald Hatton, pastor of Saint Nicholas Parish, Deacon Stephen Russo, and Mr. Paul Zalonski, a parishioner at Saint Ann Melkite Catholic Church, Waterford, CT. In attendance were Father Hrihory Lozinsky, Administrator of Saint John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church, Trumbull, CT; Father Albert Forlano, a priest of the Ukrainian Catholic Church who is currently a chaplain at Saint Vincent Hospital, Bridgeport, CT; Father Thomas Davis, pastor of Saint Ann Melkite Catholic Church, Danbury, CT; Father Joseph Pullikattil, pastor of Saint Thomas Syro-Malabar Catholic Church in Hartford, CT, and Father James Vattakunnil, pastor of Our Lady of the Assumption Syro-Malabar Catholic Church in Norwalk, CT.

The group looks forward to meeting again after Pascha and pray that more of the Eastern Catholic clergy in the state will join the group as they continue to meet.



L-R: Father Hrihory Lozinsky, Father Al Forlano, Father Ron Hatton, Father Tom Davis, Father James Vattakunnil, Father Joseph Pullikattil, Paul Zalonski, and Deacon Steve Russo



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2022 SPRING CURRICULUM EASTERNCATHOLIC.ORG

All courses are offered as live webinars, free of charge. Register at EasternCatholic.org/Events.



THE WAY OF THE PILGRIM

Unlocking the Jesus Prayer

Rev. Hieromonk Maximos Davies

Mondays, March 7 - 21 @ 8 - 9 p.m. ET

“Pray always,” St. Paul exhorts us (1 Th. 5.17). And yet, how do we achieve this? The ascetics of the Church have long extolled the Jesus Prayer as the most powerful means to achieve unceasing prayer. Join us as we explore this rich, but simple prayer of our Eastern Christian tradition, seeking to “remember God more often than [we] breathe.”



ENTERTAINING ANGELS

The Ascetical Practice of Hospitality

Rev. Michael O’Loughlin & Mother Natalia

Monday, March 28 @ 8 - 9 p.m. ET

In the Old Testament, Abraham and Sarah served three strangers not knowing they were messengers of God, setting an icon for us to demonstrate that in serving our neighbor, we serve the one who came to save us. Join us as we explore the importance of hospitality to others in our Christian life.



O DEATH WHERE IS THY STING?

The Biblical Roots of the Paschal Homily

Rev. Sebastian Carnazzo, Ph.D.

Wednesday, April 27 @ 8 - 9 p.m. ET

St. John Chrysostom’s renowned Paschal homily, proclaimed during the celebration of Pascha each year, helps us grasp the great mystery enunciated when we sing: “Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and to those in the tombs, bestowing life!” Join us as we study the rich Biblical background of this powerful text.



HEAVEN ON EARTH

The Beauty & Symbolism of the Divine Liturgy

Rev. David Anderson

Wednesdays, May 4 - 18 @ 8 - 9 p.m. ET

When pagans of Kiev entered Hagia Sophia and first experienced the Divine Liturgy, they famously said: “We knew not whether we were in heaven or on earth, for surely there is no such splendor or beauty anywhere on earth.” Join us as Fr. David Anderson guides us to understand what the beauty of the Divine Liturgy reveals to us.

WHAT'S COOKING FOR PASCHA?

By Georgia Zeedick

Slavic people everywhere will be taking baskets loaded with holiday foods to church for the traditional Paschal blessing which is a *must* prior to eating those exquisite foods.

Neatly arranged in the baskets will be *sunka* (ham), *slanina* (bacon), *chrin* (beets with horseradish), salt, *pascha*, *kolbassi*, *hrudka* (*sirets*), butter, *pysanki* (ornately decorated eggs for decoration), colored eggs for eating, and *kolachi*. Some people may add candy and a bottle of wine (or other items of Lenten sacrifice) to their baskets.

After the foods are placed in the basket, an embroidered cloth cover is placed over them and a blessed candle is fastened upright near the basket handle.

For the first-timers who have never put together a Paschal basket, let alone prepared foods for it, the whole process can be mystifying. Every cook has his or her favorite way of preparing these foods and of measuring the ingredients for them, and asking for recipes can result in confusion.

To take some of the mystery out of the preparation of the traditional foods, here are a few recipes gleaned from my own experience and a few Slavic cookbooks.

Hrudka (Sirets)

- 1 doz. eggs
- 1 or 2 tsp. vanilla
- 1 qt. milk
- ½ cup sugar

Combine all ingredients in a white enameled pan. Cook over medium to low heat, stirring constantly, until mixture curdles. Pour mixture into a colander that is lined with several thicknesses of cheesecloth. Once mixture is drained, pick it up, cheesecloth and all, and shape into a ball by twisting the top part of the cheesecloth. Tightly tie open end with string, placing string very close to top of ball. Caution: This will be hot. Hang over sink until cool. Remove cheesecloth when cool; wrap and refrigerate. (The whey from the *hrudka* can be saved and used when making *pascha*. To conserve the whey, place the colander over a large pot before pouring mixture into cheesecloth.)

Pascha

- 3 cups scalded milk, or enough scalded milk added to whey from *hrudka* to make 3 cups
- ½ tsp. salt
- 6 beaten eggs
- ½ cup lukewarm water
- ½ cup sugar
- 1 cup melted butter
- ½ large cake yeast or equivalent portion of dry yeast

12 to 14 cups flour.

In a large bowl, combine milk, sugar, with butter and cool to lukewarm. Save 2 tablespoons of the eggs and add the rest of the eggs to the milk mixture. In a separate bowl, crumble yeast in water and let stand for 10 minutes. Add to above mixture. Add flour, about 2 cups at a time, until the dough can be handled.

Knead on floured board for 15 minutes. Place dough in greased bowl, grease top and let rise in a warm place for about 1½ hours.

Punch down, and let rise a second time for about 45 minutes.

After second rising, shape into four balls and place into greased pans. Small, 1½ quart enameled saucepans can be used for baking. Let rise. Brush tops with 2 table-spoons eggs to which some milk has been added. To achieve that glazed appearance on the loaves, brush tops several times prior to removing them from the oven. Bake at 325 degrees for about 1 hour.

Note: Before placing dough in pans, about 1 cup of the dough can be saved and shaped into designs (plaits, crosses, etc.) and placed on top of the unbaked *pascha*. These fancy shapes can be prevented from scorching in the oven by placing aluminum foil on top of the *pascha* during baking.

Hrin

(Beets with Horseradish)

8 cans whole beets, drained

3 bottles horseradish (Do not use creamed horseradish.)

Grind beets, using fine grinder attachment. The juice can be saved for soup. Add horseradish to beets; mix well, refrigerate. An empty horseradish jar (washed, label removed and dipped in boiling water to sterilize it) can be filled with the mixture and placed in the Easter basket. The jar's cap can be disguised with aluminum foil, thus hiding any advertisement.

Kolachi

(Nut and poppyseed)

- 8 egg yolks
- 8 cups flour
- ½ lb. butter
- 1 cake yeast
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 cups scalded milk
- 4 tbs. shortening

Beat eggs and sugar. Melt butter and shortening in hot milk, saving ½ cup for the yeast. Dissolve yeast in lukewarm milk and let stand for a few minutes. Combine both mixtures in large bowl.

Add flour and mix well with hands until dough leaves the hands. Refrigerate overnight. In the morning, divide the dough into eight balls and let rise for one hour. Roll out on floured board and spread with filling. Roll up gently, tucking in ends.

Bake at 350 degrees until brown, about 45 minutes.

Brush tops of rolls, prior to putting into oven, with an egg-milk mixture. Doing so produces beautifully browned, shiny rolls.

Nut Filling

- 1 lb. ground walnuts
- 1 cup canned milk
- ½ cup sugar
- 2 eggs
- ½ cup honey (optional)

Combine sugar and nuts. Beat eggs and add to mixture, add honey and milk. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly. Bring to boil, remove from stove; let cool. Roll out dough to ½-inch thick; brush with butter; place filling on dough and roll up. Bake.

Poppyseed Filling

- 1 lb. ground poppyseed
- ½ cup honey
- ½ cup sugar
- 2 Tsp. butter, melted
- ½ cup milk

Cut it in half, decorate the halves, bake them and place one of them in the basket.

Kolbasi

Again, the amount of kolbasi purchased depends on how many eager eaters you are serving.

Place the kolbasi in a pan, cover with water and boil for about 45 minutes. Some cooks, after the kolbasi is boiled, place a few into a baking pan and sprinkle them with about 2 tablespoons of brown sugar and honey. This is then popped into the oven for about 15 minutes at 350 degrees. Cool before refrigerating.

Butter

If you prefer not to use already prepared butter for the Easter feasting, the butter can be made by whipping heavy cream. Use either one pint or one-half pint heavy whipping cream. Place in bowl and mix with hand beater until butter forms. Place sample of butter in a small fancy bowl and decorate for use in Easter basket.

(The above is a revised version of an article that originally appeared in the April 10, 1979, edition of the *Homestead, PA, Daily Messenger*.)



Photo by Bob Bruce.

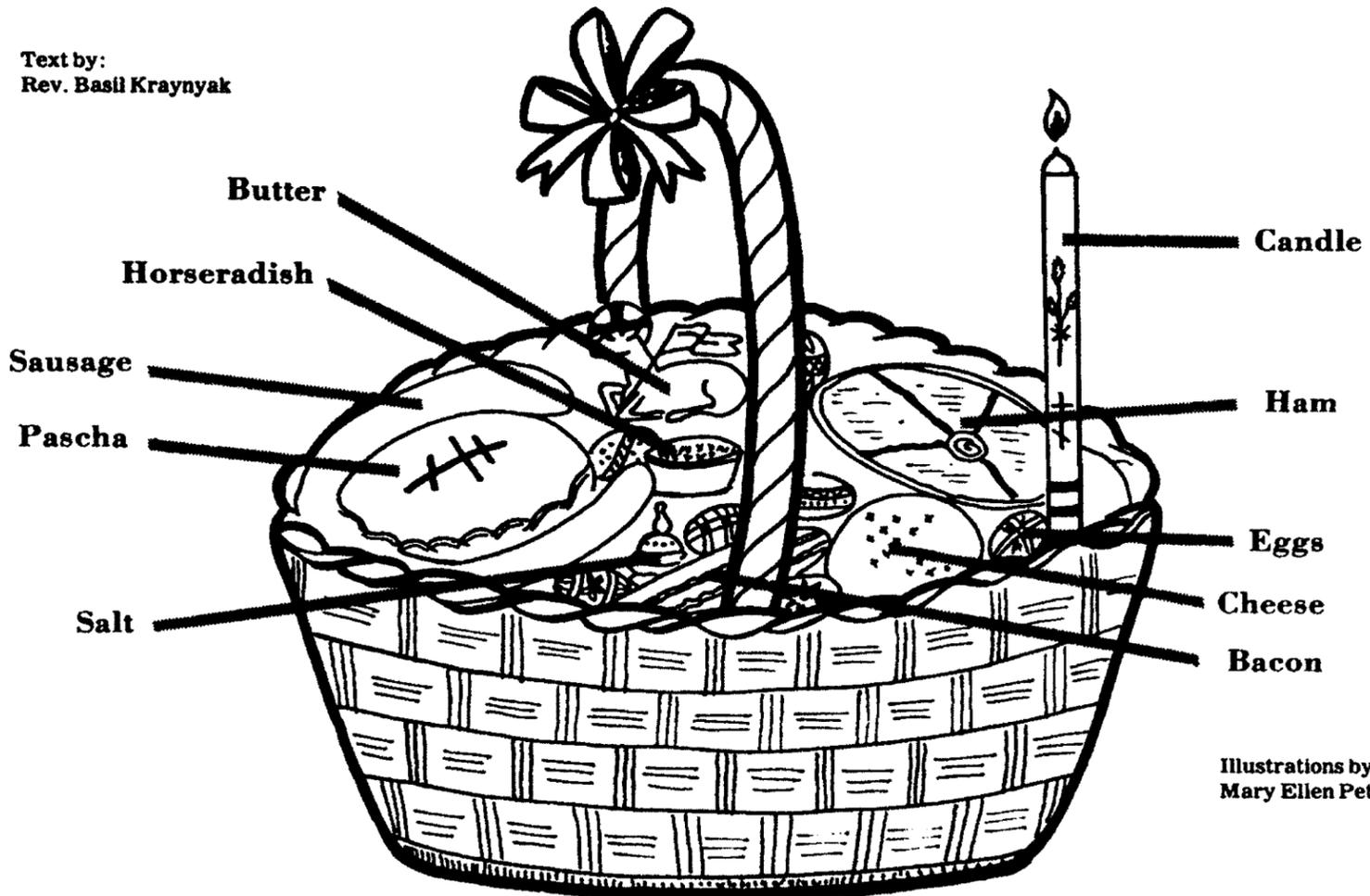
Combine sugar with poppyseed. Add melted butter. Then add honey and milk. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly until blended. Cool and spread over dough that has been rolled out to ½-inch thickness and brushed with butter. Roll up and bake.

Ham

The ham is decorated and baked according to your favorite recipe. How large a ham you buy and use depends on how many people you are serving. For a 20-pound ham:

How to Put Together a Traditional Easter Basket

Text by:
Rev. Basil Kravnyak

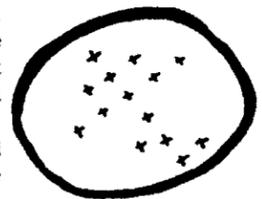


Illustrations by:
Mary Ellen Petro

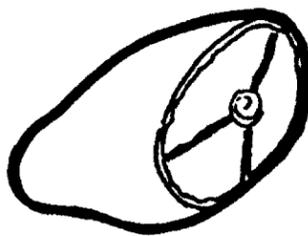


PASCHA - The Easter Bread (pron. pá-ska.) A sweet, yeast bread rich in eggs, butter, etc. Symbolic of Christ Himself who is our True Bread. Usually a round loaf baked with a golden crust decorated with a symbol indicative of Christ. Sometimes a cross (+) of dough is placed on top encircled by a plait giving it a crowned effect or Greek abbreviations for the name of Christ. The letters XB indicate the Slavonic for Christ is Risen.

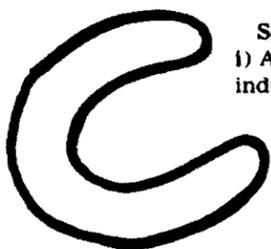
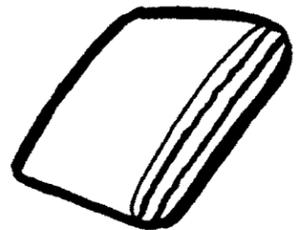
CHEESE (Slav. Hrudka or Sirets pron. hroód-ka or sí-rets) A custard-type cheese shaped into a ball having a rather bland but sweet taste indicative of the moderation that Christians should have in all things. Also, creamed cheese is placed in a small dish and both are decorated with symbols (see Pascha) out of cloves or pepper balls.



HAM (Slav Šunka - pron. shoon-ka.) The flesh meat popular with the Slavs as the main dish because of its richness and symbolic of the great joy and abundance of Easter. Some may prefer Lamb or Veal. This is usually well roasted or cooked as well as other meats so that the festivity of the day will not be burdened with preparation and all may enjoy the Feast.



BUTTER (Slav. Maslo pron. má-slo) This favorite dairy product is shaped into a figure of a Lamb or small cross and decorated as the cheese. This reminds us of the goodness of Christ that we should have toward all things.



SAUSAGE (SLAV. Kolbasi - pron. kol-buš-1) A spicy, garlicy sausage of pork products, indicative of God's favor and generosity.



SALT (Slav. Sol' pron. sol') A condiment necessary for flavor reminding the Christian of his duty to others.

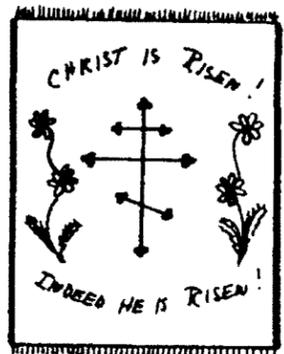
EGGS (Slav. Pisanki pron. pi-sún-ki) Hard-boiled eggs brightly decorated with symbols and markings made with beeswax. Indicative of new life and resurrection.



HORSERADISH (Slav. Chrin pron. khrin) Horseradish mixed with grated red beets. Symbolic of the Passion of Christ still in our minds but sweetened with some sugar because of the Resurrection. A bitter-sweet red colored mixture reminds us of the sufferings of Christ.

These articles are placed in a wicker basket and a ribbon or bow is tied to the handle. A decorated candle is placed in the basket and is lit at the time of blessing. A linen cover usually embroidered with a picture of the Risen Christ or symbol with the words "Christ is Risen" is placed over the food when brought to the Church.

In some places a large Easter Bread (Pascha) is made and brought separately in a large linen cloth. If the origin of the people was from a wine growing area, a sweet wine may be brought.



CHRIST IS RISEN! INDEED HE IS RISEN!

2021 PRIEST RETREAT

During the final days of September 2021, the Eparchy of Passaic held a retreat for the presbyterate at the San Alfonso Retreat Center in Long Branch, NJ. A retreat is similar to a family reunion where the participants are all family related most especially since priest brothers are related by the fact that they all celebrate the Divine Liturgy serving the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist of Jesus Christ.

Our retreat master was Father Archimandrite Joseph Stanichar, of the Eparchy of Phoenix. He serves as the hegumen at the Exaltation of the Cross Monastery called Duchovy Dom (House of Priests) located in the mountains of Oregon. Father Joseph served as colonel chaplain in the US Air Force for 21 years and founded several parishes on the West Coast. He delivered five separate conferences over the retreat days.

Father Joseph's gentle voice and presence replicated the kind and fatherly voice of Saint Joseph, his namesake, husband of the Theotokos and Foster Father of Our Lord, whose Jubilee year we currently celebrate. It was not only the pleasant tone of Father Joseph's voice which mirrored his holy namesake, his talks were punctuated—indeed saturated—with a wonderful demonstration of and resemblance to the El

Shaddai (Pantocrator), Provider Nature of God the Father. He bolstered, supported, and encouraged the presbyterate during this period of pandemic.

Father Joseph spoke of the necessity of our daily prayer life consisting of private prayers, offering intercessions on behalf of our parish families, daily reading of the sacred scriptures, and recalling the prayerful saying of the spiritual fathers, particularly of the Eastern Church, and the sage advice they have written for our edification.

Father Joseph deftly drew from his wealth of personal experience as a Byzantine Catholic pastor of many years and provided guidance and methods as how to successfully guide our parishes as resources for spiritual strength especially during times of stress which we currently experience. Father Joseph also made himself available for individual consultation, spiritual guidance, and the sacrament of reconciliation.

During his presentations he continually encouraged, nurtured, fortified, provided as well as interceded for all of the gathered priests. This uplifting and support was exactly what the presbyterate needed. The priests were still required to be masked during all of the inside activities at the retreat house. Father Joseph, himself a leader of a small



community of monks, provided much fortitude for the fraternity of the priesthood, as well as demonstrated through his gentle nature the need for all priests to be supportive and uplifting to not only their priest brothers and priestly families but importantly for their congregations which are in such need of this boost.

During the time of retreat the Divine Liturgy is celebrated as the priests share together with the Bishop the Holy Eucharist which provides strength during these tumultuous times and also incorporates us in the deification process of becoming other Christs. One evening, a Parastas is celebrated to commemorate all of the deceased brother clergy who have entered into eternal repose

during the preceding year. On the final night together, the priests, together with the bishop, chanted the Office of the Holy Anointing, where the Sacrament of Unction and Healing is bestowed on everyone gathered. This significant anointing manifests the healing power of Jesus Christ as we continually petition him for the grace of filling our needs and healing our weaknesses.

After a few days enjoying meals together; sharing company with each other during recreation; praying together in priestly fraternity; and even swimming in the ocean, they all returned to their parishes refreshed, replenished, and renewed in their service to the Lord!

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 parishioners. 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.

Walking with Christ: A Desert Pilgrimage



If you struggle with infertility, you may feel like you're on a lonely, desert pilgrimage. But you are not alone! During the season of Lent, the Springs in the Desert Team invites you to join us as we reflect on those Saints and friends of Christ who walked with Him and witnessed His Passion: from the Blessed Virgin Mary to Mary Magdalene; Simon of Cyrene to Veronica; and the Women of Jerusalem to the Centurion. Each Thursday evening during Lent (from March 10-April 7) we will meet virtually at 8pm Eastern to pray, listen to a brief reflection, and build community through small group sharing. This FREE event for women and couples struggling with infertility is a chance to enter more deeply into the Lenten spirit while gathering in prayer with others on this same path. Visit www.springsinthedesert.org for information and to register. Questions? Email Ann Koshute, ann@springsinthedesert.org

Pledges accepted through June 30, 2022

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

Please pledge online at 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

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 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: _____
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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



Sat. 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.



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.
HOLIDAYS 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

SCHEDULE FOR THE GREAT FAST 2022

Presanctified Liturgies

Monday, February 28, 12 Noon
Wednesday, March 9, 12 Noon
Wednesday, March 16, 12 Noon
Wednesday, March 23, 12 Noon
Wednesday, March 30, 12 Noon
Wednesday, April 6, 12 Noon

*FASTING LUNCH (soup/salad/beverage) TO FOLLOW EACH PRESANCTIFIED LITURGY. (Volunteers contact John Chabalko)

*JOURNEY THROUGH THE BIBLE (basics) 35 minute sessions following the Fasting Lunch. Register before or after Vigil Divine Liturgy. (Presenter: Dr. Barbara Y. Lutz)

Priest: Fr. Oleksiy Nebesnyk
Facebook: Byzantine Catholic The Villages FL
Phone contact: 352-530-9631 (Dr. Barbara)
SUNDAY VIGIL DIVINE LITURGIES, EVERY SATURDAY, 2:00 P.M.

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.



LIFE, LOVE, AND THE HUMAN PERSON

By Ann M. Koshute, MTS

WHERE IS YOUR BOAT?

Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, 'Peace, be still!' and the wind ceased and there was great calm.
Mark 4:39

Last night there was a terrible storm. The rain poured from the sky and pelted the windows of our bedroom. The wind swirled around the house, to the point that it felt as if the roof would fly off, or the house might collapse. The danger of that was pretty unlikely, but in the dead of night, in darkness and with no sound but the driving rain and the roar of the wind, the very worst seemed all too possible. The storm inside me mirrored the one raging outside, and I tossed and turned not on a stormy sea, but in all the thoughts racing through a mind that would not settle. When I – and maybe it's the same for you – have things on my mind (worries, anxiety, fear), it's hard to be calm, to rest, to surrender. Sleep came in fits and starts through the night, as the wind picked up and died down, and with every “whooshing” sound, I prayed, “Jesus! Please calm the storm.” This prayer was for my mind to settle, just as much as it was a cry that the wind and rain would cease. With the morning came relative calm, and soon the sun broke through the grey sky. My mind was still cloudy, though, bogged down by thoughts that seemed out of my control, and anxiety that would not allow me to settle down. Remembering my prayer from the night before, I picked up my Bible and read in Mark's gospel (4:30-41), about how the Apostles cried out to Jesus in terror as the sea tossed their boat, and the dark of night magnified their fears.

Every one of us is afraid of something: experiences, turbulent times in our lives, anxiety about the future, or not letting go of past hurts, regrets, or missed opportunities. It's part of the human condition, a result of sin and a manifestation of that first sense of doubt the Man and Woman expressed in the Garden when tempted by the Serpent: “What if God doesn't really love me? What if His promise of life isn't truly for me? Can I give myself to Him and His care completely? Do I dare?” We may not ask these questions of ourselves explicitly, or even consciously, but they live somewhere in our hearts,



and manifest in sleepless nights, giving up on prayer, and acting out in sinful ways as we search for comfort and reassurance outside of God's presence and plan. Of course, we do this because we think we can somehow gain control of everything, and everyone, in our lives. Most often we're not so much acting

out of defiance as fear, and an inability to trust that God is truly a loving Father who allows the seas to sometimes be choppy and the sky to darken – but who will never abandon us to be completely ravaged by the storm.

We are once again entering into the time of the Great Fast, with a new opportunity to become poor; to be stripped of even a little bit of comfort, to feel some deprivation and unease. We may not think of it this way, because we're so used to going through the motions every year: don't eat meat, no cream in the coffee, give up our pleasure of choice. We might joke about the

fasting, post to social media with our “last” latte, beer or favorite food, and compare notes with friends on what we're all “giving up for Lent” this year. There's nothing sinful in any of that, but I wonder if this reduces the Fast to a kind of “cultural practice” that keeps us from entering into it with abandon. Maybe we are afraid of the discomfort that fasting brings us, because we're hungry or we miss a simple pleasure that we've sacrificed. Or perhaps, like the Apostles on the boat with Jesus, we are afraid to let the discomfort (or fear) lead us into a stance of complete trust in Him: *And they awoke Him and said to Him, 'Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?'* (v. 38) Isn't this a question we ask the Lord, too?

As I read Mark's telling of Jesus calming the storm in my *Orthodox Study Bible*, I noticed a small detail I never had before, though I've heard the story many times: *Now when they had left the multitude, they took Him along in the boat as He was. And other little boats were also with Him.* (v. 36). Did you catch that? *And other little boats were also with Him.* On first reading it may seem like the Evangelist just tosses in this detail, with no good reason at all. I have no idea what his inspiration was to insert something this seemingly insignificant into the story, but I know for certain that out of everything given in this account, it is this detail that the Holy Spirit underlined in my heart. The sky will darken, the wind will be fierce and threatening, and the rain might beat me down. But as long as *my little boat* is traveling along with Jesus, the storms will toss me about but never sink me. If I give into fear and let the waves cause my boat to drift away – or worse yet, if I purposefully steer it far from Him – the storm will certainly overwhelm, and could destroy, me.

The Fast is upon us, and it should remind us that God became man precisely to enter into the storm of sin, suffering and fear. The storms we encounter in our personal lives, and the ones that rock our spiritual lives, can be powerful. But rather than running from the discomfort, or giving into fear and doubt, let's keep our *little boats* close to Jesus. **ECL**

PRIESTLY REFLECTIONS

Father Paul Varchola West



“PUT ON A HAPPY FACE!”

And when you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by men. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by men but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. [Mt 6:16-18]

It goes without saying that the past two-plus years have been arduous, perhaps even impossible at times. While yes, we might feel drained physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually, the Great Fast is upon us nonetheless. This year, maybe more so than others, poses a specific challenge in that so many of us are tired in so many ways. While many have “returned to normal,”

there are also many who struggle to find meaning and normalcy in the ups and downs of the age.

In what has been dubbed as a “pandemic weary” state, it may be very easy, and even inviting, to throw our hands up and simply give up on the Fast either by reducing our participation to the bare minimum, or perhaps even less. While this temptation may exist, and may be great, rest assured that our Lord is giving us a wonderful opportunity!

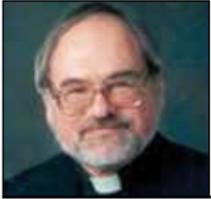
As we read in Matthew 6 above, when we fast we are called to do so with joy, with happiness, with a face gleaming with oil. This is our challenge!

With increased fasting and increased prayer comes an increased sense of the

presence of Christ within us. This is not simply “putting on a happy face” to trick others into thinking that “nothing's wrong.” No. This is the joy of the Resurrection, the joy of Christ! The Fast challenges us to put aside certain things of this world in order for us to search our souls, to search for the light of Christ deep within us that it may be brought to the forefront of our lives.

When we fast, we are called to do so with joy because we know where the journey ends. We fast in order to prepare ourselves for Holy Week, to walk alongside our Lord as He walks to His life-giving death. An intensified Holy Week then prepares us for Pascha, the feast of feasts — the joy of the Resurrection!

If you are tired and weary, do not be dismayed. Do not look at the Great Fast as just one more thing to endure. View it for what it truly is, a search for unending joy. This fasting season we must certainly heed the advice of Christ and put on a happy face in the most positive sense possible because now, perhaps more than ever, this world can surely use the light and joy of the Resurrection! This joy is the true treasure of fasting and we mustn't forget to “store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” [Mt 6:20-21] **ECL**



THE BYZANTINE LITURGY

By Archpriest David Petras, SEOD

COMMITTING OURSELVES TO CHRIST

As the candidate approaches the sacramental mystery of baptism, they, after facing West, the direction of sunset and therefore darkness and renouncing Satan and his works, turns back toward the East, the direction of sunrise and light. For the fathers, this was a sign of conversion, of moving from evil works, from slavery to freedom and from darkness to the light of Christ. They sometimes cited the example of Lot's wife, who looked back and was turned into a pillar of salt. We, however, turn our back on Satan and never look back. We proclaim, "Yes, I commit myself to [Christ.]" For a baby, this is done by the sponsors, so that he or she can receive the grace of God to make his or her own free choice to follow Christ when he or she is able.

Chrysostom compares this action to the breaking of a contract with evil and the acceptance of a contract with Christ, which later became a part of the patriarch's admonition in Constantinople. The idea here is that when we are born, because of the ancestral sin, we have a contract with Satan that can only be broken by the power of God. The renunciation of Satan is a battle between two invisible powers, the bad seeking our enslavement to evil, and the good seeking our freedom. As a weapon in this battle, we receive a state of new awareness, our enlightenment. For Chrysostom, we are freed because Christ took on our human nature, taking the form of a slave and break-

ing evil's power over us. He quotes 1 Corinthians 7:23: "You were bought at a great price, do not become slaves of men." We also all become equal with one another, Chrysostom's favorite theme, citing Galatians 3:28: "All of you were united with Christ in baptism. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

Commitment means imitation. The actual act of baptism is to imitate Christ, to go down into the water as Jesus did when he was baptized by John in the Jordan. For our Lord, this was a sign of his victory over evil, and for us, it is a sign of our death to sin to live in Christ. The imitation of Christ is the center of the life of the Christian faithful. Saint Luke reports our Lord's words, "Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple." Saint Paul wrote: "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ." (1 Corinthians 11:1) Saint Matthew wrote, quoting Isaiah, "He will not contend or cry out nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed he will not break, a smoldering wick he will not quench, until he brings justice to victory." (12:19-20) We cannot be good Christians unless we foster peace, gentleness, compliance and mercy, and especially that we must be ready to forgive one another. In their statement on Baptism, the Orthodox-Catholic Theological Consultation of North America wrote: "[Baptism] calls each of us to spiritual warfare as Christ's

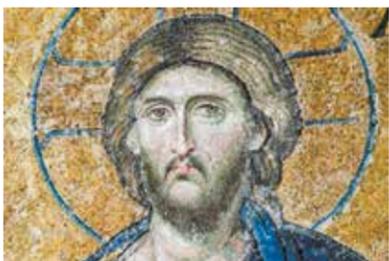
soldiers (Eph 6:10-17), and anoints us each with the oil of the Holy Spirit as priests who, in imitation of Christ, are to offer up ourselves as "a living sacrifice pleasing to God" (Rom 12:1; cf. Phil 4:18), and as prophets who are to call down upon ourselves and upon our world the fire from heaven which transforms (cf. I Kg 18:36-39; Mt 3:11; Lk 12:49).

We live in polarized times, in which charity to those who disagree or are different from us has been eclipsed by fear, anger, and hatred. The imitation of Christ, however, is the center of the Christian gospel. What Christ did was "to suffer for us" in meekness and humility. He is the Son of God, and only in Him can we find deification. This comes through love, never returning insult for insult, not threatening others, because in us and in them there is only the image of God. Instead, Jesus teaches, "Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you falsely because of me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven." (Matthew 5:11-12) Truly, only by imitating Christ can we become the human being God has created us to be. No human gospel can make that promise.

When we imitate Christ, we become a brother or sister to our Lord Jesus the Messiah. By our relationship with Him, then, we enter into the life of the Holy Trinity. Our Lord told the disciples "to

baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." In this way, our act of faith becomes threefold. We must profess our belief in the Trinity, but what kind of Trinity? The various heresies of ancient times required that the being of each Person be spelled out. Thus, the Father became the "Creator of all things visible and invisible," and the Son, to counter the Arian heresy, became "one in essence with the Father, Light from Light, true God from true God," and the Spirit became "the Lord and Creator of Life, who proceeds from the Father." The statements of belief at baptism became elaborate, so they were separated out from the act of commitment and put into a Creed that was recited by the candidate after they made their commitment to Christ. All our Creeds have their origin in baptismal creeds.

After the Creed, there is one further step. There is an act of worship, and the candidate proclaims, "I worship the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit, the Trinity one in essence and undivided." Saint Simeon of Thessalonica describes this as a sign of servitude and true obedience that is immediately blessed by the priest, who says, "Blessed is God, who wishes all to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." The fact that there is an act of worship is another sign that our baptismal commitment is not simply an intellectual act of assent, but a change in morals (the turn from the evil one to Christ) and a change in prayer to worship of the one true God. It brings about communion with God. Immediately after one makes a commitment to Christ, professes faith in the Trinity, and does an act of worship and blessing, then they are ready to go to the baptismal font, the water of life. **ECL**



A New Online Course!

Eastern Christian Iconography as Visual Theology

(Prof. Taras Tymo, Ukrainian Catholic University)

Course sponsored by the Office of Religious Education of the Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Passaic

This course offers you a unique opportunity of immersion into the mysterious world of Eastern Christian iconography and to ponder its theological depth and spiritual power.

The course will be delivered online: March 7, 10, 14, 16, 18, 31 and April 4, 6, 8, 11 (4 PM – 6 PM EST).

10 real-time Zoom meetings (2 hours each), broadcasted via YouTube and made available on the YouTube channel as recorded lectures for later viewing (for registered participants only).

Participants will be able to obtain course certificates and academic credits (3 credit points) for this course Participation fee: \$90 USD

More information and registration at: tinyurl.com/IconCourse or <https://sites.google.com/view/iconographyasvisualtheology-co/home>



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

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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.



SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

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

THE SECOND ODE OF MATINS: DEUTERONOMY

The morning prayer of the Byzantine Church includes nine biblical odes or songs which came to be replaced by new poetic Canons based on these nine odes. Except that the ninth biblical ode actually includes two distinct songs (making ten), and the second ode is omitted except during the Great Fast (making nine, or seven, depending on how you count). Leave it to Byzantines to complicate simple arithmetic!

“Deuteronomy” means “second law” or “copy of the law” (Deuteronomy 17:8). The entire book is set in the final days of the Exodus on the eastern bank of the River Jordan. In a sort of verbal last will, Moses reminded a new generation of Israelites what they and their parents had experienced over the past forty years. He then led them in a ritual to renew their covenant relationship with the Lord based on observance of the Law (chapters 27-33). This extended ritual included a public reading of the Law, the Lord’s appearance to Moses and Joshua (as at Sinai; chapter 31), Moses’ second song (chapter 32) and

his final blessing on the twelve Tribes (chapter 33).

Deuteronomy sets up a simple choice for God’s people: “I have set before you heaven and earth, life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore, choose life, that both you and your descendants may live, that you may love the Lord your God, that you may obey His voice and that you may cling to Him for He is your life” (Deuteronomy 30:19-20).

The stark contrast between Moses’ second song (Chapter 32) and his first (Exodus 15) is easily explained by the forty years of rebellion that had marred the Exodus, and the constant falls into injustice and idolatry throughout Israel’s brief history as an independent nation. This second Ode resembles an ancient lawsuit. Often speaking on the Lord’s behalf, Moses lays out all the charges against the people. In the opening lines, he calls heaven and earth to witness: “Give ear, O heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth” (32:1); these are the lines most often quoted by the hymnogra-

phers in the second Ode of the poetic Canons modeled on the biblical odes.

Moses traces the Lord’s choice of Israel as His special possession all the way back to the scattering of the nations at the tower of Babel (32:8-9; cf. Genesis 11), and envisions the Lord leading His people, lost in the desert, as if “on eagles’ wings” (32:11). Moses then warns the people that they would misuse and be corrupted by the prosperity God promised them. He describes the Lord’s growing anger and His decision to punish Israel through foreign invasion (32:19-28) but then also predicts the Lord’s mercy and the restoration of His people. If the Lord’s anger is blazing, His compassion is also warm. He describes Himself, after all, as “a consuming fire” (Deuteronomy 4:24).

This Ode insists that there is no other God but the Lord, no other Rock upon whom His people can be secure (32:15.18.30). He says: “See that I, I am He, and there is no God besides me.” (32:39). Hymnographers sometimes imitate this verse and place the

second Ode of their Canons in the Lord’s mouth. In the Greek, ‘I am He’ is *egô eimi*: the Lord’s name revealed in the burning bush (Exodus 3:14) and the very words Jesus used to assert His divinity (Mark 14:62; Luke 22:70; John 8:58; 18:5.8; Revelation 1:11.18; 21:6; 22:13). The image of the Lord as Rock, which points ahead to Christ (1 Corinthians 10:4; Daniel 2:31-45), is also common in the second Ode of Canons.

The harsh language and negative tone that mark much of this Ode are the reason it is sung only during the Great Fast. Like the Gospel of Meatfare (Matthew 25:31-46), it warns us of the final judgment while its command to acquire wisdom (32:28-29) resonates with the daily readings from Proverbs at Lenten Vespers. Its warnings against idolatry challenge us to recognize our own false gods and the compromises we make to them for convenience, pleasure, prosperity, and conformity. Remarkably, the last lines of the Ode look beyond the borders of Israel to envision the Church of the Gentiles: “Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people” (32:43) and remind us that even our repentance is a response to His grace: “The Lord will purify the land of His people” (32:43). As the Epistle to the Hebrews repeats throughout the Saturdays and Sundays of the Fast, that cleansing was perfectly accomplished by Christ’s blood sacrifice on the Cross. **ECL**

SCHOOL OF PRAYER

Father G. Scott Boghossian



THE PRAYER OF RESIGNATION



Icon of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane

In the *Our Father*, we pray, “Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” In the garden of Gethsemane, Our Lord prayed, “nevertheless, not My will but Thine be done.” Even the passion and death of Christ, the greatest crime ever committed, happened only by the “determined plan and foreknowledge of God” (Acts 2:23). Christ offered Himself as a “ransom for many” to atone for all the sins of the world (Mt. 20:28).

In Isaiah, God says, “I form the light and create darkness, I make peace and create calamity” (Is. 45:7). Our Almighty God controls all things and wills evils like sickness, natural disasters, and

painful tragedies for His glory and our salvation. Even sin cannot be committed without His permitting it. But we know that this “slight momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison” (2 Cor. 4:17).

The patriarch Joseph was sold by his brothers and ended up as a slave in Egypt. Due to a terrible famine, Joseph’s brothers came to Egypt for food many years later. When Joseph, now second in command, revealed himself to his brothers, they worried that this powerful Egyptian official would take revenge and put them to death. Instead, Joseph saw in the whole ordeal the saving will of God. “You thought evil against me: but God turned it into good, that He might exalt me, as at present you see, and might save many people” (Gen. 50:20). The evil actions perpetrated by Joseph’s brothers were all a part of God’s saving plan.

Job was a righteous man who loved and served God. Nevertheless, God allowed him to go through the most terrible losses. He lost his children and was stricken with the most painful physical maladies. In it all, he saw the will of God. “The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away: as it has pleased the Lord so is it done: blessed be the name of the Lord” (Job 1:21).

The mystery of Divine Providence is especially evident in the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. His crucifixion was not a mistake or simply a miscarriage of justice. Saint Peter says that Jesus was “delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God” (Acts 2:23). The sorrowful passion and death of Our Savior was planned and decreed “from the very foundation of the world” (Rev. 13:8).

All the Church fathers, Church doctors, and saints recognize the mystery of Divine Providence and teach us that resignation to God’s will is one of the “master keys” of the spiritual life. Saint John Chrysostom often preached on resignation to God’s will. He also practiced it. All through the process of his unjust exile and death, he repeated, “Glory to God for all things!”

Resignation to God’s will is extolled by Saint John Cassian, Saint Dorotheos of Gaza, and Saint Mark the Ascetic. Saint Francis De Sales taught resignation to the divine will as an essential aspect of Christian discipleship. He would assist the dying by urging them to resign themselves to God’s will. Saint Alphonsus Liguori said that to die in sentiments of total submission to God’s will was a kind of martyr’s death that guaranteed immediate entrance into heaven.

King Alphonso V (1396-1458) was asked whom he considered the happiest person in the world. He answered, “He who abandons himself to the will of God and accepts all things, prosperous and adverse, as coming from His hands.”

Saint Teresa of Avila writes, “Those who give themselves to prayer should concentrate solely on this, the conformity of their wills with the divine will. They should be convinced that this constitutes the highest perfection. The more fully they practice this, the greater the gifts they will receive from God and the greater progress they will make in the interior life.”

In trial and hardship, pray, “Father, not my will, but Your will be done.” In times of loss, say with righteous Job, “The Lord gives, and the Lord takes away. As it has pleased the Lord, so it is done. Blessed be the name of the Lord.” What happens to us is decreed by Him for His honor and glory, for our highest good and eternal salvation. “God works all things together for good” (Rm. 8:28). With Saint John Chrysostom, let us continually say, “Glory to God for all things!” **ECL**

SEASONAL REFLECTIONS

Father Ronald Hatton



THE PRAYER OF SAINT EPHRAIM THE SYRIAN: A PRAYER FOR ALL SEASONS



Icon of Saint Ephraim the Syrian

As we enter the time of the Great Fast, our prayers take a more penitential turn. Our liturgical cycle becomes more penitential, as we anticipate the Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil on Sundays, Presanctified Liturgies during the week, with other services such as Lenten Moleben, Paraklesis, and other prayers that help our focus to stay on Lenten disciplines. One of my favorite prayers during this season is the Prayer of Saint Ephraim the Syrian:

Lord and Master of my life, spare me from the spirit of indifference, despair, lust for power, and idle chatter. (Prostration)

Instead, bestow on me, Your servant, the spirit of integrity, humility, patience, and love. (Prostration)

Yes, O Lord and King, let me see my own sins and not judge my brothers and sisters; for You are blessed forever and ever. Amen. (Prostration)

It is a corporate prayer of the Presanctified Liturgy, yet it is a deeply personal and individual prayer. And although it is one confined to the Lenten season, it should be a prayer that we always keep on our lips and in our hearts and in all places. Each line serves to teach us, to humble us, and to lead us to a closer walk with God. The main point of this prayer is to focus on our own sins, our own shortcomings, and our own spiritual walk. Each sentence is accompanied by a prostration, as we totally humble ourselves before God.

First, seeing how broken we are as human beings as we stand before God, we ask Him to spare us from the sins of indifference to our spiritual state as well as in our relationships with one another. This is followed by a petition that we do not despair as we try to imitate our Lord Jesus Christ and His saints more closely. Next, we ask that we not be blinded by a desire for earthly acclaim, or for temporal riches and honors. Lastly, we ask for the grace to keep us from gossip and talk that serves no heavenly purpose.

In place of all these, we ask our Lord for personal integrity in what we say and do, that our actions mirror our words. We know it when we say that someone doesn't "practice what he preaches," but do we apply that to ourselves as well? We ask for humility, which washes away all pride. In Saint Paul's letter to the Philippians, he encourages us to "[d]o nothing from selfishness or conceit, but in humility count others better than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others." (Phil. 2:3,4) To the Romans he writes, "... love one another with brotherly affection; outdo one another in showing honor." (Rom. 12:10) In just these two passages, we can see the practical application of how to have the spirit of humility.

Ephraim further exhorts us to pray to God for the spirit of patience, one of the seven spiritual virtues. With humility, patience can follow: patience in situations, patience in dealing with others. It is easy to see how impatience stems from pride and self-centeredness because we are thinking of ourselves, our desires, our expectations, and putting ourselves before others. And ultimately, if we are humble and patient, it is then that we can truly love others.

In the last sentence of this simple prayer, we find the fruit of all that has come before. "Let me see my own sins, and not judge my brothers and sisters." In our spiritual life, nothing can be more important in seeking to be conformed to the image of Christ. If we are so caught up in looking at what bad sinners other people are, if we are constantly comparing ourselves to others like the Pharisee in the parable: "God, I thank You that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector," (Luke 18:11), then we will be unable to attain our salvation.

So, the Prayer of Saint Ephraim is not merely a prayer for the Lenten Season, but a prayer for all seasons. May it always be in our hearts and on our lips.

ECL

When traveling to the South, please visit our churches

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

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

Epiphany of Our Lord
2030 Old Alabama Road
Roswell, GA 30076
1-770-993-0973

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

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

Saints Cyril and Methodius
1002 Bahama Avenue
Fort Pierce, FL 34982
1-772-595-1021

Our Lady of the Sign
7311 Lyons Road
Coconut Creek, FL 33073
1-954-429-0056

Saint Nicholas of Myra
5135 Sand Lake Road
Orlando, FL 32819
1-407-351-0133

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

**Byzantine Catholic Outreach:
The Villages, FL**
Address: 625 W. Lady Lake Blvd.
Lady Lake, FL 32159 (at St. Alban's)
1-352-530-9631



CARPATHO-RUSYN SOCIETY

MANIFESTING CARPATHO-RUSYN CULTURE AND HISTORY

The mission of the Carpatho-Rusyn Society is to preserve and perpetuate the distinct culture, history, language, and heritage of the Carpatho-Rusyn people.

The Society offers many educational programs online at Carpatho-Rusyn Society You Tube. Also offered are genealogy presentations on Zoom and expert help in finding your roots. Our new addition is our Heritage Store, where you will find educational materials, maps, flags and accessories. We will constantly be adding more items.

Visit our website at www.c-rs.org and click on "Get Involved" to become a member. For more information contact: Bonnie Burke, Southeast Coordinator at bb@c-rs.org or call 440 729-2045.

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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.

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

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UPCOMING EPARCHIAL AND PARISH EVENTS

MARCH, 2022

- 6 First Sunday of the Great Fast
Sunday of Orthodoxy
- 12 Second All Souls' Saturday
- 13 Second Sunday of the Great Fast
Sunday of Gregory Palamas
- 19 Third All Souls' Saturday
- 20 Third Sunday of the Great Fast
Sunday of the Veneration of the Holy Cross
- 25 Holy Annunciation of the Theotokos
Solemn Holy Day Chancery closed*
- 27 Fourth Sunday of the Great Fast
Sunday of the Ladder of Divine Ascent

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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