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DEACON THOMAS SHUBECK ORDAINED TO THE SACRED ORDER OF PRESBYTER

On December 18, 2021, Bishop Kurt ordained Deacon Thomas Paul Shubeck to the Order of Presbyter at his home parish of Saint Thomas the Apostle, Rahway, NJ, where he has been serving since his 2015 diaconal ordination. Father Tom is the husband of (Doctor) Caroline and the father of Adriana, John, and the late Paul Francis. With the blessing of Caroline and their children, he said “yes” to the call of God. Father Tom is the son of the late Paul and Mary Shubeck and is in his seventeenth year serving as the psychologist at the College Seminary of the Immaculate Conception at Saint Andrew’s Hall, Seton Hall University. He is also an adjunct professor of pastoral theology at the Immaculate Conception Seminary’s Graduate School of Theology, also at Seton Hall. Father Tom is also a board

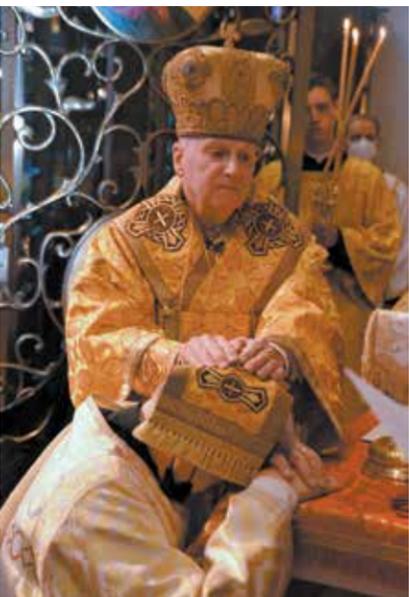
member of the Byzantine Catholic Seminary, Pittsburgh. The ordination and first Divine Liturgy were attended by family and friends, parishioners of Saint Thomas Parish; priests and deacons of the Eparchy of Passaic and other Byzantine Catholic eparchies; priests of the Seton Hall community; seminarians and alumni of the college and major seminaries at Seton Hall; and Carmelite friars.

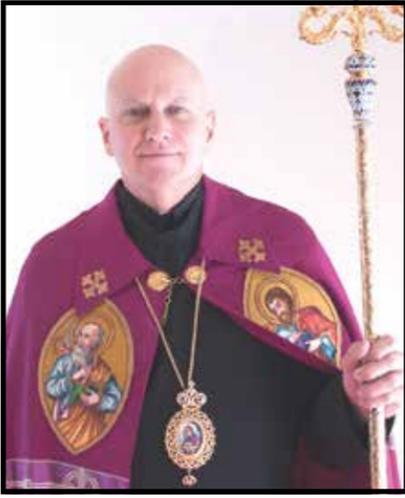
Concelebrating priests at Father Tom’s ordination were Mitred Archbishop James Hayer, pastor of Saint Thomas Parish and eparchial protosyncellus; Father Jack Custer, syncellus of New Jersey and rector of Saint Michael Cathedral, Passaic; Father Nick Daddona, eparchial chancellor, syncellus of New York and New England, and pastor of Saint Andrew Parish, Westbury, NY; and

Father Edward Cimbala, pastor of Saint Mary Church in Manhattan. Concelebrating deacons were Deacons Charles Laskowski and Stephen Russo. Father Edward Higgins and Father Paul West served as masters of ceremonies.

Concelebrating priests at Father Tom’s first Divine Liturgy of Thanksgiving were Mitred Archbishop James Hayer; Father John Zeyack, pastor emeritus of Saint Thomas Parish; Father Joseph Loya, OSA; Father John Chadwick, V.G., Archdiocese of Newark; and Father Peter Cho, Rector, College Seminary of the Immaculate Conception at Saint Andrew’s Hall. Concelebrating deacons were Deacons Charles Laskowski and Timothy Kennedy. Father Frederick Miller, Spiritual Director of Saint Andrew’s Hall, was the homilist.

Father Tom continues to serve at Saint Thomas the Apostle as well as serve as psychologist at the college and major seminaries at Seton Hall University. Father Tom commented, “I am blessed to be able to continue serving the seminary communities at Seton Hall University as well as serve Saint Thomas the Apostle Church in Rahway. Bringing the Holy Mysteries (sacraments) to the people has been humbling as well as a real privilege and joy. Opportunities to provide substitute coverage to other parishes has allowed me to get to know more of our parishes and people.” *May God grant to the newly-ordained presbyter, Father Thomas, peace health and happiness for many years! Na mnohaja i blahaja l’ita!*





I LIFT UP MY EYES

Pastoral Reflections of Bishop Kurt



Who am I, O Lord God?

...reprinted from 2019

“O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and how inscrutable His ways!” Saint Paul exclaimed these words after meditating on God’s plan of salvation. This is the time of year when we can inventory of the riches and wisdom of God. After recollecting the passion and sacrifice by which Jesus freed us from our sins, and celebrating His resurrection in which He conquered death and freed the captives in Hades, it is overwhelming to contemplate that generosity of God. Standing between the Resurrection and the Ascension, we look in both directions and are astounded at the things that God has done for us, and the things that He promises for our future. He is like a wealthy suitor who keeps opening one treasure chest after another, and saying, “What does it take to win your heart? No matter what it costs, I will give it to you.” We find ourselves filled with the sweet glow of knowing that we are loved, and humbled that someone so far above our station has chosen us.

There was a point in the life of King David when he was similarly overcome at the knowledge of God’s generosity. David went from tending a flock on a hillside, the least of his brothers, to the slayer of the giant Goliath, to the musician who could cure the king’s depression, to an outlaw, to the anointed king of the chosen people, and the man who established safety and peace in all

his realm. Throughout these adventures, David is constantly aware that it is God who gives him every victory. In so many of his songs he sings about how he was lost and beyond hope, and God plucked him up and put him on a rock of safety until the enemies were destroyed. As the kingdom is peaceful now, David determines to build a temple for the Ark of the Tabernacle in which dwells the presence of the most-high God. David calls the prophet Nathan and tells him, “When we were in constant war, I lived in a tent with the other soldiers, but in time of peace I now live in a house of cedar. How is it that the Ark of God still abides in a tent?” Although Nathan tells David to do what is in his heart, Nathan soon receives a revelation from God telling him otherwise. He returns to the king and tells him, “God has ordained that it is David’s son who will build the great temple.” But in doing so, God tells David that He will bless his line forever. King Saul lost the throne without giving it to any heir, but God promises David an eternal throne. (Remember, David did not inherit the throne. In the ancient times of violence, there was no reason to believe the next king would be David’s heir.) As a matter of history, the Davidic line no longer rules anywhere, but the prophecy was fulfilled in the reign of Jesus Christ, who conquered death and evil, and reigns gloriously forever. When David hears this prophecy, he looks back on all the blessings of his life, and at the same time contemplates the staggering promises for his future, and the scriptures tell us he was overcome with emotion, so much so that he goes into his house to hide his feelings from the public (not something he does very often). And King

David breaks into this profound song, “Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that You have brought me thus far? And yet this is a small thing in Your eyes, O Lord God.” King David was deeply moved, and it is moving for us to read his prayer. He asks, “Who am I that You do these things for me?” He says that only by trusting in the truth of the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, does he have the courage to pray this prayer. He knows that God keeps His promises, and God has promised David a dynasty.

At this point in his life, when King David is secure in his throne and is told that his son will build the temple establishing an everlasting dynasty, he has had many hardships in his past and consequently many things to be grateful for. However, his worst hardships were yet to come. All of the hardships in his past were against outside enemies or at least from outside his family. As a rich, secure, and successful monarch, the King was soon to find out the sorrow of fighting inside his own family. As his sons grew up, the princes became rivals, each one desiring the throne for himself, vaunting themselves above their brothers and, for some, even ready to overthrow their father. So it was in every monarchy before our era of constitutions. In addition to fighting over succession to the throne, there was even a rape inside the family, resulting in bloodshed between the brothers. Rather than fight against his own kin, David leaves the capital, and is pursued by his own son who wants to kill him for the crown. (Nowadays, when I see people rioting or violently protesting in our democracy, and I see the professional agitators who organize such things, I think about how ignorant they are of history. The number of innocent people who are killed or lose all their life’s work during true upheaval cannot be comprehended except by people who have lived through it.) Getting back to King David, rather than fight his own kin, he leaves the capital pursued by his own power-mad son. Have you ever thought you were not a perfect parent? Imagine the things that David must have thought on his dark lonely journey. For the second time in his life, he was fleeing his own nation, the people whom he called “the armies of the living God.” He was fleeing alone, not knowing whom he could trust. Once again, David placed his trust in God’s providence, rather than take any action that was against the law of God.

I know many of you have reared children, and some of you have even reared your grandchildren in the place of their parents, and you know the joys and sorrows of God’s blessing of posterity. How many of you have experienced the sorrow of rivalry and of bad choices by your own children and grandchildren? In my first parish, there was a virtuous

woman whose only son spent his whole adult life in jail or prison. She worked a second job just to pay his phone bill so he could call her on the phone once a week. After his last arrest, I sat in the courtroom with his father as the son was sentenced to 75 years in prison under California’s *three-strikes* law. I don’t know which was more painful for the father—the lifetime prison sentence or the shameful nature of the crimes. His mother couldn’t come to the sentencing—she said it was too painful for her. How many of you have had your children blame you for their own bad choices? I know many of you can sympathize with the pain that King David felt on his lonely journey away from his own capital—his beloved Jerusalem—the “City of David.” It seems as though the greatest blessings come with the greatest price.

Even after David survived the attack and betrayal of his own son, even after God delivered the life of David one more time, he still felt the intense pain of a father losing his son. When he learned with finality that his vain, greedy, rebellious son was dead, David went into his private chamber and wept bitterly. “O my son, Absalom, my son, my son, Absalom! Would that I had died instead of you. O Absalom, my son, my son...” Jesus was truly the Son of David, for Jesus offered His own life in exchange for ours, and when He pondered in the garden about all of our crimes that would cost Him His flesh and His life, rather than rage, He prayed to accept the will of the Father and sweated like drops of blood.

At this joyful time of year, standing between the Resurrection and the Ascension, remembering the words of Jesus, “I go ahead of you to prepare a place for you,” remembering the gifts of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, remembering God’s promise of our own eternal inheritance, we also ask, “Who am I, O Lord God, that You should do such things for me?” Like King David, who was so emotional that he prayed in private, we contemplate with awe and wonder the boundless treasures that God gives us freely, the blessings and the hardships that go with them. “Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that you have brought me thus far? And yet this is a small thing in your eyes, O Lord God. ... And now, O Lord God, you are God, and your words are true, and you have promised this good thing to your servant ... For you, O Lord God, have spoken, and with Your blessing shall the house of Your servant be blessed forever.”

+Kurt Bennette

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YOUNG ADULT LITURGY IN DANBURY

By Adriana Shubeck

Christ is risen! Indeed He is risen! As a Byzantine Catholic who attended Roman Catholic schools for the majority of my academic career, I always envisioned hosting a Divine Liturgy for my peers and teachers to attend. Despite sharing my Eastern traditions in the classroom, this vision never did come to fruition. And so, when my friend, Kevin, pitched the idea of having a Divine Liturgy for *Credo Young Adults'* monthly Mass, I knew I needed to take part in this special event. Little did I know, when we first discussed this idea in the fall, that my father, Thomas Shubeck, would be the priest celebrating the Liturgy that was to take place the following spring.

On May 10, the Vigil of Mid-Pentecost, my father, brother, and I loaded our cars with a portable iconostasis, censor, chalice set, and vestments (to name just a few necessities!) and ventured to Ossining, NY. There, we transformed the altar of Saint Augustine Roman Catholic Church, which overlooks the majestic Hudson River, into that of a Byzantine Catholic Church. We were joined that evening by Deacon Stephen Russo (Danbury, CT), as well as Subdeacon Bryan Scotton (Passaic, NJ), who served as cantor. In essence, we sought to share the Divine Liturgy with our Roman Catholic friends in its most authentic form. But what truly completed the evening for me was hearing young adults, most of whom had never attended a Byzantine Catholic Divine Liturgy before, follow along so intently, and chant, *Christ is Risen!*

Though this was not planned, it was fitting that this Liturgy took place on the Feast of Mid-Pentecost. This feast, the midway point between Pascha and Pentecost, is essentially the prelude to the Descent of the Holy Spirit. On Pentecost, we soon will read in John Chapter 7: "Whoever believes in me, as scripture says, "Rivers of living water will flow from within him." As my father stated in his homily, we are all called to become vessels overflowing with the rivers of living waters, and to share in the fruits of the Holy Spirit with one another. On this night, the Holy Spirit was truly everywhere present, filling all things to unite East and West. For me, it was a great privilege to share the richness of our Byzantine Catholic traditions with our Western brothers and sisters, and it is a night I will not soon forget.



Special thank you to Kevin Richards (Credo Young Adults) and Father JP Seon (Saint Augustine Parish, Ossining, NY) for inviting, planning with, and hosting us.

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 Saint 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, Saint 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.



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LIFE, LOVE, AND THE HUMAN PERSON

By Ann M. Koshute, MTS

PERSONAL PENTECOST

Our journey through Great Lent and the Paschal season has come not to an “end,” but rather to its full flowering as we celebrate the descent of the Holy Spirit on the feast of Pentecost. The Son of God became man to teach us what it means to be a human person, made in God’s image and likeness; to call us not to simply repent of sin, but to be converted to a new way of living, in and through Him; and to sacrifice Himself by consenting to death on the Cross so that by His Resurrection we might hope to one day be raised to eternal life with Him. Yet, this is not the end of the story. Before Jesus ascended to the Father, He promised the Apostles that, even though He would no longer continue to walk among them, He would remain with them “until the end of the age” (Matthew 28:20). Jesus also commanded them be witnesses to Him and to make the Gospel known to the whole world. Given the rather sorry state the remaining eleven apostles were in (mostly hiding out in fear of the Romans, and even some of their fellow Jews), that must’ve seemed to them like an impossible task. But just as He promised to remain with them, Jesus also promised that they would “receive power” from the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8). It is the Spirit who would give them the wisdom, knowledge, and courage to not only preach the Good News, but to persevere despite persecution, arrest, and even the threat of martyrdom. In

ten short days, the promise was fulfilled when the Holy Spirit permeated the place where the Apostles were gathered and descended upon them with tongues of fire. From that moment on, everyone in the room was changed, and convicted to go out and proclaim Jesus Christ to the world.

Like so many of the stories recounted in the Bible that we’ve heard time and again, we can be tempted to a complacency that makes the effect of these accounts less powerful, or relevant, over time. We may take them at face value, viewing them strictly within their first century context, so that they’re seen as “good examples” that don’t necessarily impact our lives today. And we may have heard these stories so many times that we tune them out, certain that we know them well enough to remember all the details. But Scripture remains as relevant today as when it was written for those who first read it, and I know from experience that hearing a story repeatedly doesn’t guarantee that its full meaning and power are apparent. In fact, it is through Scripture that the Holy Spirit breathes and moves through the words contained in it, so that we continue to be inspired and instructed by it, thus entering more deeply into relationship with God. This is true in a particular way with the account of the descent of the Spirit on Pentecost, since it is not simply an event that happened in

a place at a certain time to specific people. Everyone reading this column who has received the Mystery of Chrismation experienced his/her own personal Pentecost, which was just as real and significant as what happened to those gathered in the Upper Room more than two thousand years ago. The Eucharist, certainly, and Confession (for some of us, unfortunately, to a lesser extent) seem more present to us because they are two of the Holy Mysteries we can receive again and again. Of course, even they can become “routine” to us, but baptism and chrismation may seem even more distant from us, especially if we received them as infants. Yet, this first experience of the power of the Holy Spirit as He made His dwelling in us is one that should remain with us throughout our Christian pilgrimage.

As powerful as that first “touchpoint” with the Spirit was for us, it was not intended to be a brief encounter that would become a memory. The Holy Spirit continues to make His dwelling within us, guides our consciences, convicts us of our sins, (in the sense that He makes us aware of our sins and moves us to repentance) and gives us the power to share the Gospel to the world – even if that “world” consists only of our family, neighbors, and community. This may be news to some of us, or we may think that sharing the Good News is something for priests

and theologians, or that doing so is something “Protestant,” and not what Catholics do. We may think we’re not “qualified” to share our faith, or we may be afraid to, so as not to seem overbearing or preachy. Perhaps we simply do not believe that the Holy Spirit is alive in us, that He is truly present, and that He is calling us to be witnesses to truth and to the love of God. Our roles may not be that of the Apostles, but our mission is the same: to bring Jesus Christ to a world that does not know Him, but desperately needs Him.

Pentecost is often referred to as the birthday of the Church, and in a very real way it is the birthday of each one of us Byzantine Catholic Christians. The Spirit promised by Christ did not come and go in a particular a moment or limit Himself to touching those present at the time. No – the Holy Spirit is alive in the Church, and in each one of us. We should pray to Him for courage and inspiration when faced with opportunities to be a witness. We should ask Him to give us wisdom to know when to speak and what to say, and when we should be quiet. Most of all, we should cultivate a relationship with the Holy Spirit so that we can remain faithful to God, live out our call to become holy, and pass the flame of His love to everyone we encounter. **ECL**



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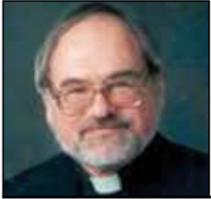
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THE BYZANTINE LITURGY

By Archpriest David Petras, SEOD

BAPTISM: ANOINTING WITH OIL

The picture we have of holy baptism is that it is a plunging into water, where we are cleansed of our sins and made alive in God, one in the Holy Trinity. After his resurrection, our Lord commands baptism as the way to faith and to a share in His life, saying, “make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19). In the apostolic Church, anointing with holy oil was almost as important a component of the rite of initiation as water. It is by our anointing that we receive the mark of identification with our Lord, who was named Jesus, and was called Christ, that is, the Greek word for “Anointed one,” which in Hebrew is “Messiah.” Jesus proclaimed himself to be the Anointed One, the Messiah. In the synagogue in Capernaum, he preached on the prophecy of Isaiah, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me, to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord” (Luke 4:18). God reveals this name to Peter, “Simon Peter said ..., ‘You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.’ Jesus said to him in reply, ‘Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah. For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my heavenly Father.’” (Matthew 16:16-17). This same gift is given to us, as the Apostle John teaches, “But you have the anointing that comes from the holy one, and you all have knowledge” (1 John 2:20).

Anointing remains an important part of the rite of baptism today. There are actually two anointings, the first with olive oil, called the *oil of gladness* from Psalm 44 “You love justice and hate wickedness, therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness,” and the second, after we have been baptized into water, with olive oil to which fragrances have been added, called *chrism*. The second is more important, and we will write about that in a later article. Here we are speaking of the first anointing, which takes place immediately before baptism into water. Immediately after the blessing of water, the priest blesses the oil that is to be used in this anointing.

This olive oil is kept in a votive lamp vessel. If there is a deacon, the deacon holds the lamp vessel, facing north and standing to the right of the priest. When the people sing “And to your spirit,” the priest breathes on the oil in the sign of a cross and blesses it with his hand. The priest then says a prayer “O Master, Lord and God of our fathers ...,”. This prayer seems to be taken from a general prayer for the blessing of oil. It mentions both those who will be anointed with it and those who will partake of it. It calls to mind the event of salvation of Noah receiving the branch from the olive tree after the flood, and it contains an explicit invocation of the Holy Spirit, “Therefore, O Lord, bless the oil through the power, action and descent of your Holy Spirit.”

After the blessing, the priest and all present sing “Alleluia!” The priest takes the vessel containing the blessed olive oil and pours it three times on the surface of the blessed water in the form of the cross, reserving enough oil to anoint the candidate for baptism. This anointing is done with the olive oil that has just been blessed. The priest is to do these anointings, not the deacon. Each anointing is done on the prescribed parts of the body with two fingers (thumb and first finger) in the sign of the Cross, or with a stick or brush. The primary anointing was of the forehead, which originally was done with the words, “The servant of God (name) is anointed with the oil of gladness in the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.” In the sixteenth century, this anointing was extended to the various parts of the body. This perhaps replaced a third anointing which was once done, but is no longer practiced, the anointing of the whole body. This came from ancient practice, for when a person was washed, they anointed themselves with oil, and then scraped the oil off, and the dirt came off with the oil. In the practice of bathing, oil was later replaced by soap.

The anointing done today, therefore, symbolizes the anointing of the whole of the body, and each body part that is anointed is done with different words proclaiming how it blesses us. Therefore, for the forehead, the priest says, “That his (her) mind may be opened to the understanding and acceptance of

the mysteries of the faith of Christ, and to the knowledge of His truth, now and ever and forever, amen;” for the breast, he then says, “For the healing of soul and body, and that he (she) may love the Lord God with all his (her) heart, with all his (her) soul, and with all his (her) mind and that he (she) may love his neighbor as himself (herself):” for the ears, “That his (her) ears may be ready to listen to the teachings of faith, and accept the words of the divine gospel;” for the shoulders: “That he (she) may willingly take upon himself the easy yoke of Christ and gladly carry His light burden and that he (she) may shun all craving of sensuality;” for the hands, “That he (she) may innocently raise his (her) hands to heaven and do the right thing at all times and bless the Lord;” and for the feet, “That he (she) may walk in the path of the commandments of Christ.” By this anointing, then, we acquire an identification with Our Lord, and we are made ready to share his life in our baptism. Theodore of Mopsuestia preached that it was a sign of immortality, “And you are anointed all over your body as a sign that unlike the covering used as a garment, which does not cover all the parts of the body ..., all our nature will put on immortality at the time of the resurrection, and all that is seen in us, whether internal or external, will undoubtedly be changed into incorruptibility according to the working of the Holy Spirit which shall then be with us.” **ECL**

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SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

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

THE SONG OF ISAIAH: THE FIFTH BIBLICAL ODE

The fifth biblical Ode (Isaiah 26:9-20), once sung at Matins and the inspiration for the poetic Canons that replaced it, comes at the turning point of a section of his book in which Isaiah has pronounced oracles against all of Israel's neighbors (13-21; 23), on Zion itself (22) and has finally announced "The Lord is about to lay waste the inhabited earth and He will make it desolate" (24:1). We can imagine the series of disasters and destruction that began with the rise of the Assyrian Empire and culminated in the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians, a span of some 150 years. The next two chapters (25 and 26) look ahead, beyond all that violence, to praise the Lord for restoring His people.

While most of the book of Isaiah is written in exquisite Hebrew poetry, chapters 25 and 26 are specifically identified as a "hymn" and a "song" respectively. The opening line of the section chosen as the fifth Ode (26:9) makes it a natural morning prayer: "From the night my spirit keeps vigil for You O Lord, for Your commands are a light upon the earth." In fact, this is one of several verses (Isaiah 26:9.11.15) sung

at daily Matins during fasting periods. Like Habakkuk in the previous ode, what Isaiah keeps watch for is the appearance of God's retribution on unnamed enemies. As drawn by Isaiah, the battle lines here pitch those who know and keep God's commandments against those whose pride prevents them from doing so (26:10-11). Isaiah defends Israel's faithfulness despite everything: "O Lord, we know no other besides You; we call You by Your name" (26:13, a line quoted in the Matins Hymn of the Resurrection), referring to the name the Lord revealed to Moses in the unburnable bush (Exodus 3).

The tribulation (26:16), the corpses (26:14.19), and the description of the Lord's wrath (26:11.14.20) all suggest that Judah and Jerusalem have suffered some catastrophic military defeat. Only in the hope of the divine vengeance he foresees can the Prophet call this tribulation a "small chastisement" to call God's people's attention back to Him (26:16). Then as now, it takes a catastrophe to get many people to turn and remember the Lord.

The prophet makes a very simple prayer: "Lord our God, grant us peace; for You have given us everything" (26:12). Saint Basil chose these words to conclude his Anaphora on a positive note. They could just as easily be read negatively: After all the suffering You have given us, now finally give us some peace. In either case, the answer to that prayer is ultimately Jesus Christ: "He shall be peace" the prophet Micah predicted (5:5), and Saint Paul (Ephesians 2:14) confirms: "He is our peace."

As elsewhere in Scripture (Isaiah 13:8; 42:14; John 16:21; Romans 8:22; Revelation 12:2), the trouble God's people have endured is described as labor pains. Birth pangs, a fact of life only in the "new normal" after the first sin (Genesis 3:16), represent a kind of suffering required to bring forth life: in this case a new and better future for God's people. Isaiah's images of labor pains and a little slap to reclaim our attention offer us two useful ways to attempt to make sense of the difficult moments in our own lives.

Isaiah's song contains one of the earliest and most explicit expressions of hope in the resurrection of the dead, and this is probably the reason for its place at Matins: "Your dead shall live, their corpses shall rise. Awake, shout for joy, you who dwell in the dust" (26:19). Like similar prophecies in Ezekiel (37) and Daniel (12:1-3), Isaiah's words point undeniably toward the doctrine of "the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come" that Jesus taught (and the Sadducees denied; Matthew 22:23-33; Acts 23:6-9).

In anticipation of the Lord's wrathful intervention (Isaiah 27:1 identifies the enemy as "the dragon, the serpent" that Revelation 12:9 equates with Satan), the Prophet advises: "Go, my people, enter your chambers and close the door behind you; hide for a brief moment until the wrath has passed" (26:20). When similarly oppressed by the dragon, the "woman clothed with the sun" (Revelation 12: 1-5) who symbolizes both the Virgin and the Church, was whisked away to a safe haven in the desert (Revelation 12:6). Two great ancient interpreters, Origen and Saint Jerome, both understand Isaiah's "chambers" as the safe haven of the Church.

The hymnographers tend to draw three themes from this Ode in their Canons: night vigil and dawn (26:9), the light of God's commandments (26:9) and the gift of peace (26:12). **ECL**

SCHOOL OF PRAYER

Father G. Scott Boghossian



THE LEVER OF PRAYER AND SACRIFICE

Archimedes (281-212 B.C.) said, "Give me a lever long enough... and I shall move the world." While we think that levers were probably in use before 5000 B.C., Archimedes was the first to describe the physical principles of the lever in mathematical terms. A lever is a simple machine that enables us to apply a little effort to move a heavy object. For example, the ancient Egyptians were able to build the pyramids, moving massive stone blocks into position using levers.

Our spiritual lever, what enables us to accomplish otherwise impossible tasks, is prayer and sacrifice. When the Apostles had trouble casting out a demon, Our Lord told them that this kind of demon only comes out by prayer and fasting (Mt. 17:21). Some things can only be accomplished by prayer and sacrifice.

Our Savior redeemed the human race by suffering and sacrifice. In union with Him, we apply the work of redemption to others by our suffering and sacrifice.

Prayer alone is good. But the power of God is invoked by prayer and sacrifice. Many of us have been praying a lot, but we haven't been sacrificing. We haven't

been offering up our sufferings to Jesus Christ, with patience, resignation, and joy, for the salvation of souls, the conversion of sinners, and the upbuilding and well-being of the Church. Prayer is essential, but Jesus didn't save the world with prayer. He saved the world by suffering and sacrifice.

Suppose we begin "offering up" our sufferings, sorrows, disappointments, and trials for the salvation of souls and the conversion of sinners. In that case, we will start to see things happen. We will see prayers answered, people return to the Church, sinners converted, and miracles happen.

The appearances of Our Lady of Fatima in 1917 provoked great spiritual renewal in the Church. "Pray, pray much, and sacrifice for sinners, for many souls go to hell because there is no one to sacrifice and pray for them" (Fourth Apparition – August 19, 1917).

Before Our Lady appeared, the Angel told the three children, "In every way you can offer sacrifice to God in reparation for the sins by which He is offended, and in supplication for sinners. In this way, you will bring peace to our country, for I am its guardian angel, the

Angel of Portugal. Above all, bear and accept with patience the sufferings God will send you."

Saint Therese of Lisieux (1873-1897) also understood the power of prayer and sacrifice. In her autobiography, she writes, "My strength lies in prayer and sacrifice; they are invincible weapons, and touch hearts more surely than words can do, as I have learned by experience."

Pope Pius XII (1876-1958) wrote, "It is really an awesome mystery, which we will never meditate enough, that the salvation of many is dependent on the voluntary prayers and sacrifices of the members of Christ's Mystical Body."

The Cursillo Movement was founded in 1954 in Mallorca, Spain. It has since spread worldwide and become well known and popular in non-Catholic churches and ecclesial communities. Cursillo is a three-day retreat where Catholics (and now other Christians) experience a profound personal conversion. They resolve to become sincere and devoted followers of Christ. How do these beautiful conversions happen and happen so regularly? "La Palanca." The Lever – of prayer and sacrifice.

From the Canadian Cursillo Movement website, we read: "A lever (palanca) is a fixed body, typically a metal bar, pivoted on a fixed fulcrum used to move or lift a load. We use a lever to overcome a resistance. In the Cursillo Movement, the [Spanish] word *palanca* is used to designate the spiritual force represented by voluntary prayers and sacrifices, which are done individually or in community with the aim of obtaining the grace of conversion. In the same way that the lever enables a person to lift something which is beyond his or her strength, the prayers and sacrifices allow the apostle to accomplish more than he or she could alone. The *palancas* help to overcome the resistance to grace for those for whom we pray. *Palancas* help to make life arise in abundance" (<https://www.cursillos.ca/en/faq/fl1-palanca.htm>).

Nobody likes to suffer, but offering our sufferings as spiritual sacrifices for the Church, the world, and souls will act as the lever, "the Palanca," that will enable us to do the impossible. "Give me a lever long enough, and I shall move the world!" **ECL**

SEASONAL REFLECTIONS

Father Ronald Hatton



"GO THEREFORE AND MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL THE NATIONS..."

Our Rites of Initiation and Holy Matrimony call to mind the final words of Jesus to His disciples in the Gospel according to the Holy Apostle and Evangelist Matthew. In these Holy Mysteries, we have concrete affirmation that the vocation to which we are called, each and every one of us, is to witness our faith to the world.

Matthew 28: 16-20, is the Gospel reading appointed for the baptismal service. It is not only to show us His command to "[baptize] them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit," but also that, as a result of our initiation into the Body of Christ (baptism, sealing of the Holy Spirit, and receiving the Body and Blood of Christ), we have been given, by Jesus Christ, the mandate to do so! As Christians, as the Church, it is our vocation to "go therefore and make disciples..." In our baptism, we are given the vocation to preach the Gospel.

In our marriage ceremony, we read a portion of the letter of the Holy Apostle

Paul to the church at Ephesus, where he points out that marriage is "a great foreshadowing... it refers to Christ and the Church" (Eph. 5: 32). The joining of a man and woman in Holy Matrimony is a sign of the relationship between Christ and the Church. The Gospel reading, John 2: 1-11, is appointed for the marriage ceremony. Not only does the Church see this as Christ blessing Holy Matrimony, but it is also a sign of His power in our lives. During what we call the Dance of Isaiah, we sing a troparion to the holy martyrs. Unless we understand that the primary meaning of the word "martyr" is not someone who has died for a cause – in our case, died for the Faith – but means *witness*. A martyr is a witness to the Faith. Because of this, we invoke the holy martyrs to bless the man and woman as they become witnesses to the world of the relationship between God and Mankind. We also invoke the holy Apostles, "who proclaimed the consubstantial Trinity." This makes no sense unless we see in marriage a witness of the Catholic Faith to the world. That is why marriage is

one of the Holy Mysteries. Marriage is not a civil ceremony or a social formality, but it is consecrating the union to God, and giving marriage a new and higher purpose. In Holy Matrimony the couple is given the vocation to preach the Gospel!

With the coming of the Descent of the Holy Spirit – the Feast of Pentecost, human beings are given the mandate to spread the Gospel, to *live* the Gospel, every day of our lives! Now each of us has a new reason for living, a new reason for getting up in the morning, a new reason for interacting with family, friends, and co-workers. Each of us has been consecrated by God to be His ministers to the world. We are called to live the Gospel in our single life, in our married life. We are called to pass the Gospel on to our children and our children's children.

During the month of June, we also celebrate the birth of the great prophet, forerunner, and Baptist of the Lord, John, and the pre-eminent Apostles Pe-

ter and Paul. Again, we are reminded of three great witness of Christ to the world, three great martyrs to the Faith. So, even though the great feasts – the Nativity, the Theophany, the Crucifixion, Resurrection, and Ascension of our Lord, and the Descent of the Holy Spirit – are now behind us for a season, it is not a time to relax. In fact, it is a time for us to be witnesses to the world, to be martyrs. It is the time for the Church – you, me, and all of us baptized into Christ – to "go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you..." And as you do this, remember His final words to us: "and, lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." **ECL**



PRIESTLY REFLECTIONS

Father Paul Varchola West

"THE FIVE MOST DANGEROUS WORDS..."

As many of you know, before attending seminary, my education and career path was in the academic field of music. By utter chance, or perhaps divine intervention, I would end up specializing in a very specific academic field of study, ultimately becoming recognized as one of the nation's leading scholars of the American composer Harry Partch (1901-1974). To this day, I am still active in researching, publishing, and presenting on his work, also sitting on the executive board of directors of the Harry Partch Commission; a nonprofit dedicated to the preservation and study of his creative output. Why am I bringing all of this up?

Relationships.

Through the study and performance of his music, essays, theoretical writings, personal journals, and my personal writing/presenting on various topics, I feel as if I know Harry Partch personally (although he died before I was born). Sometimes I even feel like he and I converse, and sometimes even argue through his work, almost like good friends. Given this relationship through his work, Harry has helped me to come to a rather significant spiritual and moral understanding.

In one particular essay, Partch says, almost in passing, that he believes the five most dangerous words in the English language to be, "go and sin no more." Being a person of faith, I always struggled with this. I would constantly mull over the statement, "arguing" with Harry as to the validity of this claim. Sometimes he would win. Sometimes I would gain the upper hand. Then, about a year ago, I decided that I was the decisive victor and that he was unequivocally wrong.

First, we need to realize that Partch's parents were Christian missionaries. Throughout his youth, Partch was mentally and emotionally abused by his mother. So, in many ways, his thought process was: my mother was abusive, she was Christian, therefore I am angry at the whole of Christianity. Clearly this anger and resentment is misdirected, as is often the case. We need to keep this in mind as we continue. Any "anti-Christian" sentiments in his work, whether explicit or implied, need to be viewed in the light of this emotional baggage.

Anyway, he was wrong. I have come to the conclusion that the five most dangerous words in the English language are, "well, that's not my problem."

Think about it: "Well, that's not my problem."

When people say this, seemingly absolving themselves from any and all responsibility in a given situation, what they are really saying is, "well, I don't want to deal with this for X, Y, Z reason, so I'm just going to push it off on someone else whose problem it really isn't either." When we say something isn't our problem, we are solving nothing. I think specifically of John 9:1-38 and the instance of the man blind from birth. I encourage you to read this passage and focus on the section in which, when confronted about the miraculous occurrence, the parents of the man essentially respond, "Don't ask us, ask him. He is of age."—basically saying, "well...that's not our problem." Sincerely, read this passage and meditate on this, including all the emotional baggage surrounding the parents, the man, and the Pharisees. The Evangelist John is certainly not scant on details!

As relational beings, we humans need to realize that while yes, perhaps we were not the one who precipitated the actions that "caused the problem," nonetheless it *IS* our problem to solve. As John Lennon so eloquently said, "there are no problems, only solutions." We

have to realize that simply (unrightly) absolving ourselves of responsibility to a given issue, all we are doing is perpetuating said issue and making it worse, thereby becoming the one who causes someone else to say, "well, I didn't do it, so that's not my problem."

In problem solving, we don't have to take responsibility for the "problem," only the responsibility for the solution. In focusing on solutions, this brings dialogue, communication, and unity rather than division, animosity, hate, anger, and the like.

We need to put our emotional baggage, and fears, aside and be the relational beings God created us to be. We need to focus on living a life of solutions—solutions rooted in our faith in Jesus Christ and solutions for the Glory of God (just like in John 9!). Let us take the five most dangerous words in the English language and turn the phrase on its head!

"Well...let's solve this together!" **ECL**

EPARCHIAL PARISHES LIVE-STREAM THE DIVINE SERVICES
 Below are just a few examples from our eparchy

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

CONNECTICUT

Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church—Danbury, CT
 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

JUNE, 2022

- 5 Pentecost
The Descent of the Holy Spirit
- 6 Pentecost Monday
Simple Holy Day
- 12 Sunday of All Saints
- 13 Beginning of the Apostles' Fast
- 19 Second Sunday after Pentecost
Father's Day
- 24 Nativity of the Holy Forerunner
Solemn Holy Day
- 29 Holy Prime Apostles Peter and Paul
Holy Day of Obligation
- 30 ByzanTEENS Youth Rally begins
June 30 - July 3, Mount Saint Mary's University, Emmitsburg, MD

JULY, 2022

- 1-3 ByzanTEENS Youth Rally continues
- 4 Independence Day
*Civic holiday * Chancery closed*

THE BYZANTINE CATHOLIC EPARCHY OF PASSAIC
 subscribes to the

Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People

adopted by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. The Eparchy, within all its parishes, institutions and programs, is committed to assuring a safe environment in ministry for its children and young people that conforms to Charter requirements. For further information regarding the Eparchial Safe Environment Program please contact:

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