



# EASTERN CATHOLIC LIFE

Official Publication of the Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Passaic

VOL. LVIII, NO. 8

NOVEMBER 2022



Icon of Our Lady of Mariapocs



## 2022 BISHOP'S APPEAL BEGINS

Prayer to Our Lady of Mariapocs

*O weeping Virgin Mother, refuge of sinners, we call upon you to petition your Divine Son to obtain for us the forgiveness of our sins and an abundance of blessings for us and for those for whom we pray. Alleviate our sufferings, cure our ills, console us in our sorrows, help us to lead a virtuous life and guide us to eternal life. O weeping Virgin, Mother of God remember us before your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, now, and at the hour of our death. Amen.*

Glory to Jesus Christ!

Dear friends,

This year, the whole world is transfixed by the war in Ukraine. Many people who are still alive remember the horrors of the last great war. People in our own churches here remember the long night of the invasion and occupation by the Red Army, and its ruthless suppression of the Christian faith.

Our brothers and sisters in the old country are deeply grateful for the generosity of all the good people of the Eparchy of Passaic and of all our churches in America. In Transcarpathia, there are six hundred thousand refugees in a region with only three hundred thousand residents. Our bishop, Bishop Nil, presides over three or four funerals each week of young men killed in combat, young men often with young wives and children. I don't think I could go on as a pastor if I

had to do that. I can't tell you how important it is to them that we remember them and pray for them. They never ask for things, they only ask, "Please don't forget us. Please pray for us."

This year I am joyful to share with you our miraculous icon from our original home in the Austro-Hungarian empire, the icon of Our Lady from Mariapocs. This icon wept for the first time on November 14, 1696, during the final attempt by the Ottoman Turks to conquer Europe. The emperor took the original icon to Vienna. The journey took five months because of the crowds of people and the many miraculous healings that took place on the journey. Our people made a copy for our own church in Mariapocs, and the original never wept again after it moved to Vienna.

Meanwhile, in our church in Mariapocs, the new icon wept two more times. The next time was in 1715, and

so the church authorities built a Basilian monastery to care for the icon and the countless pilgrims who go there to pray. Our own Fathers Basil Rackaczy and Joe Erdei lived at that monastery in recent years until their deaths. When I went to Father Joe's funeral this summer, I had the opportunity to pray in front of the great icon, and I prayed for all of you with all my heart. It made me happy that Pope Francis asked me to be the bishop of this great eparchy.

The third weeping of the icon in our church in Mariapocs took place in 1905. Just as with the other events, the icon cried during the holy sacrifice of the Divine Liturgy. The year 1905 is one of the most ominous years in history. The massacre at the Winter Palace by the guards of the proud Tsar led to the Revolution of 1917 that spread atheism and terror across the globe. The Mother of God had good cause to weep in 1905. But the icon reminds us that Mary is always present for us in our suffering,

our good mother who was given to us by her Divine Son during his own death on the cross. Wherever He is crucified today, she is standing there with him. I am thrilled to send you this photo of the miraculous icon this year. And I ask that you pray fervently for God's mercy on our world. If you look closely, you can see the stains from the tears.

With inflation and all the hardship this year, I cannot ask everyone for money. If you would like to help me with my work, please pray for me and for your priests and for our bishops in Europe. Please only send money if you can afford it and have extra after your needs.

+Kurt Bennette



# PEOPLE YOU KNOW

## IN SMITHTOWN...

### Bishop Kurt Makes Pastoral Visit

Sunday, September 9, 2022, was a historic and very special day for the Resurrection Parish in Smithtown NY, as Bishop Kurt came to Smithtown with a pastoral visit.

Divine services began with Matins and after the procession continued with the Solemn Liturgy. Bishop Kurt preached the Gospel — the *Good News* — to the numerous parishioners and guests who came to church that day. The Bishop also shared his experience of his visit to Ukraine and his numerous meetings and conversations with people whose lives were affected by the evil and tragedy of war. The services in the church ended with a memorial service – Panahida for all the victims of 9/11 and the war in Ukraine.

The culmination of this day was the blessing of the old and restored parish rectory. The Resurrection rectory is a building that is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Its original owner was Fred Wagner – the premier race started in the early 1900s, including all Long Island Vanderbilt Cup Races. Unfortunately, the rectory was abandoned for 16 years and was in a terrible state of disrepair. However, thanks to numerous prayers and efforts of the parishioners, the building was restored, even preserving the historicity of the interior and exterior. It is



significant that the blessing of the restored rectory took place exactly 110 years after the foundation of the building. The Wagner's House was built and designed by Gustav Stickley in 1912. Thereby, the visit of Bishop Kurt and the blessing of the Resurrection rectory opened a new page in the history of the parish. Now a priest has returned to Smithtown, NY, after 16 year of absence and can live in the parish. Now, after the restoration, Father Vlad Budash and his wife, Natalia, and their three sons live in the rectory. May God bless all those who put their efforts into the restoration of the Resurrection rectory in Smithtown, NY.

## IN ST. PETERSBURG...

### Catechetical Sunday

On Sunday, September 18, 2022, the students and teachers of the ECF Program at Saint Therese Byzantine Catholic Church in St. Petersburg, FL, gathered together to attend the Divine Liturgy and to receive the blessing of students and teachers at the end of the Liturgy. Father Robert Evancho is the pastor of Saint Therese Parish.



You are invited and welcome to join us for **DIVINE LITURGY (MASS) VIGIL EVERY SATURDAY 11AM** (Fulfils Sunday Obligation) Celebrated by Fr. Oleksiy Nebesnyk at **Christ Lutheran Church 15699 SE 80th Ave. Summerfield, FL 34491** For more information call 352-326-9831



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# AROUND THE EPARCHY



## WHERE PA MEETS NJ...

### Joint Parish Picnic

The parishes of Saint Mary in Trenton, NJ, Saint Nicholas in Roebing, NJ, and Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Levittown, PA, held what has become an annual picnic, and like previous years it was a resounding success. With guidance by hosts, Father Yuriy Oros (Trenton and Roebing) and Father Paul West (Levittown), committee chair, Gregory Embley, and his incredibly capable team put together an affair enjoyed by the young and not-so-young.

Supported by the help, cooperation and generosity of Thomas Mladenetz, church member and Executive Director of the Mercer County CYO, the event was held at the Yardville, NJ CYO branch. The celebration began with Liturgy held in the gym and continued outside on what turned out to be a glorious day.

Catered food was served by McCaffrey's Food Markets with other specialty dishes prepared on-premises by Frank Baldorossi, all while the crowd of approximately 185 was being entertained with live music by The Continental Gypsies. With their admission tickets, the attendees were provided a plethora of prize stubs as well as a helpful agenda of the day's events, which included children's activities and relay races, a teens free-throw contest, ice cream sundae station, and gift basket drawings. Prizes were well-crafted and abundant.

It was incredibly satisfying to see all the volunteers pitch in and address even the smallest of details: parking cars; dishing out ice cream; running prizes to winners; moving tables and chairs; and leaving the complex the way it was found. It was an enjoyable experience for everyone and all left with a real sense of community. To paraphrase Father Yuriy's statement in his homily, "the church is not a building, it is us."



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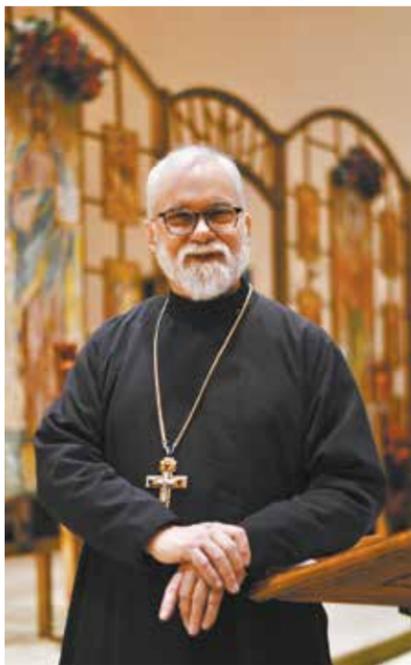
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Celebrating  
**Eastern Christianity**  
and  
**all things Catholic**

## FATHER EDWARD G. CIMBALA, D.MIN., RECEIVES MASTER OF ARTS IN ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP



Father Edward G. Cimbala, M.A., D.Min., pastor of Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church and administrator of Exaltation of the Holy Cross Hungarian Byzantine Catholic Church in New York City, has received a Master of Arts in Organizational Leadership from the University of Valley Forge, Phoenixville, PA. He graduated *summa cum laude* on August 21, 2022. UVF's Master of Arts in Organizational Leadership – Church Revitalization Track focuses on team building, conflict resolution, strategic thinking, and leading change. The program is designed to equip graduates to turn declining or plateauing churches into high-functioning, growing organizations.

Father Cimbala's capstone project is entitled, *'We Knew Not Whether We Were in Heaven or on Earth' Young Adults and Their Motives for Joining the Byzantine Catholic Church: A Qualitative Case Study of Mary's Byzantine Catholic Church in New York City.*

In addition to scholarly research, the project included interviews with the young adults who have joined Saint Mary Parish over a period of eighteen months. The study showed the primary reasons for the attraction to the Byzantine Catholic Church are: eastern theology and ethos, especially as it is experienced and expressed in the celebration of the Divine Liturgy, and the intergen-

erational relationships which the newcomers experience in the parish community. The young adults included in this study range from Roman Catholics to converts from Protestant denominations such as Evangelicals and Episcopalians. This study provides the foundation for developing programs beneficial to the Byzantine Catholic Church as it is the first to evaluate systematically why young adults join the church.

Father Cimbala has a Doctor of Ministry Degree from Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. He attended Saints Cyril and Methodius Byzantine Catholic Seminary in Pittsburgh and was ordained by Bishop Michael J. Dudick on May 8, 1988.

## THE BEGINNING OF THE REST OF OUR LIVES

By Stephen Melancon, Deacon Candidate of the Eparchy of Phoenix, Our Lady of Wisdom Italo-Greek Catholic Church, Las Vegas, NV

During the homily at the last Liturgy of our last year of our diaconal studies program, the rector of the Byzantine Catholic Seminary of Saint Cyril and Methodius, Father Robert Pipta, told the seventeen men sitting before him that we should continue to discern our vocation. Father Robert encouraged each of us to pray to God to discern if it is indeed His will that we be ordained as deacons in the Byzantine Catholic Church. Our respective bishops may be eager, he noted, but it is still important that we discern the call, even at this late stage. I thought to myself, we had just completed the coursework of the fourth year of a four-year program of deacon formation. We had completed our practicum and demonstrated our ability to serve in the Divine Liturgy, matins, vespers, and the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts. We had practiced the incensations, intonations, and even distribution of the Holy Mysteries, using unconsecrated bread and wine, of course. Yet, we were being instructed to continue to discern. We were still being encouraged to listen for God's still small voice. This was a rather profound moment and led to some real reflection on my experience in this the fourth and final year of the program.

For the second and third years of the program, we were prevented from attending the seminary in person due to the pandemic. The program remained vigorous and was more convenient for some of us, allowing us to learn from home and on our own schedule. Of course, these two years of online classes, submitting sermons and practicum assignments via video, were challenging for students and professors alike. Returning to the seminary for our fourth and final year was, I believe, universally a joy for us. We were able to really reconnect and share our struggles and triumphs. We helped each other to serve the liturgies well. We prayed together, including at a Sunday Divine Liturgy at



(L to R) Deacon candidates for the Eparchy of Passaic; Michael Sivulich, Saint Nicholas, White Plains; Adithia Kusno, Ascension of Our Lord, Williamsburg; ; Alex Adekambi, Roswell

a local parish where most of us attended and four of us served on the alter. After thirteen- and fourteen-hour days, including three two-hour classes and one and sometimes two liturgies, we usually ended our nights in the basement, sharing a beverage and even playing a little music. We were all aware of just how special this was, our time together.

This year we were joined by three deacons who were graduates of the last class. They volunteered to return to the seminary to serve in the liturgies, preach homilies, and share their experiences of life in the real world. They answered questions and were in fellowship with us. This was a wonderful addition to our experience at the seminary.

Academically, the fourth year of our studies included the final two scripture classes, one on the Old Testament and the other on Johannine literature. As it turned out, these classes were taught on the same day and so were able to complement each other. Each weekday included a practicum class, where the real *nuts and bolts* of the deacon's work in the Liturgy was presented and practiced., while the weekends included classes in pastoral leadership. These were two of the most practical and useful classes in the entire program. In the second week we were immersed in the study of Catholic social doctrine as well as the Second Vatican Council.

After four years of study that covered Canon Law, Moral Theology, Dogmatics, Homiletics, Spirituality, Scripture, Holy Mysteries, Marriage, Sexuality, and Bioethics, Liturgy, Liturgical Reading, Pastoral Care and Counseling, Pastoral Leadership, Eastern Church History and more, we are still discerning. I expect most, if not all, of the seventeen men who will complete this program by submitting our final four papers sometime before next spring, will discern that it is God's will that we be ordained. Yet, I so appreciate hearing that we should continue to consider prayerfully what we believe to be God's will for our lives. That process of listening, of discerning, should be a lifelong process. So, this, the fourth and final year of our diaconate studies, is not the end. It is the beginning of the rest of our lives in the service of Christ and His Holy Church.



Deacon candidates of the Metropolia, flanked by the formation staff of the program

## BYZAN-TEEN YOUTH RALLY 2022 – A TOUCHDOWN

By Father Michael J. Salnicky

After three years of roadblocks due to COVID and other difficulties, the Byzan-Teen Youth Rally 2022 kicked off with a bang at Mount Saint Mary's University in Emmitsburg, MD. The theme for this rally was *Soar as On Eagles Wings*. The teens and adult



chaperones arrived at the registration desk between 3 and 5 PM on Thursday. Dinner was served in the university dining hall followed by icebreakers for the teens conducted by Father Lukas Mitro of the Eparchy of Parma and instruction for the chaperones and security team by team leaders Jonathan Aponick, Saint Ann Byzantine Catholic Church, Harrisburg, PA, and Frank Hughes, Epiphany of our Lord, Annandale, VA.

The keynote speaker was Matt Birk, who played center on the 2012 Superbowl-winning Baltimore Ravens team. Matt hails from St. Paul, MN, and is heavily involved in Catholic youth ministry. I'm sure the experience he has as a father of eight added to his appeal to the teens, who welcomed him warmly. After he finished the keynote address, he personalized a copy of his book, *All-Pro Wisdom*, for each teen.

At 10 PM it was time for evening prayer, so the teens invited Matt to join them for the Compline service. For me, this was the best example of witnessing to his faith – spending time in prayer with the teens. It was a truly memorable evening. We wish Matt the best as he is now running for Lieutenant Governor in his home state of Minnesota.

Friday morning saw the teens attending two of the four featured speakers



in the break-out presentations. Father Andrij Dumnich from our Eparchy of Passaic spoke about *Our Faith in The Modern World*. Sister Barbara Jean Mihalchick, OSBM, and Father Kevin Marks, of the Archeparchy of Pittsburgh, tag-teamed the vocation talk of *Why Are We Byzantine Catholics*. Father Cyril Pinchak, SJ, serving in the Eparchy of Parma, addressed the teens about *Challenges to Faith*, and Father Paul West from our Eparchy of Passaic presented his talk on *The New Normal: Life After the Pandemic*.

After a delicious lunch in the university dining hall, the teens participated in the sports venue coordinated by Jonathan Aponick; teen choir training under the direction of Professor Michael McGonigal of Patronage of the Mother of God Parish, Baltimore, MD; or crafts under the guidance of the sisters from Christ the Bridegroom Monastery from the Eparchy of Parma.

Later that afternoon, it was time for the service project – packaging meals for *Rise Against Hunger*, an organization that provides meals for the poor throughout the world with a special emphasis on providing meals for preschool children in undeveloped countries. In two hours, the 56 teens attending the rally packaged 14,250 meals! I was so proud of them and thankful to Sister Susan Sisko, OSBM, and Father Andrew Deskevich, Archeparchy of Pittsburgh, for coordinating this project.

A Panachida was celebrated by Father Paul West, remembering the names of deceased family members that the teens had provided. Of special remembrance was Father Gary Mensinger, to whom this rally was dedicated. Father Gary was a founding member of the Teen Rally team and served it for 23 years until he was called home by God in December of 2019. After the Panachida, instruction on making a good examination of conscience and confession was followed by the Mystery of Reconciliation celebrated by the bishops and priests present. The night closed out with the teens spending time in the *Byzantine Bistro*, refreshing themselves with snacks provided by our Harrisburg parish and enjoying each other's company.

On Saturday afternoon, a trip to Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton Shrine Basilica was arranged with the help of Rill's Bus Service of Westminster, MD. The basilica was set-up in our Byzantine tradition complete with portable icon screen provided by our Annandale, VA, parish and their pastor, Father John Basarab. Metropolitan William of Pittsburgh was the main celebrant, with Bishop Kurt and Bishop Milan of Parma concelebrating the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy. A cadre of priests surrounded the Holy Table as priest-concelebrants. Bishop Kurt delivered the homily and many non-rally attendees at the service remarked on the spirituality and behavior of the teens— another mo-

ment in which I was so proud of them. The teens then returned to the university campus for dinner and the rally dance.

A music-and-light show was provided by Kraig Nace of JukeBoxHits.com



from Duncannon, PA. I was amazed at how the teens knew each type of music played and the appropriate dance moves from rock to country music. It began with what could have been a scene from the Kevin Bacon movie *Footloose* as each teen, surrounded by all the others, showed off their special moves. It really made me smile watching them enjoy themselves and each other. When the dance was over, and the teens were walking up the hill to their dormitory at 11 PM, they were singing our national anthem, *The Star-Spangled Banner*. I realized these teens were not just spiritual – they were patriotic as well.

Sunday finally arrived and it was time for Matins followed by the closing ceremony. Father Artur Bubnevych and Deacon Jonathan Deane of the Eparchy of Phoenix made the big announcement: the next Byzan-Teen Rally will



be hosted in 2024 by that eparchy in SAN DIEGO, CA! The tentative dates will be June 27-30, 2024. The rally is open to teens aged 13 through 17 at that time, so start saving and running your fund-raisers now!

I want to express my thanks to Metropolitan William and the Council of Hierarchs for their support of our committee and our youth; the fellow members of the Inter-Eparchial Youth and Young Adult Commission; Maureen Plant and the entire staff at Mount Saint Mary's University, who went above and beyond in making this a memorable experience for our teens; and all the priests, parishioners, chaperones, and others who generously gave or their time, talent, and treasure to make this rally such a success. May God bless you all! *Na mnohaja i blahaja l'ita!*



# 2022 BISHOP'S APPEAL

## BYZANTINE CATHOLIC EPARCHY OF PASSAIC

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BYZANTINE CATHOLIC EPARCHY OF PASSAIC  
2022 BISHOP'S ANNUAL APPEAL

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

\$2,500.00     \$1,000.00     \$500.00

\$250.00 \_\_\_\_\_     Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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

The 2022 Bishop's Appeal will run through the end of our fiscal year, June 2023.  
Contributions received prior to December 31, 2022, will count toward your  
2022 tax year. Acknowledgement letter will be mailed prior to January 31, 2023.

New Address or Correction

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

# BISHOP'S APPEAL 2021 – FINAL REPORT

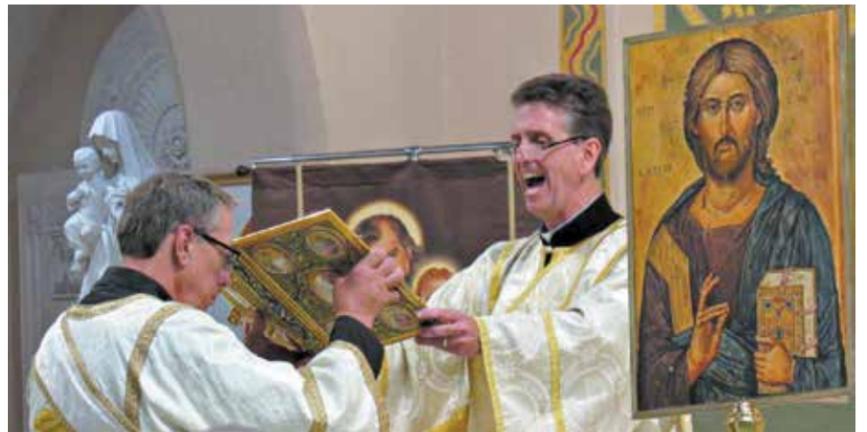
*Highlighted parishes reached their goal and received a 40% refund*

Parish	Location	Goal	Received
Saint John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church	Trumbull, CT	\$15,400.00	\$6,475.00
Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church	Danbury, CT	\$7,000.00	\$2,000.00
<i>Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church</i>	<i>Meriden, CT</i>	<i>\$800.00</i>	<i>\$800.00</i>
Holy Trinity Byzantine Catholic Church	New Britain, CT	\$4,800.00	\$650.00
<i>Saint Gregory of Nyssa Byzantine Catholic Church</i>	<i>Beltsville, MD</i>	<i>\$5,400.00</i>	<i>\$10,570.00</i>
Saint Therese Byzantine Catholic Church	Saint Petersburg, FL	\$10,600.00	\$4,660.00
Saint John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church	Bayonne, NJ	\$3,000.00	\$1,960.00
Saint Elias Byzantine Catholic Church	Carteret, NJ	\$4,400.00	\$3,290.00
Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church	Dunellen, NJ	\$4,000.00	\$1,490.00
Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church	Jersey City, NJ	\$3,000.00	\$2,000.00
Saint George Byzantine Catholic Church	Linden, NJ	\$8,000.00	\$1,825.00
<i>Holy Spirit Byzantine Catholic Church</i>	<i>Mahwah, NJ</i>	<i>\$2,600.00</i>	<i>\$2,860.00</i>
Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church	Hillsborough, NJ	\$30,000.00	\$9,506.00
Saint George Byzantine Catholic Church	Newark, NJ	\$2,400.00	\$980.00
Saint Joseph Byzantine Catholic Church	New Brunswick, NJ	\$3,400.00	\$50.00
Saints Peter & Paul Byzantine Catholic Church	Somerset, NJ	\$2,600.00	\$200.00
<i>Cathedral of St. Michael the Archangel</i>	<i>Passaic, NJ</i>	<i>\$25,200.00</i>	<i>\$30,775.00</i>
<i>Saint Michael Byzantine Catholic Church</i>	<i>Perth Amboy, NJ</i>	<i>\$4,000.00</i>	<i>\$4,020.00</i>
<i>Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church</i>	<i>Perth Amboy, NJ</i>	<i>\$4,000.00</i>	<i>\$4,060.00</i>
Saints Peter & Paul Byzantine Catholic Church	Phillipsburg, NJ	\$3,000.00	\$4,858.00
Saint Thomas the Apostle Byzantine Catholic Church	Rahway, NJ	\$12,400.00	\$15,067.86
Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church	Roebing, NJ	\$3,000.00	\$3,050.00
<i>Assumption of the Virgin Mary Byzantine Catholic Church</i>	<i>Trenton, NJ</i>	<i>\$10,000.00</i>	<i>\$11,500.00</i>
Holy Spirit Byzantine Catholic Church	Binghamton, NY	\$12,000.00	\$3,445.00
Saints Peter & Paul Byzantine Catholic Church	Endicott, NY	\$4,000.00	\$2,040.00
Saints Peter & Paul Byzantine Catholic Church	Granville, NY	\$800.00	\$250.00
Holy Cross Byzantine Catholic Church	New York, NY	\$1,000.00	\$250.00
Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church	New York, NY	\$5,000.00	\$2,905.00
<i>Saints Peter &amp; Paul Byzantine Catholic Church</i>	<i>Peekskill, NY</i>	<i>\$3,400.00</i>	<i>\$6,900.00</i>
Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church	White Plains, NY	\$5,000.00	\$2,075.00
Saints Peter & Paul Byzantine Catholic Church	Beaver Meadows, PA	\$16,000.00	\$9,170.00
<i>Saints Peter &amp; Paul Byzantine Catholic Church</i>	<i>Bethlehem, PA</i>	<i>\$17,000.00</i>	<i>\$18,711.00</i>
Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church	Brockton, PA	\$2,000.00	\$200.00
Blessed Virgin Mary Byzantine Catholic Church	Coatesville, PA	\$1,800.00	\$150.00
Saint Michael Byzantine Catholic Church	Dunmore, PA	\$12,000.00	\$7,2075.00
Saint John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church	Forest City, PA	\$4,000.00	\$1,800.00
Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church	Freeland, PA	\$15,000.00	\$12,335.00
Saint Ann Byzantine Catholic Church	Harrisburg, PA	\$16,000.00	\$7,920.00
Saint John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church	Hazleton, PA	\$18,400.00	\$6,350.00
Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church	Hazleton, PA	\$12,000.00	\$8,387.00
Holy Ghost Byzantine Catholic Church	Jessup, PA	\$13,000.00	\$4,740.00
Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church	Kingston, PA	\$8,880.00	\$5,650.00
Saint John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church	Lansford, PA	\$5,000.00	\$2,205.00
Our Lady of Perpetual Help Byzantine Catholic Church	Levittown, PA	\$7,800.00	\$2,450.00
Saint Michael Byzantine Catholic Church	McAdoo, PA	\$10,200.00	\$1,710.00
Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church	Mahanoy City, PA	\$10,000.00	\$2,230.00
Saints Peter & Paul Byzantine Catholic Church	Minersville, PA	\$14,000.00	\$3,395.00
<i>Saint Michael Byzantine Catholic Church</i>	<i>Mont Clare, PA</i>	<i>\$8,000.00</i>	<i>\$8,485.00</i>
<i>Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church</i>	<i>Nesquehoning, PA</i>	<i>\$3,000.00</i>	<i>\$3,195.00</i>
Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church	Old Forge, PA	\$8,200.00	\$3,460.00
Holy Ghost Byzantine Catholic Church	Philadelphia, PA	\$7,800.00	\$3,020.00
Holy Trinity Byzantine Catholic Church	Philadelphia, PA	\$3,000.00	\$1,339.17
Saint Michael Byzantine Catholic Church	Pittston, PA	\$8,200.00	\$1,145.00
Saint John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church	Pottstown, PA	\$13,800.00	\$5,432.00
<i>Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church</i>	<i>Saint Clair, PA</i>	<i>\$3,200.00</i>	<i>\$4,000.00</i>
Saint John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church	Scranton, PA	\$3,200.00	\$170.00
Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church	Scranton, PA	\$6,600.00	\$2,990.00
Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church	Sheppton, PA	\$2,000.00	\$1,170.00
Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church	Swoyersville, PA	\$7,400.00	\$3,860.00
Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church	Taylor, PA	\$3,400.00	\$875.00
Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church	Wilkes-Barre, PA	\$19,800.00	\$7,160.00
Saint John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church	Wilkes-Barre Tw., PA	\$5,800.00	\$2,250.00
Saint Basil Byzantine Catholic Church	Miami, FL	\$3,000.00	\$300.00
<i>Resurrection Byzantine Catholic Church</i>	<i>Smithtown, NY</i>	<i>\$8,800.00</i>	<i>\$9,031.00</i>
Nativity of Our Lord Byzantine Catholic Church	East Brunswick, NJ	\$4,200.00	\$200.00
<i>Holy Wisdom Byzantine Catholic Church</i>	<i>Flanders, NJ</i>	<i>\$1,600.00</i>	<i>\$2,437.00</i>
Patronage of the Mother of God Byzantine Catholic Church	Arbutus, MD	\$9,800.00	\$5,310.00
<i>Epiphany of Our Lord Byzantine Catholic Church</i>	<i>Annandale, VA</i>	<i>\$19,800.00</i>	<i>\$21,196.00</i>
Our Lady of Perpetual Help Byzantine Catholic Church	Toms River, NJ	\$9,800.00	\$5,510.00
Saint Nicholas of Myra Byzantine Catholic Church	Orlando, FL	\$8,600.00	\$6,220.00
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<i>Epiphany of Our Lord Byzantine Catholic Mission</i>	<i>Gaithersburg, MD</i>	<i>\$6,000.00</i>	<i>\$6,000.00</i>
<i>Blessed Basil Hopko Byzantine Catholic Mission</i>	<i>Conway, SC</i>	<i>\$600.00</i>	<i>\$1,570.00</i>
<b>TOTAL GOAL:</b>		<b>\$619,680</b>	<b>\$390,935.05</b>



## SAINT ANN NOVENA CONTINUES

A Byzantine Catholic Divine Liturgy held at the National Shrine of the Basilica of St Ann, Scranton, PA, on Tuesday, July 19, 2022, during the course of the annual Novena to Saint Ann. It was a beautiful Liturgy with many of our local Byzantine Catholic priests, deacons, and a wonderful group of altar servers present with Bishop Kurt as the main celebrant. Bishop Kurt plainly and vividly described the impacts of the war in Ukraine. He also expressed the need of prayer for the people of Ukraine, for peace in the world, and for all of us as we face a very unknown future.



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# LIFE, LOVE, AND THE HUMAN PERSON

By Ann M. Koshute, MTS

## PICK UP YOUR CROSS TO LAY IT DOWN

We have a lot to be grateful for in this life. For one thing, the very fact that we exist is a miracle and a blessing, because we were willed by God and *loved into being* by Him. Every one of us can generate our own gratitude list, to include family members and friends, spouse and children, and other people we encounter along our life's path. We can be grateful for little pleasures as much as the big accomplishments in our lives. There is a great deal of joy and goodness all around us, and we'd do well to stop and notice it more often. Yet we can all acknowledge that life can be hard, too. Sometimes, it's so hard that the burden of whatever pain, suffering, or disappointment we carry weighs heavily on us, and may bring us to our knees.

In chapter 16 of Saint Matthew's gospel, Jesus' teaching to the Apostles takes a decidedly serious turn, perhaps in a direction they hadn't quite expected. The time of His passion and death is drawing closer, and Jesus wants to prepare His followers for what's to come in the immediate future; but He also wants to prepare them for the mission they will carry on after He has ascended to Heaven. In this chapter, the Evangelist recounts Jesus' warning to the disciples not to be like the Jewish leaders, who were eager for signs and wonders, but not willing to understand and appreciate their deeper meaning. He also foretells His coming death, hinting at the method of execution by making a significant theological and spiritual point:

"Then Jesus said to his disciples, 'Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me.'" (v. 24).

There is so much in this verse for us to contemplate, and each part of it – *deny, cross, follow* – warrants a column of its own. For now, though, let's take the statement as a whole, and consider what Jesus is asking of the disciples, and of us. If we truly want to *belong* to Him, to learn from Him and follow His example; if we want to one day enjoy eternal life in union with Him, along with the Father and the Spirit, we must emulate Jesus in every way. To follow Jesus

is to be humble and recognize the good of others, and minister to their needs. Following Jesus means cultivating a relationship with God and living by His commandments. Take a moment right now to put aside this column, close your eyes, and think about who Jesus is, all that He did when He walked the earth, and the things He taught the disciples and demonstrated by His actions. Now put yourself in the crowd, in the fishing boat, on the Mount – at the foot of the Cross. Ask yourself, "What does it mean to follow Jesus Christ, and *am I* a follower?"

In this verse, Jesus states an obvious point: in this life, we will be given a cross (and likely more than one). He also issues a challenge: take up your cross. This is probably one of the Scripture verses that is most familiar to a lot of us, even if we can't put our finger on exactly where it's found. The notion of "taking up our cross" is a rich one, acknowledging that suffering exists, a result of those lingering effects of sin. That Jesus uses the word "cross," well before He will pick up His and be executed on it, tells us that our suffering is not merely inflicted on us by a distant God who watches us writhe in pain. Jesus Himself willingly endured suffering first for our salvation, but also because He wants to be intimately united to us in every way. Finally, Jesus asks us to pick our cross *and follow Him*, which indicates that our suffering is not meaningless. It is Jesus' Cross that gives suffering meaning, makes it a way of salvation, and for us, a means by which we can grow spiritually. Jesus didn't say, "Pick up your cross and follow me on the easy path." Taking up our cross in this life is hard, and sometimes the cross is much too heavy for us. That's why we must take it up so that we can *lay it down*.

While meditating on this verse, it occurred to me that one of the meanings of "denying" oneself in this context could refer to the self-reliance we so often lean on in our daily life, as well as in our spiritual life. How many times to we stubbornly try to do things on our own, only to become frustrated, bitter, and resentful? We refuse to ask

for help, out of pride, fear of embarrassment, or because we simply think we should be able to do anything. This can also be the case in our spiritual lives, where we believe we must simply muster up the will to fast, to pray daily, to be charitable and love our enemies as ourselves. Perhaps we pray to God, ask His help, beg the intercession of Mary and the saints. But are we just seeking *solutions*, treating Heaven like it is password protected, and if we enter just the right combination, we'll get what we need? Praying with this verse revealed something deeper – something I really needed to hear. I'm not meant to

hoist my cross on my shoulders, buckle under its weight and awkwardly try to walk a straight path as it pulls me to my knees again and again. Jesus does want me to take up my cross – and then allow Him to carry it with me. He is inviting each of us, when we take up our own cross, to deny that part of ourselves that stubbornly tries to do everything on our own. Unlike us, Jesus' shoulders are broad and strong. At this very moment, in His infinite love for you, Jesus is waiting for you to take up whatever cross you are carrying and lay its weight on Him. **ECL**



## Icon of the Apostle Phillip

The Phillip's Fast in preparation for celebrating the Nativity of Our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ begins on Monday, November 15

From the Typicon: "During this fast it was the custom to observe a strict abstinence on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday and a lesser abstinence (mitigation for wine and oil) on Tuesday and Thursday. The fast is observed more strictly from December 10 (in some traditions) or from December 20 (in other traditions), with daily strict abstinence, and a mitigated abstinence (wine and oil) on Saturday and Sunday. The Ruthenian Metropolia has identified this period as a penitential season. This fast may be observed voluntarily, partially, or in its entirety."



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## SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

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

### THE PRAYER OF AZARIAH: THE SEVENTH ODE OF MATINS

The prayer of Azariah (Daniel 3:26-45) is the first of the two hymns prayed by the Three Hebrew Youths in the fiery furnace of Babylon. Both this Ode and the next (Daniel 3:52-90) quickly found a place in the worship of the ancient Church. Since they were handed down only in Greek, both of these Odes were rejected by the Protestant reformers and will not be found in Protestant editions of the Bible in English.

The Three Hebrew Youths were cast into the furnace by the tyrannical King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon for their refusal to worship his golden idol. Along with Daniel the Prophet, these young men had remained steadfastly faithful to the Lord and His Law even in exile in Babylon. So, we might be surprised to discover that, after beginning with a traditional Jewish blessing (3:26) Azariah's prayer becomes a confession of sin!

The prophet Jeremiah had predicted the overthrow of Jerusalem, the destruction of the Temple, and the exile to Babylon as the unavoidable punishment for the sins that had alienated Judah and Jerusalem from the Lord. Azariah prays as "we" (not "I"); he speaks

not so much for himself and his two friends, who are willing to be faithful even to death, but rather for the whole Jewish people. He admits the justice of God's punishment (3:28.31). In the people's name he confesses to sin, lawlessness, disobedience, and a failure to keep the commandments of the Law (3:29-30). Since Nebuchadnezzar was overseeing this horrible execution (3:24/91), he heard Azariah describe him as "an unjust king, the most-evil in any land" (3:32)!

As in so many Psalms, the young man's prayer next changes course and begins to entreat the Lord to restore the fortunes of His people. He admits he has no right to ask for anything (3:33) but rather relies on the Lord's own faithfulness to His covenant (3:34.36-37). God's fidelity to His promise, rather than any righteousness of His people, is offered as a motivation for Him to intervene and save them. Azariah begs for the Lord's mercy, not on the strength of Israel's own merits but rather "for the sake of" the holy Patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (3:35). Here is a biblical example of prayer that calls upon the merits and intervention of the saints, a doctrine Protestants deny.

Azariah describes the utter humiliation and devastation of Jerusalem: no prince, no prophet, no leader, no way to offer sacrifices because the Temple has been razed. What can take the place of sin offerings for a people who desire to repent? The Epistle to the Hebrews provides the ultimate answer: Christ has offered the perfect sin offering of His own blood once and for all, as perfect priest, in the temple of His own body, and has carried that sacrifice all the way to the heavenly Temple by His Resurrection and Ascension (Hebrews 9-10). Like Psalm 51, which also asked how to atone for sins without a Temple, Azariah offers the Lord "a contrite soul and a humbled spirit" (Daniel 3:39; Psalm 51:17). This conversion of the heart is what the Lord had been calling for all along: "it is mercy I desire and not sacrifice" (Hosea 6:6).

Speaking for the chastened nation, Azariah assures the Lord that His people have learned their lesson: "Now we are following You with all our heart and we fear You and seek Your face" (3:41). That is certainly true for the Three Youths; the later history of Israel and the destruction of the Second Temple in 70AD suggest that the repentance of a whole nation—any nation!—is much harder to maintain.

Azariah wisely understands both the destruction of Jerusalem and its hoped-for restoration to be revelations of the Lord's truth, justice, mercy and glory. By showing Himself to be the Lord of world events and faithful to His covenant with Israel, the Lord will "give glory to (His) name" (3:43) and all will know "that You alone are the Lord God and glorious over all the inhabited earth" (3:45).

Composers of the Canons modeled after the biblical Odes often quote the initial blessing of this seventh Ode: "Blessed are You and praiseworthy, O Lord, the God of our fathers, and praised and glorified is Your name unto the ages" (3:26) or allude to the fiery furnace, or the king's idol, or the "son of God" who appeared in the furnace with the Youths (3:24-25/91-92). The Great Canon of Saint Andrew of Crete places in our mouths Azariah's confession of sin. **ECL**

## SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

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

### HYMNS FROM THE FIERY FURNACE: THE SEVENTH AND EIGHT BIBLICAL ODES

Surprising though it may sound, one of the casualties of the Protestant reformation was the Bible. Luther and later reformers rejected seven Old Testament books which were not included in the Hebrew Bible that Christian scholars were rediscovering in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. These books, Baruch, Tobit, Judith, Wisdom of Solomon, Wisdom of Sirach, and two books of the Maccabees had all been translated or collected by Jews in Greek before the time of Christ, and they had been included in all Christian versions of the Bible for 1500 years. Protestant Bibles in English do not print these books; Catholic and Orthodox editions do. By the same logic, the reformers also left out large sections of the book of Daniel including two hymns that the early Church included in its worship: the seventh and eighth biblical Odes (Daniel 3:26-45 and 3:52-88).

Daniel 1 provides the back story. Daniel, along with the three Hebrew Youths Hananiah, Azariah, and Mishael, were among the young nobles carried off in the first Babylonian invasion of Jerusalem to be re-educated for service in the Babylonian court. They steadfastly

resisted assimilation, kept kosher, continued to worship only the Lord, and bested their captors repeatedly by their superior wisdom and grace.

In their faithfulness and their success, Daniel and the Youths resemble Joseph, son of Jacob, who rose from slavery to be second only to Pharaoh in Egypt (Genesis 37-50), and Esther, the Jewish concubine of the King of Persia who saved her people from extermination. All these young people embody what the Old Testament calls Wisdom. The books of Proverbs, Wisdom, and Sirach teach the prudence needed to survive and even thrive in a sinful world while remaining innocent and obedient to the Lord's commandments.

The seventh and eighth Odes come from the well-known account of the fiery furnace (Daniel 3). King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon appears as a buffoon capable of speaking only in absolutes and threats. He commissioned a golden idol, whether of himself or some false god the Bible does not say. He gathered all his lackeys and issued an absurd command. Whenever the king gave the musical signal, life was supposed to stop

all over the Babylonian Empire as all the loyal subjects fell on their faces to worship a nameless, faceless something pretending to be divine. The whole chapter is littered with lists of strange foreign words—titles of imperial officials, names of musical instruments, and various articles of Babylonian clothing—by which Daniel subtly mocks the Empire and its supposed superiority.

Some jealous Babylonian courtiers were quick to report that the Three Hebrew Youths were ignoring this decree, and they were hauled before an enraged (as always) Nebuchadnezzar. He threatened: "you shall be cast into the burning fiery furnace. Then what god is there who will deliver you from my hand?" (Daniel 3:15). The Youths have a ready answer: "There is a God in the heavens whom we serve, and He is able to save us from the burning fiery furnace; and He will deliver us from your hands, O king. But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods, nor worship the golden image you set up" (Daniel 3:17-18).

This response is full of Wisdom. The Youths are polite but firm. They know

there is one God, and they know He can save them. They also recognize God's absolute and mysterious freedom. Whether or not God will save them, He is their God, and they will not worship another.

Now so furious that "his face changed," Nebuchadnezzar reacted with even more exaggeration and ordered his furnace heated up seven times hotter than usual (Daniel 3:19). The Youths were tossed into the furnace bound and overdressed in all their Babylonian finery "but they walked about in the midst of the flame singing to God and praising the Lord" (Daniel 3:24). The seventh and eighth biblical Odes record their words.

The setting for these two Odes continues to challenge us today. The Three Hebrew Youths model Wisdom in their prudence, their fidelity to the Lord, and their ability to distinguish temporary convenience from eternal values. They steadfastly resist any assimilation to a dominant culture that might distance them from their covenant relationship with the Lord. Saint Paul encourages Christians to do the same (Romans 12:2). The text invites us to re-evaluate secular powers. Like Pharaoh in Exodus, and like the various Herods in the New Testament, Nebuchadnezzar, who tyrannized a huge empire, was no match for a Wisdom that relies on God's plan and God's power. **ECL**

# SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

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

## HYMNS OF THE THREE HEBREW YOUTHS: THE EIGHTH ODE OF MATINS

Like the Seventh Ode of Matins, the Hymn of the Three Hebrew Youths appears in the account of the fiery furnace of Babylon in Daniel 3. Hananiah, Azariah and Mishael, three noble teenagers exiled from Jerusalem to Babylon along with Daniel, were condemned to death by King Nebuchadnezzar for refusing to worship his golden idol (3:1-24). Between the Prayer of Azariah (the Seventh Ode; 3:26-45) and the Hymn of the Three Youths (3:52-90), we learn that the Babylonians kept stoking the furnace with every combustible they had. Meanwhile an angel joined the Youths and transformed the flames into breezy dew (3:46-50). The Prayer of Azariah was, in one sense, a plea for deliverance. The Hymn of the Three Youths is an act of thanksgiving in response to their salvation by the angel.

The Hymn of the Three Youths opens with a series of six traditional Jewish “Blessed are You” phrases that move from God’s heavenly Temple to “the firmament of heaven” (3:52-56). For each of these blessings, there is a response of giving praise “unto the ages” (the words vary slightly in each). Such a symphony of praise from a wide range of God’s animate and inanimate creatures is also found in Psalm 148 which is sung daily at Matins.

Once the Hymn crosses the firmament, that imagined boundary between heaven and earth, a regular pattern emerges. The Hymn invites: “Bless the Lord, all you works of the Lord: praise and exalt Him above all unto the ages” and

repeats that refrain seventeen times for specific creatures of the sky: first angels and then the heavens, the sun, the moon, and every imaginable feature of weather (3:57-73). A new series of fourteen invitations (3:74-87) begins: “Let the earth bless the Lord” and specifically addresses various types of landscape and animals, always with the same refrain. The focus narrows to Israel and its (now exiled and jobless) priests, the “servants of the Lord” (either liturgical ministers or the congregation in general), and “holy men of humble heart” (Israelites led to repentance by the experience of the Babylonian invasions). Remarkably, the Hymn next addresses the “spirits and souls of the just” (3:86), clearly expressing faith in life after death and correcting the older idea that the dead cannot praise the Lord (Isaiah 38:18; Psalm 6:5; Psalm 88:11; Psalm 115:17).

Next, the Youths include themselves among those praising and exalting the Lord specifically for saving them in the furnace (3:88). The Hymn concludes by quoting Psalm 136:1.26 (the *Polyelej* of Matins): “Give thanks to the Lord for He is good, for His mercy endures forever.” Lastly, the Hymn invites us to join: “Bless the Lord, the God of Gods, all you who worship Him; praise and exalt Him above all forever” (3:89-90).

The destruction of the Temple had been more than a military catastrophe for Israel. Practically, it was no longer possible to offer the sacrifices the Law itself prescribed, among them the sin

offering. Theologically, it cast doubt on whether the Lord was still with His people and whether they could worship Him at all. Azariah’s prayer (3:38-40) had raised these questions. Now, in the nastiest corner of the evil empire of Babylon, the Three Youths found the answer in prayer. They recognized God’s lordship over all creation, and they orchestrated a sacrifice of praise that included all creation in worshipping Him. They made a temple in the fiery furnace and the Lord’s presence among them was either symbolized or actually realized in the person of the “Angel,” who is also called a “Son of God” (3:92; a term sometimes used for angels: Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7) and is understood by a few ancient commentators to be an actual appearance of the Second Person of the Holy Trinity before His Incarnation (see the Canons for the Annunciation and Thomas Sunday). Isaiah (9:6) actually calls Emmanuel/

Christ the “Angel of Great Counsel” and the Lord seems personally present in several other visions of angels (Genesis 22:11-12, Exodus 3:1-5).

The *irmosy* (initial stanzas) of several Canons explore the interplay of fire and watery dew in their 8<sup>th</sup> Odes, comparing it to the mystery of Mary’s womb containing God without being consumed (Christmas), of Christ being baptized in the Jordan without extinguishing the fire of His divinity (Theophany), or to the unconsumed burning bush (Pentecost). A common *irmos* in tone 6 connects the furnace in the dew to a miracle of the Prophet Elijah involving fire and water (1 Kings 18). Most frequently the hymnographers incorporate some form of the refrain “praise Him above all forever” in the 8<sup>th</sup> Ode of their Canons. **ECL**

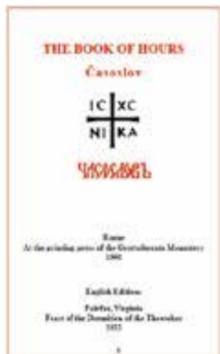
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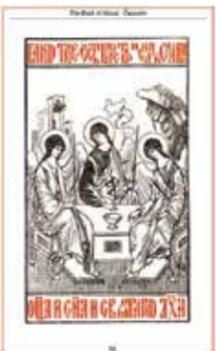
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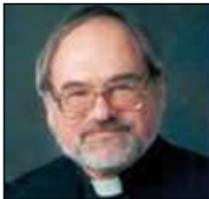
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By Archpriest David Petras, SEOD

## BAPTISM: RESURRECTION

The first meaning of baptism is rebirth in the life of the Holy Trinity. God is our Father and Christ our brother in the Holy Spirit. When we enter the water in baptism three times, the first symbolism then, is of the Holy Trinity, but the second is of Resurrection, for when our Lord died on the Cross, he was in the tomb for three days. The baptismal font, then, may be said to be a representation of the tomb because of the three-day burial of our Lord. Because of this, it became the tradition of the Church to celebrate baptism at Pascha, the feast of the Resurrection of our Lord. It was celebrated in the vigil Liturgy of the feast.

As the candidates were being baptized, there were readings from the Old Testament foreshadowing the mystery of baptism. The readings ended with the passage from the prophecy of Daniel, where the three youths, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, were rescued from the fiery furnace, a sign of life in faith and resurrection. The New Testament reading is Saint Paul's Epistle to the Romans, chapter 6, where baptism is described as dying and rising in Christ: "are you unaware that we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were indeed buried with him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live in newness of life." (Romans 6:3-4). This epistle is also read at every baptism.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* § 628 says, "Baptism, the original and full

sign of which is immersion, efficaciously signifies the descent into the tomb by which the Christian who dies to sin with Christ in order to live a new life." (Cf. Romans 6:4). I commented on both of these ideas (rebirth and resurrection) in the catechetical book *Light for Life* (p. 74). These two ideas are the main chords of a theology of baptism: "Water cleanses, refreshes, and is essential for life. As such it is a symbol of rebirth, of life. Water also carries an element of death, of destruction. Water, which parted for the Chosen People fleeing Egypt, drowned their masters. And so, it also represents death: the burial and resurrection of Jesus. In the Paschal Canon we sing, "Yesterday I was buried with you, O Christ [referring to the baptisms on Holy Saturday], but today I rise, resurrected with you."

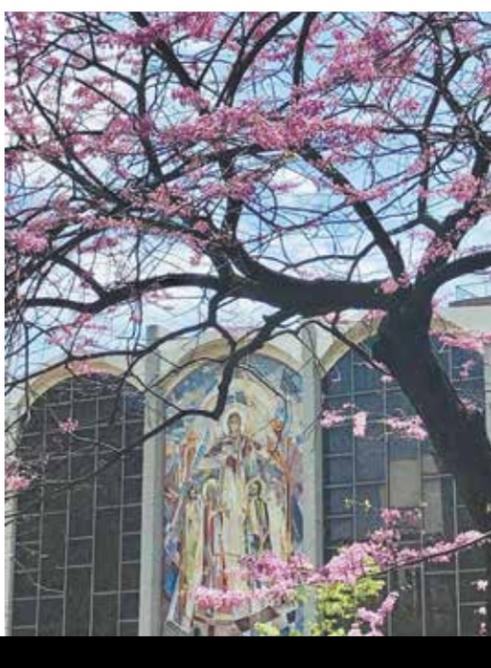
The baptism in the Jordan is a synopsis of the whole gospel, the gospel in miniature. By his humble descent even to death on the cross, Jesus was exalted above all other names (Philippians 2) and brought the human race the gift of life. The entrance into the Jordan river is the entrance of God into the world. The descent into the water is the burial in the tomb. Just as Christ was condemned for blasphemy on the cross, his baptism is his acceptance of repentance for sin. On the Cross, Jesus was revealed as the Son of God because of his love. In the Jordan, he was revealed as the Son of God by two witnesses, the Father and the Holy Spirit. Because of this, our baptism is also our death to sin and resurrection to eternal life.

This is shown also by an identification of the descent into the Jordan with the descent of Jesus into Hades. The descent into Hades is a Christian story expressing Jesus' victory over death by the Cross and Resurrection. In this tradition, Hades is personified, and in the Liturgy, the Jordan is also personified. "The waters saw the Lord and were terrified." (Psalm 76:17). "The heads of the dragons in the river were crushed." (Psalm 73:13). "Christ sanctified us in the waters and crushed the heads of the dragons in the water." Just as Jesus lifts out Adam and Eve from Hades, so Jacob of Serugh describes how Jesus explains his baptism to John, "I am trying to find the lost Adam; let me go down and look for Adam, the fair image."

Baptism is a spiritual dying and rising in Christ, a laying down of our lives in obedience to God, concomitant with the will to even lay down our bodily lives for the faith if necessary. Baptism is a radical rejection of what is evil and the commitment to following the way of Christ, even to the point of death. Saint Paul concludes, "Consequently, you, too, must think of yourselves as being dead to sin and living for God in Christ Jesus." (Romans 6:11). Baptism is worship of God, as Saint Paul later says in Romans: "I urge you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, your spiritual worship. Do not conform yourself to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect." (Romans 12:1-2).

The passage from Romans 6, therefore, has become the most important theological source in the Byzantine tradition. It is a shift from an earlier emphasis on the baptism in the Jordan. Both ideas were found in East and West, but it was a matter of emphasis. Professor Gabriele Winkler wrote, "In the fourth century, however, the development of the whole baptismal liturgy underwent considerable change .... The baptismal font, once seen as womb and also referred to as Jordan, changes now ... into sepulcher and grave; the immersion becomes the imitation of Christ's burial and resurrection."

Baptism and the Eucharist are joined in this – they are both worship and sacrifice, drawing their meaning and effectiveness from the death of Jesus on the cross and his resurrection. Baptism, then, can be understood only through the lens of the resurrection. We are now able to read the commission of our Lord, who suffered on the Cross and rose from the dead, to baptize, which is seen by many theologians as the establishment of Christian baptism: [Jesus said] "All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20). **ECL**



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# THE BYZANTINE LITURGY

By Archpriest David Petras, SEOD

## BAPTISM: RITUALS AND WORDS

The rituals of the Church are made up of words and gestures. While it is conceivable that a particular ritual might only be a physical gesture, in the Church all ritual actions are accompanied by a word. Saint Augustine observed this about church rituals: "The word comes to the element and a sacrament happens." (Tract on John 80,3). It is to deal with this observation, that, we say a "sacramental mystery" is a ritual action made up of a human word and a physical element. I think this can be generalized to any ritual action.

The liturgical worship of the Church is different from other religious systems. It is true that the Church does consider its sacramental system a "mystery," but it is not a mystery in the same sense as other ritual religions. For the Christian, "mys-

tery" does not denote a complex, elitist, gnostic-type system, but a relationship with God that is open to all human beings. For the Christian, "mystery" is not something hidden from the masses of people but is open to all. Saint Paul says about "mystery," "I am a minister in accordance with God's stewardship given to me to bring to completion for you the word of God, the mystery hidden from ages and from generations past. But now it has been manifested to His holy ones, to whom God chose to make known the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; it is Christ in you, the hope for glory." (Colossians 1:25-27) He is, of course, not speaking here about ritual as such, but the same principle applies to the content of our faith as to the ritual that expresses it. Having said that, note, in regard to

mystery, Christianity is a plain message, accessible to all, not hidden in obscure myths or esoteric magic rites.

For a period in the early history of the Church, there was a period in which the rites of the church were emphasized as a kind of hidden knowledge. Catechumens were taught the basics of the faith, but they were dismissed before the sacramental mystery was celebrated. They were not able to see the bread and wine, to hear the prayer of offering and to partake of Holy Communion until they were baptized. Then, the rites were explained to them after baptism in a series of instructions called “mystagogia.” However, this was not to make Christianity an esoteric religion, but instead was intended to instill a respect for the rituals of the church in the mass of people who were being converted from paganism or from unbelief. There must, however, be a moderation here. We need some standard of faith, and we yet need to instill respect for the way we express faith in worship, but we must also not make of Christianity an elitist religion. That is what is important.

Some people erroneously believe that we must put “mystery” into our worship by our own human powers. We should use obscure rituals that no one can understand without explanation, or we should worship in a foreign language, sometimes called a “sacral language,” because we should not be able to understand the mystery. Saint Paul has told us in Colossians that the mys-

tery has been revealed. Even after its revelation, we remain unable, of course, to understand the depths of God’s wisdom and love, but that does not mean we should deliberately try to make it obscure. And this is why our Christian worship is a combination of gesture and word. Word to guide us in understanding, gesture because not everything can be said in words. We may say we love our children, or husbands and wives may say they love each other, but love is not complete unless we embrace and kiss one another.

In the course of our articles, we have been looking at how we become members of the people of God – the rites of initiation. We have seen the beginning of the process, how we come to faith, how we become a candidate for baptism, how we become a “learner,” the technical word “catechumen,” though most of us enter the Church as infants. We then saw how we were “anointed,” becoming other “Christs,” for the Greek word “Christ” means “the anointed one.” Finally, we saw how we were reborn through water, the source of life and cleansing. Jesus, in fact, promised, “whoever drinks the water I shall give will never thirst; the water I shall give will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” (John 4:14).

Each of the steps in this process are accompanied with words, for Christ is “the Word of God,” and we are rational creatures that offer to God our sacrifices of words. There are prayers for making

a catechumen and for our freedom from the evil one through exorcism – not the dramatic exorcisms that entertainment likes to provide, but the power of God to free us from the world of selfishness, deceit, and power over others, and to enter the kingdom of God established on love for one another. At the beginning of the rites of initiation, the words are not just empty wishes, but the proclamation of the action of the Holy Spirit. The baptizer performs a gesture, laying his hand upon the candidate and proclaiming, “Free this person from the ancient deceit and fill him (her) with faith in you, hope in you and love for you, that they would know that you are the only true God.”

The ritual actions of anointing and baptism are accompanied with formulas, proclaiming that we are entering into the life of the Holy Trinity. When being anointed with oil, then, the priest says the words, “The servant of God

is anointed with the oil of gladness in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” When washed with water, the priest proclaims, “The servant of God is baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” The initiation is not yet complete, but after baptism in water, the priest prays, guiding us into the fullness of the beginning of the life in Christ, “Now, to your newly enlightened servant, you have been pleased to give new birth by water and the Spirit, for the forgiveness of his (her) voluntary and involuntary sins. Now, O Master and gracious King of all, grant him (her) also the seal of the gift of your holy, almighty, and adorable Spirit, and the communion of the holy body and precious blood of your Christ.” It is to the mysteries of Chrismation and Holy Communion that we must now turn our attention. **ECL**

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## THE BYZANTINE LITURGY

By Archpriest David Petras, SEOD

### THE RIGHTS OF INITIATION: CHRISMATION

When we are baptized, we become children of God. We are baptized “in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” Saint Paul expresses this, “But when the fullness of time had come, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to ransom those under the law, so that we might receive adoption. As proof that you are children, God sent the spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying out, ‘Abba, Father!’” (Galatians 4:4-6). God becomes our Father by adoption; the Son of God, Jesus, our Lord, becomes our brother; as Scripture says, “He who consecrates and those who are being consecrated all have one origin. Therefore, He is not ashamed to call them ‘brothers.’ (Hebrews 2:11).” We are baptized with the baptism of our Lord: “After Jesus was baptized, He came up from the water and behold, the heavens were opened for Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming upon him. And a voice came from the heavens, saying, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.” (Matthew 3:16-17). This is all done in the power of the Holy Spirit. When Jesus rose from the dead, He confirmed the faith of the Apostles, and told them to await the promise from on high. Our baptisms are dynamic, and so, even after we enter this new life, we receive the gift of the Spirit to seal and manifest this new relationship.

After the Resurrection, therefore, Jesus sent the Holy Spirit upon the apostles so that they were able to proclaim our faith. Saint Paul writes, “no one can say, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ except by the Holy Spirit.” (1 Corinthians 12:3). Saint Paul likewise teaches that this gift of the Spirit is an essential part of our relationship with God, “In Him you also, who have heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and have believed in Him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, which is the first installment of our inheritance toward redemption as God’s possession, to the praise of His glory.” (Ephesians 1:13-14). This is a wonderful gift, as Saint Paul describes, “the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.” (Galatians 4:22-23). This is why, in the sacramental mystery of the gift of the Spirit, after baptism in water giving us new life in God, the priest anoints us with chrism, saying, “The seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

The sacramental mystery of the gift of the Holy Spirit is called chrismation. Chrism is the material substance that is the sign of the Spirit. It is olive oil, to which a number of fragrances have been added, each fragrance a symbol of a gift given by the Holy Spirit. In the first anointing, marking us as “anointed,” or “Christs,”—from which we receive the

word “christening,”—we are anointed with simple olive oil blessed by the priest. The second or more solemn anointing, with the specially prepared olive oil filled with fragrance, the priest anoints us with this chrism which is consecrated by the bishop. In his consecration, the bishop prays over the chrism, “Send your Holy Spirit upon this *myron* (the Greek word for the oil), and make of it a royal chrism, a spiritual chrism, a protector of life, a sanctifier of our souls and bodies, an oil of gladness, anticipated in the Law, and shining with light in the New Testament.” The prayer continues saying that the Lord anointed priests and high priests, prophets and kings, and that “with it you anointed the holy apostles.” A second epiclesis is then added: “Yes, Master God Ruler of all, by the visitation of Your adorable and Holy Spirit, make of it a garment of incorruptibility and a seal bringing perfection, which imprints on those who have received the holy bath, the holy naming of your only-begotten Son and of the Holy Spirit, so that they may be recognized in Your sight as friends and citizens, slaves and servants, sanctified in soul and body.”

Theodore of Mopsuestia emphasized the oil as a symbol of immortality. Clothes only cover the body, he said, but the oil penetrates into the body, which then acquires immortality at the

time of resurrection. The chrism was significant for this because, counter to the pre-baptismal anointing with olive oil, the chrism was perfumed, scented, which underlined our identification with Christ, “the good odor of Christ” in 1 Corinthians 2:15. Saint Cyril of Jerusalem compares the chrism to the Eucharist – just as the bread and wine are no longer ordinary, but the body and blood of Christ, so the chrism is the “gracious gift of Christ and the Holy Spirit.” Few fathers went this far in describing the chrism. Like a mystery, chrismation is entering a new world. Saint Cyril preached, “Already, my dear candidates for Enlightenment, scents of Paradise are wafted towards you, already you are culling mystic blossoms for the weaving of heavenly garlands, already the fragrance of the Holy Spirit has blown about you ... You have walked in procession with the tapers of brides in your hands and the desire of heavenly citizenship in your hearts.” (*Procatechesis* 1). No contact with God leaves us unchanged. The contact with the mystery of chrism transforms us, as Saint Gregory the Theologian observes, “Let us be healed also in smell, that we ... may smell the ointment that was poured out for us, spiritually receiving it; and that we may be so formed and transformed by it, that from us, too, a sweet odor may be smelled.” (*Homily* 40.38.) Truly, as Saint Cyril of Jerusalem said, the seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit in the sacramental mystery is a mark of ownership by God by which the Lord recognizes what is his own. **ECL**



## PRIESTLY REFLECTIONS

Father Paul Varchola West

### “BE MERCIFUL...”

**B**e merciful, even as your Father is merciful. (Lk 6:36)

Mercy—compassion, charity, grace, forgiveness, humanity, kindness, sympathy, generosity. When we hear this command to be merciful as our Father is merciful, we need to realize that within the word mercy all of these synonymous actions are also present. These actions, however, are seemingly absent from society these days. Perhaps even more alarming, these actions are becoming increasingly absent from Christians as our world becomes increasingly polarized.

In our zeal to “defend the Faith,” or in our eagerness and hopefulness to “bring people to Jesus Christ,” we may come across as lacking compassion to those who might not fully understand our Faith or our intentions. Even worse, at times we may forget to be compassionate as our human emo-

tions and anxieties get the better of us. If we find ourselves lacking compassion, mercy, grace, and understanding, it is not cause to lose hope as we have the absolute best beacon to light our way back to the narrow and righteous path—Jesus Christ!

When Christ teaches to “be merciful, even as your Father is merciful,” we need to remember that the Father’s mercy is perfect and unconditional, whereas ours, in our fallen human nature, is not. This is OK. Christ was well aware of this when He gave us these words to be merciful. In this teaching, what we are being called to is a life of improving our mercy, perfecting our compassion, growing in our forgiveness, increasing in our charity, always using the Father as the standard. In our efforts to grow in Faith, we must realize that the goal of attaining the perfection of the Father is a lifetime task, and then some!

*But I say to you that hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. (Luke 6:27-28)*

These are all things that the Father does simply by His nature. Once again, Christ is directing us to be like the Father, not like other humans.

Being called to love your “enemies,” or rather “those who don’t think or act like us,” is not an easy task. Often, this “love” may come with a subconscious condition of something to the effect of, “oh, I will love them as soon as they clean up their act,” or, “well, I’m lecturing them and ‘putting them in their place’ because I love them and want the best for them.” In wanting the best for humanity, in desire to cause conversion, we may very well be undercutting mercy and not even be aware of it.

According to what Christ teaches here in Luke 6, the mindset should rather be, “I love them, and because I love them, I truly wish they would stop sinning and see the Truth that Christ is preaching. Until then, I will love them unceasingly and show them mercy and kindness continually until they come around, never turning them away.”

This is how the Father is merciful!

Let us sinners remember the mercy that the Father shows us, through Christ, so that we may emulate this mercy in an effort to bring about conversion in the hearts of those who have gone astray.

**ECL**

## SCHOOL OF PRAYER

Father G. Scott Boghossian



### THE POWER OF FAITH

**H**e who says, “God never hears and answers my prayers,” and he who says, “God always hears and answers my prayers,” are both right! Why? Our Lord said, “According to your faith be it done to you” (Mt. 9:29).

To the centurion, Jesus said, “Go; let it be done for you as you have believed” (Mt. 8:13). To the woman with the hemorrhage, Christ said, “Take heart, daughter; your faith has made you well” (Mt. 9:22). He opened the eyes of the two blind men saying, “According to your faith be it done to you” (Mt. 9:29). To the Canaanite woman Jesus said, “O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire” (Mt. 15:28). To Bartimaeus He said, “Go your way; your faith has made you well” (Mk. 10:52), and to the grateful leper, “Your faith has made you well” (Lk. 17:19).

We ask, “why didn’t God intervene? Why didn’t He do anything?” We don’t know the mysteries of divine providence. We don’t understand why God allows some to suffer and fail and others to prosper and succeed. However, we can always be assured that “God works all things together for good for those who love Him and are called according to His purpose” (Rm. 8:28). As Job says, “The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away. As it has pleased the Lord, so it is done” (Job 1:21). Nevertheless, Jesus challenges us to have faith for a miracle. As He said to Martha, “Did I not tell you that if you believed

you would see the glory of God?” (Jn. 11:40).

When Jesus was in Nazareth, Matthew tells us that “He did not work many miracles there because of their lack of faith” (13:58), and Mark says that “He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them. And He marveled because of their unbelief.” When the Apostles had trouble casting out a demon, the Savior told them it was “because of your little faith” (Mt. 17:19).



Could this be one reason, among many, for our dwindling numbers, parish closures, and lack of vocations to the priesthood and religious life? Our secular age, the watered-down liberal theology in many academic institu-

tions, and the pseudo-scholarship that relegates the miracles of the Bible to myth and legend all have done significant damage and robbed us of answers to prayer. The serpent inspires doubt, unbelief, and skepticism toward the Word of God (Gen. 3:1). In contrast, Jesus Christ says, “Only believe” (Mk. 5:36), “All things are possible to him who believes” (Mk. 9:23).

The Bible assures us that God responds to faith. “Whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith” (Mt. 21:22). “All things are possible for one

prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours” (Mk. 11:22-24).

Pray for faith, as the Apostles did, “Lord, increase our faith” (Lk. 17:5). Say with the father of the boy afflicted with an unclean spirit, “Lord, I believe; help my unbelief” (Mk. 9:24).

Exercise your faith. Start small. When you pray, believe that God is hearing and answering your prayer. Get in the habit, not just of asking, but of asking and believing that the answer is coming. Thank God in advance, even before you see the answer. “Thank God ahead of time!” said the Venerable Solanus Casey (1870-1957).

Read, hear, and meditate on the Word. The more we expose ourselves to the Word of God in scripture, in the liturgy, and through spiritual reading, the more our faith will grow. Saint Paul says, “faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ” (Rm. 10:17). The more we read the Bible, pay close attention to the readings and liturgical hymns in church, memorize and meditate on the promises of God found in scripture and the writings of the saints, the greater the faith we shall have.

May your prayer life be empowered and revitalized by the power of faith. “According to your faith” shall it be done! (Mt. 9:29). **ECL**

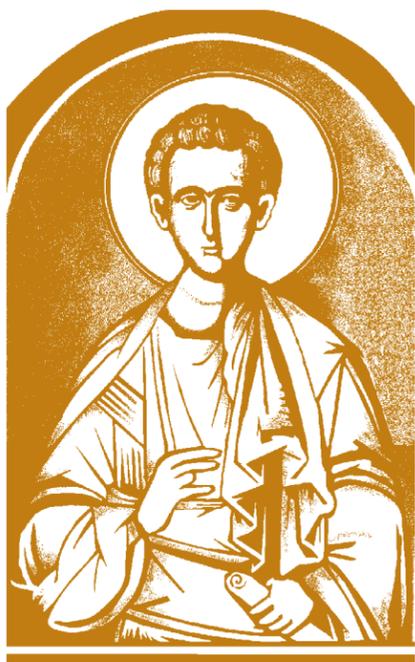
who believes” (Mk. 9:23). “If you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you” (Mt. 17:20). “Whatever you ask in

# SEASONAL REFLECTIONS

Father Ronald Hatton



## A SEASON OF HOPE



Icon of the Apostle Philip

The changing of the seasons once again brings us to autumn. In our liturgical calendar, our thoughts are inexorably pulled towards the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord, whether we realize it or not. As Eastern Catholic Christians, the two major signposts of our lives are Christmas and Easter: God, incarnate in the womb of the blessed Theotokos, reveals Himself to the world He created, in the form of a child, and we celebrate this great fact in the Feast of the Nativity. As the world turns, and winter changes to spring, we are presented with the earth-shaking reason He came into the world. Every time we celebrate the Divine Liturgy, or read our Bibles each day, we are shown the *real* reality, if one can phrase it that way, of the world, our place in the world, and

our purpose in the world. In a studied reading of Old or New Testaments, we are presented with God's will for us, and the fact that we must respond to the gift of Life, Love, and Salvation that He has given us.

I recently listened to a podcast of a secular person who opines on politics, science, and whether we are a simulation running on some sort of cosmic computer, programs that have no free will but are being controlled by The Programmer. It sounds like the 1980's Disney movie *TRON* is his bible! He had recently had COVID, and was speaking on this day as to his impression that his current mood, etc., could be the result of what they call "Long COVID" – long-term effects of having had the virus. What really struck me was that, although this person thinks he's got it all together and figured out, to one degree or another, he feels he has lost a reason to get up in the morning, that he feels he lacks purpose. He reassured his listeners that he was not going to do something drastic to himself, but was just telling us how it is. Let's not go into the fact that he has also recently divorced a wife of less than a year, experienced the death of a stepson to Fentanyl, but, whatever is driving his feelings these days, the over-arching feeling is the lack of purpose, of reason to be.

I could go into a long *pop-psychologizing* of all this, but I do wonder if his rejection of God – which he has openly pro-

fessed, although he *does* seem to believe that he is a computer program created by some sort of programmer – is really at the root of his feelings of lack of worth, of lack of purpose, etc. Whether this is actively true or not – I do not know him personally, and am just a parish priest and sinner trying to attain my own salvation – I think what I have described can rightly be said of a majority of people in the world, whether in the past or present. Lack of Belief, lack of Faith in the Creator of the Universe and of each and every one of us, are the symptoms of the "long COVID" that affects the world: Sin and Death. We are in such need of God, in need of His salvation, in need of His Holy Spirit in all we think, say, and do, that if we deny Him, deny that there are such things as Sin and Redemption from Sin, we are truly living a life without purpose, without reason. It is only in God that we find who we are, why we were made, why we were given the life we have been given.

As the Holy Apostle Paul says in his first letter to the Thessalonians, "We do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, so that you may not grieve like those who have no hope" (4:13). Although the pandemic has all but destroyed parishes, families, and relationships, we as Christians *have hope*. Hope that those who do not believe do not have. And that hope is presented to us all through our Liturgical Year, be it major or mi-

nor Holy Days. It is presented to us in the Holy Mysteries, from the Rites of Initiation through to Last Rites. We receive strength and grace through the Sign of the Cross, through sacramentals such as holy water, though the icons, and through one another as we join together to worship and praise God, Who loves us and gave Himself for us on the Cross so that we might respond and be reunited with Him. And we are united with Him and receive His grace most intimately in the Eucharist, the Holy Communion with Him in His Body and Blood.

In November, we begin our 40-day pilgrimage to the Cave at Bethlehem, where we see for ourselves God the Son in the flesh, and where we bow down and worship Him as our King and our God. It is a time of preparation, of purification, without which we would be unable to recognize and receive the Father's gift of His Only-begotten Son. We should not take the season of Advent, of Saint Philip's Fast, lightly, despite the lapses of years gone by. God has given us the seasons, our calendar of feasts and fasts, and His salvation. Have a blessed Advent season, and may it lead you to a blessed and life-changing Christmas. **ECL**



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### Presenters



Father Thomas Shubeck, PhD and his wife 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.



## Carpathian Village Saint Nicholas Shrine

802 Snow Hill Road, Cresco, PA 18326-7810  
Tel (570) 595-3265 - Cell (570) 650-3252  
Email: carpathianvillage@earthlink.net  
Father Michael J. Salnicko, Director

*Carpathian Village is presently taking reservations for group retreats, ski weekends, family vacations, day of recollection weekends, parish or group picnics, and private retreats. To schedule your event or for more information call or email Fr Michael.*

*Events Scheduled as of October 1, 2022*

### 2023 Eparchial Events

#### “Eparchial Teen Rally 2023”

Thursday June 22nd thru Sunday June 25th  
Camp Director Fr. Andrej Dumnich

#### “Altar Server Retreat Congress 2023”

Sunday July 16th thru Thursday July 20th  
Camp Director Rev. Deacon Stephen Russo

#### “Annual Saint Nicholas Pilgrimage 2023”

Sunday August 6th  
Pilgrimage Co-Ordinator Very Rev. Michael Salnicko

#### “Family Weekend Retreat Camp 2023”

Friday August 11th thru Sunday August 13th  
Camp Director/Retreat Master Fr. Andrej Dumnich

### 2022-23 Parish Events

#### “Annual Philippian Fast Teen Retreat”

Friday November 18th thru Sunday November 20th  
St Ann's ECF, Harrisburg PA

#### “Teen Ski Retreat Weekend”

Friday January 13th thru Monday January 16th  
St Ann's ECF, Harrisburg PA

#### “Teen Ski Retreat Weekend”

Friday February 17th thru Monday February 20th  
St Ann's ECF, Harrisburg PA

#### “Annual Great Fast Teen Retreat”

Friday March 17th thru Sunday March 19th  
St Ann's ECF, Harrisburg PA

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

Is God calling you to be a 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



### Eastern Catholic Life

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## UPCOMING EPARCHIAL AND PARISH EVENTS

### NOVEMBER, 2022

- 8 Holy Archangel Michael  
*Solemn holy day*
- 14 Holy Apostle Philip  
*The Christmas Fast begins at sundown*
- 21 Entrance of the Virgin Theotokos into the Temple  
*Solemn Holy Day*
- 24-25 Thanksgiving Day Holiday  
*Civic holiday \* chancery closed*

### DECEMBER, 2022

- 6 Our Holy Father Nicholas of Myra  
*Solemn Holy Day*
- 8 Maternity of the Holy Anna  
*Solemn Holy Day*
- 11 Sunday of the Holy Forefathers
- 18 Sunday of the Holy Fathers  
*Sunday before Christmas*

- 24 Vigil Eve of Christmas  
*Chancery closed December 26-30*
- 25 Holy Nativity of Our Lord, God, and Savior, Jesus Christ, According to the Flesh  
*Holy Day of Obligation*

THE BYZANTINE CATHOLIC EPARCHY OF PASSAIC  
subscribes to the

*Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*

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

Father David J. Baratelli, Ed.S., M.Div.  
Safe Environment Program Coordinator • 732-280-2682

Dr. Maureen Daddona, Ph.D.  
Victim's Assistance Coordinator • 516-623-6456