



EASTERN CATHOLIC LIFE

Official Publication of the Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Passaic

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“GO, THEREFORE, AND MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS”

A New Era Begins at the *Eastern Catholic Life*

By Father James Badeaux

“Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations” In 1996, Father James Hayer was appointed Editor of the *Eastern Catholic Life* by then-Bishop Andrew Pataki. Under his leadership, the *ECL* entered the modern era, ushering in the first use of desktop publishing software, and, indeed, the first use of computers at all, in putting together this publication. During his tenure, Father Hayer set the standard, which the current staff will endeavor not only to maintain but also to bring in new directions. We are so grateful to Father Hayer for his hard work and dedication and leaving us such a well-maintained publication, and we realize the difficult task ahead in fostering the legacy which he has left us.

Building upon Father Hayer’s legacy, we, the new staff, would like to take the words of Our Lord Jesus Christ from Saint Matthew’s Gospel Chapter 28, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations: baptizing them in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit...” and make them our own. To us, this is the only mission statement we need; indeed, we believe it is the mission statement *par excellence* of all Christians. It is the impetus for all of our endeavors in bringing you this newspaper.

What will the paper look like in the future? While you may notice subtle design changes, we have kept many of the ideas begun by Father Hayer, including regular columnists and features, and have decided to bring on board additional regular contributors in order to fulfill our mission and to nourish you, our readers, so that you may more fully live out your Christian witness in

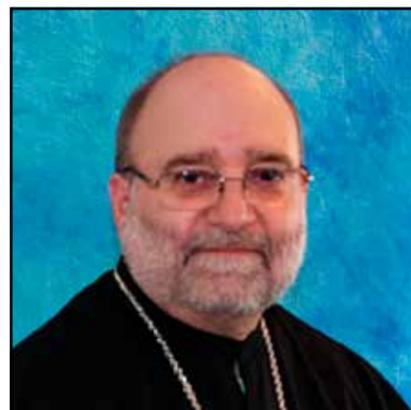
the context of the Byzantine Catholic Church. You may look forward to reading these new features in future issues.

With this issue, I would like to formally introduce the new *ECL* staff: I, Father James Badeaux, am the new Editor-in-Chief. Father Ron Hatton is the new Assistant Editor and Deacon Lewis Rabayda is the new Layout Editor. We are assisted in these tasks by Diane Rabiej and Maureen French, who both work at our Chancery Offices in Woodland Park.



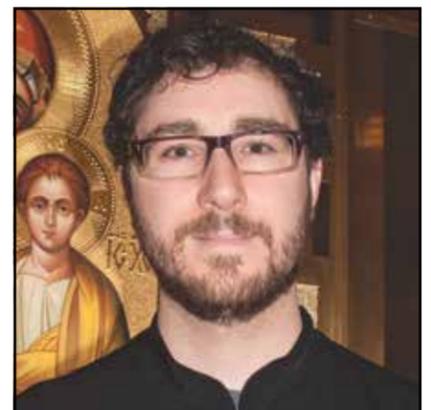
I, Father James Badeaux, was born near New Orleans, LA, in 1970, and was raised there until I attended college. In 1992, while a student at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, I was received into Full Communion with the Catholic Church. Shortly thereafter, I began attending Saint Nicholas of Myra Byzantine Catholic Mission in New Orleans and became a parishioner there. In 1994, after graduating from LSU, I moved to Florida for employment and became an active parishioner at All Saints Byzantine Catholic Church in North Ft. Myers, FL, from where I was accepted as a seminarian for the Eparchy of Passaic, and was sent to Saints Cyril and Methodius Byzantine Catholic Seminary in Pittsburgh. I was or-

dained a priest by the late Bishop Andrew Pataki in June, 1999, at Saint Michael Cathedral in Passaic and my past assignments include Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church in Trenton, NJ; Saint John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church in Wilkes-Barre Township, PA; and Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church in Swoyersville, PA. Since 2007, I have been Pastor of Saint Michael Byzantine Catholic Church in Mont Clare, PA, and Administrator of Blessed Virgin Mary Byzantine Catholic Church in Coatesville, PA. In 2000, I was appointed by Bishop Andrew to serve as Assistant Editor of the *Eastern Catholic Life*, helping Father Jim Hayer, the most recent editor, with preparation and editing of articles and photos for publication; layout; as well as by writing a regular column entitled, “Ask and You Shall Receive.” I served in this position until 2007. In 2014, Bishop Kurt asked me to serve as Editor of the *Eastern Catholic Life*, since Father Jim Hayer had recently been appointed to serve as Eparchial Protosyncellus.



Father Ronald Hatton was born in 1953, in Passaic, NJ. His family moved to Virginia Beach, VA, where he graduated from high school in 1971. He received a B.A.

in Computer Science and Swedish Language and Culture at North Park College in 1985. In 1989, his family was among the founders of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Byzantine Catholic Church, Virginia Beach, VA, where he was their first cantor. In 1991, he began his seminary formation at Saints Cyril and Methodius Byzantine Catholic Seminary, and was ordained by the late Bishop Michael J. Dudick, D.D., at Saint Michael Cathedral, Passaic, NJ, in May of 1995. His past assignments included Ascension of Our Lord Parish, Williamsburg, VA; Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish, Virginia Beach, VA, Saint John the Baptist Parish, Lansford, PA, Saint Mary Parish, Nesquehoning, PA, and assisting at Saint Mary Parish in Hillsborough, NJ. He is currently pastor of Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church, Danbury, CT, and administrator for Saint Nicholas Parish, Meriden, CT, and Saint Nicholas Parish, White Plains, NY. He was appointed Associate Editor of the *Eastern Catholic Life* by Bishop Kurt in 2014.



Deacon Lewis Rabayda was born in 1983 in Summit Hill, PA. After graduating from high school, he obtained a Bachelor’s Degree in Graphic Design from Pennsylvania

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I LIFT UP MY EYES...

Pastoral Reflections of Bishop Kurt

MAKING BITTER WATERS SWEET

Most people become irritable when they are hungry, although some people become despondent. Whatever our faults are—impatience, self-centeredness, pessimism—hunger seems to amplify them. One of the benefits of a fast is to highlight our faults. Just as a stress test tells the cardiologist what is wrong with our heart, and a road test tells a mechanic what is wrong with a car, a fast brings our faults to the surface so that we are aware of them and can apply medicine to them.

Everyone has the emotion of anger at some time or another. For some people, it is a way of life, their primary reaction to the world. For most people it is occasional. And for others, it is completely suppressed. These latter people are perhaps the angriest of all.

What is anger? Is it a sin? Anger is an emotion that tells us that there is something wrong, and is directed outside of ourselves. According to our religion, anger is not always wrong, and is sometimes necessary to make things right. However, because of our fallen nature, anger is often unjustified or misdirected. Sinful anger is traditionally one of the deadly sins—it is deadly because it can lead to many serious sins. Uncontrolled anger leads to domestic violence and even homicide. According to the Surgeon General, the leading cause of physical injury to women is domestic violence. Some people never act on their anger, but it still destroys the soul by driving away friends, killing love, or simply eating up time and energy.

What can we do about sinful anger? In our day, there are many resources of a psychological nature, and for people with serious problems there are support groups. I knew a prisoner who was in prison for other crimes, but out of all his resources for reform, he received the most help from an anger management group. Isn't a support group for virtue what the Church should be?

In the *Ladder of Divine Ascent*, Saint John Climacus gives a complete program for anger management and for healing. The first medicine for anger is mourning, by which he means repentance. To recognize sinful anger as a sin, and not as righteousness, is the first step in repentance. Once we recognize that our anger damages our relations with others, and therefore offends God

Who is Love, the sorrow that we feel about our sinfulness is the beginning of repentance. When sinful anger occurs occasionally, we turn to confession before God, and if necessary an apology to the injured party. An apology can be astonishingly effective—even when it is unaccepted, the treasure of humility is worth the pain.

All sin is based on a lie, and the lie that is underneath sinful anger is our belief that our anger is always justified. We imagine ourselves to be the instruments of God's righteousness in a sinful world. When you think about it that way, our anger appears comical, which indeed it is to an outsider. Nevertheless, it seems that people have an unquenchable thirst for this kind of self-righteousness, manifested in their unquenchable thirst for gossip and news. The attraction of gossip and news is the thrill of righteous anger that we feel when we see or hear about other people's sins.

In the *Ladder of Divine Ascent*, the holy saint gives a more detailed and colorful roadmap of the lies that lead to sinful anger when he tells us that after we have chained anger with mourning and meekness we are to interrogate it, "Tell us base idiot, what is the name of the father who begot you and the mother who brought you for evil into the world, and what are the names of your foul sons and daughters?" A less talented writer would simply say, "What are the causes of anger and what are its aftereffects?"

In case you are unsuccessful in chaining anger and interrogating it, Saint John tells us the answer himself. He says that the father of anger is "conceit", and the mothers of anger are "vainglory, love of money, greed, and sometimes lust." Conceit might be explained as excessive self-importance. When we see someone glued to the 24 hour news channel, what a comical but pitiful sight it is to see someone with no influence making pompous speeches to an empty room about what's wrong with the world and how it should be fixed. Saint John was right on target to say that conceit or the wrong kind of self-importance is the father of sinful anger. As for the mothers of anger, anything that we value more than God will make us lash out at others—when our dignity is unappreciated, or we are unnoticed or unthanked, or some-

one touches our property, or we are inflamed with unwarranted jealousy. (By the way: I think "mothers of anger" would be a good name for a punk rock band.) The children of anger, according to Saint John, are "remembrance of wrongs, hatred, enmity, and assertion of rights."

I said that the wrong kind of self-importance is the father of sinful anger. What is the right kind of self-importance? After all, we are not garbage, and it is a sin to think of ourselves that way. We are made in the image and likeness of God. When Saint Paul tells us to respect our bodies, he says, "Remember you were purchased and at a price." And when he tells us to avoid giving scandal to the weak, he says "your brother for whom Christ died." In other words, the Son of God purchased us with His life. When we are aware of our true importance, someone made in the image and likeness of God, someone created for virtue not for sin, someone for whom Christ died, we naturally mourn our sins including our sinful anger towards others whom God loves, and we endeavor to avoid sin in the future.

Anger leads to resentment, and resentment to bitterness. The grandchild of anger is bitterness. The scriptures give us the medicine for bitterness. When the Hebrews were in the desert, and their thirst was unquenchable because the waters were bitter, God told Moses to throw a piece of wood into the water, and it made it sweet. That wood was a type of the cross of Jesus. The bitterness in our lives from past anger is made sweet by the cross of Jesus. Bitterness is the anger of the past. Joseph was able to forgive his brothers, and even rejoice in their past injustice when he said to them, "it was not you who sent me here, but God...to preserve life." In the same way, Jesus knew that we intended evil with the injustice of the cross, but the Father intended good. What injustice have we ever suffered that is comparable to the injustice of Christ's death on the cross? When we accept our past as God's plan for our salvation, when we embrace the wood of the cross, the bitter waters in our lives become sweet.

+Kurt Burnett



The World Meeting of Families will take place in Philadelphia, PA, from September 22-25, 2015. This gathering will offer an Adult Congress and a Youth Congress for ages 6 to 17. The Adult Congress, for ages 18 and older, will consist of keynote presentations and breakout sessions that address the many ways in which families can strengthen their bonds, especially in the face of significant challenges facing the family globally in the 21st century. The

EPARCHIAL REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Youth Congress will provide interactive programs designed for young people to play, listen, serve, build and embrace the mission of love in a family.

Held every three years and sponsored by the Holy See's Pontifical Council for the Family, the World Meeting of Families is the world's largest Catholic gathering of families. Each World Meeting of Families has a theme that energizes and enlivens the event while adding great depth of meaning to our understanding of families. The theme of the World Meeting of Families - Philadelphia 2015 is "Love Is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive," emphasizing the impact of the love and life of families on our society.

We are hopeful that many of our families of the Eparchy of Passaic will participate.

- Please go to <http://www.worldmeeting2015.org> for more information and to register.

- Once you have registered, please forward a copy of your registration to the Eparchy of Passaic at secretary@dioceseofpassaic.org.

- Bishop Kurt is planning a special event that will bring together everyone who will be attending. The Eparchy will also be offering a partial registration reimbursement to families who attend with children.

If you have any questions, please e-mail Father Ed Cimbala at: FREDSTMARY@aol.com

DIRECTIVES FOR THE GREAT FAST

From the Office of the Bishop



FASTING REGULATIONS

- †All who receive Communion in the Eparchy of Passaic are required to abstain from meat on Wednesdays and Fridays of the Great Fast.
- †All adults who receive Communion in the Eparchy of Passaic are required to abstain from meat, eggs, and milk products on the first day of Lent, Monday, February 16, and on Great and Holy Friday, April 3.
- †These are the minimum requirements; however, the faithful are encouraged to do more.

Dispensation

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

LITURGICAL DIRECTIVES

Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts

- †All Pastors and Administrators are encouraged to celebrate the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts on Wednesdays and Fridays of the Great Fast.
- †A liturgical service at which Holy Communion is distributed may be celebrated on the other weekdays of the Great Fast.

We ask you to pray for peace throughout the world, and for the victims of war. Please remember in your prayers all those in the military who are serving our country throughout the world.

SCHEDULE OF LENTEN VESPERS AND CONFESSION

WYOMING VALLEY

Sunday, February 22	Saint Mary—Wilkes-Barre
Sunday, March 1	Saint John—Wilkes-Barre Twp
Sunday, March 8	Saint Michael—Pittston
Sunday, March 15	Saint Nicholas—Swoyersville
Sunday, March 22	Saint Mary—Kingston
Sunday, April 12	Saint Nicholas—Swoyersville

All Services begin at 3:00 p.m. followed by opportunity for Confession and Lenten refreshment Social Hour. April 12th followed by dinner at the Knights of Columbus, Luzern.

SCRANTON AREA

Sunday, February 22	Holy Ghost—Jessup
Sunday, March 1	Saint Nicholas—Old Forge CHANGED
Sunday, March 8	Saint Michael—Dunmore
Sunday, March 15	Saint Mary/Saint John—Scranton
Sunday, March 22	Saint John—Forest City CHANGED

All Services begin at 3:00 p.m. followed by opportunity for Confession and Lenten refreshment Social Hour.

GREATER HAZLETON AREA

Sunday, February 22	Saint Mary—Hazleton
Sunday, March 1	Saints Peter & Paul—Beaver Meadows
Sunday, March 8	Saint John the Baptist—Hazleton
Sunday, March 15	Saint Mary—Sheppton 4p.m.
Sunday, March 22	Saint Mary—Freeland
Sunday, March 29	Saint Michael—McAdoo

All Services begin at 3:00 p.m. except for Sheppton at 4p.m. All will be followed by a Lenten refreshment Social Hour.

CHESTER & MONTGOMERY COUNTIES

Sunday, March 1	Saint Michael—Mont Clare
Sunday, March 8	Saint John the Baptist—Pottstown
Sunday, March 15	Blessed Virgin Mary—Coatesville
Sunday, March 22	Saints Peter and Paul Ukrainian Catholic Church—Phoenixville CHANGED

All Services begin at 3:00 p.m. followed by opportunity for Confession and Lenten refreshment Social Hour. Dates subject to change. Please confirm with parish bulletin.



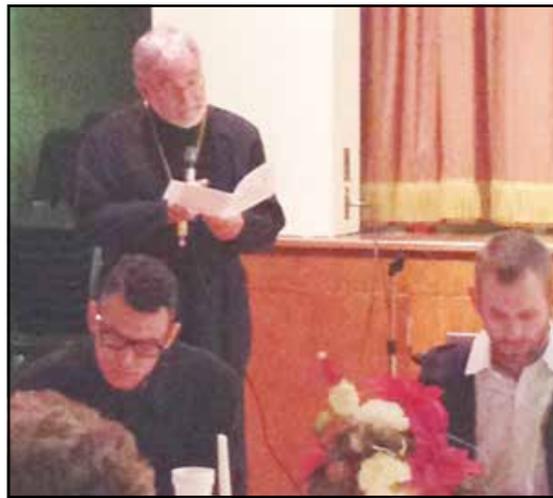
PEOPLE YOU KNOW

IN PHILADELPHIA...

Trans-Eparchial Christmas Celebration

There was a trans-eparchial celebration over the Nativity holiday, as many visitors attended Holy Ghost Byzantine Catholic Church, Philadelphia, PA, where the Father Edward J. Higgins is pastor. Visitors from the Phoenix, Parma, and our own Passaic eparchies, as well as the Pittsburgh archeparchy, joined in liturgical and seasonal activities to celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior, on through to the Feast of the Theophany. We were blessed to have visitors including: Father Joseph Loya, Father Deacon James Danovich and his family, from Saint Stephen Cathedral, Phoenix, AZ; the Krofcheck families from Saint John Chrysostom, Columbus, OH; and Saint George, Aliquippa, PA; Dave Klacik from Saint Gregory, Upper Saint Clair; John Danovich from Saint Athanasius, Indianapolis, IN, among others. The visitors not only assisted Father Ed with liturgical services and cantoring, but also joined in choral liturgical singing and caroling. This year, the 20-plus trans-eparchial carolers and Gubi started at a nursing home and continued

through a number of parishioners' households. The season culminated with the Theophany Holy Supper, where Father Ed greeted everyone "... May we all live in health, peace, and happiness, and we all celebrate another year together."



Father Edward Higgins leads prayer



Trans-Eparchial Carolers



Parishioners pray with an Advent Wreath

IN MYRTLE BEACH...

The Blessed Basil Hopko Byzantine Catholic Mission at Myrtle Beach, SC, recently gathered for a Divine Liturgy. When a priest is available for a Sunday or a week-day Divine Liturgy, an e-mail goes out to all the members. Pictured below is Father Conan Timoney and members of the mission community. For information contact: Jack Securda at securda4082@gmail.com or Father Conan at frchtimoney@gmail.com



Father Conan Timoney and parishioners of Blessed Basil Hopko Mission

IN BALTIMORE...

The Men's Club of the Patronage of the Mother of God Byzantine Catholic Church in Baltimore, MD, recently gathered to celebrate a Slavonic Liturgy celebrated by Father Michael Kerestes of Saint Gregory Byzantine Catholic Church, Beltsville, MD. Following the Divine Liturgy, an ethnic dinner prepared by parish members was served to all who attended the Divine Liturgy. Father Conan Timoney is the pastor of Patronage Parish. Father Michael and Father Conan are pictured with officers of the Patronage Men's Club.



Celebrants with Men's Club members

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IN JERSEY CITY...

On Sunday, December 7, Saint. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church in Jersey City, NJ, held its annual Saint Nicholas Celebration. Over 120 people attended, including guests from Manhattan, Staten Island, and Brooklyn. Traditional Christmas carols were sung, over 75 prizes were handed out to luck winners, and everyone was treated to delicious ethnic foods and a visit from Saint Nicholas himself. The parish is served by Father Ronald Barusefski.

Photos on opposite page

AROUND THE EPARCHY



IN LANSFORD AND NESQUEHONING...

Article and photos by Susan M. Seaver

The parishes of Saint John Byzantine Catholic Church, Lansford, PA, and Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church, Nesquehoning, PA, were busily preparing for Christmas season with a variety of activities. On December 6th, Saint Mary Parish held its annual Saint Nicholas festival complete with delicious homemade ethnic foods, theme baskets, bake sale, and a visit from Saint Nicholas.

On December 14th, Saint John Parish enjoyed a delicious Christmas dinner at Capriotti's in McAdoo, PA. Mr. Edward Kusko of Saint Mary Parish provided the entertainment, playing his accordion and treating parishioners and guests to a variety of Christmas carols. The highlight was the singing of traditional Byzantine carols led by cantor Bill Gribble, concluding with "O Kto Kto" as

everyone waited for the appearance of Saint Nicholas, who distributed gifts to the children. Lastly, new this year at Saint John Parish, a Christmas cookie sale was held along with a pirohi sale. The faithful pirohi workers gather once a month to prepare the delicious pirohi to be sold after the weekend Liturgies. Saint John and Saint Mary are served by Father Vasyly Chepelsky.



Parishioners make pierogies with Pani



Cantor Bill Gribble leads the Hymns



Parishioners enjoying a visit from St. Nicholas

IN WILKES-BARRE...

by Archpriest James Hayer

Over 100 Boy Scouts of America, their Troop leaders, parents and friends filled Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church for a special Moleben on Thursday, January 29, 2015.

The occasion allowed the scouts to see first-hand a faith tradition different from their own. The scouts, however, were not merely observers at the prayer service; they were participants as well. Scripture readings were done by the scouts, as well as antiphonal singing of Psalms. Moreover, the service was cantored by a Byzantine Catholic Scout Leader and cantor, John Seasock, from Saint Mary Church in Kingston.

Archpriest James Hayer, Pastor of Saint Mary Church, welcomed the scouts and their guests and explained the theme for the evening, "Living Inside Out," was inspired by the many icons found inside Byzantine Catholic Churches. He went on to explain that every person is made in the image and likeness of God and, as such, is a "living icon." As living icons, each of us are called

to let the image of God inside of us be seen by others through the way we live our lives.

The scouts had plenty of questions during their hour in church and all were impressed by the beauty of the Byzantine Tradition. "Wow!" some said; and "we never knew" how beautiful the Byzantine Church would be, they commented. Following the service, all were invited to the cafeteria social hall for refreshments and fellowship.

Saint Mary Church is served by Archpriest James Hayer with the assistance of Deacon Edward Frey, Deacon Basil Soroka, and the ministry of the Sisters of Saint Basil the Great.



Archpriest James Hayer teaches about icons



Scouts salute as the American flag is brought in procession



Jersey City youth enjoying the Saint Nicholas celebration



Mothers with their children look at the prizes



40TH ANNIVERSARY OF SAINT ANDREW THE APOSTLE PARISH

Westbury, NY

By Father Jack Custer

On Sunday, November 30, 2014, the parish family of Saint Andrew the Apostle in Westbury, NY, marked their patronal feast day and celebrated forty years of faith, worship, fellowship and service. The parish welcomed Bishop Kurt as celebrant and homilist for a Divine Liturgy of Thanksgiving, concelebrated by the parish clergy, Father Jack Custer and Deacon Nicholas Daddona, along with Father Eugene Khomyn (Basilian Fathers Monastery, Glen Cove NY) and the Rev. Dr. Richard Viladesau (Fordham University). Cantor Ed Matusiewicz and Cantor Emeritus Peter Gnall led the packed congregation in praise.

The banquet which followed the Liturgy gathered over 150 local clergy, former and current

parishioners, members of GCU Lodge 151 and friends at Verdi's of Westbury. Saint Andrew's children and teens made presentations to Bishop Kurt, and Cathy Walsh proposed a champagne toast in the name of the Anniversary Committee: Marie Dzadik, Marge Pajer Russell, Mary Cangialosi, Francine LoGrippo, Carol Challed and Joyce Turner. DJ Christopher LoGrippo mixed the Csardas, Tarantella, Cha Cha Slide, and standards to bring the guests onto the dance floor.

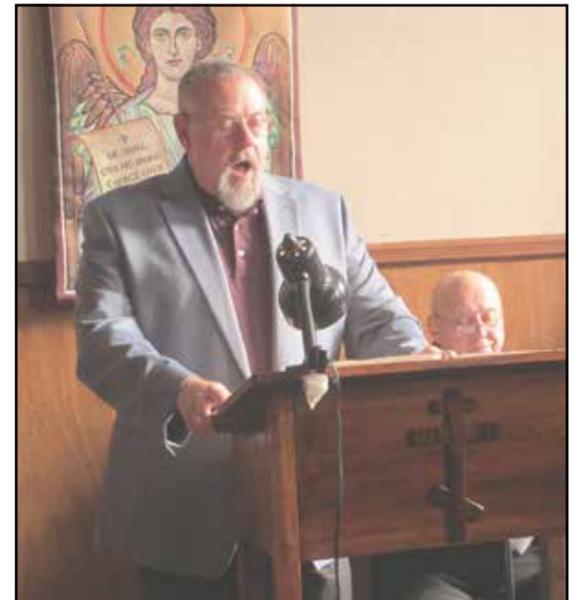
Saint Andrew Parish was founded in 1974 by Father Daniel Bitsko of Smithtown, NY, under the direction of Bishop Michael Dudick, to meet the needs of the faithful moving to Long Island from New York City and PA. Father Richard Lee, who served from 1978 to 1989, oversaw the conversion of the former synagogue into a Byzantine temple and firmly established the parish in the local community. After the brief pastorate of Father Joseph Ball (1989-1992), Saint Andrew's was served for more than 20 years by a variety of monastic, Ukrainian and bi-ritual Latin priests, most notably Bishop Peter Libasci, now of Manchester NH. Throughout this period, the parish was administered by the pastors of Saint Mary Church in New York City, Msgr. Raymond Misulich and Father Robert Hospodar, or from Smithtown by Father Daniel Bitsko. Deacon Nicholas Daddona ministered to the daily needs of the parish and oversaw its liturgical and catechetical life. Father

Jack Custer succeeded Father Harry Untereiner as resident administrator in 2009.

Comprising 60 souls from around Nassau County, the parish maintains a full liturgical life, religious education for all ages, a variety of social and charitable events and a very successful cooking and baking project. In preparation for the anniversary, the faithful sacrificed to raise an additional \$60,000.00 for renovations and improvements to the church building. To mark the 40th anniversary, the parish published a 108 page commemorative journal.



Bishop Kurt is greeted by parish teens



Parish cantor leads the singing

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10. **DVD Video "The Byzantine Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom in Church Slavonic"** church Slavonic Commemorative Production with Four Concelebrants (English Liturgical subtitles included), 90 minutes (\$21.95 each DVD)

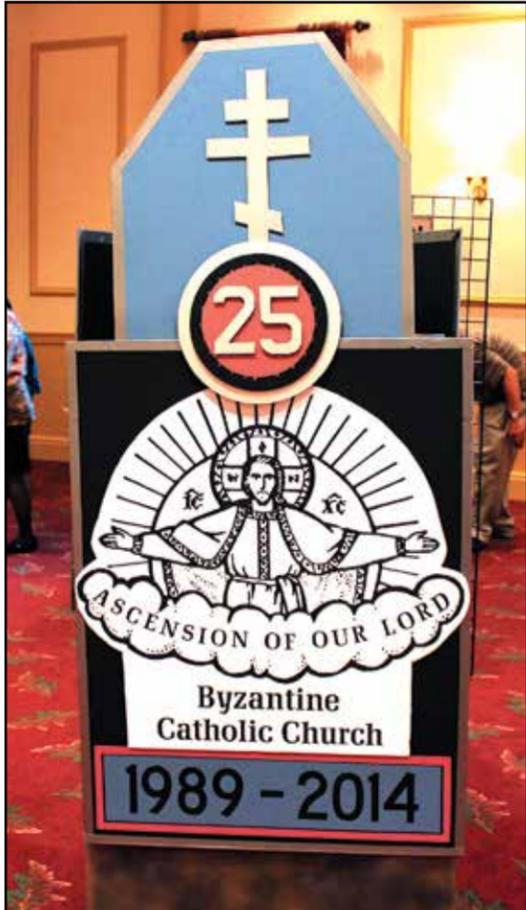
Please add \$3.00 Shipping and handling for each order. Items 1 through 8 are offered digitally re-mastered \$12.95 CD format. Make checks payable to: Holy Ghost Choir, 2310 South 24th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19145-3207.

25TH ANNIVERSARY OF ASCENSION OF OUR LORD PARISH

Williamsburg, VA

By Robert Linderman

On Sunday September 28, 2014, the parish community of Ascension of Our Lord Byzantine Catholic Church, in Williamsburg, VA, served by Father Alex Shuter, celebrated the 25th anniversary of its dedication. Joining the



parish community were Bishop Kurt Burnette, Bishop of the Eparchy of Passaic; Father Edward Cimbala, D.Min., the first Pastor of the parish; Father Tom Mattingly, Pastor of Saint Olaf Roman Catholic Church; Father Robert Chope; parishioners of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Byzantine Catholic Church in Virginia Beach; as well as former parishioners and friends in the community.

The church was specially decorated for the event. The dominant color was silver, reminding everyone of the special significance of the day. The Hierarchical Divine Liturgy was celebrated by Bishop Kurt, with Father Edward and the pastor, Father Alex Shuter, concelebrating. The parish choir led the responses, with the entire parish community also responding. At the end of the Liturgy, Bishop Kurt blessed the 25th anniversary icon, written by the parish iconographer, Donald Merkley. Prayers were also said for a former pastor and the many parishioners who

have gone before us, without whose help our parish would not be the church it is today.

Following our liturgical celebration, the community took a short drive to Colonial Heritage Country Club. There, the celebration continued with cocktails, buffet dinner, a slide show, as well as a few short speeches. A good time was had by all.

The celebration would not have been possible without the effort of many members of the parish. The list of people helping was huge and all are proud in making this celebration a success.

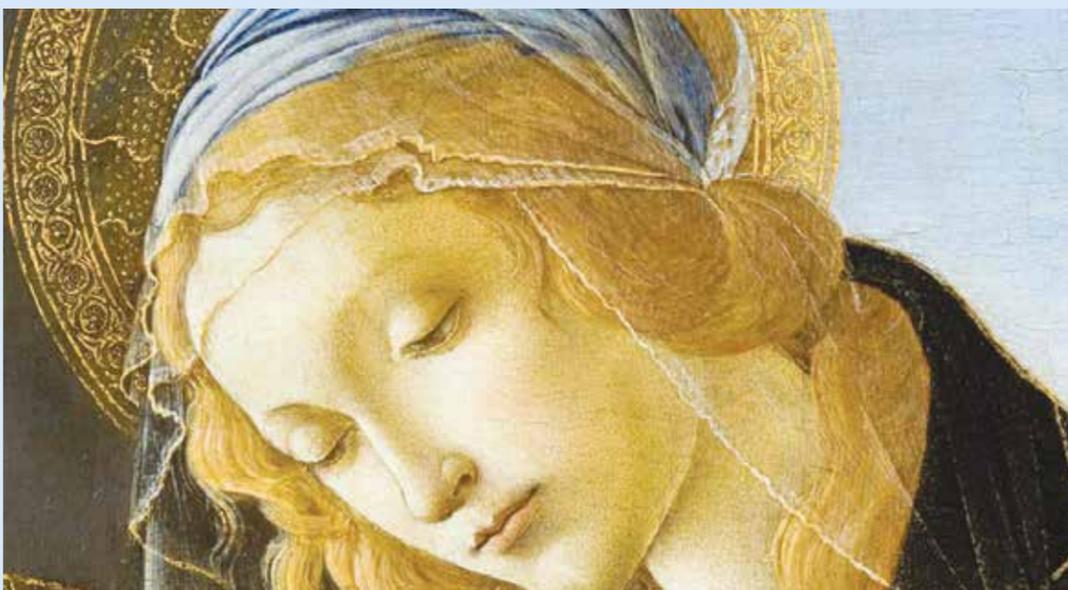


Father Edward Cimbala, Bishop Kurt, and Father Alex Shuter with altar servers

PICTURING MARY: WOMAN, MOTHER, IDEA

National Museum of Women in the Arts · Washington, DC

December 5, 2014 – April 12, 2015



Picturing Mary: Woman, Mother, Idea explores the concept of womanhood represented by the Virgin Mary as well as the social and sacred functions her image has served through time. This landmark exhibition organized by the National Museum of Women in the Arts brings together more than 60 Renaissance- and Baroque-era masterworks from the Vatican Museums, Uffizi Gallery, and other museums, churches, and private collections in Europe and the United States.

Divided into six thematic sections, the exhibition presents images of Mary as a daughter, cousin, and wife; the mother of an infant; a bereaved parent; the protagonist in a rich life story developed through the centuries; a link between heaven and earth; and an active participant in the lives of those who revere her.

The exhibition features works made by both female and male

artists. Paintings by Sofonisba Anguissola, Artemisia Gentileschi, Orsola Maddalena Caccia (an Ursuline nun who ran a bustling painting studio in her convent in northern Italy), and Elisabetta Sirani highlight the varied ways in which women artists conceptualized the subject of Mary. These artists' works are featured alongside treasured Marian paintings, sculptures, and drawings by Fra Filippo Lippi, Botticelli, Michelangelo, Pontormo, Giovanni Battista Tiepolo, and others.

During the presentation of *Picturing Mary*, NMWA's website will feature an online exhibition exploring global traditions in Marian imagery, further contextualizing the artworks on view in the galleries. *Picturing Mary* is part of NMWA's ongoing

program of major historical loan exhibitions that examine humanist themes related to womankind.

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DIACONAL ORDINATION OF SUBDEACON

At Holy Ghost Church, Jessup, PA

On Meatfare Sunday, February 8, 2015, Subdeacon Lewis Rabayda was ordained to the Order of Deacon by Bishop Kurt at Holy Ghost Byzantine Catholic Church in Jessup, PA, where Msgr. John T. Sekellick is pastor. The responses for the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy were led by Cantor Richard Covaleski, along with the parish choir and other area cantors, and the parishioners and guests at the ordination. Con-celebrating were Msgr. Sekellick, pastor; Father Leonard Martin, SJ, Pastor of Saint Mary Church and Saint John Church in Scranton; Father Michael Kucera, SJ, Professor at the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome; and Deacon Robert Behrens of Holy Ghost

Parish, along with Deacon Stephen Stepien of the Archdiocese of Phoenix. Deacon Stephen Stepien, who served as a priest in Danbury, CT, served as a deacon in the Archdiocese of Newark, NJ. Father Paul Tigyer, a rector in Passaic, assisted in choir. Responses for the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy were led by Cantor Richard Bryan Scotton of the Eparchy of New York. Deacon Robert Behrens, who served as a priest in the Eparchy of New York, served as Assistant

In his homily, Bishop Kurt said, "We are the salt of the earth, the light of the world, the 25 Christians," who clothe the naked, give drink to the thirsty, food to the hungry, a shelter to the homeless, and so on. He continued that it was





UBDEACON LEWIS RABAYDA

Stephen Casmus, of the Eparchy of Parma. Melkite Seminarian of Parma. Melkite Seminarian of Parma. Melkite Seminarian of Parma.

con on the day this Gospel is read, because a deacon is a servant. Bishop Kurt referenced the Book of Acts when discussing the introduction of deacons and how they were ordained by the Apostles to perform menial tasks, but soon afterward were mentioned as those who were preaching the Good News to all people.

Deacon Lewis Rabayda graduated from the Byzantine Catholic Seminary of Saints Cyril and Methodius in Pittsburgh, PA, in December of 2014, with a Master of Divinity degree. He is currently serving as Deacon at Holy Ghost Church in Jessup, PA, and Saint John the Baptist in Forest City, PA, with Deacon Robert Behrens and Msgr. John Sekellick.





SUBDIACONAL ORDINATION OF PETER TURKO

Epiphany of Our Lord in Annandale, Virginia

On February 9th at 7:30 p.m., Bishop Kurt ordained Peter Turko to the minor orders of Candle Bearer, Reader, Cantor, and Subdeacon at Epiphany of Our Lord Byzantine Catholic Church in Annandale, VA. Con-celebrating the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy were Father John Basarab, pastor; Msgr. George Dobes, bi-ritual priest who assists in Annandale and other parishes; Deacon Elmer Pekarik, parish Deacon; Deacon Lewis Rabayda, parish vocation; and Epiphany altar servers, as well as a server from Epiphany's Mission parish in Hagerstown, MD.

Subdeacon Peter Turko successfully completed the Diaconate Program several years ago. Bishop Kurt called Subdeacon Peter to Orders so he can continue to serve Epiphany of Our Lord Church in a more liturgically active way.



Bishop Kurt holds a lighted candle while blessing Mr. Turko at the Ordination of a Candle-Bearer



Bishop Kurt lays hands on Cantor Turko after he is vested in sticharion and orarion at the Ordination of a Subdeacon



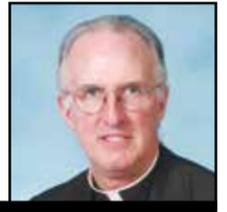
Bishop Kurt cuts the hair of Candle-Bearer Turko in the sign of a cross which is known as a tonsure



Bishop Kurt with the newly-ordained Subdeacon Peter Turko with his wife and three sons

CATECHETICAL REFLECTIONS

Father Robert F. Slesinski, Ph.D.



OMG: A SHOUT IN THE STREET?

The acronym that begins the title of this column is surely problematic at first sight; one might say it is even blasphemous. To the “non-hipsters” among us - like myself - it stands for “Oh, My God!” Thus, the question naturally arises whether it contradicts the commandment not to take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain. And if this is so, it could be argued, the subject matter does not fit into the parameters of Christian discourse. But for reasons I shall try to make clear in the specific context of this column and what it will be trying to address, this, hopefully, is not the case.

The title takes as its inspiration the words of two literary giants of the early twentieth century: namely, the Russian Vasily Rozanov (1856–1919) and the Irishman James Joyce (1882–1941). Notably, they both had tenuous, even tortuous, relationships with the respective Churches of their birth, the one Russian Orthodox, the other Roman Catholic. A celebrated—even if, at times, despised—literary critic, Rozanov’s written works are largely episodic. In one of his fleeting remarks penned on May 24, 1915,

and found in his collection *Transitory Things (Mimoletnoe)*, we read the following:

...In old age everything seems like a miracle. “It’s even impossible that it EXISTS.” And for everything I thank God. I thank Him for “what EXISTS.” And let my word resound eternally: GOD IS ON THE STREET. (On Gorokhovaya Street, after buying a purse for “travel money”).

The ambivalence of Rozanov here is palpable. On the one hand, he seems to be consoled by belief in the existence of God, but, on the other, in the exact context of his humdrum, everyday world, he seems to trivialize or make light of his apparently heartfelt intuition.

For his part, in his 1922 novel *Ulysses*, Joyce makes a similar cryptic comment. Near the beginning of this famed, if controversial, work, we read of a somewhat bizarre exchange of words between one of its protagonists, Stephen Dedalus, and his headmaster, Mr. Deasy. With the shouting of boys in the background, we are drawn into the

following conversation:

-The ways of the Creator are not our ways, Mr. Deasy said. All history moves towards one great goal, the manifestation of God.

Stephen jerked his thumb towards the window, saying:

-That is God...

-What? Mr. Deasy asked...

-A shout in the street, Stephen answered, shrugging his shoulders.

The banter and undoubted cursing of boisterous boys thus seems to serve as the catalyst for not just Stephen’s, but rather Joyce’s, indifference before the question of the existence and role of God in the world. But all is not so simple in the development of the novel. Indeed, it can be argued that Molly’s traumatic monologue that concludes *Ulysses* constitutes one of the great pro-life statements of world literature. But that is a point needing its own specific attention, best left for another time.

But, on the other hand, this is the precise point of this “experimental” column—to endeavor, however modestly, however insuf-

ficiently—to make His Holiness, Pope Francis’ pastoral project our (yes, you readers and me) own. Pope Francis’ “peripheries” are in our own families, parishes, in the very society in which we live.

Now, this being said, the inaugural program of this column is to heed a pastoral call of His Holiness—but, again, I am turning his call a bit on its head. The “peripheries” Pope Francis speaks of in “our” instance is ourselves. What we know is not special in the lives and hearts of our loved ones. So, to explain myself and this “experimental” column: The “peripheries”—the inadequate aim of this column—is the hearth of our own eparchial families, those who read the *Eastern Catholic Life* and are in via—en route - to finding God again in our own hearts as we search to reaffirm not only our belief in God, but, most importantly, to dare to enter the “peripheries” of those closest to us—yes, indeed, the indifferent—to bring them closer to our Lord—Almighty God. **ECL**

GREAT BLESSING OF WATER AT PARISH OUTREACH

New Brunswick, NJ

The Great Blessing of Water was held at Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Church in New Brunswick, NJ, on the evening of January 6, 2015. The service was held as part of the Byzantine Catholic outreach project in the city, started by Father Harry Untereiner, pastor emeritus of Saint Joseph Byzantine Catholic Church. Father Francis Rella, the new administrator of Saint Joseph, was invited by Monsignor Joseph Kerrigan, the Roman Catholic dean of the New Brunswick area, and Mr. Tony Varas, the liturgical director of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Metuchen, to participate in the prayer service held every Tuesday evening at Sacred Heart. After seeing the Office of the Great Blessing, Monsignor Kerrigan asked that it be the prayer service for the evening. In his opening comments, Monsignor Kerrigan noted Sacred Heart parish was 140 years old, and this was the first time a Byzantine Catholic service had been performed there. Re-

flecting the cultural diversity of the parish, the psalmody of the service was done in Spanish, and the homily was preached in both Spanish and English. Weaving both languages together during his homily, Monsignor Kerrigan spoke about the diversity of the Universal Church, and how the Byzantine Catholic Church was part of the One True Church. There were over 200 people in attendance, the great majority of whom were Hispanic Roman Catholics who had never witnessed this beautiful service before. The clergy of the parish concelebrated with Father Frank, and assisted in blessing the parishioners with holy water. At the end, Father Frank invited all to come up and drink of the sanctified waters and to take a bottle of holy water home for the blessing of their house. This invitation was enthusiastically received by all of the parishioners present.

Father Frank is also the administrator of Saints Peter and Paul Byz-

antine Catholic Church in Somerset, NJ, and was assisted by Deacon Mark Koscinski, who helped organize the event and gave a short talk on the Theophany to those present.

Robert Kondrk led the responses with the aide of Mr. Varas. Father Frank also is a Chaplain in the Air National Guard with the rank of Captain.



Father Frank hands out blessed water



UNDERSTANDING ICONS

Father Joseph Bertha, Ph.D.

JOSEPH THE PATRIARCH: ICON OF THE HIGH PRIEST Eparchial Priest Gives Retreat in Uzhorod, Ukraine



Bishop Milan Šašik presents an icon to Father Joseph Bertha



Group photo of Mukachevo Eparchy priests, Bishop Milan Šašik, and Father Joseph Bertha



Priests of the Mukachevo Eparchy singing in prayer

At the invitation of Bishop Milan Šašik, the Bishop of the Mukachevo Eparchy, and with the blessing of Bishop Kurt Burnette, Father Joseph Bertha, Ph.D., directed the priests' retreat on February 9 - 11, 2015, at the Blessed Bishop Theodore Romzha Seminary in Uzhorod, Ukraine. Twenty-eight priests, together with Bishop Milan, attended the three day spiritual conferences entitled: *Joseph, Icon of Christ the Eternal High Priest*. Father Joseph discussed the life and trials of Joseph the Patriarch, found in the concluding chapters of Genesis 37-50, and how they prefigured the life and suffering of Jesus. He used four panels, each consisting of eleven scenes, to illustrate and discuss significant events in Joseph's life and how they teach priests to become better in their ministry. Consisting of eight conferences, Father Bertha traced the travails, the sufferings,

and the successes of Joseph, drawing from the Genesis account, and vividly visualized his comments through the use of the individual icons. As usual during a retreat, the priests were invited to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Daily Divine Liturgy celebrated with Bishop Milan, as well as the Akathist Hymn to the Holy Theotokos, formed part of the routine of prayer. After eight conferences, the eparchial priests returned to their parishes renewed and refreshed by this encounter with Joseph. Bishop Milan expressed his thanks to Father Joseph, and gave him an icon of Blessed Bishop Theodore Romzha as a token of his and the priests' gratitude. **ECL**



Icon of the Patriarch Joseph

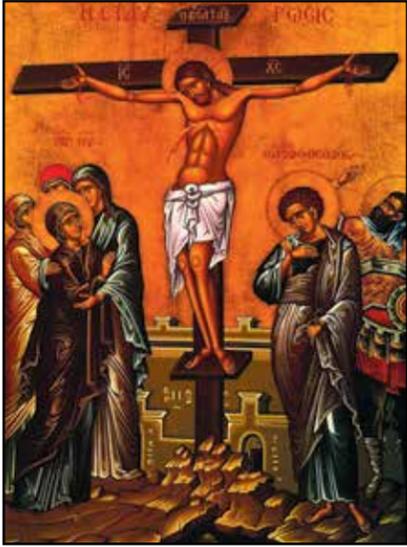
ARTICLE SUBMISSION REQUEST

Does your parish have Feast Day events, fundraisers, community service projects, special liturgical services, or any other type of happening? Speak with your pastor and become your parish media liaison!

Articles can be emailed to the editor at:
ECL@dioceseofpassaic.org

Article Submission Requirements:

- Article must be approved by the pastor
- Article written in Microsoft Word
- Author's name
- Photographer's name
- Key people present in photographs
- Photographs preferred at a resolution of 300ppi, 150ppi minimum



Icon of the Crucifixion of Our Lord

Having entered into the Great and Holy Fast, as we prepare for the Radiant and Joyous Resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, a brief review of the ascetical practice of fasting is helpful to understand its origin and its importance in our spiritual lives.

Fasting is a discipline for spiritual reasons, in which we abstain from food, drink and physical pleasures, in preparation for some significant event or in penitence for sin, in commemoration of national or personal tragedies, or in petition to God for favors or special graces. We know that Jesus Himself fasted in the wilderness for 40 days and 40 nights prior to being tempted by Satan (cf. Matthew 4:2). The number forty is associated with many acts of salvation.

Forty is also often used as a measure of significant time: the Flood at the time of Noah lasted for 40 days. Moses spent 40 days on Mount Sinai and there received the Ten Commandments. Israel spent 40 years wandering in the wilderness after the Exodus from Egypt. Kings David and Solomon reigned for 40 years. A curious computation of the founding of the Temple is set of 480 years (40 x 12 years) after the Exodus.

For the Jewish people, the most important fast is the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur), which takes place on the tenth day of the seventh month (end of September / beginning of October). After their exile in Babylon, regular fasts were observed in remembrance of the siege of Jerusalem and its final capture.

Linked with fasting is the practice by Jewish people of fervent prayer, especially as a sign of genuine repentance. During the time of fasting, abstinence from food and drink is strictly observed. Other customs were to tear their clothing, dress in coarse sackcloth, throw dust and ashes on their heads, and leave their

hair uncombed and their bodies unwashed. But the prophets and Jesus Himself made it clear that such outward signs of fasting was not enough. A real change of heart was what mattered most. This spiritual change, then, is our focus and motivation for fasting.

Our Church, in addition to the Great and Holy Fast of Lent, sets aside several other periods of time in preparation for particular events, such as the time preceding the Nativity of our Lord (Christmas) known as Philip's Fast, beginning after his feast day, November 14; the weeks preceding the feast of the Prime Apostles Peter and Paul (June 29) called "Peter's Fast," and the fifteen days prior to the Dormition of the Theotokos, identified as the "Savior's Fast."

Many people today identify abstinence from certain foods as "fasting." This is, of course, an important characteristic of fasting. All the same, it would be a serious slight to think such abstinence constitutes the only observance necessary for Lent. Bodily fasting should also be accompanied by more fer-

vent prayer and almsgiving. In the early centuries of Christianity, the Church prescribed conjugal abstinence during Lent; it forbade participation in entertainment and attendance at public festivals. In recent years, such discipline has notably weakened and is not presented as forcefully as in patristic times, but it still remains a precious indication of the true dynamic of fasting and the intention of the Church, namely that during Lent we exercise a much stricter control over our thoughts, words and deeds and concentrate our spiritual attention on the Person of our Savior and what He expects of us. **ECL**



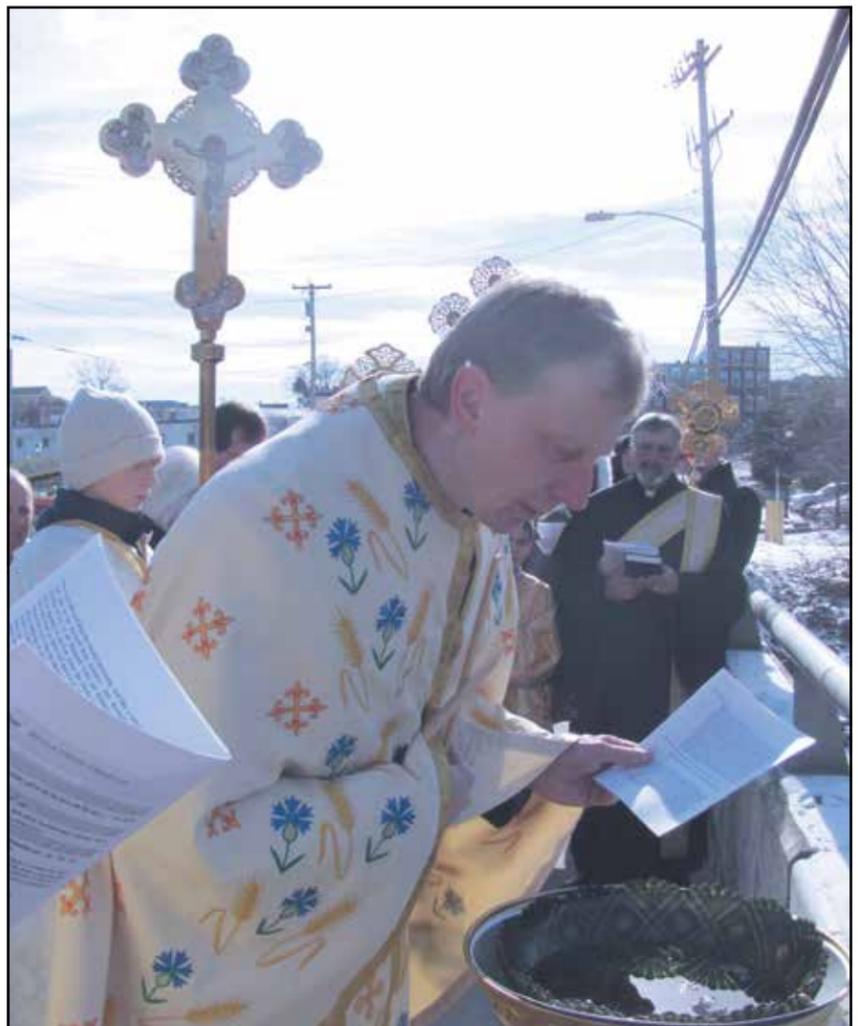
PARISHES UNITE FOR GREAT BLESSING OF WATER

Phoenixville, PA

On Sunday, January 11, 2015, the faithful of Saint Michael Byzantine Catholic Church in Mont Clare, PA, and Saints Peter and Paul Ukrainian Catholic Church in Phoenixville, PA, together with their respective pastors, Father James Badeaux and Father Stepan Bilyk, gathered for the Annual Blessing of French Creek in Phoenixville. This was a particularly historic and joyous occasion, as it was also attended by Father John Fedornock and Deacon Jim Phifer of Holy Ghost Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Church in Phoenixville, marking the first time in more than 75 years that these communities had prayed together.



Father James Badeaux gives a blessing, joined in prayer by Father Stepan Bilyk and parish altar servers, while Father John Fedornick and Deacon Jim Phifer look on.



Father Stepan Bilyk breathes on the water in the sign of a cross

SEASONAL REFLECTIONS

Monsignor John. T. Sekellick, JCL



FASTING IN SCRIPTURE



FAITH AND COMMUNITY ISSUES

By Father Carmen Scuderi, OFM, Ed.D., P.C.C.

WHERE DO THE ELDERLY “FIT” INTO THE FAMILY SCHEMA?

Having looked at the contributions the husband, wife and children make to the welfare of family life, the question is begged, what about the elderly, Gramma, Gramps and the aunts, uncles and, if fortunate enough, great-grandparents? In some cultures, particularly the Orient, the aged are seen as repositories of wisdom, experience and knowledge. They are cherished and revered as national treasures. Families live in close proximity for 4 or 5 generations and provisions are made for the family to care for their aging relative. The aged live in-home and are not relegated to institutions or nursing facilities for care.

In many of the Western cultures, however, the case is very different. The document on the family makes a clear statement regarding this:

Other cultures, however, especially in the wake of disordered industrial and urban development, have both in the past and the present set the elderly aside in unacceptable ways. This causes acute suffering to them and spiritually impoverishes many families (*Familiaris Consortio*, 1981, §27).

Sadly, there are daily examples of elderly being neglected, abused, and even forsaken completely. The Nursing or Convalescent Home setting has become the norm for the care of elderly in today's society. Economic trends and the nuclear family model rather than the extended family have forced the family unit into narrow avenues for choices when it comes for care for their elderly members. Granted, the tragedy of Alzheimer's and some dementia cases necessitate institutionalization due to the specialized care needed to maintain the safety and quality of life for the af-

fectured individual, there are elderly who are fully capable alert and active individuals still able to participate and positively contribute to society especially from their wealth of experience and knowledge gleaned from years of living experience.

These active individuals can still be productive, especially in the family constellation by assisting in the care of the young, participation in Church activities and engaging in socio-political activities for the betterment of society in general and the family in particular. *Familiaris Consortio* makes a clear statement in this regard: “The pastoral activity of the Church must help everyone to discover and make good use of the role of the elderly within the civil and ecclesial community, in particular within the family” (*Familiaris Consortio*, 1981, §27).

The wisdom of the elderly can be a guide to the past for the young, granting a perspective of history that otherwise would be completely unknown or forgotten. Such perspective provides the youth with the opportunity of finding not only a starting point in their lives, from where they came, but also a direction to which they can launch into the future with confidence. The stories told by the elderly about past family experiences provide grounding for the young in their identity, providing a secure foundation as they approach adulthood and take a responsible place within the family as contributing members.

The document takes note of the marvelous ability of the elderly to bridge the generation gap oftentimes before such gaps are even identified. Often, when mom and Dad are too busy with

keeping the house stable financially and otherwise, the grandparents are there to lend support in the rearing of the children, in some cases providing a sounding board for the frustrations of the children enduring “growing pains” in dealing with parental or sibling rivalries, providing wisdom, love and profound patient understanding, expressed, as the document states, “in the eyes and words and caresses of the aging! And how many old people have willingly subscribed to the inspired word that the ‘crown of the aged is their children’s children’ (Prov. 17:6)!” (*Familiaris Consortio*, 1981, §27).

Clearly, not only is there a role for the elderly in the family, but it is also a vital one, bridging the generations, inspiring the young, giving counsel to the parents, providing generational historical perspective through the medium of storytelling in which the family history is related from the vision and experience of one who lived the story in its fullness. Such wisdom begs to be passed on so that the past may not be forgotten but honored, as it is built upon by succeeding generations. These generations, garnering the lived wisdom of the elders, discover their own identity through which they too contribute to the history of the family, and when they become the elders of the family in their turn, they too pass on the story, allowing the history of the family to live on, providing direction for the day and hope for the future.

This brings an end to this study of *Familiaris Consortio*. The next installment will take a different tack in looking at contemporary issues and crisis within the context of the contemporary family. **ECL**



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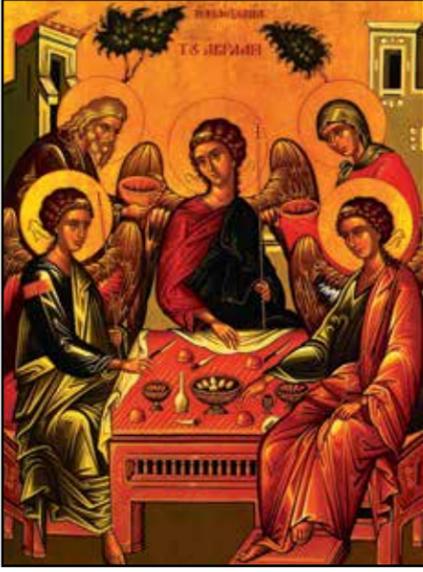
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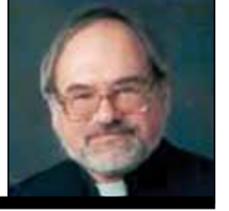
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Icon of the Holy Trinity, or
The Hospitality of Abraham

THE BYZANTINE LITURGY

By Archbishop David Petras, SEOD



WHAT IS THE GREAT FAST?

The proper and common term for what we usually call “Lent” is the Great Fast. There are actually three fasting periods on our journey to the feast we call “Easter,” more properly, *Pascha* (the Greek word for Passover) or Resurrection. The first is Cheesefare Week, the week before the proper Great Fast, when we do not yet abstain from dairy products. The Great Fast itself runs from the Monday after Cheesefare Sunday to the Friday before Lazarus Saturday, a period of exactly forty days. The third is the intense week of preparation called the Great and Holy Week. The term “Great Fast” is very descriptive, but I think we have to understand that “fasting” is not the only characteristic of this preparation. We often name things after some feature that especially stands out for us. Thus, we call the Sacramental Mystery of Penance “Confession.” The practice of confessing our sins is the most difficult part of this whole process of reconciliation to God and his people, the Church. It is, however, not the most important part; it is done only to open us to the great reality of the mercy of God’s forgiveness.

In the same way, fasting is an integral part of our preparation for our Lord’s resurrection, but it is done primarily to open us to the grace of His infinite love for us on the cross, by which He trampled upon death by death and granted us life. Fasting is a tool of our preparation for Pascha, but it is not the goal. By fasting, we train ourselves to think less of our own comfort and needs and to turn toward love for others. The last Sunday before the fasting periods is called Meatfare Sunday, again putting the emphasis on what we are giving up. It may also be called the Sunday of the Last

Judgment, because we read the Gospel of the second coming of the Lord (Matthew 25:31-46), in which we are judged on our charity to others, and the ability to see the image of God in all human beings. If, at the end of the Great Fast, we take pride in our accomplishments, we have done the exact opposite of what the Fast is for: to turn our concern to the other instead of ourselves. This is why it was often the custom of the faithful to give the money they saved by fasting to the poor.

The way we use the word “fast” is to abstain from all food. The Great Fast, though, does not mean a literal fast from all food. Instead, it meant abstaining from the pleasure of food, as Saint Dorotheus of Gaza wrote, one “must take care not to break the fast without great necessity or to look for pleasurable things to eat, or weigh oneself down by eating and drinking until he is full.” This has been codified in precise rules. For the Great Fast, it means to abstain from meat and animal products, which include eggs, butter, cheese and milk. It is, in actuality, a healthy diet, since these foods often contain potentially harmful fats. The strict fast also precludes cooking food in oil, which would also be less healthful. There are, in tradition, mitigations of the fast, on Saturday and Sunday oil may be used, and on certain days, fish and dairy products may be eaten, for example, the Feast of the Annunciation on March 25 and the great Feast of Palm Sunday. The ancient Greek people considered fish to be an animal. In our modern Church, what is required by law is abstention from meat and dairy products on the first day of the Great Fast and on Good Friday, and abstention from meat on Wednesdays and Fridays. The fast is actually not difficult, and today many people keep a similar diet, but not for religious reasons. They may do it to protest the killing or mistreatment of animals, or because it is a healthy diet for them. Whether we find it difficult or easy to keep depends on our awareness of what we are doing. Conscious motivation makes many actions possible, though, of course, we also need the grace of God, especially if we are acting out of our faith. That is why we can never take pride in our accomplishments. Pride drains fast-

ing of all value.

There are also models for fasting. The Great Fast lasts forty days. In human experience, this is long enough to make a serious difference, but not so long as to be an intolerable burden. Our liturgical worship points to the experience of the Hebrew people in the desert. Freed by God from slavery in Egypt, they then had to wander for forty years in the desert before coming to the Promised Land, a land flowing with milk and honey. This is why Lent, the Great Fast, is sometimes called a journey. It is not an actual, physical trip from one place to another, but a metaphorical passage from sin (slavery to evil) to sanctification in Christ. In their journey through the desert, the Hebrew people received the ten commandments from God, which are much less a burdensome code of law than a covenant to live a truly human life as the Creator intended. We remember this in the Ambon Prayer of the Pre-sanctified Divine Liturgy, “During the forty days, You gave Your servant, Moses, the tablets of the Law inscribed by Your divine hand.” Another model for fasting is the forty day fast kept by our Lord after His baptism in the Jordan. Here the evil one tempted Him three times with the allure of power. As followers of Christ, we must learn not to take power over but to serve one another (Mark 9:35-45, the reading for the Fifth Sunday of the Great Fast). Finally, the Great Fast may be considered as a journey with the Lord to Jerusalem, where He would endure the cross and then rise from the dead for us, “When the days for His being taken up were fulfilled, He resolutely determined to journey to Jerusalem” (Luke 9:51). Lent, which we call the great Fast, is a time of self-denial, and our moderation in food is a sign and tool to set aside our pride and selfishness and to open ourselves to love of God and love of our neighbor. Every Lent should be a renewal of our baptism as we are being transformed into Christ, which is the Christian goal, as expressed by Saint Paul, “All of us, gazing with unveiled face on the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, as from the Lord Who is the Spirit” (2 Corinthians 3:18). **BCL**

“GO, THEREFORE, AND MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS”

A New Era Begins at the Eastern Catholic Life

Continued from page 1

College of Technology in Williamsport, PA, in 2008. After graduation, he lived in Fairfax, VA, for employment and, while attending Epiphany of Our Lord Byzantine Catholic Church in Annandale, VA, was accepted as a seminarian for the Eparchy of Passaic by then-Bishop William Skurla, and enrolled in Saints Cyril and Methodius Byzantine Catholic Seminary in Pittsburgh, PA, from which he graduated in De-

cember, 2014, with a Master of Divinity (M.Div.). Then-Seminarian Lewis spent his first pastoral summer assignment with Father James Hayer, and was introduced to minor work on the Eastern Catholic Life. He was later asked to redesign the cover of the newspaper which first appeared in February of 2013. Then-Seminarian Lewis, also began to write reflection articles for the publication, which he continues

today. Then-Subdeacon Lewis was assigned by Bishop Kurt to Holy Ghost Byzantine Catholic Church in Jessup, PA, to assist the pastor, Monsignor John Sekellick. On February 8, 2015, Subdeacon Lewis was ordained Deacon. He is excited to use his education and skills for spreading the Good News of Christ within the Eparchy of Passaic, and God-willing, will be ordained a Priest for the Eparchy.

All of us, dear readers, will be counting on your prayerful support as we begin this ministry. We are aware of the legacy we have received and are determined not only to maintain it, but to build upon it and make it prosper, with God’s help. **BCL**



SPIRITUAL REFLECTIONS

Deacon Lewis Rabayda

AN OPPORTUNITY TO ENCOUNTER MONASTICISM, TO ENCOUNTER THE LIGHT OF THE EAST

The Great Fast offers Christians an opportunity for real conversion towards Christ, and to experience Him in a more profound way than we do throughout the year. But why is this period of the liturgical calendar so special? Why is there so much more an opportunity to encounter Christ than any other time of the year? Because the Great Fast and the liturgical texts of the East bombard us with language of repentance, of fasting, of rejecting the passions, of acknowledging our sinful nature, and of a reliance on Christ for His forgiveness and grace to heal us and accept us into His heavenly kingdom. As members of The Church, we subscribe to Its wisdom and experience, and take this opportunity to rededicate ourselves to our Baptismal promises: that we renounce Satan and have united ourselves to Christ. This Lenten liturgical language is the language of the Eastern Monks, those brave men and women of the desert whose vocational call is to leave their contemporary world behind for a life devoted to constant prayer; either communally, or hermitically.

But what about us, those who must live in the world, those who have not been called by God to devote our lives in such a severe way? Yes, we are still called by God to follow Him and to follow the example He gave to us. But God knows that we do not always have Him as the center of our lives, and that we often stray as the Israelites did, and have followed other gods and have given in to our passions. God calls sinners to repentance, and the holiest among us cannot compare to the

sinlessness that was the Son of God in the flesh. This time, this Great Fast, this great journey, is an opportunity for each of us, regardless of the intensity of our vocation, to say "Yes" to God when he reaches out for us, as did the father of the Prodigal Son.

Saint John Paul II said in his Apostolic Letter *Oriente Lumen*,

"In the East, monasticism was not seen merely as a separate condition, proper to a precise category of Christians, but rather as a reference point for all the baptized, according to the gifts offered to each by the Lord; it was presented as a symbolic synthesis of Christianity" (9).

The words of Saint John Paul II remind us that monasticism is not something for a select few, but it is to be referenced by all. The Great Fast is our call to reference monasticism. This is the time in which we are guided by the Church to leave the world so we can concentrate on God, and spend time in intense and contemplative prayer. This is our time to fast in a severe way and to pray with compunction so that we will be equipped to follow the greatest commandment, to love our neighbors as ourselves. For this ascetical practice forms us for the greatest task a Christian has, to give to others the sacrificial love that Jesus Christ has given to us. As the true monastic holds no personal possessions, so too, we cannot own for ourselves the love that Christ has given us, for it is a gift too abundant



to contain.

Indeed, when we fast well, we will have a storehouse full of love, more love than we can contain and it will be natural to share it with others. When we take on this ascetical practice as the Church suggests, we will indeed be ready to see the Light of the East that is the splendor of the Risen Christ. **ECL**

UPCOMING EVENTS FOR MARCH

Eparchial and Parish Events

Glory to Jesus Christ!
Glory forever!

MARCH, 2015

1 Second Sunday of the Great Fast

8 Third Sunday of the Great Fast

15 Fourth Sunday of the Great Fast

22 Fifth Sunday of the Great Fast

25 Holy Annunciation of the Virgin Theotokos
Chancery closed

29 Flowery Sunday * The Triumphal Entry of Our Lord into Jerusalem

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