



EASTERN CATHOLIC LIFE

Official Publication of the Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Passaic

VOL. L, NO. 10

OCTOBER, 2014

2014 Eparchial Stewardship Appeal

“CHARITY IS HUMILITY IN BLOSSOM”

BLESSED MIRIAM TERESA DEMJANOVICH

A Message from Bishop Kurt

What an exciting year we have had in our Eparchy! Imagine. Someone from our own church was beatified by Rome! Sister Miriam Teresa Demjanovich is praying for all of us and for our church. A boy in New Jersey was miraculously cured of incurable blindness through her intercession. If you know someone struggling with eye problems, perhaps you might recommend her to your friend or loved one. If you believe that you have received a miraculous cure, you should contact the Sisters of Charity and learn how to document it properly. We need one more miracle to have Sister Miriam Teresa canonized.

We have purchased very beautiful bibles for all of our churches, and there are seven pallets of bibles sitting in my garage right now, waiting for distribution. We also purchased a machine to print the names of our churches on the bibles in gold to match the icon on the cover. I think you will be thrilled when you see them in our churches. And I will be thrilled if you pick them up and read them!

Our mother church in Zakarpatska celebrated twenty five years since the re-legalization of our church in Ukraine. It's hard to believe that only twenty five years ago it was a crime to worship in our church in half of Europe. It was like the Dark Ages in the 20th Century. How inspiring to see the Holy Spirit flourishing there. Bishop Sasik has ordained 164 priests in the short time that he has been bishop. Did you know, YOU fed every single one of those priests in seminary? That's right. From the day our seminary reopened in Uzhgorod, the Eparchy of Passaic has generously paid for their food every year.

The surplus of priests in Ukraine is beginning to help us with our own clergy shortage. Right now we have six priests with families working in our eparchy from eparchies in East-

ern Europe. I am expecting three more priests from Uzhgorod in the near future. Please continue to pray for priests. It says in the Gospel of St. Matthew, “And seeing the multitudes, he had compassion on them: because they were distressed, and like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, the harvest is great, but the laborers are few. Pray therefore to the Lord of the harvest, that he send laborers into his harvest.” Just as

important, support the priests you already have. They have generously given their lives to serve you.

A class of deacon candidates is finishing their four years of training, and will soon be serving at the altars of our eparchy. Another class of candidates is forming. One of our seminarians was ordained a new priest for our eparchy on September 24. What a day of rejoicing for our whole church! Father Steven put in long years of study and pastoral training to prepare for this day. Your prayers were answered. Another seminarian will finish his studies this Christmas. It costs a minimum of \$100,000 to train one priest from beginning to end.

We are so blessed by Almighty God to be Americans. We live in the richest country in the history of the world, and your individual generosity has allowed our church to take care of itself and others as well.

Whether we are feeding seminarians in Europe, or preparing our own candidates for holy orders, or helping out troubled parishes with targeted grants and loans, or presenting educational events, or purchasing bibles, your generosity is an inspiration to others.

I am so blessed to be the Bishop of Passaic, and I thank each of you for your warm welcome. Every parish I visit accepts me most graciously. Please continue to pray for me, and to support all the priests, deacons, and religious of our church.



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BYZANTINE CATHOLIC EPARCHY OF PASSAIC STEWARDSHIP APPEAL

2014



Blessed Miriam Teresa Demjanovich

Our Joy and Our Inspiration

“There is but one God, one Truth, one life, one ego, one soul; there is but one duty, one aim, one business, designated by the One God to occupy that one ego, that one life, that one soul. What is it? Listen to the words of the eternal truth: “Be . . . perfect as also your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matt. 5:48)

*Blessed Miriam Teresa,
on The Time of Prayer*

“The fruit of prayer is good works.”

*St. Teresa (as quoted
by Sister Miriam Teresa)*

My Beloved One! To the Father, Son, And Holy Paraclete, Be all honor, praise, to the end of days in measure full, replete.

Sister Miriam Teresa

“Realize that everything you have you owe to God – life, faith, health, talents, virtue, vocation.”

Blessed Miriam Teresa, on Religious Humility

“Why do we pray? That we may know; and knowing, love; and loving, serve; as to possess life in its fullness.”

*Blessed Miriam Teresa,
on The Time of Prayer*

“The real beginning of my life, the life of the spirit, occurred five days after my birth according to the flesh. I was baptized and confirmed in the Greek rite on the thirty-first of March, a Sunday, truly a day of resurrection.”

~Blessed Miriam Teresa Demjanovich

“In serving God we serve our neighbor, who, as a member of the same mystical body, is benefited by our good works; converse-

ly, in serving our neighbor through charity, we serve Him Whose image we see resplendent in every soul.”

Blessed Miriam Teresa, on Disposition for Prayer

Prayer for Canonization

Most Holy and Blessed Trinity, Whom Blessed Miriam Teresa loved so ardently, grant that we, like her, may become ever more conscious of Your Divine Presence within our souls. We implore You to continue to show signs that Your humble servant enjoys glory with You in Heaven, and to hasten the day when we may render her a lasting tribute of our veneration and love.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.

Prayer for Favors

Most Holy and Adorable Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, for Your own glory and the sanctification of souls, glorify Your servant Blessed Miriam Teresa, by granting to us the graces which we humbly ask through her intercession.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory to the Father..

All the faithful who receive miracles and favors through the intercession of Blessed Miriam Teresa, SC, should report them to the Director of the League of Prayer: Sister Mary Canavan, SC c/o Blessed Miriam Teresa League Headquarters PO Box 476, Convent Station, New Jersey 07961-0476 or visit, www.SCNJ.org.

**Your Stewardship Gifts Support
Our Eparchial Programs
OUR GOAL: \$495,000**

TARGETED PARISH REVITALIZATION

Capital improvements and renovations in specific parishes
\$150,000

BIBLES FOR PARISHES

Providing beautiful new bibles to every parish for the people in the pews
\$100,000

ASSISTANCE TO EASTERN EUROPEAN PARISHES

Starting with Bishop Dudick, our Eparchy has fed the seminarians of the Uzhorod Seminary since it was reopened after communism. Bishop Sasik has ordained 154 priests in 11 years, some of whom serve in the Eparchy of Passaic.
\$50,000

DEACON FORMATION

A class of deacons is finishing this year, ready and eager to serve the faithful of Passaic. A new class is organizing now for the next four year program.
\$20,000

EDUCATION OF SEMINARIANS AND PRIESTS

Seminary studies and formation; pastoral training programs; vocations BBQ's and graduate studies. Tuition and room and board for one seminarian is \$22,000 for one year at Sts. Cyril and Methodius Seminary in Pittsburgh.
\$25,000

EASTERN CHRISTIAN FORMATION

Publications, Youth Ministry, Family Enrichment, Catechist and Coordinator Formation
\$25,000

PAROCHIAL SUPPORT

Grants to individual parishes for support, renovation, and maintenance
\$125,000



**STEWARDSHIP
APPEAL
2014**

**“Charity is humility in blossom”
“Without humility, there can be no
charity. This is self evident”**

-Blessed Miriam Teresa



**BYZANTINE CATHOLIC EPARCHY OF PASSAIC
STEWARDSHIP APPEAL 2014**

Name: _____
Address: _____
City/State/Zip: _____
Parish: _____

ADDRESS CORRECTIONS ONLY:

Name: _____
Address: _____
Parish: _____

Please remember the Church in your will and estate plans.

- Please send me more information.
- I have already included the Church in my will.

*In gratitude to God and to honor my commitment to the Church,
I have prayerfully considered my gift to the Eparchy of Passaic
this year and faithfully pledge:*

PLEDGE AMOUNT 6 MONTHLY PAYMENTS

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$ 500.00 | or: | <input type="checkbox"/> \$ 83.33 per month |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$ 200.00 | or: | <input type="checkbox"/> \$ 33.33 per month |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$ 150.00 | or: | <input type="checkbox"/> \$ 25.00 per month |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$ 120.00 | or: | <input type="checkbox"/> \$ 20.00 per month |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$ 60.00 | or: | <input type="checkbox"/> \$ 10.00 per month |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | | |

CHECK ONE: Single payment or Monthly Statements

Pledge Amount: \$ _____
Enclosed Payment: \$ _____
Pledge Balance: \$ _____

Pledge cards will be mailed to you in October. Or, you may use the one above, and return to your parish or to 445 Lackawanna Ave., Woodland Park, NJ 07424.



FROM THE OFFICE OF THE BISHOP



Clergy Appointments and Assignments

REVEREND MICHAEL KRULAK, has resigned his position as Pastor of Saint Ann Byzantine Catholic Church in New Port Richey, FL effective July 10, 2014. He remains a priest in good standing in the Eparchy of Passaic.

REVEREND TIMOTHY CLEGG, is appointed Temporary Administrator of Saint Ann Byzantine Catholic Parish in New Port Richey, FL, effective July 10, 2014.

REVEREND CARMEN SCUDERI, OFM, Guardian of Holy Dormition Franciscan Friary in Sybertsville, PA, is relieved of his duties as Pastor of Saint John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church, Hazleton, PA, effective September 1, 2014.

REVEREND JEROME WOLBERT, OFM, is appointed Pastor of Saint John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church, Hazleton, PA, effective September 1, 2014.

Eparchial Presbyteral Council

The following priests have been elected to serve on the Presbyteral Council of the Eparchy of Passaic. Election results have been ratified by the Most Reverend Bishop.

CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA SYNCPELLATE

Very Reverend Edward Higgins

Reverend Michael Popson

MIDDLE STATES SYNCPELLATE

Reverend Michael Kerestes

Very Reverend Conan Timoney

NEW JERSEY SYNCPELLATE

Reverend Edward Cimbala

Reverend Charles Yastishock

NEW YORK - NEW ENGLAND SYNCPELLATE

Reverend Jack Custer

Reverend Ronald Hatton

SOUTHERN STATES SYNCPELLATE

Reverend Vincent Brady

Very Reverend Sal Pignato

SUSQUEHANNA VALLEY SYNCPELLATE

Reverend Mykhaylo Prodanets

Very Reverend Michael Salnick

Other priests on the Eparchial Presbyteral Council, by virtue of their office (*ex officio*) are:

Right Reverend Archpriest James G. Hayer,
Protosyncellus

Very Reverend John Basarab,
Syncellus of the Middle States Syncellate

Very Reverend Robert Evancho,
Syncellus of the Southern States Syncellate

Very Reverend Robert Hospodar, Chancellor and
Syncellus of the New York-New England Syncellate

Very Reverend Peter Hosak,
Syncellus of the Central Pennsylvania Syncellate

Very Reverend Gary Mensinger,
Syncellus of the Susquehanna Valley Syncellate

Very Reverend Michael Mondik,
Syncellus of the New Jersey Syncellate

Very Reverend Monsignor John T. Sekellick,
Judicial Vicar

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What is a Presbyteral Council?

According to Canon Law, "A presbyteral council must be established in the eparchy, that is a body of priests representing the presbyterate, and which, according to the norm of the law, assists the eparchial bishop by its advice in those things which regard the needs of the pastoral work and good of the eparchy." (Canon 264)

Altar Server Congress 2014

Knights of the Holy Table Gather at the Carpathian Village

By Subdeacon Lewis Rabayda

CANADENSIS, PA – Altar servers from across the Eparchy of Passaic came together at the Carpathian Village from July 27-30 for a four-day experience of spirituality and recreation that had a positive influence on their lives that they can bring back to their parishes. Twenty-five altar servers were in attendance for this year’s congress. This year’s camp organizer, Deacon Stephen Russo of Danbury, CT, enthusiastically greeted the servers. The other clergy in attendance were Father Gary Mensinger, Father Myklaylo Prodanets and his wife, Ivanna; Father Martin Vavrak and wife; Deacon Robert Behrens; and our seminarian-Subdeacon Lewis Rabayda; as well as Father Michael Salnicki, who served as head chef, and kept everyone energized with good home-cooking.

In addition to receiving instruction on the duties of Altar Server during a Hierarchical Divine Liturgy, the young Knights of the Altar also

learned many other interesting lessons related to the liturgical and spiritual life of the Byzantine Catholic Church. For example, the older servers enjoyed a special presentation on the different aspects of Christ in the Divine Liturgy given by Subdeacon Lewis Rabayda. Deacon Stephen Russo presented the same information to the younger servers. There was also a talk by Deacon-Candidate Thomas Shubeck entitled, “It’s Awesome” where he spoke about the *awe* that is present in the Divine Liturgy. The servers also made their own icon, which they were able to take home.

In addition to the fun activities throughout the week, such as capture the flag, water balloon toss, kickball, the servers also enjoyed a field trip to H2OOOHH! Water Park. Servers were also able to participate in the Holy Mystery of Reconciliation (Confession) and to assist in the celebration of the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy with their Chief Shepherd, Bishop Kurt.

Prior to the Divine Liturgy with Bishop Kurt, the servers were reminded, or taught for the first time, about how to serve a Hierarchical Liturgy by Father Edward Higgins. He also instructed them on the different roles that a server must be ready for during the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. The celebration of the Divine Liturgy with the servers and Bishop Kurt turned out beautifully, and the servers sang with enthusiasm while on the altar!

On Wednesday, the final day of the congress, the servers help clean up their dorms and began packing for their return to their home parishes. This year’s altar servers congress was truly a memorable event in which they shared their faith with each-other and were strengthened in their Byzantine heritage. May God Bless everyone for their help in making this Altar Server Congress a reality and a wonderful event with fun had by all. See you next year!



PEOPLE YOU KNOW

AROUND THE EPARCHY



PATRONAGE OF THE MOTHER OF GOD CHURCH • BALTIMORE, MD

PARISHIONERS ENJOY "LUNCH WITH THE PASTOR" DISCUSSION SERIES

The Patronage of the Mother of God Byzantine Parish in Baltimore, Maryland recently concluded its 2013-2014 series entitled "Lunch with the Pastor." the day includes an informative presentation followed by a catered lunch.

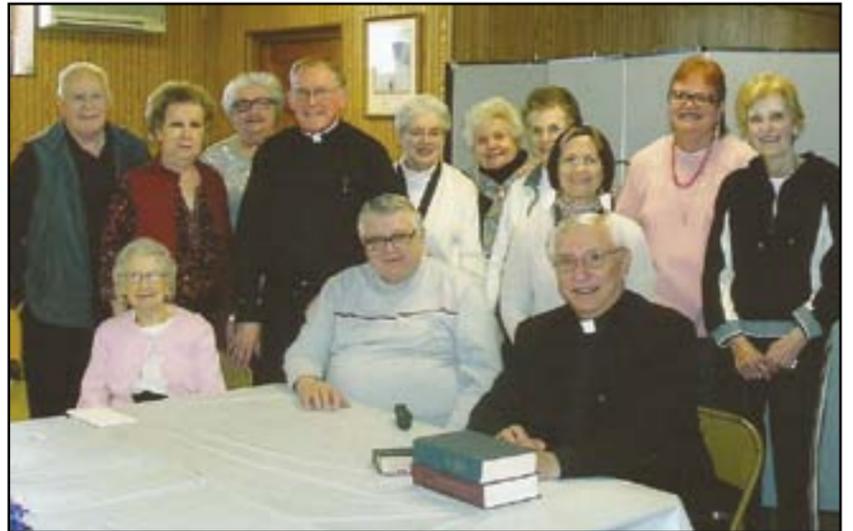
This month, Msgr. George Dobes gave a presentation on "Annulments in the Catholic Church." Msgr. Dobes assists at Epiphany of Our Lord Byzantine Parish in Annandale, Virginia and is a member of the Tribunal of the Archdiocese of Washington.

Previous presenters were: Elizabeth Krueger a retired Army nurse who served in Viet Nam and also in Iran at the time of the overthrow of the Shaw. She and Lisa Guba, a re-

tired Air Force Nurse who dealt with Iraq service persons did a presentation on their ministry. Mary Demyan who has a degree in gerontology did a presentation of medical and legal issues affecting senior citizens.

Also, Sister Reginald of the Oblate Sisters of Providence gave a presentation of Mother Katherine Drexel with emphasis on the Black communities in Louisiana. Sister Christina of the All Saints Sisters of the Poor gave a presentation on the journey of faith of her community of eleven Episcopal Sisters who embraced the Catholic Church.

Father Conan Timoney is Pastor of Patronage Parish.



Pictured is Father Conan Timoney Pastor of Patronage Parish with Msgr. George Dobes and individuals who attended the last monthly luncheon catered by "The Lunch Box Lady".

SAINT MARY CHURCH • WILKES-BARRE, PA

ANNUAL PET BLESSING WAGS MANY TAILS



The annual Blessing of Animals was recently held at Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church in Wilkes-Barre, PA in honor of Saint Mamma, the third century Martyr who had a special affinity for animals and is depicted in iconography as riding a lion.

The blessing, which the church has been doing for about 10 years, is a service to pray for all animals. Though, this year, only dogs were present for the blessing, all pets are welcome and have been present in past years.

Over the years, homing pigeons, horses, cats, turtles, mice and security dogs were blessed. After a prayer service (moleben) to Saint Mamma, the animals were blessed individually with a gentle



sprinkling of Holy Water. The owners, too, were blessed for their continued care of their pets. In addition to the blessing, all pets were given a tasty treat (or two). Owners were given a souvenir keepsake and a prayer card for any sick pet.

Saint Mary Parish is served by Archpriest James Hayer with the assistance of Deacon Edward Fey, Deacon Basil Soroka and the Ministry of the Sisters of Saint Basil the Great.



Senior Seminar at Smithtown Parish

Saturday, October 18, 10AM-12PM

John Spiciati will present a wealth of information about resources and services offered to seniors on the federal, state, county and town levels. He will offer advice on how to navigate these systems to address areas of concern for senior citizens. This is useful information for seniors and those who care for them. This presentation is being offered as a public service by our parish as part of our ongoing speakers' series. All are welcome, and there is no charge to attend.

Resurrection Hall is located beneath the Church, Corner of Edgewater and Mayflower Avenues in Smithtown, NY, and is accessible by chair lift for those with walking difficulties. The Hall is not wheelchair accessible. Resurrection Church is served by Father Jack Custer.

Pilgrims Drink from the Fountain of Mercy at the 80th Annual Pilgrimage at Mount Saint Macrina

By Susan McCarthy



Scattered showers throughout the weekend did not dampen the spirits of the pilgrims who journeyed from throughout the United States, Canada and Eastern Europe to come to Mount Saint Macrina in Uniontown, PA over Labor Day weekend.

This year's Pilgrimage celebrated two special anniversaries: the 80th year for the Pilgrimage and 75 years since the death of Pope Pius XI, who donated the Icon of Our Lady of Perpetual Help to the Sisters.

In her welcome letter to the Pilgrims, Sister Seraphim Olsafsky, OSBM, Provincial, explained the gift of the icon and origin of Pilgrimage, "Pope Pius XI was the first Pope to directly address the Christian ecumenical movement. Like Benedict XV he was interested in achieving reunion with the Eastern Orthodox- failing that, he was determined to give special attention to the Eastern Catholic Churches. In 1935, on the occasion of the visit of Bishop Basil Takach to Rome, Pope Pius XI entrusted the Bishop with a gift for the Sisters of Saint Basil in Uniontown, a beautiful icon of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. In presenting this icon, the Pope requested that the Sisters spread devotion to the Theotokos under this title. Wishing to comply with the Holy Father's request, Mother Macrina and the Sisters initiated the Pilgrimage so that thousands of faithful would come to Mount Saint Macrina to honor the Mother of God through this holy icon."

This year was no exception. Thousands of faithful pilgrims attended this spiritual gathering of the Byzantine Catholic Church. The theme

for the 80th Pilgrimage was "Theotokos: Fountain of Mercy" and many came to drink from this fountain. The beautiful homilies and some of the prayer services emphasized this theme.

As in previous years, the Sisters welcomed all those Pilgrims who came from distant places whether by cars, vans, buses, or airplanes. Some arrived early to help with the preparations of the grounds. Many stayed on the grounds and camped at the racetrack or stayed in the Trinity Center throughout the weekend.

For those who arrived early, they started their Pilgrimage on a beautiful Friday evening with Liturgical prayers at the Shrine Altar.

On Saturday morning, which was the official start of Pilgrimage, the crowd grew for Divine Liturgy in the morning. At the end of the service, Sister Seraphim welcomed the pilgrims to the Mount.

The rest of the weekend included services and activities for pilgrims of all ages, including children, teens and young adults. There were many opportunities for participation in the Divine Liturgy. Also scheduled were Matins, Vespers, sacrament of reconciliation, healing and anointing services, and other services in honor of the Mother of God. In between scheduled events, pilgrims found solace in walking the beautiful grounds of Mount Saint Macrina, visiting the many shrines, and enjoying the companionship of family and friends who share a common purpose.

The Pilgrimage closed on Sunday with a Hierarchical Divine Liturgy at 4 p.m. Later in the

evening, the rain held off long enough for the beautiful candlelight procession. On Monday morning, Divine Liturgy was held for those pilgrims who were still at Mount St. Macrina or in Uniontown.

The Bishops of all four Eparchies attended and conducted services throughout the weekend: Metropolitan William (Skurla) of Pittsburgh, Bishop John (Kudrick) of Parma, Bishop Gerald (Dino) of Phoenix, and Bishop Kurt (Burnette) of Passaic. They were joined by Bishop John (Pazak) of Toronto, Canada.

Pilgrims attending this year may have noticed several upgrades around the property that included handicapped restrooms and renovations to the pilgrim house, as well as an additional prayer garden.

The Pilgrimage provides for the diverse spiritual needs of many pilgrims who frequent this major unifying event in the life of the Byzantine Catholic Church. Its participants include clergy and faithful from across the country. It holds the distinction of being the oldest and the largest Byzantine Catholic Pilgrimage in the United States.

All denominations are welcome to attend the annual Pilgrimage. Next year, the Pilgrimage will be held at Mount St. Macrina on September 5th and 6th. To view Pilgrimage photo albums, please visit www.sistersofstbasil.org.

See photo highlight on next page.

A Word of Gratitude from Sister Seraphim

Dear Friends,

Through the grace of God, together we have completed the historical 80th Pilgrimage honoring our Lady of Perpetual Help at Mount St Macrina. Your participation, your prayers and your generous assistance have once again enabled the Pilgrimage to be successful and spiritually fulfilling.

You are the women and men and young adults called today to help shape the future of our Byzantine Catholic Church as we journey forward. Just as Pope Pius XI, Bishop Basil Takach, and our foundress, Mother Macrina responded to a unique calling within their lifetime, so too, will all the good actions and decisions of your life ripple over the course of our Church's history and echo throughout eternity. You have the power to make a difference. You make a profound difference to us, the Pilgrims, and to the Pilgrimage honoring the Theotokos.

For eighty years, the Sisters of St. Basil have endeavored to keep Mount St. Macrina as a peaceful harbor of prayer and reflection. The 80th Pilgrimage has ended, however, the blessed Pilgrimage of our life continues. Our prayer is that the most

significant journeys you make will be those which take you deeper into the heart of God.

With heartfelt appreciation, and with the assurance that you are being held in the depth of our prayers, we ask that Our Lady of Perpetual Help protect you and give you a profound understanding of how uniquely loved you are by her beloved Son.

With Sincere thanks in the Lord,

Sister Seraphim, O.S.B.M.

Sister Seraphim Olsafsky, OSBM
Provincial



PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 80TH ANNUAL

PHOTO CREDITS: SISTER MONICA HUSOVICH, OSBM, SUSAN McCA



The Pilgrims listen attentively to the words spoken at the 80th Annual Pilgrimage.



"The serenity is amazing"

"The beautiful grounds keep us coming back each year"

"The tram service is wonderful"

"We come to find peace and recharge our batteries"



The Bishops in attendance: (l. to r., Bishop John (Kudrick) of Parma; Metro Bishop Gerald (Dino) of Phoenix; and



The Sisters process for the o

L PILGRIMAGE AT MOUNT SAINT MACRINA

...RTHY, SUBDEACON LEWIS RABAYDA, AND ARCHPRIEST JAMES HAYER



“Theotokos, Fountain of Mercy”



“If we want to follow Christ, we must walk to calvary with Him ... Faith gives wounds a purpose ... We can always jump into the arms of Mary, the Mother of God, and she will hold us...”

~Bishop Kurt Burnette

Bishop Kurt Burnette reflects on the life of Blessed Miriam Teresa Demjanovich.



...): Bishop John (Pazak) of Toronto; Metropolitan William (Skurla) of Pittsburgh; and Bishop Kurt (Burnette) of Passaic.



“Sometimes we are asked to go down a path we don't want to go, but God want us to go. That is when we need to pray Mary's prayer, “I am Your servant, be it done to me according to Your will.”



...pening of the Pilgrimage.



October is Respect Life Month

*Statement from Cardinal Seán P. O'Malley, O.F.M. Cap.
Chairman, USCCB Committee on Pro-Life Activities*



Pope Francis has captivated the world with his humility, warmth and compassion for each person. Vivid accounts of his tenderness for “the least of these”—the elderly, the imprisoned, those with disfiguring disabilities, the unborn, and many more—seize our attention. Why?

At the heart of each of these interactions is a truth which resonates in our hearts, revealing to us something essential to understanding ourselves and our purpose.

We are loved.

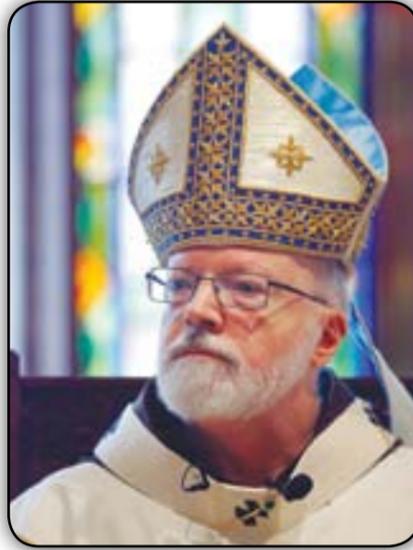
In his 2013 Day for Life Greeting, Pope Francis conveyed that “even the weakest and most vulnerable, the sick, the old, the unborn and the poor, are masterpieces of God’s creation, made in his own image, destined to live forever, and deserving of the utmost reverence and respect.” We see Pope Francis living out the truth of these words in his actions.

We want to be part of a society that makes affirmation and protection of human rights its primary objective and its boast. Yet to women faced with an unexpected pregnancy, abortion is often presented as their only “choice.” A large percentage of children pre-diagnosed as having Down syndrome are never given the chance to live outside their mothers’ wombs. Elderly members of our families fear they will become burdensome and seek physician assisted suicide. We see these and many more of our brothers and sisters pushed to the periphery.

These tragedies go directly against respect for life, and they represent a direct threat to the entire culture of human rights. Rather than societies of “people living together,” our cities risk becoming

societies of people who are marginalized, uprooted and oppressed.

What can be done to prevent this? We must draw close to Jesus in prayer and in the sacraments. We must ask the Lord for the grace to see ourselves and others as he sees us—as masterpieces of his creation. When God created each of us,



he did so with precision and purpose, and he looks on each of us with love that cannot be outdone in intensity or tenderness. We must look at ourselves and at others in light of this truth and treat all people with the reverence and respect which is due.

The Church’s antidote to an individualism which threatens the respect for human dignity is community and solidarity. Are we moved by the suffering of those without shelter? Do we seek to

alleviate the fear, confusion and panic that women facing unexpected pregnancies may be experiencing? Do our hearts ache for elderly patients in nursing homes who feel abandoned and unwanted, having no one to visit them?

Our mission is to show each person the love of Christ. As uniquely created individuals, we each have unique gifts which we are called to use to share Christ’s love. We are continually given opportunities to do so in our interactions with the cashier at the grocery store, our spouses, children, friends and even the people we encounter in traffic. Each of these moments is valuable beyond our realization. We may never know how much a simple gesture of compassion may affect someone’s life.

As the 2014 Respect Life Program begins, let us take a moment to reflect on the theme, “Each of Us is a Masterpiece of God’s Creation,” and how this truth affects both our understanding of ourselves and others and the way we live. Pastoral and educational resources of the program can be found at www.usccb.org/respectlife.

Although we set aside October to particularly pray for respect for all human life, let us never cease this urgent work. I’m grateful to the many parishes and schools nationwide which participate in the program during October, Respect Life Month, and throughout the year.

Love and justice must motivate each of us to work for a transformation of our own hearts so that we can transform the world around us. This is the message of Pope Francis. May the Risen Lord put the Gospel of joy in our hearts so that we may bear witness to the greatest love story ever told.

EACH OF US IS A
MASTERPIECE
 OF GOD’S CREATION.

RESPECT LIFE

facebook.com/peopleoflife
www.usccb.org/respectlife

Healing within Marriage from Abortion

October is Respect Life Month

When Susan's* husband, Juan, told her about the abortion he was involved in when he was in college, she finally understood why he was so depressed and had trouble bonding with their children. However, she wanted him to just get over it, without seeking help from a post-abortion healing ministry. It bothered her to think of him dealing with this in relation to another woman and child.

During Steve's premarital preparation with his (now) wife, the topic of her past abortion never arose. Now married and participating in a post-abortion healing ministry, Steve notes, "It is one of the questions you never think to ask during premarital preparation."

With an estimate of over 56 million abortions in our country since the infamous Roe vs. Wade decision of 1973, there's little doubt that countless marriages are suffering from one or both spouses' involvement in an abortion.

Although many of the same struggles may arise when only one spouse was involved in a previous abortion, couples who aborted their own child before marriage may experience their own unique difficulties, as Tina shares: *...I didn't think it bothered me until after we were married for a year and our son was born. I was so resentful that my husband hadn't protected me and our baby when I became pregnant before we were married. ...I began to resent and hate him. It was like a great divide between us. I couldn't and wouldn't let go of the anger and resentment, because if I did, it would be like saying the abortion was ok, and it wasn't. (Our baby died,) I was hurt, and he could just go on like nothing happened.*

For cases in which one spouse is unaware of the other's past abortion experience, some feel it is crucial for him or her to be told, while others believe it is in the past and it's not necessary to address it. But if "the two shall become one" (Mt 19:5), can the marital union be brought to its fullest potential with the secret of an abortion lingering in the past?

Steve doesn't think so: "...looking back over our 29 years of marriage, it is probably the one thing from [either] of our pasts that has affected our marriage more than any other."

It is no secret that the devastation of abortion brings with it many challenges. Many times the people who have participated in an abortion are not even aware of the countless ways it is affecting their lives. Often, it is not until they recognize some of the effect it is having and become involved in a healing ministry that they begin to more clearly identify their personal abortion connectors (people, places or things that trigger memories of their abortion experience).

It is not uncommon for those suffering from past abortions to overreact to present situations because of the trauma they experienced. For example, what would otherwise be a normal disagreement between spouses can seem like a very real act of abandonment to someone who was coerced into having an abortion. An abortion may also lead to infertility or difficulty conceiving later in life, which bring their own emotional strains for a couple.

Fear of intimacy is another struggle that may arise. Some women and men have kept past abortion experiences a secret and live in the fear of being exposed. They never really

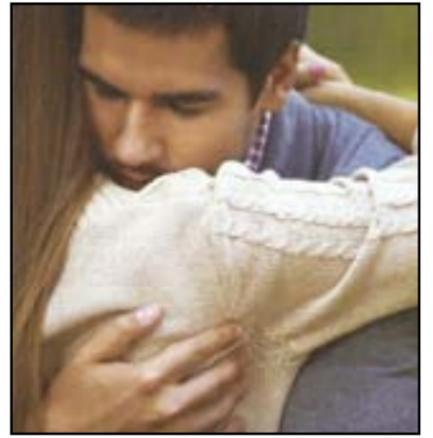
open themselves completely to intimacy for fear of being rejected if their spouse ever discovered their secret. Others may not be willing to practice their faith because of the guilt and shame they feel, which deprives them of spiritual consolation and drives a wedge between them and their spouse.

It is scary for a person to tell his fiancée or her fiancé or spouse about a past abortion. It requires great trust in that person's love for them and trust in God. Unfortunately, sometimes that knowledge can threaten the relationship, but it can also be a means for the couple to grow closer together.

Through the help of a post-abortion healing ministry, couples can successfully work through abortion-related challenges, and God's grace can bring true healing in their relationships. Matt shared his own story of this experience:

I had a hard time learning about the abortion and was not sure if I in fact was still going to be able to marry my fiancée. Attending the retreat helped me to recognize that she was the same person I had loved the day before I learned, and that if God had forgiven her, I needed to forgive her as well. Through counseling and direction we have been able to work through the many feelings and fears I had, and I feel confident we are now able to work on any issues that come up together, and move past them through the grace of God. I feel I am now able to love her the way God intended.

Significant growth can also result from working through the pain together as a couple. For example, the spouse that was not involved in their husband's or wife's past abortion may choose to "spiritually adopt" their spouse's aborted child. This spiritual



adoption can be a beautiful way to unite the couple as the family God intends them to be, as Steve recognized:

I made the decision that this was part of what was brought to our marriage 'in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health...to love and honor... all the days of my life.' I take that vow seriously. We had to make this journey together. ... I now look upon it that I have two sons, the one [whom] she conceived before we met, and the one we conceived together. Would it be any different if the child had lived and ... [were] here present in our lives? No!! The only real difference is that we have a child who is with God and who is working and praying for us.

Abortion affects countless marriages more than many people recognize. But there is no doubt that God will bring great healing to those who trust in his infinite mercy. If a past abortion can be acknowledged and addressed, a married couple can make great strides in experiencing even more fully God's design that "the two shall become one" (Mt 19:5).

**The stories of Susan, Juan, Steve, Tina and Matt (their names are changed for their privacy) are just a few examples of the many marriages touched by abortion. To find out what pastoral resources for marriage may be available in your local area, contact your diocesan family life office. To find resources for post-abortion healing, visit HopeAfterAbortion.org.*



RESPECT LIFE SUNDAY

BYZANTINE CATHOLIC PRO-LIFE PRAYERS

THE FOLLOWING PRAYERS MAY BE USED AT THE DIVINE LITURGY OR FOR PRIVATE REFLECTION.

Again we pray for our Holy Father Francis, that his proclamation of the Gospel of Life may lead all to a love for all of God's creation and for our Bishops, that united with all the successors of the Apostles, they may lead us all in the ways of Truth and Justice. Let us all say, Lord hear us and have mercy.

Let us pray that all of God's people may come to more dearly cherish the Gift of Life and that all who are weighed down by hardship may find strength in God's holy grace and let us pray for all who have died by violence, especially for children who have not been allowed to live, let us say, hear us, Lord, and have mercy.

Again we pray for the Lawgivers in our country, that they may have the courage and wisdom to establish and promote laws which protect the dignity of Human Life from conception until natural death, and we ask, O Lord, that You hear us and have mercy.

God our Father, Giver of Life, we entrust the United States of America to Your loving care. You are the rock on which this nation was founded. You alone are the true source of our cherished rights to Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness. Reclaim this land for Your glory and dwell again among Your people. Send Your Spirit to touch the hearts of our Nation's leaders. Open their minds to the great worth of Human Life and the responsibilities that accompany Human Freedom. Remind Your people that true happiness is rooted in seeking and doing Your will. Through the intercession of Mary Immaculate, Patroness of our Land, grant us the courage to reject the "culture of death" which now prevails. Lead us into a new millennium of life. For every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from You, the Father of lights of heaven, and we render glory, thanksgiving and worship to You, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.



Eparchial Marriage Jubilee Celebration

SUSQUEHANNA VALLEY SYNCCELLATE



Bishop Kurt with the clergy and servers following the Anniversary Liturgy.

SCRANTON, PA – Byzantine Catholic couples from throughout the Susquehanna Valley Syncellate recently gathered with Bishop Kurt, and their parish clergy, at Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church in Scranton, PA for a celebration of their wedding anniversary. All couples celebrating a marriage milestone (5 years, 10 years, 15 years, etc.) were invited to attend.

The day began with the celebration of the Divine Liturgy of Thanksgiving for the intentions of the jubilarians. Concelebrating with Bishop Kurt were Archpriest James Hayer, Father Gary Mensinger, Syn-

cellus; Msgr. John Sekellick, Protopresbyter; Father Robert Lozinski, CSC; Father Leonard Martin, SJ, Host Pastor; Father Michael Salnick, Protopresbyter; Father Mykhaylo Prodanets, Father Peter Tomas, Father Eduard Shestak; Father Michael Kuchera, SJ; Father John Cigan, and Deacon Larry Worlinsky. Father Edward Higgins served as Liturgical Master of Ceremonies. and Deacon Basil Soroka, Deacon Edward Frey, and Deacon Robert Behrens. Assisting at the Liturgy were Subdeacon Gregory Lozinsky from Rome as well as altar servers from neighboring par-

ishes. The liturgical responses were sung by Cantor Andrew Drozdik and the Saint Mary Choir, together



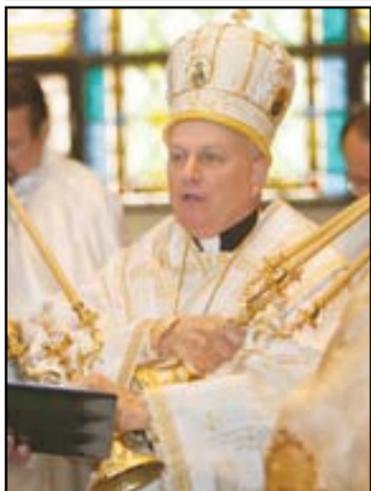
with local cantors from the parishes of the jubilarians.

Following the Divine Liturgy, Bishop Kurt expressed his gratitude to the jubilarians for their example of commitment and love. He then blessed the marriage scrolls. Each couple had the opportunity to have an individual photo taken with the Bishop as he presented them with their marriage scroll of blessing.

All couples were then invited to be guests of honor at a gala testimonial banquet at Saint Mary's Center. Following the Blessing of Food by Bishop Kurt, Father Gary Mensinger, Syncellus, welcomed the guests and acknowledged the jubilarians by years of marriage. A hearty round of applause was given to all the couples, especially those married the longest

– Mr. and Mrs. Peter Borick and Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Susco, each from Saint John Church in Forest City.

Father Michael Salnick then closed with a prayer and asked God's blessings upon all the jubilarians, as well as everyone present, for a safe journey home and many happy years!



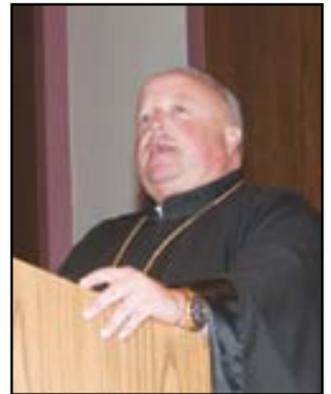
Bishop Kurt blesses with candles at the beginning of Liturgy.



Deacon Lawrence Worlinsky chants the Word of God.



The Bishop blesses the Wedding Scrolls.



Father Gary Mensinger welcomes the guests.



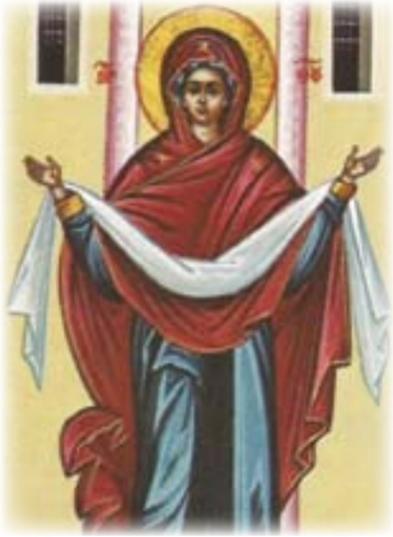
Couples married 65 years, MM Peter Borick and MM Thomas Susco, cut the wedding cake.



The guests and jubilarians enjoy a delicious meal and listen to inspiring words on their years of marriage.



Father Michael Salnick offers a closing prayer.



SEASONAL REFLECTIONS

Msgr. John T. Sekellick, JCL



MARIAN DEVOTION

As October opens with the solemn Feast of the Protection of the Theotokos on the first, our Church brings into focus its unique reverence for Mary, ever-Virgin and Mother. The life of the Theotokos whose holy birth was observed last month, mirrors that of her Son and our Lord, Jesus. She is addressed in prayers under many descriptive titles. Numerous icons portray her spiritual presence. Some have been known to shed tears or exude beautifully and powerfully scented oil. Hardly ever is she seen in iconography alone. Mary almost always is depicted with her divine Son in her arms. She is invoked in our Divine Liturgies some thirteen times. There are many sites of pilgrimages honoring her. Inspiring hymns petition her intercession and resound to her edification.

The Church is careful not to ascribe divinity to her. The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (*Lumen Gentium*) from the Second Vatican Council makes this clear: "We have

but one Mediator, as we know from the words of the Apostle: 'For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, Himself man, Christ Jesus Who gave Himself a ransom for all' (I Timothy 2:5-6). The maternal duty of Mary to us in no way obscures or diminishes this unique mediation of Christ, but rather shows its power. For all the saving influences of the Blessed Virgin on us originate, not from some inner necessity, but from the divine pleasure. They flow forth from the superabundance of the merits of Christ, rest on His mediation, depend entirely on it, and draw all their power from it. In no way do they impede the immediate union of the faithful with Christ; rather, they foster this union." (no. 60)

Mary then, as Mother of God, intercedes for us before His throne in heaven. She is famously described as "more honorable than the Cherubim and beyond compare more glorious than the Seraphim." More than an example of piety and more than a saint, Mary is called "All-holy" (*Panaghia*), "Ever-Virgin" and resoundingly *Theotokos* (Mother of God), as defined by the Ecumenical Council of Ephesus in 431. She is the exemplar of virtue to people of all ages.

Mary cares for us on our journey through life surrounded by dangers and difficulties. While on earth, she and Saint Joseph experienced with her Son their flight into Egypt escaping the very jealous wrath of the wicked king, Herod. She was united with Him in suffering as He died on the Cross. Her sorrow was turned into inexpressible joy with His glorious and radiant resurrection and was taken body and soul into heaven at her holy Dormition.

From the writings of some of our great Eastern Saints, we have their descriptions on the Virgin Mary's role in God's plan of salvation. Saint Epiphanius of Cyprus (c.315-403) writes that Mary is "the holy Jerusalem, Virgin of Christ, His Bride." Saint Andrew of Crete (c.660-740) chants she is "the living city of the King and God, in which Christ dwelt and worked out our salvation." Saint Cyril of Alexandria (+444), in his famous litany of praise spoken after the Council of Ephesus, where he was a very dominant figure, ends with these words: "Let us give glory to Mary, Ever-Virgin, that is to the Holy Church, and her Son and immaculate Spouse; to Him be glory forever and ever."

The recently canonized Saint John Paul II in his sixth encyclical letter *Redemptoris Mater* (Mother of the Redeemer) issued on March 25, 1987 points out that a central consideration of Mary is precisely her being Theotokos (the Mother of God) since by the power of the Holy Spirit she conceived in her virginal womb and brought into the world Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Who is of one Being with the Father and the Holy Spirit. It is said that Saint John Paul II attributed his being spared certain death by the dramatic assassination attempt on May 13, 1981 in Saint Peter's Square surely to the miraculous intervention of the Mother of God.

As we celebrate Mary's feast of the Protection, may we make our own this prayer from the Office of Consolation (*Paraklisis*): "O Joy of all the afflicted, Patroness of the persecuted, Sustainer of the hungry, Consolation of those in exile, Haven to the storm-tossed, Comfort to the sick, Protectress and Patroness of the weak, Staff of the aged, O Mother of God, you are most pure. Hasten to us, we pray, that your servants may be saved."

SPECIAL FEATURE: SEMINARY LIFE IN UZHOROD

The Uzhorod Greek-Catholic Theological Academy of the Blessed Theodore Romzha is the institution of formation and education of the Greek-Catholic Eparchy of Mukachevo. Its purpose is the formation of the candidates for the priesthood by living in the spiritual growing and obtaining the philosophical-theological education. The Seminary of three Hierarchs, Andriy Bachynsky's Catechetical Institute, the cantor school and the icon school led by the Friars Minor Capuchin also operate in the Academy.

The beginning of this important institution is dated at the time of the Bishop Mykhajlo Manuil Olshavskyy who established a theological school in Mukachevo in 1744. Since 1778 the school moved to Uzhhorod castle that Maria Theresa donated to Andriy Bachynskyy, the bishop of Mukachevo. In 1941 the Seminary received the status of Academy. Since 1949 the Seminary was closed because of the liquidation of the Mukachevo Greek-Catholic Eparchy by the communist government. Nevertheless, the closing of the Seminary did not cause the closing of the hearts of the young men who heard the Christ calling: "Follow me!"

During the clandestine activity from 1956 till 1991 fifty-three candidates were educated and ordained to the priesthood. The religious freedom in 1989 gave the possibility to reopen the Seminary.

The corner stone was blessed for the new building on June 28, 1992. The academic year 1992-1993 started and the seminarians lived in the small coaches which were situated on the territory of the Seminary. Neither summer heat, nor winter cold impeded the seminarians in their preparation to the priesthood.

The cardinal Jozef Tomko blessed the complete building of the new Seminary and the footing for the new Seminary chapel on June 28, 2004 on the feast of the Transportation of the Relics of the Blessed Theodore Romzha. Bishop Milan Šašik and the Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, Archbishop Emeritus of Washington, DC, blessed the new Seminary chapel. Since the religious freedom, over 170 students have been graduated.

The academic term of the Seminary is seven years where young men who received the vocation to the priesthood, desire to become good shepherds for the people of God and to live the life in Christ in a more profound way. During the years of Seminary study, the candidate has the occasion to cultivate personal growth, to know oneself better and to recognize God's design for him.

The Seminary is not only academic but also a spiritual institution where the seminarians live in community life. One of the most important aspects of formation is the spiritual life. Thanks

to the spiritual practices, the seminarian has the chance to be united with God and to get the necessary preparation for spiritual growth.

The main purpose of the Seminary is to form a good priest. Every seminarian is engaged in pastoral activity: in the hospitals, youth ministry, participating to the meetings of young Christian group "Faith and Light," catechetical activity, liturgical chant. All these activities give the seminarian opportunity to know better the spiritual needs of this world, and to grow in the personal vocation.

The fifth year of the Seminary is especially dedicated to the pastoral growth of the seminarian, which is called "pastoral year". It is the time that the seminarian spends during the year in the local parishes. It gives the the seminarian the opportunity to work with the youth, to take part actively in the parish life, and to experience the "real" life of the priest.



Bishop Sasik Bishop Kurt.



FAITH AND COMMUNITY ISSUES

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

The Family: A Community of Persons

THE ROLE OF INDISSOLUBILITY IN THE MARRIAGE COVENANT

In the perspective of *Familiaris Consortio* The Church sees the role of indissolubility in the married state as a *sine qua non* to be believed, accepted and lived out in cooperation with the activity of the Holy Spirit in the life of the married couple. In the midst of a cynical and ephemeral world, the lived out experience of a marriage that is lasting both reconfirms the foundation of that lived out experience as a manifestation of Christ's commitment to His Church and a challenge of the possibilities of permanence and stability in relationship, to the impermanent, unstable values of the world.

According to *Familiaris Consortio* through the charism of indissolubility, the quality of permanence in a marriage bond, the original plan of the Creator in fashioning Man and Woman reaches its apex. The charism echoes the words of Genesis which the Author places into Adam's mouth: "the man said: 'This one, at last, is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; this one shall be called 'woman' for out of man this one has been taken.'" (Gen. 2:23)

This bonding of man and woman in the bond of marriage in fact is "the plan that God has manifested in his revelation . . . the indissolubility of marriage as a fruit, a sign and a requirement of the absolutely faithful love that God as for man and that the Lord Jesus has for the Church" (*Familiaris Consortio*, 1981, §20).

It is in the Mystery of Matrimony that the original plan of God for the union of Man and Woman created for the good of both Husband and Wife as well as the children coming as the fruit of the bond, come to full expression in this world renewed by Christ through this mystery, a new heart is created and offered the result of which is the removal of the heart of stone from the couple and the intimate love sharing of Christ himself, full and all-encompassing literally, "the new and eternal Covenant made flesh" (*Familiaris Consortio*, 1981, §20).

The implication becomes plain, as Christ is the faithful unconditional witness and positive response to God's promises the Hesus, unconditional fidelity and love of God toward His people, and that Jesus has for the Church he founded; a love that is limitless, a love that is "to the end" (Jn. 13:1). There is more to this multifaceted experience than just the charismatic perspective. *Familiaris Consortio's* perspective speaks of the Mystery of Marriage as a calling from God, indeed a mandate to the Christian couple "that they may remain faithful to each other forever" (*Familiaris Consortio*, 1981 §20). This fidelity is to prove faithful beyond every test, every difficulty no matter the gravity of the situation, generously, obediently reflecting in their actions their free participation in the Sacred Will of God: "What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder." (Mt. 19:16, as quoted in *Familiaris Consortio*, 1981 §20)

Familiaris Consortio (1981) underscores the fact that indissolubility and fidelity of The Mystery of Marriage, is of inestimable value and the witnessing to this on the part of the couple is a task both priceless and extremely urgent at present. Saint John Paul II uniting himself with his

Brother Bishops assembled at the Holy Synod publicly extolled "those numerous couples who, through encountering no small difficulty, preserve and develop the value of indissolubility . . . they perform the role committed to them of being in the world a 'sign' . . . subjected to temptation but always renewed—of the unfailing fidelity with which God and Jesus Christ love each and every human being." (§20)

While the ideal of the matrimonial commitment is found in the relationship of the couple, the document also recognizes the heroic cooperation with God's grace in the supreme witness of those who have divorced and remain single. Their witness to fidelity brings a great teaching to a cynical and ego-centered world. The document makes it clear that such witness must be strongly supported by the Church in the person of their pastors and parishioners of the community to which these people belong.

Conjugal Communion

For the document, the intimacy of conjugal communion is the base upon which the entire

constellation of the family from parents and children to the in-laws and "out-laws" is structured. This communion begins with flesh and blood and grows into the supernatural bonds of spirit to spirit where the two become one in mind and heart and through that union reaching out to the rest of the family membership.

As with the couple so with the larger family membership; all are called to experience "a new and original communion which confirms and perfects natural and human communion" (*Familiaris Consortio*, 1981, §21). The document utilizes the perspective of ST. Thomas Aquinas in describing this unique grace as a "grace of brotherhood" (Thomas Aquinas as quoted in *Familiaris Consortio*, §21). The Source and Fountain of this inexhaustible grace is the Holy Spirit. His Labor is to gather all who believe and bond them to Jesus Christ and each other within the context of the membership of God's Church. How this gathering and living out of the bond is experienced will be the subject of our next installment.



Protection of the Mother of God

The Protection of the Mother of God

2014 Icon retreat led by iconographer Peter Pearson

October 23-26

Retreatants will follow step by step instructions to produce an icon of The Protection of the Mother of God. We will also discuss the development of iconography, the spirituality of creating an icon, and praying with icons.

Peter Pearson has forty years experience writing icons for churches, private individuals, and institutions around the world. He is noted for teaching both painting technique and the spirituality of creating icons. He has given presentations to groups ranging from school children and senior citizen groups to artists and seminarians. Samples of his iconography are available online at <http://www.nb.net/~pearson> or may be seen in Hazleton at St John Byzantine Catholic Church or Holy Rosary Roman Catholic Church.

Schedule: Thursday October 23 & Friday October 24, 6:30pm-9:30pm
Saturday October 25, 9:30am-4:30pm; and Sunday October 26, 1-5pm

Cost: \$275 (\$285 after October 10), includes all supplies and materials for completing this icon, plus Saturday lunch.

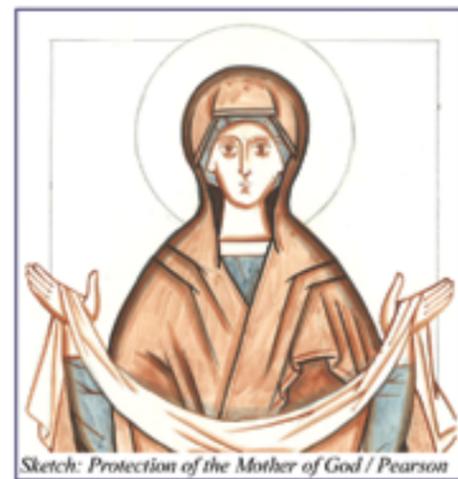
Optional room & board starts at \$50/night (\$75 for private room).

Contact: Fr Carmen at holydormition@gmail.com or 570-788-1212 x 407

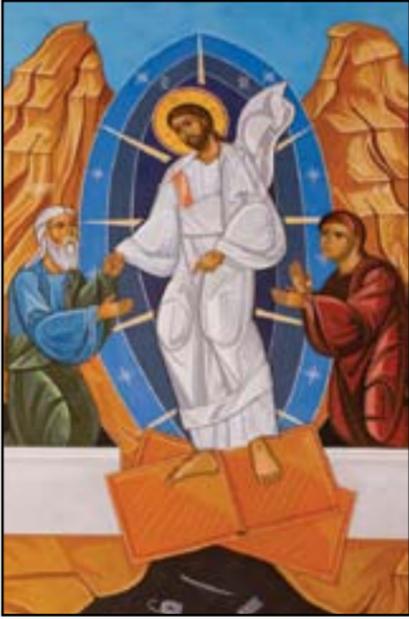


Holy Dormition Friary

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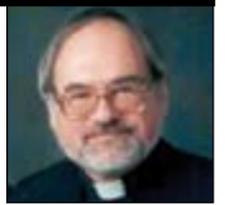


Sketch: Protection of the Mother of God / Pearson



THE BYZANTINE LITURGY

By Archpriest David Petras, SEOD



Jesus the Resurrection and the Life

There is yet one other Resurrection in the Gospel of Matthew. When Christ died on the Cross, Matthew states: "But Jesus cried out again in a loud voice, and gave up His spirit. And behold, the veil of the sanctuary was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth quaked, rocks were split, tombs were opened, and the bodies of many saints who had fallen asleep were raised. And coming forth from their tombs after his resurrection, they entered the holy city and appeared to many." (Matthew 27:50-53)

This event is recorded only in the Gospel of Saint Matthew, just as in the case of the earthquakes (at His death and resurrection). No record of what happened to these people who rose is given. Sometimes commentators seem to say that they had to die again, therefore, were like other resurrections Jesus did before His own death and resurrection. However, I think they are to be associated with the resurrection of Jesus. The passage says that they "appeared to many" only after Jesus' resurrection. The Lord's death was the victory over death, and what Matthew seems to be proclaiming here is that the general resurrection began with Jesus. He has accomplished the salvation on the Cross and the tree of life is now open to humankind. As Saint Paul wrote, "But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first-fruits of

those who have fallen asleep. (1 Corinthians 15:20)"

The story of the harrowing of Hades is not told in the Gospels, but it has become an important part of the Paschal Mystery. The icon of Pascha is, in fact, Jesus raising Adam and Eve out of Hades. If this passage is the image of the general resurrection, then those raised do not die again. Saint Matthew is making a theological statement here. He constantly points out how Jesus fulfills the prophecies of the Old Testament, and here he fulfills perhaps Ezekiel 37 (the dry bones) and Daniel 12:2-3, the clearest prophecy of resurrection in the Old Testament, "Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake; some to everlasting life, others to reproach and everlasting disgrace."

Though this event is recorded only in the Gospel of Saint Matthew, it has connections to the other Gospels, particularly Saint John. This may be seen also as a fulfillment of his promise made in his Gospel, "... the hour is coming in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voices and will come out, those who have done good deeds to the resurrection of life, but those who have done wicked deeds to the resurrection of condemnation." (John 5:28-29) We may, in fact, be familiar with this verse, it is the Gospel passage that is read at funerals. This is the theme of all of chapter 5 of the gospel of Saint John, and similar passages are found in alternate gospels passages that are read when we pray for those who have fallen asleep ahead of us, "For just as the Father raises the dead and gives life, so also does the Son give life to whomever He wishes (John 5:21). Amen, amen, I say to

you, whoever hears My word and believes in the one who sent Me has eternal life and will not come to condemnation, but has passed from death to life. (John 5:24) Amen, amen, I say to you, the hour is coming and is now here when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. (John 5:25) For just as the Father has life in himself, so also He gave to His Son the possession of life in Himself." (John 5:25-26) Saint Matthew witnesses that what our Lord has foretold has already begun, though for us it remains a future hope. These gospels are read at funerals to nourish that hope and to comfort us on the departure of those we love.

A very important question that this gospel brings, however, is that of the Descent into Hades. The resurrection narratives in the gospels do not describe Jesus going down into the kingdom of death. The stories are quite simple: Jesus dies, is buried, and on the third day the tomb is found empty. This is followed by appearances of Jesus to his followers. In the Gospel passage of Saint Matthew, however, we see the beginning of the Lord's victory over death, which has come to be depicted in the icon of Jesus' despoiling Hades, of "trampling upon death by (His) death", and which has become the icon of the feast of Pascha in the Church. There is no graphic description of the descent into Hades in the Gospels. However, it did become an article of faith. The Apostles Creed, used in the Western Church, professes that Jesus "descended into Hell." The concept of the destruction of Hades likewise dominates the liturgical texts of the feast of Pascha. Archbishop Hilarion Alfeyev enumerates this: "Christ's

descent into Hades is mentioned more than fifty times in the services of Good Friday and Great Saturday, more than two hundred times during the Pentecost period, and more than one hundred and fifty times in the Sunday and festival hymns throughout the church year."

Certainly the core of the idea of the destruction of death through Christ's death on the Cross and resurrection is found in the Scriptures. In the New Testament, we do find statements of Christ's "descending" after His death on the Cross:

"What does "He ascended" mean except that He also descended into the lower [regions] of the earth? The one who descended is also the one who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things." (Ephesians 4:9-10) "For Christ also suffered for sins once, the righteous for the sake of the unrighteous, that he might lead you to God. Put to death in the flesh, he was brought to life in the spirit. In it he also went to preach to the spirits in prison." (1 Peter 3:18-19) This was thought of as the preaching of the gospel even to the departed: "For this is why the gospel was preached even to the dead that, though condemned in the flesh in human estimation, they might live in the spirit in the estimation of God." (1 Peter 4:6) "Amen, amen, I say to you, the hour is coming and is now here when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live." (John 5:25) This simple passage from Saint Matthew has become the center of our faith, which we proclaim at every Liturgy.

8 Days in Rome & Assisi! January 26 – February 2, 2015

Hosted by Father Charles M. Yastishock and Father Edward G. Cimbala

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SEMINARIAN REFLECTIONS

Subdeacon Lewis Rabayda

“Yearning for the Lord”

Many things happen in our lives that require our attention and that pull us into different directions. These events can cause us to lose our focus and to place God at a distance, to place Him in the tomorrow that never comes. But then there can be a day when we have a moment to look back and see why our lives have not gone the way we prefer, or if we have endured more than enough suffering from calamities within and beyond our control. There may be a moment when we say, “Where is God?” “What happened to God?” “When was the last time I felt the reassurance of God in prayer?” “Will He forgive me now, with all I’ve done, like He did when I was young?” If these questions bring up a *faint* memory of God or His action in our lives, or even His forgiveness for our sins, then we have let it go too far and too long. If, I hope, that sometime in our past we have had the sweet feeling of God’s presence in our lives, in our prayer, then the appropriate response to these memories is similar to remembering an old friend, a deceased parent or spouse or child, or a love that made us so happy, that we long for those moments again. Indeed, when we miss something or someone that was so precious to us that it was the most important thing or person in our lives, and they are gone, they are away, they have changed, or we ourselves caused the separation, we yearn for those good moments to return.

But the more experienced of us do not have the monopoly on loss or longing. I do not think that younger people can long for moments they have lost any less than the elderly can, because this is one instance in which time is relative. A 19 year old can miss the innocents of their youth just as a 74 year old can miss the spouse of their 50’s and all the joyful intimacy they shared. Due to tragedies, youth can also mourn the loss of a parent due to death or separation. We are humans, and we have heartache and pain that has been caused by our own actions or by those of others. We naturally long for times when our lives were good, or in order, or productive, or we shared it with those who helped us to be happy. But that begs the question of what makes us happy?

Again, we are humans, so we draw most of our feelings of love and affection from the relationships we have with others. We would be sick to think that material objects could offer more emotion or feelings of satisfaction than interactions with other people can. But there is one challenge that is limited to the fragility of human life: we may be here today, but there is no

guarantee that us, or those around us will be there tomorrow. We are the only constant in our own lives. We were present at our birth, and we (even if we develop dementia, we will still be present to some degree) will be the only person who has accompanied ourselves on the journey thought life to our death.

But luckily for us, there are more aspects to life than those that are limited to the human realm. We have a God that created us. We have a God that loves us. God in all three forms of the Holy Trinity, is “everywhere present and filling all things.” We are not alone on this journey of life. There is a Pro-Life saying that talks about the sanctity of human life “From Womb to Tomb.” But God is present for much more than this, this saying just represents our earthly existence. God has chosen us before we were born, He has been there for us through our lives, and He will be our God after our bodies give out, and when we will be raised for the Eternal Paradise.

I hope and pray that each of us has had some good experience of God in our past that we can look back and say, “that was a good moment, those were good years, I remember the joy I felt when I prayed regularly.” Because, unlike the good days that we experience and think we can never relive because of our age, because of death or loss or pride, we can always experience the good that we shared with God. God hasn’t gone away, even if we have stopped believing in Him, He has not stopped His pursuit for us. God is waiting for us to ask Him back into our lives. It is not that He has been absent from our lives, but He is waiting for us to reach out to Him, so that He can meet us on our path. To yearn for the Lord, is to long for the One that completes us in a way that no other human being can. And if we do have this desire, if we stretch-out our arms and reach for God, reach for that memory of love that we haven’t experienced for some time, God will not disappoint us as other humans have. God will shower us with His great forgiveness and love—what more could we need?

“Look towards Him and be radiant,
let your faces not be abashed.
This poor man called; the Lord heard him
and rescued him from all his distress.” —Psalm 33[34]

Upcoming Events for October

Eparchial and Parish Events

Glory to Jesus Christ!
Glory Forever!

OCTOBER

1 Holy Protection · *Solemn Holy Day*
Chancery Closed

Eastern Catholic Life

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| 4 | Beatification Ceremony
of Sister Miriam Teresa Demjanovich
<i>Sacred Heart Basilica · Newark, NJ</i>
9:30 AM |
| 5 | Hierarchical Liturgy of Thanksgiving
for the Beatification of
Blessed Miriam Teresa Demjanovich
<i>St. John Church · Bayonne, NJ</i>
3:00 PM |
| 12 | 100th Anniversary of Roebling Parish
<i>St. Nicholas Church · 3PM</i> |
| 18 | Senior Seminar
<i>Resurrection Church · Smithtown, NY</i> |
| 23-26 | Icon Retreat
<i>Franciscan Friary · Sybertsville, PA</i> |
| 31 | Feast of Blessed Theodore Romzha |