



IN LINE WITH VATICAN II: NEW RULES ON EASTERN MARRIED CLERGY by Archbishop Cyril Vasil', SJ, with Bishop George Gallaro

INTRODUCTION

Until recently, it seemed that the presence and ministry of Eastern Catholic married clergy in the so-called diaspora (places outside of the traditional territories) was a closed question. In fact, not much could have been added to its historical or canonical viewpoint that had not already been studiously examined. The issue is summarized by the 1990 *Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches*: "The particular law of each Church sui iuris or special norms established by the Holy See are to be followed in admitting married men to sacred orders" (Canon 758, paragraph 3).

Following ancient discipline, all Eastern Catholic Churches – with the exception of the Syro-Malabar and Syro-Malankara Churches [of India -

The November 2013 Plenary Session of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, among other things, adequately dealt with this issue and reached the wide-ranging consent of the members present. As a consequence, the Prefect of the Eastern Congregation submitted to the Holy Father, Pope Francis, the request to grant, under certain conditions, to the respective ecclesiastical authorities the faculty to allow Eastern Catholic married clergy to minister even outside of their traditional territories.

The Holy Father, at the audience granted to the Prefect of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, Cardinal Leonardo Sandri, on December 23, 2013, favorably received this request, notwithstanding the least things to the contrary (*contrariis quibuslibet minime obstantibus*) and the text of the new norms was published on June 14, 2014. [*Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 106 (2014) n. 6, pp. 496-499] In order to better understand the importance of these new rules, it seems opportune to briefly present here the history of the legislation, from its beginnings to the present-day situation.

ORIGIN OF THE RESTRICTIVE NORM

Towards the end of the 19th century, the influx of Eastern Catholic faithful to America, mainly from Slavic countries (Ukrainians, Ruthenians, Slovaks, e.g.), caught the local Latin hierarchy off guard, particularly on how to meet the pastoral and spiritual needs of the newcomers. The initial idea of combining all Catholics under the Latin jurisdiction found its support in the prevailing mentality of the superiority of the Latin rite (*praestantia ritus Latini*) and the supposed inferiority of Eastern Catholic practices.¹ The then-American hierarchy, with Irish or German backgrounds, was not entirely familiar or even open to an Eastern Catholic married clergy. It was foreign to them and practically inadmissible in their dioceses. As a consequence, the Latin bishops insistently requested the Roman Ap-

ostolic See to issue restrictive norms that would eliminate such disciplinary difference in their territories and among the faithful entrusted to their pastoral care.

The then-Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide (somehow reluctantly) on October 1, 1890, issued a decree forbidding married Ruthenian clergy from residing in United States. In 1913, the Holy See established that only celibate men could be ordained priests in the United States and Canada. Later on, the Sacred Congregation for the Eastern Church published three decrees: *Cum data fuerit* on March 1, 1929, forbidding the priestly ministry of married Ruthenian clergy in North America; *Qua sollerti* on December



Bishops assembled in Saint Peter's for a meeting of the Second Vatican Council during The Great Fast in the early 1960's

ed. note]– admit married men not only to the diaconate but also to the priesthood. Later on, special norms were established by the Holy See for married clergy living and ministering to their faithful residing outside of the traditional Eastern territories. A recent important development of this legislation gives us the chance to recall the main points of the question in its historical perspective and to understand the newly enacted set of norms.

Since 1890, the Roman Apostolic See issued some directives whereby priests of the Eastern Catholic Churches ministering to their faithful outside of the traditional territories were bound to celibacy like the Latin clergy. Isolated cases of dispensation were granted by Rome.

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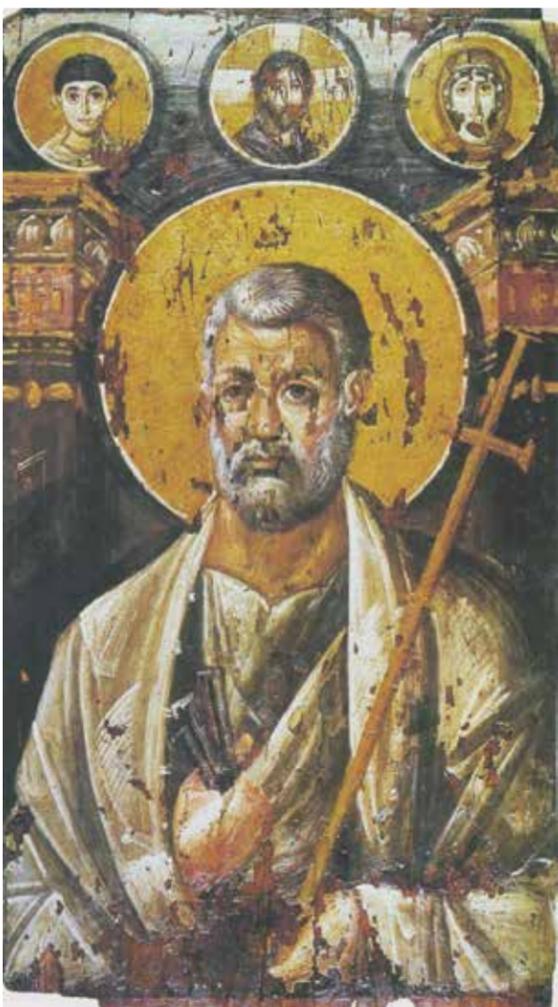


I LIFT UP MY EYES...

Pastoral Reflections of Bishop Kurt

HE APPEARED FIRST TO KEPHAS, THAT IS PETER

Something special about the Christian religion is its historical nature. Of course, all religions have a history, and their history is in some ways important. If a religion is based on an individual, and I consider him to be a con-man, then I wouldn't want to belong to that religion, no matter how pleasant their teachings. Despite the fact that all religions have a history, the history may not be part of the religion itself. But for us, our history is very much part of what we believe



Icon of Saint Peter: 6th-century encaustic from Saint Catherine's Monastery, Mount Sinai

in our religion, beginning with the Jews or Hebrews. The Jewish religion is based on a special history, and they believe (as we do too) that God intervened in the affairs of the world in a special way to set apart His chosen people. For example, at the time of Abraham, God not only set aside a chosen people, but began to teach us His ways. Archeology has shown that our ancestors almost universally practiced human sacrifice, and when the angel stopped the arm of Abraham, God revealed to His chosen people that human sacrifice must stop. It took a very long time for the rest of the world to learn this lesson. The Romans, whom we think of as civilized, still practiced it at the time of Christ. The Aztecs still sacrificed people from other tribes in huge numbers when the Spanish arrived around 1500. (And only the appearance of the Mother of God converted them to Christianity.) After Abraham, God continued to reveal himself gradually until the coming of Jesus, whom we Christians accept as the Messiah, the Son of God, and the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets.

Most especially, Christianity is based on the historical life of Jesus Christ, and in particular, on his Resurrection from the dead. One early Christian writer mentions that in every church then you could meet people who were cured by Jesus or raised from the dead. The most important eyewitnesses were the witnesses of the Resurrection of Jesus Himself.

In the fifteenth chapter of his first letter to the Corinthians, Saint Paul lists eyewitnesses to the Resurrection. He says that Jesus appeared first to Kephias (that is Peter) and then to the twelve, and then to more than five hundred of the "brothers" at the same time, and he says most of those eyewitnesses are still alive (while he is writing). When he says "brothers" that is a word that he often uses for other Christian believers. Saint Paul challenges his readers at the time to check the historical facts by talking to eyewitnesses, and goes on to say that if the history is false then our religion is false, and he says that if our religion is false, then we are the most pitiable of creatures—after all, Christians were being harassed and even killed for believing in the Resurrection when he wrote that letter.

This man Kephias or Peter still plays a role in our faith in the historical event that is the foundation of our faith. As we know, Saint Peter was an impulsive man who showed his emotions on the outside, and often put his foot in his mouth, and was very much in love with Our Lord. He even says when Jesus interrogates him after the Resurrection, "Lord you know all things, you know that I love you." After Jesus ascended, Saint Peter spent the rest of his life traveling around the Mediterranean and giving people his eyewitness testimony. According to ancient sources, his eyewitness testimony was written down by his friend Saint Mark as the Gospel of Mark.

Saint Peter finally went to the City of Rome to give his testimony. According to ancient tradition, Saint Peter was talked into leaving Rome because of the danger, and on the highway out of the city he met Jesus who was heading the other way. Saint Peter asked him, "Quo vadis?" which means, "Where are you going?" Jesus replied, "I am going to Rome to be crucified again", and so Saint Peter returned to Rome despite the danger.

If you go to Rome today, you can visit a place that was an ancient chariot racetrack. It was started by the Emperor Caligula, but was completed by Nero, and so it became known as Nero's Circus. One of the decorations was an obelisk that the Romans brought from Egypt. Contrary to what many people say nowadays, Jesus was mentioned by ancient non-Christian historians, and also the persecution and execution of the early Christians are described in chilling details by the Roman historian Tacitus, who wrote about it probably in the year 117.

After the great fire of Rome, the populace believed that Nero started the fire, and nothing

he could do seemed to stop the rumors, so Tacitus tells us: "Consequently, to get rid of the report, Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace. Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus, and a most mischievous superstition, thus checked for the moment, again broke out not only in Judæa, the first source of the evil, but even in Rome, where all things hideous and shameful from every part of the world find their centre and become popular. Accordingly, an arrest was first made of all who pleaded guilty; then, upon their information, an immense multitude was convicted, not so much of the crime of firing the city, as of hatred against mankind. Mockery of every sort was added to their deaths. Covered with the skins of beasts, they were torn by dogs and perished, or were nailed to crosses, or were doomed to the flames and burnt, to serve as a nightly illumination, when daylight had expired. Nero offered his gardens for the spectacle, and was exhibiting a show in the circus, while he mingled with the people in the dress of a charioteer or stood aloft on a car. Hence, even for criminals who deserved extreme and exemplary punishment, there arose a feeling of compassion; for it was not, as it seemed, for the public good, but to glut one man's cruelty, that they were being destroyed." I quoted this passage in full so that you can see for yourself one example of a secular historian, in fact a historian who didn't like Christians, who talks about Christ and the early Christians.

According to ancient tradition, it was in this fierce persecution by Nero that Saint Peter and Saint Paul were both executed. Saint Paul was a Roman citizen, and so he was executed in a different place by decapitation. But Saint Peter was taken to Nero's Circus where he was crucified as part of spectacle. At that time, all executions took place outside the sacred city limits of ancient Rome, and in addition, there was a law that forbade burials inside the city. So the Romans built their mausoleums along the highways leaving the city, and along Nero's Circus was a highway to the seashore. There were many mausoleums along this highway so that Romans could visit their dead on the way to a beach holiday, as we might today. The body of Saint Peter was cut down from his cross, and taken to the mausoleum of a well-off Roman family not far from where he died.

Now moving three centuries into the future, Constantine legalized the Christian religion. (Constantine definitely did NOT make it the state religion, contrary to what many people say. In fact, it was even outlawed again a few emperors later.) Constantine provided places of worship for this new religion, but he did not touch any-



thing that was already sacred, so the first Christian churches were built outside the old city of Rome. One church he built was a basilica dedicated to Saint Peter, and according to tradition, the bones of Peter were directly under the high altar. The Roman engineers built enormous retaining walls on the side of the Vatican hill to create a level area for the new church. Because they did not wish to disturb the now sacred mausoleums along the highway, even the pagan ones, they carefully filled in the area with rocks, and built their new church above the old highway.

Moving twelve more centuries into the future, the old church is falling apart, so the popes build a spectacular new church designed by Michelangelo on top of the old one. In fact, if you visit Saint Peter's today in Rome, the basement is the old floor of Constantine's basilica. Moving a few more centuries into the future we come to the 1930's, and the death of Pope Pius XI. (Some people reading this article were alive when this happened.) While they were breaking through the marble in the basement to make him a tomb, the workmen found a hollow area under the floor.

They went to the new pope, Pius XII, and told him and he said, "Well, get some archeologists and find out what's down there."

What do you think they found? They found the ancient highway, just as the ancient sources described it, complete with the mausoleums, some two stories high, where the ancient Roman families interred their loved ones. Because the Romans respected these sacred tombs, no matter what religion they were, the Roman engineers carefully filled the area in with rock preserving everything perfectly.

And underneath the main altar, they found the bones of Saint Peter in a stone box, exactly where they were said to be. In the box were the bones of a male, but with no hands, no feet, and no skull. Ancient tradition did say that his skull was kept somewhere else, and some people speculate that if the first Christians were in a hurry to get the body off the cross, they may have cut it at the hands and feet.

What an amazing confirmation through archeology of the ancient traditions about the chief

eyewitness to the Resurrection of Jesus Christ! And if you go to Rome today, you can take a tour under the church, and walk up this ancient highway for yourself. A knowledgeable guide can show you the sites along the highway, and explain much of the science, for example, we can tell the age of masonry by the types of bricks used (just as nowadays—fashions changed). When Saint Paul says most of the eyewitnesses are still alive, it seems as though that it is still true, at least for the chief eyewitnesses. With scientific archeology, Saint Peter speaks up and gives his testimony to the truths that were handed down to us. You yourself can walk on an ancient highway a stones' throw from the crucifixion of Peter, where his friends hastily hid his body from Nero's police. You can see the mausoleums and sarcophaguses from two thousand years ago. You can see ancient Christian art painted on the walls. You can also see the Egyptian obelisk that was in Nero's Circus—it has moved to the center of the plaza in front of Saint Peter's Church. Saint Peter still cries out today, "Christ is Risen!"

+Kurt Burnett



FROM THE OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

Clergy Appointments

VERY REVEREND MICHAEL MONDIK has been relieved of his responsibilities as Pastor of Saint Thomas the Apostle Church in Rahway, NJ and is granted retirement status. Father Mondik remains a priest in good standing in the Eparchy of Passaic. Thank you, Father!

RIGHT REVEREND JAMES G. HAYER, in addition to his present responsibilities, has been appointed Administrator of Saint Thomas the Apostle Church in Rahway, NJ

VERY REVEREND RONALD BARUSEFSKI has been relieved of his responsibilities as Administrator of St. John the Baptist Church, Bayonne, NJ; Saint George Church, Newark, NJ and Saint Mary Church in Jersey City, NJ and has begun studies this summer in Italy.

VERY REVEREND MARCEL SZABO has been relieved of his responsibilities as Rector of Saint Michael Cathedral, Passaic, NJ; as Administrator of Holy Spirit Church, Mahwah, NJ and as Administrator of Holy Wisdom Church, Flanders, NJ and has been appointed Pastor of Saint John the Apostle Church, Bayonne, NJ; and Administrator of both Saint George Church, Newark, NJ and Saint Mary Church, Jersey City, NJ.

VERY REVEREND JOHN CUSTER has been relieved of his responsibilities as Pastor of Resurrection Byzantine Catholic Church in Smithtown, NY, and Administrator of Church of Saint Andrew the Apostle in Westbury, NY, and has been appointed Rector of the Cathedral of Saint Michael, Passaic, NJ; Administrator of Holy Spirit Church, Mahwah, NJ; and Administrator of Holy Wisdom, Flanders, NJ.

REVEREND TYLER STRAND is appointed Administrator of Saint Andrew the Apostle Byzantine Catholic Church in Westbury, NY and Administrator of Resurrection Byzantine Catholic Church in Smithtown, NY. Welcome to the Eparchy of Passaic!



STATEMENT REGARDING "SAME SEX" MARRIAGE

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

Archbishop Joseph Kurtz, Archbishop of Louisville, KY, President of the USCCB

Regardless of what a narrow majority of the Supreme Court may declare at this moment in history, the nature of the human person and marriage remains unchanged and unchangeable. Just as *Roe v. Wade* did not settle the question of abortion over forty years ago, *Obergefell v. Hodges* does not settle the question of marriage today. Neither decision is rooted in the truth, and as a result, both will eventually fail. Today the Court is wrong again. It is profoundly immoral and unjust for the government to declare that two people of the same sex can constitute a marriage.

The unique meaning of marriage as the union of one man and one woman is inscribed in our bodies as male and female. The protection of this meaning is a critical dimension of the "integral ecology" that Pope Francis has called us to promote. Mandating marriage redefinition across

the country is a tragic error that harms the common good and most vulnerable among us, especially children. The law has a duty to support every child's basic right to be raised, where possible, by his or her married mother and father in a stable home.

Jesus Christ, with great love, taught unambiguously that from the beginning marriage is the lifelong union of one man and one woman. As Catholic bishops, we follow our Lord and will continue to teach and to act according to this truth.

I encourage Catholics to move forward with faith, hope, and love: faith in the unchanging truth about marriage, rooted in the immutable nature of the human person and confirmed by divine revelation; hope that these truths will once

again prevail in our society, not only by their logic, but by their great beauty and manifest service to the common good; and love for all our neighbors, even those who hate us or would punish us for our faith and moral convictions.

Lastly, I call upon all people of good will to join us in proclaiming the goodness, truth, and beauty of marriage as rightly understood for millennia, and I ask all in positions of power and authority to respect the God-given freedom to seek, live by, and bear witness to the truth.





PEOPLE YOU KNOW AROUND THE EPARCHY

IN BALTIMORE...

Andrew Wood, an altar server and parishioner of Patronage of the Mother of God Byzantine Catholic Church in Baltimore, MD, recently took on a project of a picnic area on the parish grounds as his Eagle Scout Project. Father Conan Timoney is the pastor of Patronage Parish.



Father Conan and Eagle Scout Andrew Wood stand by the newly created picnic area

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+CANTOR JOE MATSO

Called to Eternal Repose

Old Forge, PA

Cantor Joe Matso of Old Forge, PA, fell asleep in the Lord on July 6, 2015. Born in Old Forge on June 19, 1929, son of the late Michael, Sr., and Barbara Argonish Matso, Joe was a proud member of the Old Forge High School class of 1947 and was very active with the class reunion committee. Joe served in the Army during the Korean War and was assigned to the Army security agency as a cryptographic technician. In 1991, he retired from Trane Co. after 30 years of service. Joe served as president of the Greek

Catholic Union, Lodge 17, Old Forge, and was the secretary of Saint Nicholas mixed bowling league for many years. He was the cantor at Saint Nicholas of Myra Byzantine Catholic Church, Old Forge; Saint Mary's Byzantine Catholic Church, Taylor, PA; and Saint Nicholas Byzantine Mission Parish, Coolbaugh Twp., Mount Pocono, PA, for more than 47 years.

Surviving are a nephew, Michael, Old Forge. He was also preceded in death by a sister, Mary; and a broth-

er, Michael Jr.

The parastas was celebrated in the Semian Funeral Home, 704 Union St., Taylor, followed by Divine Liturgy in Saint Nicholas of Myra Byzantine Catholic Church, 140 Church St., Old Forge, by Fathers Eduard Shestak, Michael Kuchera, SJ, and Father Gary Mensinger, local syncellus, concelebrating.



+CANTOR JOSEPH ROMPILLA

Called to Eternal Repose

Hazleton, PA

his retirement in 2014. He was 83 years of age.

Born in Hazleton to the late Andrew, Sr., and Julia (Mitchak) Rompilla, Joe was a veteran of the Army, having served in the Korean conflict. He was also employed at the Tobyhanna Army Depot.

Joe was well known among Hazleton area musicians, singing for many years with the Community Christmas Chorale in McAdoo, and playing trombone in the Hazleton Philharmonic Orchestra and in the Hazleton Liberty Band. He was a

kind uncle and generously gave to his neighbors from his garden. He was also learning Spanish in order to speak with some of his neighbors.

He was a member of the Secular Franciscan Order, Holy Dormition Fraternity, which meets at Holy Dormition Friary in Sybertsville, PA.

Preceding him in death, in addition to his parents, were a brother, Andrew Rompilla, Jr., and a sister, Anna Konel. Joe is survived by his brother, Lt. Col. Michael Rompilla of Fayetteville, NC; by two sisters:

Ethel Rompilla of New York, NY, and Julia (Stephen) Skurla of Bayville, NJ; and many nieces, nephews, and their families.

Funeral services were celebrated from Frank J. Bonin Funeral Home, Hazleton, PA, with Divine Liturgy with Office of Christian Burial at Saint John's Church on May 18 by Father Jerome Wolbert, OFM, and interment at Calvary Cemetery in Drums, PA. In blessed repose grant, O Lord, eternal rest to your departed servant, + Joseph, and remember him forever!

Saint Thomas the Apostle to Sponsor Tricky Tray

Wednesday, October 7, 2015 7:30PM-10:00PM

Doors open at 5:00PM • Admission \$10

Sorry, no children under 18 allowed.

The Parish Family of Saint Thomas the Apostle Byzantine Catholic Church in Rahway, NJ, will be sponsoring a Tricky Tray Auction on Wednesday, October 7th from 7:30PM-10PM in the Parish Center.

Homemade foods: holupki, pierogi, kielbasa, hot dog and hamburgers

Charity table sponsored by:

GCU Lodge 340 of Saint Thomas Church to benefit The Seeing Eye® organization of Morristown, NJ. **Win a \$250 Visa Gift card, a handmade Seeing Eye quilt, and a Yellow Lab stuffed-animal**

Additional contributions can be made to The Seeing Eye® by making checks to "GCU Lodge 340" c/o Dorothy Koenig/Treasurer, GCU Lodge 340, 2332 Coles Avenue Scotch Plains, NJ 07076.

Saint Thomas Parish Center is located at 1400 Saint Georges Avenue in Rahway, NJ, 07065

For Tickets/information is available by calling Barbara at 732-382-2417.

THE BYZANTINE CATHOLIC EPARCHY OF PASSAIC

subscribes to the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* adopted by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. The Eparchy, within all its parishes, institutions and programs, is committed to assuring a safe environment in ministry for its children and young people that conforms to Charter requirements.

For further information regarding the Eparchial Safe Environment Program please contact:

Father David J. Baratelli, Ed.S., M.Div. • *Safe Environment Program Coordinator* • 973.890.7777

Dr. Maureen Daddona, Ph.D. • *Eparchial Victim Advocate* • 516.457.5684



BISHOP KURT CELEBRATES THE DIVINE LITURGY AT SAINT ANN BASILICA Scranton, PA

On Tuesday, July 21st, Bishop Kurt and clergy from across Pennsylvania, New Jersey, even as far as Rome, gathered with the faithful pilgrims of Northeast Pennsylvania for the annual celebration of the Byzantine Catholic Divine Liturgy at the Basilica of Saint Ann in Scranton, PA, on the occasion of the Novena to Saint Ann. It has been a long-standing tradition for area Byzantine Catholics to participate in the Novena with the celebration of the Divine Liturgy.

Begun during the time of Bishop Michael J. Dudick, of blessed memory, and continuing through the tenure of Bishop Andrew Pataki, also of blessed memory, and Bishop William Skurla, now Metropolitan Archbishop, there has been a

continuous presence of the Eparchy of Passaic at the Novena to Saint Ann in Scranton. The annual Novena draws thousands of faithful and is televised to thousands more. It is also an occasion of inspiration for many others who have never witnessed or participated in a service of the Eastern Church.

In addition to Bishop Kurt, concelebrating clergy included Father Gary Mensinger, Regional Syncellus; Msgr. John Sekellick, Regional Protospesbyter; Fathers Nestor Iwasiw; John Wysochansky; John Zeyack; Robert Lozinki, CSC; Leonard Martin, SJ; Michael Kuchera, SJ; Eduard Shestak, and Thomas Petro; and Deacons Steven Russo and Lewis Rabayda. Also in attendance were Archpriest James Hayer; Father Ed-

ward Higgins as Master of Ceremonies; Deacons Lawrence Worlinsky, Basil Soroka, and Thomas Shubeck. The responses were led by Cantor Andrew Drozdik of Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church in Scranton, PA, and area and parish cantors and choir members.

Offering liturgical assistance was altar server Max Mukerjee, and the entire body of campers from the Eparchial Altar Server Congress. Thanks to the labors of Father Leonard Martin, SJ, Pastor of the Scranton Byzantine Catholic Churches, the Basilica was properly appointed with icons and other liturgical items. The homilist this year was Father Lee Harvey, CP.

O good Saint Ann, mother of the Mother of God, pray for us!



Bishop Kurt blesses a pilgrim with the relic of Saint Ann



Cantors and faithful praying the Divine Liturgy



Altar servers stand attentively at the Divine Liturgy



BYZANTINE ONLINE FALL CREDIT COURSES

Courses Begin Monday, September 14th

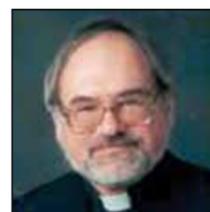


Introduction to Church History (Geoffrey Mackey, M.A.T.)

A survey of the history of the Church from the time of Christ until the present. Includes period from the death of Christ through the Renaissance and Reformation, the Age of Enlightenment, the industrial revolution to the rise of liberalism and the modern world. Special emphasis on the Eastern Christian experience and specifically the formation of the Eastern Catholic churches. (2 credits)

History of the Eastern Churches in America (Fr. David Petras)

This course traces the history of Eastern Christianity in America, with a particular focus on the development of ethnic jurisdictions, both Catholic and Orthodox. Eastern Churches both Catholic and Orthodox are examined, with special emphasis on the struggle over a married clergy, and the resulting divisions as well as the cultural questions that remain for Eastern Churches. (2 credits)



Introduction to Moral Theology (Fr. Vasyly Symyon)

This course introduces Eastern Christian ethics in the context of the Western ethical tradition. It includes material representing the Eastern Catholic moral tradition and an in-depth understanding of the foundations of Eastern Christian ethics. Students will analyze theological principles and provide appropriate pastoral application. (2 credits)

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FATHER JOHN BASARAB COMPLETES USCCB NATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL TERM

Annandale, VA

By Christian N Braunlich

Father John Basarab, parish priest of Epiphany of Our Lord Byzantine Catholic Church in Annandale, VA, recently completed his four year term as a representative on the National Advisory Council (NAC) of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB)—one of 48 members of the prestigious council and only the second Byzantine Ruthenian priest appointed to serve in the Council's 46 year history.

Formed by the USCCB after the close of Vatican II, the National Advisory Council is designed to be a functioning advisory council whose membership reflects the multi-faceted dimension of the Catholic Church in the United States. The Council includes bishops, priests, deacons, men and women religious, men and women monastics, and laity of every age of each of the 15 regions of the USCCB.

The resulting Council has been described as "the Church in miniature" not only because of its racial, ethnic, occupational and geographic diversity, but also because it often reflects the tensions within the Church.

The first Byzantine Ruthenian priest appointed was Msgr. Edward V. Rosack in 1972. Two Byzantine Ruthenian lay persons have been appointed: Helen Kennedy of the Archeparchy of Pittsburgh and Dr. Barbara Yastishock Lutz of the Eparchy of Passaic.

Meeting twice a year, Advisory Committee members review reports and supporting documentation from all 47 standing and ad-hoc committees of the USCCB and, following the deliberations of the NAC, the USCCB Executive Committee may change the final composition of the reports provided to all bishops of the United States.

And although the National Advisory Committee is largely reactive, responding to action items proposed by the bishops and their committees, the NAC members may also develop individual resolutions that will be reviewed, critiqued and voted upon by the full NAC membership.

"The bishops take these deliberations seriously and the advice is important to them," notes Father Basarab. "All plenary sessions are taped because the executive committee of the USCCB wants the benefit of hearing what is said and how it is said. Nor are the votes simple "yea or nay" votes. The votes use a profile voting system with categories like "Highly Agree," "Agree," "Disagree," "Highly Disagree," and "Abstain."

"And those who abstain aren't 'off the hook,'" Father Basarab smiled. "Those who abstain are polled for the reason they are abstaining, and members of the NAC have been known to occasionally abstain so they can give the bishops the reason they might have an issue with a resolution."

But while the reports are detailed and confidential—and the four-day meetings are process-driven, intense and packed with work—the focus of those meetings remains prayer.

"Probably the thing I have been most impressed by was the centerpiece that prayer takes in all the deliberations," notes Father Basarab. "Every day there is either a Mass or a Divine Liturgy. All the plenary sessions begin and end with prayers, Prayer precedes meals. Morning and Evening Prayer are prayed in common at the beginning and end of each day and, in addition, special Marian devotions or other devotions may be suggested by the membership.

"When discussions were difficult it wasn't surprising for a lay person, a religious or monastic or a cleric to ask the chair to request the prayer leader to lead the membership in prayer. Everything we did—all the deliberations and the votes—all happen within a consciousness of the need of dependence on God for guidance."

"The focus of the USCCB's work is prayer, and knowing this is a reminder to all of us that no matter how busy one is, there is always time for prayer."

Father Basarab was also impressed by the character of the NAC members. "I cannot speak highly enough about them," he noted. "The quality and integrity of the people I served with was remarkable, as was the competence and dedication of the USCCB staff. And working with bishops in such a close and collaborative way was a privileged opportunity for me to see how pious, wise, and filled with charity the bishops serving on the National Advisory Council are."

Does it all make a difference? For Father Basarab, the answer is an unqualified "yes."

"Because of confidentiality requirements, I cannot share specific examples ... but when I see certain statements by the bishops' conference, or decisions taken by the bishops, or a particular change in the strategic plan, I can see the path those changes took through the National Advisory Council. And I know how the bishops were open to accepting the advice of the council on the many topics of apostolic work. That makes all the time and effort worthwhile."

MOUNT MACRINA MANOR RENOVATION PROJECT

Glory to Jesus Christ!
Dear Friends,

Perhaps you know someone who hesitates to visit a loved one in a hospital or nursing home. You are not alone. In our American culture, illness, infirmity, and death are not exactly "hot topics" for social conversations.

On the grounds of Mount St. Macrina, we Sisters sponsor a cherished ministry following in the footsteps of our founder, St. Basil the Great, whose legacy included a unique concern for the frail and infirm. I prefer to view this site as one of the "thing

spaces" on our grounds where the boundaries between this world and the heavenly one are very fragile. Hospitals and long term care facilities are more than functional buildings, they are sacred places where the most profound decisions of life are being made. I believe that within our final moments, we have the opportunity to wholeheartedly choose our loving Lord in life everlasting.

We continue to sponsor this vital ministry in a society where illness and limitation are often negatively viewed. We are committed to providing quality care, validating that life at every age and every stage is sanctified. In order to achieve this, we must provide a comfortable and safe atmosphere for body as well as for soul. Our present facility is "showing its age," and needs renovation in many areas, particularly in the essential mechanical systems which provide comfort and safety for both our long term residents, and for those who require temporary rehabilitation prior to returning home.

We are calling upon you once again to offer your support whether in prayer and/or in monetary donations. Be assured that all monies received will be used exclusively for the Mt. Macrina Manor Nursing Home renovation project. We have made a

mindful choice to appeal directly to you rather than to incur the expense of an outside development company.

We are grateful for your benevolence, and we trust that with God's help and yours we will be able to continue to provide a hallowed place where many residents, whether temporary or long term, may live in the peace of His loving care.

In the love of the Lord Jesus,

Sister Seraphim Olsafsky, OSBM
Sister Ruth Plante, OSBM
Provincial

I am pleased to support the Mt. Macrina Manor Renovation Project.

I am aware this is a declaration of intent and is not legally binding.

Please return in provided envelope.

3-Year Gift Plans

| | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Total Pledge | <input type="checkbox"/> \$5,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$4,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$3,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$2,500 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$2,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,500 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,000 |
| 36 Monthly Payments | \$139.00 | \$112.00 | \$84.00 | \$70.00 | \$56.00 | \$42.00 | \$28.00 |

Or a One-Time Donation of \$ _____.

I wish to donate toward:

1st choice _____

2nd choice _____

Please use my donation toward any project needed.

Please make checks payable to Mt. Macrina Manor Renovation Fund.

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Amount Enclosed _____ Balance Due _____



WORLD MEETING OF FAMILIES IN PHILADELPHIA

Big Church, little church...Our Church

By Ann M. Koshute, MTS

My godson, Luke, and his big sister, Anna, love playing house. When I visit, Anna pulls out the baby dolls and we feast on plastic hamburgers fresh off the pretend grill. We feed and bathe the babies and sweep the floor, while Luke mows the carpet – I mean, grass – pausing for a tea party in the midst of our busy house-keeping. How do Luke and Anna know how to play house? They learned it from their mom and dad, extended family and friends, and each other. The little home they create in their imagination is born from and nurtured within their experience of family.

Adults no longer play house (except with our kids – and godchildren). But we care for our own homes as married couples, families with kids, single people, and priests and religious. Whether in a house, apartment, dorm room, rectory or convent it's important that the space we live in is a place of security and love. It's equally important to use our Catholic imaginations to bring what we experience in our Church home (the parish) into our experience of daily family life. In a way we're called to "play church," only this isn't child's play, but our responsibility as followers of Christ. The "Big Church" – the Temple of God in which we worship and receive the Holy Mysteries – is not our "Sunday play date," but (in Ernest Hemingway's words) "a moveable feast." What we do and say and the rituals we participate in at Divine Liturgy aren't meant to be left behind. The Church and all that's contained in it are models for our "little churches:" our homes.

As followers of Christ we must internalize what we're given in the "Big" Church and allow it to grow and flourish in our own "little church-

es." This is what we mean by domestic church: "When you go home from here, lay out with your meal a spiritual meal as well. [...] that the household might become a church, so that the devil is driven off and that evil spirit, the enemy of our salvation, takes to flight; the grace of the Holy Spirit would rest there instead, and all peace and harmony would surround the inhabitants." (Saint John Chrysostom.) The Holy Temple where we worship is the beginning point in a pilgrimage toward God, and its path winds through our home, into our school and workplace, through our neighborhood, and within our daily interactions. The flesh and blood of Christ we receive at Divine Liturgy must take root in us and become enfleshed in the world. What we "do" at Liturgy is to "be who we are" in the world. The question is: How do we take the "Big Church" and make it present in the "little church" of our homes? Here are a few thoughts:

The Church is God's home and He welcomes anyone seeking Him. Likewise, the little church of our home should be a place of welcome and hospitality. Inside it must be found the opportunity for mercy and forgiveness, comfort and peace. As God welcomes, so we should welcome extended family, friends and neighbors, and even strangers in need.

At the Liturgy we engage in worship and supplication, a dialogue with God in which we speak to Him and He listens and answers (in the Gospel, the homily, the Eucharist, and in the depth of our open hearts). At home, this "sacred conversation" continues when we speak and listen to each other with love. We don't have to chant in our homes; just be mindful of God's presence there,

and speak knowing that He is listening.

Byzantine churches are filled with icons, reminding us that we're in God's home, and His saints are there with us. The icons remind us that we're their brothers and sisters in Christ with a role in God's plan of salvation. In our homes we display photos of friends and loved-ones, cherishing the memories they invoke and the people they represent. We should include among the family pictures our Heavenly Family too. The presence of icons, a crucifix on the wall, a favorite framed Scripture verse, keeps us close to this Family, and shows all who enter our home that we belong to Christ.

When the priest stands at the Holy Table during Divine Liturgy he's not alone. He stands for and with us before God, and through his priesthood Christ becomes our nourishment in the Eucharist. This is not "fast food," or a meal to be taken alone. The Eucharist conforms us to Christ each time we partake. If we're transformed in Christ everything we do and all our relationships will be transformed, too. When we return home, this Eucharistic nourishment should "feed" every thought, word and action. Our kitchen tables must become Holy Tables where we celebrate the liturgy of the everyday: making our daily chores, jobs and school work, conversations with family and friends, offerings of ourselves and our homes to God.

When Anna and Luke are finished playing we break for lunch (the non-plastic kind). We pause to thank God, making the Sign of the Cross – or a reasonable facsimile – and eat our lunch while recounting all of our play adventures. This is the Big Church nurturing the little church.

WORLDMEETING2015.ORG

LOVE IS OUR MISSION
THE FAMILY FULLY ALIVE



WORLD
MEETING OF
FAMILIES

2015 Philadelphia

SEPTEMBER 22 - 27

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 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.

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

2 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





The Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Passaic Invites:

ALL PARISHIONERS

**Families • Singles • Seniors
Young Adults • Teens • Children**

to a continuing celebration of the World Meeting of Families

**Our Church, Our Family,
Our Mission: Called to Love**
Regional Parish Family Days of Recollection

Dates and Locations

Saturday September 19

Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church – Scranton, PA - 8:30 AM

Saturday, October 10

Saint Therese Byzantine Catholic Church – St. Petersburg, FL - 10:30 AM

Saturday, October 17

Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church– Danbury, CT - 8:30 AM

Sunday, October 25

*Epiphany of Our Lord Byzantine Catholic Church Annandale, VA
Following 10:30 AM Divine Liturgy*

Sunday, November 8

*Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church – Hillsborough, NJ
Following 11:00 AM Divine Liturgy*

Continental Breakfast and Lunch included at all locations

As the World Meeting of Families closes in Philadelphia, the work of building up and nurturing the Family is just beginning! This Day of Recollection will focus on individual and family spirituality and the meaning of our vocation to love. Through four presentations, we will explore Jesus Christ's personal invitation to each of us to live as children of God, called to love and be fruitful as part of a family (single persons, spouses, parents, children, grandparents), and in support of families as friends, neighbors and parishioners. Whether we are married or single, parents or godparents, aunts and uncles, widowed or divorced, we are members of God's family, and this day of fellowship, prayer and time with our extended family—the Church—will offer ways of strengthening our own family bonds, as well as our personal relationship with Christ.

For children and teens: This day of recollection will ask young people of all ages to discover the priceless treasure they have in God's love. Through reading Scripture, role playing, talking, and creating, they will learn to recognize God is with them in everything they do. The final activity will ask families to work together to recognize God's love that has been shared with them through family and friends through the ages.

Event is FREE!

Generously Underwritten by:
The Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Passaic

The Presenters



Ann M. Koshute, MTS will deliver the Adult track. Ann is Adjunct Instructor in Theology at St. Joseph's College of Maine and DeSales University. She obtained her Master of Theological Studies from the Pontifical John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family at the Catholic University of America. In addition to working on marriage preparation and adult faith formation programs, Ann is a retreat leader and writer. She and her husband Keith are parishioners of St. Ann Byzantine Catholic Church, Harrisburg, PA.

Marie C. Nester, M.Ed will coordinate and present the pre-K to Teen tracks. Marie wrote the God With Us catechetical texts for Grades 3, 4, 5, and 7. She also contributed meditations for Journey Through The Great Fast and Christ Is Born, published by the Office of Religious Education, Archeparchy of Pittsburgh. Marie is Adjunct Instructor of English at Harrisburg Area Community College. She and her husband Luke are members of St. Ann Byzantine Catholic Church, Harrisburg, PA. They have 3 children and 6 grandchildren.



Schedule

Registration - Morning Prayer and Welcome
Session 1 – The Family: Created to Love
Session 2 – The Family: Center of Love
Session 3 – The Family: Fruit of the Union between a Man and a Woman
Session 4 – The Family: A Result of Everlasting Love
All gather for sharing Family Activity and Liturgy or Closing Prayer

Registration Form

Name: _____
Address: _____
Phone: _____ E-Mail: _____
Location: Scranton, PA St. Petersburg, FL Danbury, CT Annandale, VA Hillsborough, NJ
Number of Adults: _____ Number and Ages of Children: _____

Please send completed registration form at least two weeks prior to your Day of Recollection to:
Father Ed Cimbala, St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church, 1900 Brooks Boulevard, Hillsborough, NJ 08844
FREDSTMARY@aol.com Questions? Call Fr. Ed Cimbala at 908 725-0615 or contact him by e-mail.

2015 SUMMER EVE

Byzantine Catholic Day at Knoebels Amusement Park

Sunday, May 17

Hot food, cool rides, inspiring songs, and of course, prayer, marked the celebration of the fourth annual Byzantine Catholic Family Day at Knoebels Amusement Resort in Elysburg, PA. Co-sponsored by the Eparchy of Passaic and the Greek Catholic Union (GCU), Byzantine Catholic Family Day was celebrated on Sunday, May 17, 2015. Over 350 people attended this year's celebration. Local priests, deacons, cantors, local GCU Lodge members, and parish volunteers insured that all present were well cared for with good food for the body and the spirit.

Following arrival, the hungry guests enjoyed a hot, catered meal of BBQ chicken, hot dogs, macaroni and cheese and ice cream. This was followed by a few hours of fun and relaxation before the celebration of a prayer service (moleben) at 4 p.m. by Archpriest James Hayer, Eparchial Protosyncellus, along with Deacon Lawrence Foran and Deacon Basil Soroka. Inside the pavilion, there were activities from relay races for kids, to bingo for adults, and a sing-a-long for everyone to participate in.

After a day of prayer, food, rides, games, fun, food and more food, the Cantors Mike and Paul Komishock and the Parish Choir from Saints Peter and Paul Byzantine Catholic Church in Beaver Meadows, PA, led all in a sing-a-long of liturgical, ethnic and traditional songs. It's a wonderful way to celebrate family and faith, with a heaping measure of good food and great fun!



Pre-Teen Girls Camp at the Carpathian Village

June 28-July 1

by Michelle Sapsara Rubush



The retreat kicked off with Vespers for the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul. After a delicious meal prepared by Father Michael Salnick, the campers participated in an icebreaker where the theme: *Following in the Footsteps of Jesus- Discipleship*, was introduced. The evening wrapped up with watching *The Song of Bernadette*. On Monday, Divine Liturgy for the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul was celebrated by Archpriest James Hayer, the Protosyncellus for the Eparchy of Passaic and concelebrated by Father Richard Rohrer of Saints Cyril and Methodius Church in Cary, NC, who was also the camp moderator.



The campers participated in sessions exploring God's purpose for their lives as well as praying the hours. There was a trip to Promised Land State Park as well as a bonfire and s'mores. The second full day of camp brought rain, rain and more rain! After a morning of praying the hours and learning about vocations, an afternoon movie, *Polycarp*, was in order as the rain continued to fall. That evening after an explanation of an examination of conscience, questions were answered and then the campers participated in the Mystery of Confession.



On the last day, prayer and discussion continued about God's call for each of us. The campers enjoyed one last meal together before departing separate ways, taking with them their artwork: origami cranes and bracelets they made, along with their memories. The camp leader was Michelle Sapsara Rubush, assisted by Donna Ellwanger, and Junior counselors Kate and Kim Urgo; all from Saints Cyril and Methodius in Cary, NC.

EVENTS: A LOOK BACK

Altar Server Congress at the Carpathian Village

July 19-22

by Stephen Fanning

My name is Stephen Fanning. I am 15 years old and from Saint Nicholas Church in Danbury, CT. I have been attending Altar Server Congress for 4 of the last 5 years and the year I missed it was due to a scheduling conflict. I was really upset over missing it because I look forward to meeting new friends and reacquainting with old friends from previous years.

The priests, deacons and counselors are super nice and will make sure of a safe and awesome time at camp. We also get to experience a very cool religious side. Besides Bible study, we do morning and evening prayers, practice the precision of altar serving, and gain a better knowledge of the Divine Liturgy. This year the theme for the congress was: *The true presence of Christ in the Liturgy*. The discussions and conferences were focused on the very real fact that Jesus is truly present with us. And as altar servers, part of our job is to take our faith out into the world. We also learned what a Hierarchical Liturgy was and we were all able to meet Bishop Kurt and serve for him at Saint Ann's in Scranton, PA. Besides the spiritual side, there are awesome fun parts of the camp: we do field games like relay races, egg toss, arts and crafts, and field trips such as the indoor waterpark. If you are an altar server and have never been to camp, we hope to see you there next year. It's a blast!



ByzanTeen Youth Rally at the Carpathian Village

July 26-29

by Father Steven Galuschick

Food, Family, Fun, Learning, and Sharing are all words that could be used to describe this year's ByzanTeen youth rally at the Carpathian Village. The theme of the week was *We are Family*, which was chosen because of the Pope Francis' visit to the United States in September. Each morning, the teens prayed in the chapel, listened to teachings, wrote their thoughts and feelings in their journal, and then shared a little of the journal with the group. Sharing time for many of the teens gave them an opportunity to share themselves with others and in the process became better friends. Each day had a different emphasis, such as the first day was spent working on themselves and learning about their own relationship with God. Through their work, they were able to see in which ways they could improve in their relationship with God, but also seeing how important it is to have a relationship with God. The second day focused on family. The teens learned about their own family and how their own family shapes who they are today.

Then, the teens experienced one of their favorite parts of the rally: the field trip. This year, the teens went to Kalahari Indoor Waterpark. The only frowns that were seen were the ones we had while leaving leaving to go back to the Carpathian Village. The last day was filled with learning about how each of the teens belonged to their Church family and the importance of the Church family being a part of their lives. The rally closed with the celebration of the Divine Liturgy with Bishop Kurt as the main celebrant. We cannot wait to see everyone back again next year for the ByzanTeen Rally in Cleveland.





81ST ANNUAL PILGRIMAGE IN HONOR OF OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP

SEPTEMBER 5 & 6, 2015

MARY, MODEL OF CONSECRATED LIFE

MOUNT SAINT MACRINA, UNIONTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA

724-438-8644

WWW.SISTERSOFSTBASIL.ORG

Friday, September 4

7:00 p.m. - Office of Small Compline at Shrine Altar

Saturday, September 5

7:00 a.m. - 12 noon MYSTERY OF RECONCILIATION
(Confessions) House of Prayer Patio

OPENING OF PILGRIMAGE

8:00 a.m. MATINS at Shrine Altar

9:45 a.m. Procession with icon of Our Lady of Perpetual Help from House of Prayer to Shrine Altar

10:00 a.m. DIVINE LITURGY

Welcome: Sister Ruth Plante, OSBM

Divine Liturgy to be followed by procession to Lourdes Grotto for the Solemn Blessing of Water; procession to return to the House of Prayer at the conclusion of the Blessing.

1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. MYSTERY OF RECONCILIATION
(Confessions) House of Prayer Patio

1:00 p.m. MOLEBEN at Shrine Altar

2:00 p.m. CHILDREN'S PILGRIMAGE at Children's Tent
ORIENTATION for TEENS at Prayer Garden
ENRICHMENT SESSION at Trinity Center

3:00 p.m. TEEN PILGRIMAGE at Prayer Garden

4:00 p.m. VESPERS with DIVINE LITURGY at Shrine Altar

6:00 p.m. ENRICHMENT SESSION at Mausoleum

7:15 p.m. Procession from House of Prayer to Mount Macrina Cemetery

7:30 p.m. PARASTAS at Mount Macrina Cemetery
CANDLELIGHT PROCESSION

(Mount Macrina Cemetery to Shrine Altar)

AKATHIST to OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP

Following Akathist:

TEEN SOCIAL at Prayer Garden

YOUNG ADULT SOCIAL at Trinity Center

Sunday, September 6

7:00 a.m. MATINS at Shrine Altar

7:00 a.m. DIVINE LITURGY in House of Prayer Chapel

7:30 a.m. - 12 noon MYSTERY OF RECONCILIATION
(Confessions at House of Prayer Patio)

8:30 a.m. DIVINE LITURGY - Slavonic at Shrine Altar

10:30 a.m. DIVINE LITURGY at Shrine Altar

11:00 a.m. MYSTERY OF ANOINTING at Trinity Center

12:30 - 5:00 p.m. MYSTERY OF RECONCILIATION

(Confessions at the House of Prayer Patio)

1:00 p.m. CHILDREN'S PROCESSION with Special Blessing for Youth & Young Adults - from House of Prayer to Mother of God Shrine

1:30 - 2:30 p.m. MYSTERY OF RECONCILIATION (Confession for the infirm, sick and physically challenged at Manor Gazebo)

2:00 p.m. CHILDREN'S PILGRIMAGE at Children's Tent

ENRICHMENT SESSION at Trinity Center

TEEN PILGRIMAGE at Prayer Garden

MYSTERY OF ANOINTING at Shrine Altar

3:45 p.m. Procession from House of Prayer to Mother of God Shrine

4:00 p.m. DIVINE LITURGY at Mother of God Shrine

Words of Gratitude: Sister Ruth Plante, O.S.B.M.

7:15 p.m. Procession from House of Prayer to Mother of God Shrine

7:30 p.m. CANDLELIGHT PROCESSION

(Beginning and ending at the Mother of God Shrine)

CLOSING OF THE PILGRIMAGE

Following the Candlelight Procession::

TEEN SOCIAL Prayer Garden Area

YOUNG ADULT SOCIAL Trinity Center

Monday, September 7

9:30 a.m. DIVINE LITURGY at Shrine Altar



Sunday, September 13, 2015
10 AM—7 PM

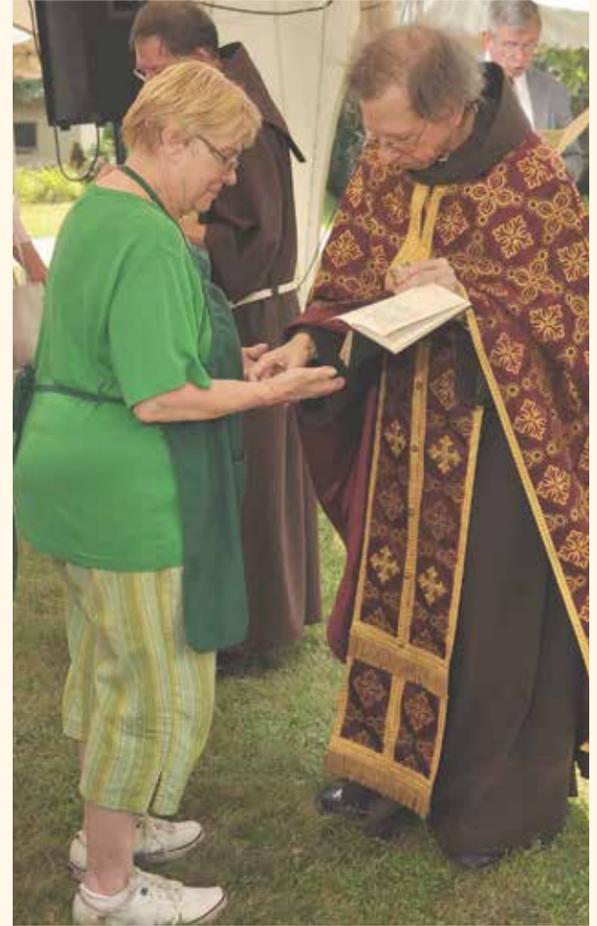
Pilgrimage For Peace



Holy Dormition
Byzantine Franciscan Friary
Sybertsville, PA

Pilgrimage Schedule

- 10AM Sunday Matins (morning prayer)
 - 11AM Food Service Begins
 - 12NOON Holy Anointing for Healing
 - 1PM Divine Liturgy with Bishop Kurt using both Ruthenian and Ukrainian melodies
Food Service continues after Divine Liturgy
 - 3:30 PM Children's Programs
 - 4PM Spiritual Talk: **The Shape Love Takes; Peace, Family and the Cross**, Ann Koshute
 - 5PM Vespers for the Feast of the Exaltaion of the Cross
Confession available throughout the day
- Special Note: Parishes requested to bring decorated Procession Crosses.
Please bring lawn chairs



Come for part or all of the day. Join as you are able. If you are not in our area, please join us by praying for peace.

We start the pilgrimage at 10am by praying matins, the morning prayers of the Byzantine tradition. Throughout the day there will be food service and Confession available, except during the Divine Liturgy. Those who are sick in mind, spirit, or body, may seek Holy Anointing for healing at noon.

Bishop Kurt will be the celebrant and homilist at the Divine Liturgy at 1pm. Knights of Columbus will join in the procession to the Liturgy with representatives of area parishes who carry their parish's processional cross. Bishop Kurt will have special prayers to com-

mission catechists, those who will teach the faith to our children, for the coming school year.

We encourage families to bring their children, to participate in the afternoon program for children to explore and deepen their faith, trusting in God especially in times we recognize we must embrace the Cross.

Indeed, the Cross shapes our love even in the family. Ann Koshute, teacher, writer, and speaker, will speak on *The Shape Love Takes: Peace, Family and the Cross*, how families in particular can find the peace Christ offers us in a place the world least expects: the Cross. By inviting Christ into our homes and our hearts, letting our love take the shape of the

Cross, we can find the peace He promises and become agents of His peace in this noisy and chaotic world.

The day closes at 5pm with vespers, the evening prayer that begins the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross. Pilgrims may stay after vespers as food is available and to help clean the friary grounds from the day's events.

- We are still seeking volunteers!
- help serve food
 - set up (Saturday and Sunday) or clean up (after vespers)
 - sing with the choir at the Divine Liturgy
 - help with the children's program (must be safe-environment-approved in your parish)

FOR QUESTIONS OR TO VOLUNTEER, PLEASE CONTACT
FATHER JEROME: HOLYDORMITION@GMAIL.COM OR 570-788-1212 EXT 402.



IN LINE WITH VATICAN II: NEW RULES FOR EASTERN MARRIED CLERGY

by Archbishop Cyril Vasil', SJ, with Bishop George Gallaro

Continued from page 1

23, 1929, extending the same prohibition to all the Eastern Catholic married clergy in North and South America, in Canada, and Australia; and *Graeci-Rutheni* on May 24, 1930, establishing that only celibate men could be admitted to a seminary as candidates for holy orders.

These decrees, which initially pertained to the Eastern Catholic clergy in the United States and Canada, required for the first time the general obligation of celibacy from Eastern Catholic clerics and constituted a frame of legal precedence that was then extended to other non-Eastern territories. The norm was motivated by the difficulty - and perhaps also by weak will - to explain to the Latin faithful that obligatory clerical celibacy binds the Latin Church only. The local hierarchy was terribly worried that the presence of married Eastern Catholic clergy would have harmed the respect the lay faithful had for Catholic clergy and, moreover, it would have put in danger the celibacy of the Latin clergy. All things considered, then, the reasons that motivated the restrictive norm seem to be of a practical and pastoral character rather than of a theological and ecclesiological nature.

The introduction of obligatory clerical celibacy for Eastern Catholics had some traumatic results. On one side, the uniformity of discipline was reached, but, on the other, the Eastern Catholic communities were divided, often splitting families into pro-and anti-Latin camps. In fact, the first decades following the introduction of the restrictive norms on married clergy, saw approximately two hundred thousand Ruthenian faithful, who fearing for being deprived of their own ritual priests, passed to Orthodoxy.²

The faithful and clergy who remained in the Catholic Church reluctantly submitted to the new norm. In fact, the faithful had not been consulted nor had their rights or spiritual needs been taken into account.³ Therefore, the new set of rules was perceived as an imposition rather than an organic development correspondent to their traditions.

POST-COUNCIL PERIOD

Following the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), in the light of the affirmations of the Decree on the Eastern Churches, *Orientalium ecclesiarum*, about respect for the Eastern traditions everywhere in the world (*ubique terrarum*), the heads of certain Eastern Catholic Churches and other hierarchs requested the Roman Apostolic See to abrogate the restrictive norm. In fact, the Council Fathers "solemnly declared that the Churches of both east and west enjoy the right, and are bound by duty, to govern themselves in accordance with their own particular rules, seeing that they are recommended by venerable antiquity, are more suited to the customs of their faithful and seem more suitable for assuring the good of souls." (OE n. 5)

Nevertheless, several letters of Paul VI (+ 1978) and John Paul II (+ 2005) to Melkite and Ukrainian hierarchs restated the restrictive norm for the so-called diaspora married clergy. The given reasons called the Eastern hierarchy to consider the stability/well-being of the Church universal (... *au sens de l'Eglise universelle*) and to

the need of considering eventual ripples through other rites within the Catholic Church (... *des répercussions que peuvent provoquer chez d'autres rites de l'Eglise Catholique*). Thus, the January 30, 1980, letter of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches drew attention to "those repercussions that the existence of Eastern Catholic married priests presents certain delicate issues to the Latin communities (... *que la présence de prêtres orientaux mariés, ... pose des problèmes délicates aux communautés de rite latin*).

How should we interpret such a request to keep in mind the stability/well-being of the universal Church? And what were the "delicate issues" linked with the presence of Eastern married clergy in Latin rite dioceses? In all probability, one could see the shadow of the serious crisis of priestly celibacy within the post-Vatican II Church, especially in the Latin West of the seventies. The many defections of priests and the wide public challenge of the Latin norm of celibacy were a phenomenon that seriously hurt the Catholic Church.

From this perspective, one can understand the fear that the revocation of the restriction on Eastern married clergy, requested by Eastern hierarchs, could have then been most likely interpreted as dissension against the celibacy of the Latin clergy and a sign of weakness of the Church before undue pressures, or even could have been looked upon with a kind of hidden envy by protesting groups of Latin clergy dissatisfied with the traditional norm of the Latin Church.

Several decades have come and gone since that post-conciliar crisis on clerical celibacy in the Latin Church. Moreover, it goes without saying that presently in the Latin West there are dozens of priests coming from Anglicanism who, although married, exercise pastoral ministry in Latin parishes. This relatively new situation does not seem to minimally disturb the faithful or the celibate clergy.

A NEW SITUATION

Today, there are *de facto* Eastern ecclesial communities in all continents, and therefore the situation of the Eastern Catholics is completely different from that that existed in North America at the end of the nineteenth century, when the restrictive legislation for the Eastern married clergy appeared, or in the seventies of last century, when the Latin Church had to face the critical identity of priests and the stormy challenge of celibacy.

The last few decades also saw visible shifts in the general opinion of the Latin episcopate with regard to the possibility and/or opportunity of the presence of Eastern married clergy in western countries. This is also corroborated by the various episcopal conferences in countries with a significant presence of Eastern Catholics, which have expressed their support in restoring the traditional Eastern praxis, even though some episcopal conferences wish/prefer to see the newcomers served by celibate clergy. Moreover, it should be noted that in these very nations, not a few members of the hierarchy often approach the Congregation for the Eastern Churches to regularize the presence of individual married priests who, with the support of the local people, were

successfully working for the Eastern faithful in their dioceses.

These considerations constitute the context of the new norm which foresees three ways of dealing with the pastoral presence of Eastern Catholic married clergy. In some places, Eastern Catholics lack their own hierarchical administrative structures and therefore the papal norms offer a way of proceeding with regard to the admission of Eastern married clergy in these situations.

Within the territories where Eastern faithful lack a hierarchical structure and are entrusted to the care of the Latin bishops of the place, the faculty for allowing the pastoral service of Eastern married clergy is reserved to the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, which will exercise it in concrete specific cases after hearing the opinion of the respective episcopal conferences. In this last specific case, one shall follow the norm given by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith on February 20, 2008, which bound all the Eastern Catholic married clergy residing outside of their traditional Eastern territories.

In some countries, Eastern Catholics lacking their own hierarchy are entrusted to the care of a single local hierarchy, usually a Latin bishop. In these so-called Ordinariates for the Eastern faithful said faculty is vested in the Ordinaries, who will exercise it informing in concrete cases the respective episcopal conference and the Congregation for the Eastern Churches.

Within the Eastern administrative districts (metropolias, eparchies, exarchates) established outside the traditional territories, this faculty of allowing the pastoral service of Eastern married clergy is vested in the Eastern hierarchs, who will exercise it according to the traditions/norms of their respective Churches. Also, they have the faculty to ordain Eastern married candidates coming from the respective administrative district/territory with the obligation to inform beforehand in writing the Latin bishop of the candidate's residence, in order to have his opinion and any useful/relevant information.

Therefore, this faculty foresees the possibility of inviting married clergy from the so-called traditional Eastern territories and/or of ordaining married men (*virii probati*) from other territories. This last case obviously implies the same standard formation of candidates for priesthood: human formation, spiritual formation, intellectual formation, and pastoral formation.

Indeed, this praxis is followed by the same Churches in their own territories which foresee a common formation for all candidates, celibates or married, before the reception of holy orders. The only procedural difference for married candidates to priesthood is the stipulation that the Eastern bishop inform beforehand the Latin bishop of the candidate's residence, in order to have his opinion or any useful information. This stipulation is nothing else than a specification implied in the *Codex Canonum Ecclesiarum Orientalium*: "The authority who admits a candidate to sacred ordination should obtain testimonial letters, if it is considered expedient (*si id expedire iudicat*)." [Canon 769, paragraph 1, number 6] Due to prudential reasons, Pope Francis decided

to make this possibility obligatory for bishops when ordaining married candidates outside of the traditional Eastern territories.

The possibility/potentiality of satisfying pastoral needs with newcomer married clergy from traditional territories does not dispense the relative Eastern hierarchs outside from the duty to promote local vocations. It rather increases their pastoral work for promoting both celibate and married candidates to sacred orders.

The new directives on pastoral service of the Eastern Catholic married clergy outside of the traditional Eastern territories constitutes an eloquent sign of the confidence the supreme legislator has in the Eastern Catholic hierarchs and of the reconfirmed respect regarding the disciplinary diversity among the Eastern Churches *sui iuris* and the Latin Church.

Fifty years after the *Decree on the Eastern Catho-*

lic Churches, it is once again confirmed the journey undertaken by the Second Vatican Council: one Church with two codes for the *varietas ecclesiarum*, different disciplinary, liturgical, spiritual and theological approaches in order to express the same principles of faith. This eagerly awaited gesture of confidence entails a responsible application of the new rules and should not constitute, even minimally, a prejudice before the celibate clergy, Eastern or Latin, nor an occasion for claims or undue inferences/speculations with regard to Latin praxis on celibacy and of the high esteem that celibacy enjoys among the Eastern Catholic Churches.

Archbishop Cyril Vasil', SJ, is Secretary of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches at the Vatican.

Bishop George Gallaro, previously a priest of the Melkite Eparchy of Newton and former Professor of Canon Law and Ecumenism at Saints

Cyril and Methodius Seminary in Pittsburgh, PA, contributed to this article prior to his June 28, 2015 ordination as Bishop of the Eparchy of Piana degli Albanesi in Palermo, Italy.

NOTES

1. Latin hierarchs in America also objected to the use of languages other than Latin in the liturgy and Confirmation being conferred by a priest in a single ceremony with Baptism.

2. After 1890 thousands of Ruthenians entered the Russian Orthodox Church. After 1930 thousands more, after a period of autonomy, were accepted as an eparchy under the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

3. Latin hierarchy reacted by attempting to persuade Rome to curtail Greek Catholic practices in America, particularly the married clergy. It is, they said, "a constant menace to the chastity of our unmarried clergy ... The sooner this point of discipline is abolished before these evils obtain large proportions, the better for religion, because the possible loss of a few souls of the Greek Rite bears no proportion to the blessings resulting from the uniformity of discipline."



SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

Father Jack Custer, S.T.D.

WORSHIP AT HIS FOOTSTOOL?

At the Little Entrance of the Divine Liturgy for the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross (September 14), we sing this verse from Psalm 99:5: "Exalt the Lord our God and worship at his footstool; for he is holy." Because the "exalt" part makes such sense for this feast, perhaps the "footstool" part goes unnoticed. Yet this one word can lead us to a better understanding of what our Lord accomplished on the Cross and how the sacrifice of Calvary continues to be present in every Divine Liturgy we celebrate.

When King David envisioned and King Solomon finally built the first Temple in Jerusalem nearly a thousand years before the coming of Christ, their attitude was quite unlike that of their pagan neighbors. They never deluded themselves into believing that the Lord might actually inhabit the grand building Solomon constructed. What Scripture says is that the Temple functions as God's "footstool"--the earthly extension of His heavenly throne (1 Chronicles 28:2). When the Babylonians destroyed that first Temple in 586BC, the Bible mourns the demise of that "footstool" (Lamentations 2:1).

Within the Temple, we can locate God's footstool more precisely. The Bible describes the

golden cover of the Ark of the Covenant as a "Mercy Seat." In fact, it was an empty space defined by the outstretched wings of the two Cherubim (Exodus 25:17-25). Into this empty space, the closest one could come to God's presence on earth, the High Priest would offer the blood of the sin offering on Yom Kippur, the annual Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16:14). In fact, the Hebrew name for this "Mercy Seat" is "kip-poret" (atonement). Saint Paul specifically connects this blood sacrifice of atonement for sins with Christ's sacrifice on the Cross in Romans (3:23-25): "All have sinned and are deprived of the glory of God. They are justified freely by his grace through the redemption in Christ Jesus whom God set forth as an expiation through faith by His blood. . ." Behind that word "expiation" (or "propitiation" in other translations) is the Greek *ilastérion*, which is how the Greek Old Testament translates the Hebrew *kip-poret* or "Mercy Seat."

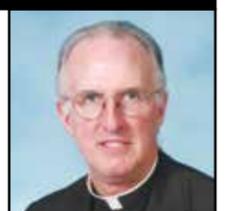
The connection is made even more clearly when the ninth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews describes the interior of the Holy of Holies as only the High Priest would have seen it. What Israel did with the blood of animals on the Day of Atonement prepares for and points toward what

Jesus did on the Cross: the perfect blood of the perfect sacrificial victim, offered by the perfect priest, in a once-and-for-all sacrifice to atone for the sins of every human being.

Where do you usually see the Cross in your parish church? Most likely right in the center behind the Holy Table, filling in the empty space between the two Cherubim represented on the ripidia (fans). When we celebrate the Divine Liturgy we do not pretend to crucify Christ again (as some Christians who reject the Church's sacramental mysteries sometimes claim). But we can, *we can* trace a straight line--both visually and sacramentally--from the Eucharistic gifts on the Holy Table at any Liturgy to the Mercy Seat, no longer an empty space but filled--and fulfilled--by Christ, who took His sacrifice all the way to God's heavenly throne when He ascended to heaven and brought human nature to heaven (Hebrews 10:12). Because of the perfect sacrifice offered on it, the Cross is the ladder that unites heaven and earth, the footstool that points us toward the divine throne. That mercy, that atonement, that reconciliation and that possibility of heaven is what continues to be offered to us in every Divine Liturgy we celebrate. **ECL**

GUEST EDITORIAL

Father Robert F. Slesinski, Ph.D.



POPE FRANCIS, THE THEOLOGIAN-ÉCOLOGIST

As His Holiness, Pope Francis, is about to conclude his lengthy reflection on climate change and environmental issues, he ends on a most personal note, confessing, indeed, that his effort was "both joyful and troubling" (n. 246). It was "joyful" because he was able to praise Almighty God, the Creator, and afford him an opportunity to render homage to one of his spiritual heroes, Saint Francis of Assisi (1181/1182

– 1226) universally known for his deep sensitivity to the whole created order, be it animate or inanimate. Indeed, the very first paragraph of his Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'* is but a gloss on Saint Francis, the very title of his encyclical being a quote from the Medieval saint's "Canticle of the Creatures," which begins with the words: "Laudato Si, mi' Signore" (Praise be to you, my Lord), only to continue quoting Saint Francis'

"pregnant" verse: "Praise be to you, my Lord, through our Sister, Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us, and who produces various fruit with colored flowers and herbs" (n. 1). How cannot these opening words but touch the hearts of all sensitive Christians? Indeed, in the Orthodox world, they cannot but recall to mind the equally ascetical life of one of their own saints, Seraphim of Sarov (1754 – 1833).

These poetic words not only set the tone for the Pontiff’s extensive remarks, but also underscore the pace and direction of his discourse. In a word, His Holiness is not intent on entering into, let alone settling, the scientific matters relating to environmental issues. Indeed, he hastens to state “on many concrete questions, the Church has no reason to offer a definitive opinion” (n. 61), only to repeat his stance much further on regarding certain environmental issues: “Here I would state once more that the Church does not presume to settle scientific questions or to replace politics” (n. 188).

But, then, what is the Pontiff’s precise point in penning this lengthy Encyclical? This brings us to the second motivation for his reflections: they were and are “troubling.” The created order as willed by Almighty God is, in our own time in particular, being challenged by “environmental degradation,” directly resultant upon a no lesser evil—“human and social degradation” (n. 48). The very joy that imbues us with the poignancy and beauty of creation can seem to be all but cancelled by the violence, as it were, inflicted upon the created order by a truly disordered conception of human dominance over creation. As the pontiff directly—unabashedly—declares: “This sister [Mother Earth] now cries out to us

because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her. We have come to see ourselves as her lords and masters, entitled to plunder her at will” (n. 2). Venturing beyond a merely scientific and technological approach to addressing environmental degradation, the Holy Father takes a definitive stance as to how this—the whole of the created order being inherently interrelated—relates to human and social degradation. Pope Francis could not be more blunt on this environmental issue: “When we fail to acknowledge as part of reality the worth of a poor person, a human embryo, a person with disabilities—to offer just a few examples—it becomes difficult to hear the cry of nature itself; everything is connected. Once the human being declares independence from reality and behaves with absolute dominion, the very foundations of our life begin to crumble” (n. 117).

On this note, we can, indeed, grasp the central point of his encyclical—the crucial need to develop and foster an integral ecology, one that would, it certainly would seem, put inanimate and animate created reality on parity, living organisms being able to be such only in harmony with the environment in which they are enveloped. Creation is a fundamental good at the caressing

hands of Almighty God freely given to mankind, not for its dominance, but for its stewardship.

His Holiness, Pope Francis, concludes his encyclical beautifully subtitled “On Care for Our Common Home” with two lengthy, moving prayers. We end by quoting them in part as we pray along with the Pontiff:

All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures. You embrace with your tenderness all that exists. Pour out upon us the power of your love, that we may protect life and beauty...

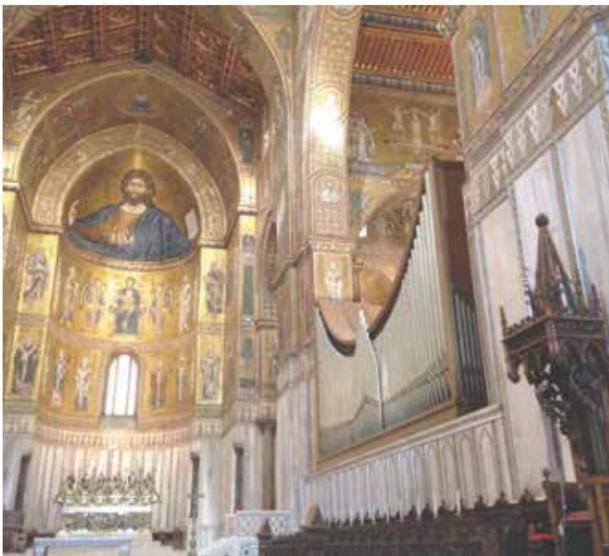
Bring healing to our lives, that we may protect the world and not prey on it, that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction...

Father, we praise you with all your creatures. They come forth from your all-powerful hand; they are yours, filled with your presence and your tender love. Praise be to you!...

Give us the grace to feel profoundly joined to everything that is... **ECL**

TRIP TO SICILY CONTINUED...

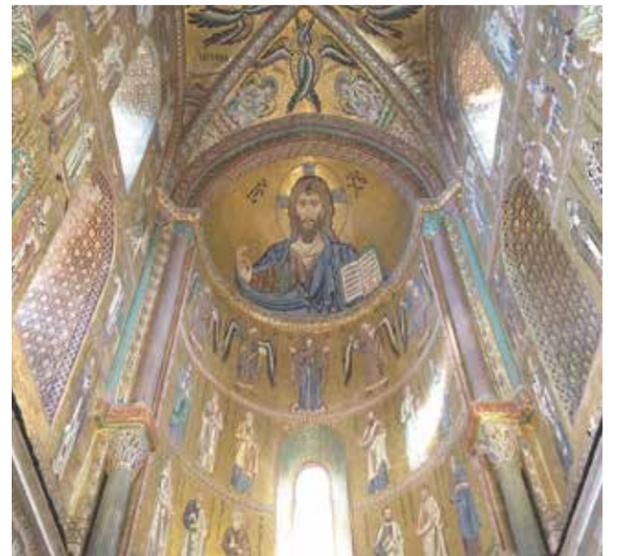
A Photo Montage from Bishop George Gallaro’s ordination and enthronement as Bishop in Sicily



The massive pipe organ in the cathedral in Monreale has divisions on either side of the choir.



In Monreale is a “Tree of Jesse”. Jesse was the father of King David, and the Prophet Isaiah said, “And there shall come forth a shoot from the stem of Jesse, and a branch will grow from his root.” In Christian art, the Tree of Jesse shows the ancestors of Jesus, the Son of David. In this one, the cross is also the tree of life.



Up the coast from Palermo is the city of Cefalu. The mosaics here were the warm up for Monreale. After the king died, the next king cut off the money, and only the mosaics in the front were finished.



Metropolitan Archbishop William Skurla doing what he likes best at the Monreale cloister.



From the outside of the pro-cathedral.



Bishop-elect George made his profession of faith in front of the three ordaining bishops, the Bishop of Lungo, the Bishop of Athens, and our Bishop Nicholas Samra of the Melkites in the United States. Bishop Nicholas is a native son of Northern New Jersey! And was Pastor of Saint Ann Melkite Church in Woodland Park. The Cardinal Archbishop of Palermo is in the background.



SCHOOL OF PRAYER

Father G. Scott Boghossian

MONOLOGISTIC PRAYER

Monologistic prayer, which literally means “prayer of one word,” is sometimes referred to as praying aspirations. An aspiration is a short prayer that we offer up repeatedly. Often aspirations are prayed while we go about doing other things. They may also be prayed with focused attention in the silence and solitude of a time especially set aside for prayer. The “Jesus Prayer,” “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner” is an aspiration or monologistic prayer that is probably the most popular one used among Eastern Christians. In the Western Church, Saint Leonard of Port Maurice taught the same prayer with slightly different words: “My Jesus, Mercy!” Both of these short prayers, or aspirations, were to be said many times a day, over and over, as a way of praying without ceasing (I Thessalonians 5:17).

The Desert Fathers memorized verses of Scripture, and meditated on them all day, using the biblical text as a prayer, and also as a way of driving away evil thoughts inspired by demons. Evagrius of Pontus, a disciple of Origen, wrote a book called *Antirrhethikos*, which was a topical compilation of Bibli-

cal verses intended to repel temptation. Temptations toward any of the eight evil thoughts (gluttony, greed, sloth, sorrow, lust, anger, vainglory, and pride) were driven away by the power of Scripture. If the temptation was toward gluttony, Evagrius provided verses from the Bible that could be directed against gluttony. If lust attacked, Evagrius provided verses to pray in resistance to lust. One would repeat the verse over and over in a prayerful way when tempted. This process of spiritual warfare was modeled after Our Lord’s temptation in the wilderness (Matthew 4:1). Our Lord quoted Scripture against the devil’s attacks, leaving us an example.

Different verses used against different evil thoughts must have seemed complicated. The system needed to be simplified. Saint John Cassian, who founded an Egyptian style monastery in southern Gaul, near Marseilles, suggested the first verse of Psalm 70, “O God come to my assistance, O Lord make haste to help me.” In the West, this became the aspiration that monks used against any temptation. They persevered in this prayer all day long, while working or resting.

In the East, the practice of scriptural prayer became simplified into a prayer of sorrow for sin and a prayer that made use of the Holy Name of Jesus: “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God have mercy on me, a sinner.” The “Jesus Prayer” was used by the Holy Fathers to resist the temptations of the evil one and as a way of praying without ceasing.

Monologistic prayer was also used by Saint Francis of Assisi who would pray “My God and my All,” repeatedly, all night long. Father Cruz of Lisbon taught Blessed Jacinta of Fatima the prayer, “O my Jesus I love you! Sweet Heart of Mary, be my salvation!” which she repeated over and over. Saint Gertrude the Great prayed “Lord, not my will but thy will be done,” over three hundred times a day.

Some of the saints used beads or a prayer rope to keep track of how many times they said their favorite aspirations. Saint Philip Neri used beads to count the prayer “O God come to my assistance, O Lord make haste help me,” and recited this set of beads sixty three times a day. Saint Margaret of Cortona said the “Our Father” up to a thousand times

a day. In the Way of the Pilgrim, the pilgrim counts the “Jesus Prayer” with his prayer rope, and at one point is instructed to pray it twelve thousand times a day. Father William Doyle, SJ (1873-1917) prayed up to one hundred twenty thousand aspirations a day. Brother Mutien-Marie (1895-1940) prayed thirty or forty thousand aspirations a day but on occasion prayed as many as three hundred seventy thousand, in one day!

Find a prayer or a verse from the Bible, and make it your monologistic prayer. Find an aspiration that you love, that is short, and can be repeated indefinitely, and use it all throughout the day. Pray without strain and without forcing yourself. Use a prayer rope or prayer beads to keep track of how many prayers you pray, and then seek to increase that number, until you are “praying without ceasing” (I Thessalonians 5:17). The great saints practiced this kind of prayer and recommended it to all. By means of monologistic prayer, temptations will be put to flight, your mind will stay on the Lord, and you will cultivate the spirit of constant prayer. **ECL**

SEASONAL REFLECTIONS

Monsignor John. T. Sekellick, JCL



NATIVITY OF THE THEOTOKOS



Icon of the Nativity of the Theotokos

Together with the Dormition of the Theotokos (August 15), the Nativity of the Theotokos is one of the most ancient and well-known Feasts of our Lady. Celebrated on September 8th, it is the first great feast of the cycle of Saints to come after the start of the liturgical year on September 1st. Our Church sets her birth during the first days of its new year to focus on the highest example of human holiness that the Church recognizes and venerates – that of the mother of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

It is noteworthy that for the most part our Church observes the death of its saints rather than the day of their birth since in a deeply spiritual sense, death itself marks the beginning of unending life so beautifully stated in the prayer attributed to Saint Francis of Assisi, “...it is in

dying that we are born to eternal life.” Moreover, the Troparion for this feast explains how the birth of the Virgin Mary “heralded joy to the universe;” since from her God’s Son will be born and die “destroying Death, granting us everlasting life.” In addition to the birth of the Mother of God, only two other important birth days are actually celebrated liturgically – that of Jesus Himself (December 25) and His forerunner, John the Baptist (June 24).

At Vespers, three meaningful selections are read from the Old Testament. The first gives the account of the night which Jacob spent at Luz (Gen. 28:10-17). While Jacob slept, with stones for a pillow, as he dreamt, he saw a ladder stretching from earth to heaven, and angels ascending and descending upon it. God Himself appears, blessing Ja-

cob and his descendants. Upon awakening, Jacob blessed the stone pillow with oil and called the site Beth-el, meaning House of God. In a spiritual way, Mary, whose motherhood was the channel for the Incarnation is herself a mystical ladder between heaven and earth. As she carried God in her womb, she is truly the Beth-el of which Jacob declared, "This is none other but the house of God; this is the gate of heaven!"

The second lesson (Ezekiel 43:27-44) refers to the future Temple which is shown to Ezekiel. One line from this passage can well be applied to Mary's virginity and motherhood: "This gate shall be shut. It shall not be opened, and no man shall enter in by it because the Lord, the God of Israel, has entered in by it; therefore, it shall be shut." The Catechism of the Catholic Church instructs us, "The deepening of faith in the virginal motherhood led the Church to confess Mary's real and perpetual virginity even in the act of giv-

ing birth to the Son of God made man. In fact, Christ's birth did not diminish his mother's virginal integrity but sanctified it. For this reason the Church identifies Mary as Aeiparthenos, the "Ever-virgin." (No. 499)

The third reading (Proverbs 9:1-11) describes a personified divine Wisdom: "Wisdom has built her house.... She has sent forth her maidens, proclaiming upon the highest places of the city." Seat of Wisdom is among the titles accorded to Mary in the Western Church; in our Eastern Church, she is described as "...one who surpasses the wisdom of the wise." (Acathist Hymn, Ode Two). This suggests that there is a link between holy Wisdom and Mary, manifesting Wisdom to a world darkened with moral ignorance and bringing forth Truth in her Son, Who is the way, the truth and the life (John 14:6).

As we solemnly celebrate the holy birth of Mary, ever-Virgin and Mother, may we resonate with our Church as she proclaims, "Come, all you faithful, and let us hasten to the Virgin; for long before her conception in the womb, the One Who was to be born of the root of Jesse was destined to be the Mother of our God. The one who is the treasury of virginity, the flowering rod of Aaron, the object of the prophecies, the child of Joachim and Anna is born today, and the world is renewed in her. Through her birth, the Church is clothed with splendor. O holy Temple, vessel of the Godhead, model of virgins and strength of kings, in you the wondrous union of the two natures of Christ was realized. We worship Him and glorify your most pure birth, and the whole world extols you." (Glory... now and ever at the Aposticha of Vespers) **ECL**



FAITH AND COMMUNITY ISSUES

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

THE EFFECT OF ROLE MODELING IN SUICIDE

The role of fame in influencing attempted suicide

Is there any reality to the idea that suicide can be contagious? Is there such a thing as a "copycat" suicide? Can a person be influenced through the actions of another to take their own life? When Comer (2011) examined the research of Feigelman and Gorman (2008) he found that according to their study, it was commonplace for people in general, teenagers in particular to attempt suicide after being exposed to the story about one who had either committed or attempted suicide. When the individual was someone of note, a political leader or a celebrity the suicide rate increased sharply for a short time afterward (Fu & Yip 2009; Stack, 2005, 1987 as cited by Comer 2011). Comer cites Phillips (1974) in referring to the suicide of Marilyn Monroe in 1963 and the increase in the national suicide rate by 12% the week after she was found deceased.

The rationale Comer suggests that people in a profound struggle with difficult issues over a long period with no solution forthcoming may find the other person's "solution" not only plausible but viable! It appears that a kind of "permission" is given that serves as a justification for the act. In such context, the appearance is very convincing that one suicide does serve as a credible role model for another suicidal attempt. When the individual committing the suicide is a celebrity with high publication of the act, or a co-worker, the act serves as a very potent trigger for others to follow suit.

A phenomenon of interest was found that, at times, copy-cat suicides may vary from the original intent of the suicide victim. The example given described a self-burning suicide, the origins of which were politically motivated. Yet, 82 other people took their lives the in the same manner

but when investigated it was found that the majority of the people had deep emotional problems and utilized the method for personal reasons that were unattached to the political motivation of the original suicide victim (Comer 2011, citing Ashton and Donnan, 1981).

According to Comer, there is a strong argument in favor of utilizing a more responsible style of reporting the suicides of the famous that would be instrumental in reducing the profound impact these incidences have (Comer, 2011 citing Blood et al., 2007; and Gould et al., 2007). Comer relates how MTV and others during the reporting of Curt Cobain in 1994 continually repeated the message not to do it and posted phone numbers to suicide crisis lines and interviewed suicide experts who offered counseling and advice to call-ins. Comer attributes the stability of the suicide rate during the following weeks post Cobain's suicide (Comer, 2011 citing Colburn, 1996).

Co-workers and Colleagues

"Word of mouth" publicity of a committed suicide especially in a closed system such as a school, place of work, or small neighborhood may trigger suicide attempts according to Comer (2011). He cites as example the incident of a recruit who committed suicide at a school for the US Navy, which triggered another suicide and one attempt at the school itself within a two week period following the recruit's suicide. The school initiated "a program of staff education on suicide and group therapy sessions for recruits who had been close to the suicide victims" (Comer, 2011, pg 241 as citing Grigg, 1988). Comer coins the term "Postvention" (p 241) as a descriptive of the kinds of preventative programs put into place by media following the suicides of the rich and famous.

Underlying Causes of Suicide

What causes a person to contemplate taking their own life? What sets a person on the path to committing suicide? Comer (2011) suggests a combination of current events and personal conditions in a person's existence are viable contributors. The stress of losing a loved one, a job loss, serious illness that lingers over months or years, mood changes, changes in thought patterns especially when those thought patterns lead into an overwhelming sense of helpless, hopeless feelings or conclusions. When alcohol or recreational drugs enter the picture, the situation is exacerbated. The role of mental disorders or as seen earlier the news of another's suicide may lead to the committing of a suicide attempt.

How is it when some people are presented with difficult situations they resort to suicide as the answer rather than life-empowering alternatives? Research has presented perspectives from psychodynamic, socio-cultural and the biological as a way of accessing more basic explanations than the triggers mentioned earlier. Sadly, these attempts at understanding have received limited support financially and are thereby unable to study the suicidal phenomenon fully. Because of this, the clinical field is lacking in an understanding of suicide that satisfactorily offers an understanding of the why and how of suicide (Comer, 2011).

Psychodynamic View of Suicide

Comer (2011) states that, "Many psychodynamic theorists believe that suicide results from depression and from anger that is redirected toward oneself. This theory was first stated by physician and psychologist Wilhelm Stekel at a meeting in Vienna in 1910, when he proclaimed that 'no one kills himself who has not wanted to kill another or at least wished the death of another'

(Shneidman, 1979). Agreeing with this notion, the influential psychiatrist Karl Menninger later called suicide ‘murder in the 180th degree.’” (p. 241).

The real or symbolic loss of a loved one may cause the individual to incorporate the lost person on an unconscious level feeling toward themselves what they felt toward the lost individual (Comer, 2011). It is possible that over the short term, if there are negative feelings that existed toward the lost person they may be turned inward and experienced as a self-hatred on the part of the one experiencing the loss. If this self-hatred is left unresolved it can decompensate into depression

with suicide being an ultimate expression of this total self-hatred (Comer, 2011). Is there a relationship between childhood losses, either real or symbolic and an act of suicide? Comer cites Ehnvall et al. (2008) and Read et al. (2001) in affirming such a relationship. Citing Adam et al. (1982) Comer invokes a classic study in which 200 family histories revealed that people who as children suffered a parental loss attempted suicide more frequently (48%) than those who did not experience this type of loss at a young age (24%).

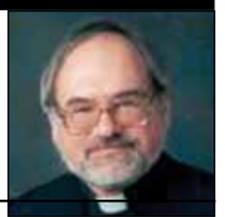
The kinds of loss experiences were typically paternal loss or divorce/separation of parents, Comer (2011) cites a study involving 343 de-

pressed individuals found that those who felt they were victims of neglect or abandonment had a higher likelihood of suicide acts or attempts in their adulthood than other adult individuals (Comer, 2011 citing Ehnvall et al., 2008).

Does Freud’s concept of a death instinct, thanatos give insight into the mechanism of suicide? What role does the sociocultural perspective have in clarifying the “why?” and “How?” of Suicide? In the next installment a look at Freud’s “death instinct” theory and Suicide from a sociocultural perspective will be examined. **ECL**

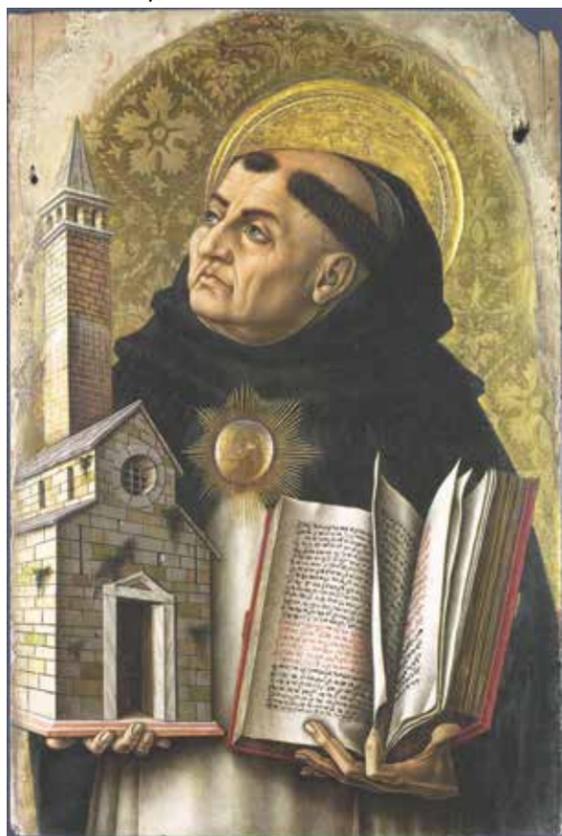
THE BYZANTINE LITURGY

By Archpriest David Petras, SEOD



ARGUMENTS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

Long ago, in the thirteenth century, Saint Thomas Aquinas addressed the question of the existence of God. He did this as a part of his project to put together a complete science of God, a wholesome theology. As a part of this, he presented five “arguments,” that is, reasoned explanations of why there had to be a God. Many people today turn to these “arguments,” because they want proof that there is a God and that they are not wasting their life by trying to follow Him in faith. So some people will not believe in God unless there is a fool-proof, mathematical demonstration that He actually exists. However, this was not Aquinas’ goal. He was not really trying to convince anyone about God. He simply wanted to have a complete system of knowledge about God, and also to comfort and strengthen those who had faith in God in their belief. The same is true today, we do not come to faith in God



Saint Thomas Aquinas

through rational arguments, but because faith was passed on to us by our parents, through their parents, through a whole community of faith to which we belong. We believe in God because so many have witnessed to His presence in their lives. We believe in Christ because the apostles witnessed the divinity present in Him and have

passed that faith on to their followers, and we still have that witness in the Gospels. The arguments for God tell us that this is all very reasonable.

Saint Thomas’s arguments for the existence of God really rest on one reality. We cannot deny that there is existence, that there is stuff, that we are a part of a universe. That is absolutely certain, so that human beings, so far the only sentient creatures that we know of, ask the ultimate question, “Why is there something rather than nothing?” The problem is that nothing in the universe that we can sense with our eyes or ears or touch exists by necessity. Just like we ourselves, who came into life as one of many possible children our parents could have had, everything that is could have not been. This is known as the argument from “contingency,” that is, that since something may either be real or unreal, there must be some reason that it really exists. This means that there must be some principle, some foundation, some ground of existence. Everyone admits this, but atheists will affirm that it is simply “chance.” Things are the way they are because they just happened. There is no plan behind it. However, it is much more reasonable to suppose that because there is planning, goals and consciousness in the universe, that the principle of being is not simply “chance,” but aware and intentional, having a plan for creation. Bertrand Russell, the well-known English atheist, was one of the few to encounter head-on what it would mean to believe only in chance: He wrote, “That Man is the product of causes which had no prevision of the end they were achieving: that his origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves and beliefs, are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms Only within the scaffolding of these truths, only on the firm foundation of unyielding despair, can the soul’s habitation be safely built.” On the contrary, as we have seen from the whole series on resurrection, we do not live in despair, but in hope.

Despite all this, we do not come to faith in God only by reason. I also think that every one of us in our lives sometimes has an experience of the “transcendent,” of the ultimate reality behind all that there is. God reveals Himself in some way to every one of us. We all receive this experience in different ways, though. Sometimes our life is so busy and so noisy that we cannot hear or sense the soft gentle whisper (the Prophet Elijah’s experi-

ence of God in 1 Kings 19:12) that is God “speaking” to us. Sometimes we have turned our minds against God, we don’t want to hear His voice either through the Gospels or in our own hearts. Sometimes we have our own preconceived ideas of faith that expect God to reveal himself in ways that he actually never would. How we respond to God then depends on our openness to the experience. Saint Paul, on the road to Damascus, had an experience of Christ that completely changed his life, because he was open to accepting it. However, mystical events are not the only way we can meet God. We also can meet him in our prayers and worship in Liturgy. Through the Scriptures and the words of the prayers in Liturgy God can speak into our hearts. This is one reason, I believe, that the Liturgy should be in the vernacular, in the language we use in life, for they are words that God does not need, but which are for us and our relationship with God.

Finally, what can the arguments for God tell us? They can give us a certainty about a principle and foundation of being, but not necessarily that YHWH, the God of the Scriptures, and his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, are to be identified with this principle. However, if we listen carefully to the words of God in Scripture, we can make a connection and come to understanding. Our basic faith begins with the statement, “I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth and of all things, visible and invisible.” God is the Father in the sense that all that is comes from Him, as Saint Paul explains, “for this reason I kneel before the Father, from Whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, (Ephesians 3:14),” and “in Him we live and move and have our being. (Acts 17:28)” Jesus said, “Not one [sparrow] falls to the ground without your Father’s knowledge. (Matthew 10:29)” And Jesus said, “No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son (Matthew 11:27) ... The Father and I are One. (John 10:30)” Jesus is the image of God, and one cannot read His words with openness and not come to God. Militant atheists sometimes try to disprove God by the “straw man” argument. They create an image of God that no one could believe in and demolish this false image. For one who believes, however, the ultimate argument is not only a rational process, but the reality of our Lord Jesus himself. **ECL**



SPIRITUAL REFLECTIONS

Deacon Lewis Rabayda

DISCERNMENT

Discernment is a word not often used today. To discern something means to put great thought into recognizing and discovering the truth of a situation or of a thing. There comes a time in one's life where one is faced with many possible roads to travel on. Which road, and at which time, is up to the person to figure out. They need to analyze the possibilities of what may happen. One road can lead to personal stability, financial success, personal achievement, happiness, altruism, and/or God-willing, spiritual growth. Other series of roads may lead to distress, burden, financial dependency, personal failures, selfishness, and/or God-forbid, spiritual degradation. The discerning person is able to see each road for what it is, not as it is perceived or how it is presented to us, but for the real end that it will take us to.

As the Christian tries to navigate the world, they may find themselves

lost or going in circles. But it is the discerning Christian who realizes that the end goal of our life is to live forever in heaven with the Holy Trinity and with all the Saints. When one realizes this final destination, it will clearly illumine these different paths so the sojourner can see without deception what lies along each way. Having this end goal of heaven in mind, the illumined path that reveals a virtuous lifestyle, is the path that God has placed before us for direction in our lives. This can be thought of as our vocation because our vocations are given to us by God. We will be at our happiest, our most generous, and our most virtuous, when we are best living out our vocation in life.

But what if we've been unaware of our need to discern, and what if we do not have the knowledge or wisdom that we need to discern properly? What if we are on the wrong

path, and what if our lives are a mess or less than ideal? Even if we think we may have been missing the signs and clues that God is giving us to turn off of the wrong path, it is never too late to change direction. We may think that our lives are set and that there will be little adjustment, but God likes to surprise us. He reminds us that He knows what is best for us, and that He calls His children back to Him, especially if they have been avoiding Him.

Honest, sincere, and open prayer is one of the best ways to see how God sees. It is by conversing with God in both formal and informal prayer that we allow Him to speak to us, to teach us, and to guide us. It is by reading the Holy Scriptures that we allow the eternal wisdom of God to pour over our wounds and heal our infirmities and correct our skewed thinking. It is by consciously being open to the Holy Spirit and giving up our per-

sonal desires that we will be guided to the desire of God. It is also by consciously and faithfully participating in the Mysteries of Confession and the Holy Eucharist that we are strengthened with courage to see the path that leads to God.

Vocation and discernment go together. One cannot fully live out their God-intended vocation if they are not capable of discerning whether they are on the right path or not. So, whatever point we are at in our journey to heaven, we can always shift to a better course if we participate in the Life of Christ through the Sacraments of the Church and through learning Her teaching. **ECL**



"COME AND SEE" RETREAT OF DISCOVERY FOR BYZANTINE CATHOLIC MEN 18 TO 35 YEARS OLD

"Come and See" is a retreat weekend hosted by the Byzantine Catholic Seminary in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The retreat includes sharing liturgical services and meals with the Seminary community, an introduction to the Seminary formation program, a tour of the Seminary, gatherings with the seminarians, witness talks, and guided reflections on discernment—on how to listen to God's plans for your future and your happiness.

Invited are men, ages 18 to 35, single or married, who may be considering a vocation to the priesthood in the Byzantine Catholic Church. It is important to note that the retreat is conducted in a "no pressure, no hard-sell" environment. The atmosphere is prayerful, positive, and fraternal.

Friday (5:00 PM), 16 October
Sunday (3:30 PM), 18 October

Byzantine Catholic Seminary of
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UPCOMING EVENTS FOR SEPTEMBER

Eparchial and Parish Events

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| <p>5-6 Annual Pilgrimage in Honor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help <i>Mount Saint Macrina, Uniontown, PA</i></p> <p>7 Labor Day Holiday <i>Chancery Closed</i></p> <p>8 Nativity of the Theotokos <i>Solemn Holy Day</i></p> <p>12 105th Anniversary Celebration <i>4 p.m. Hierarchical Divine Liturgy, Saint Mary Parish, Nesquehoning, PA</i></p> <p>13 Saint Michael Cathedral Annual Picnic <i>12-6 p.m. Cathedral Chapel, Woodland Park, NJ</i></p> <p>Pilgrimage for Peace <i>10 a.m. - 7 p.m. Holy Dormition Friary, Sybertsville, PA</i></p> <p>Slavic Festival <i>12 noon - 6 p.m. Epiphany of Our Lord Parish, Annandale, VA</i></p> | <p>Pig Roast <i>12 noon- Epiphany of Our Lord Parish, Roswell, GA</i></p> <p>14 Exaltation of the Holy Cross <i>Solemn Holy Day * Chancery closed</i></p> <p>19 Regional Family Day of Recollection <i>8:30 a.m. Saint Mary Church, Scranton, PA</i></p> <p>20 Wedding Jubilarians' Celebration <i>3 p.m. Hierarchical Divine Liturgy, Saint Mary Church, Hillsborough, NJ</i></p> <p>21-24 Annual Eparchial Priests' Retreat <i>San Alfonso Retreat Center, Long Branch, NJ.</i></p> <p>27 Annual Slovak Festival <i>9:00 a.m. PNC Bank Arts Center, Holmdel, NJ</i></p> |
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