



## 370-YEAR-OLD “BAPTISMAL CERTIFICATE” OF GREEK CATHOLICS FOUND

Translation by Maria Silvestri of an interview by Pavol Rábara; May 10, 2016

**O**n 4 May, the Greek Catholic priest Juraj Gradoš discovered a document from 1646, which has a high value for the Greek Catholic Church.

In an interview for Postoj, he says how he did it, and also why now he must rework his dissertation almost completely.

He discovered the document confirming the formation of the Union of Uzhorod, which was a formal act restoring full ecclesial communion between the Church of the Byzantine Rite Eparchy of Mukachevo (to which the territory of the present

Greek Catholic Church in Slovakia belonged) and the Catholic Church.

According to historians, it happened on 24 April 1646 at the Drugeth Castle in Uzhhorod, where 63 Greek Catholic priests were present and the Roman Catholic Bishop of Eger, György Jakusits.

**Postoj:** Where did you find this document?

**Father Gradoš:** I cannot say where, because an information embargo currently applies. First, because no studies have been conducted yet, and also because it is a very sensitive issue.

**Postoj:** Were you intentionally searching for it, or was it a coincidence?

**Father Gradoš:** It was not intentional. I was searching for something else. It was like this: when they gave me the original document in the archive, which I requested, I flipped through their catalogue books. And there, some file called to me, which led me to this document. Only then, when they brought it to me, I determined what it is.

**Postoj:** So, what is it? What does it mean for Greek Catholics?

**Father Gradoš:** It must be said, that from the practical side, bread

doesn't get cheaper (laughs). But for historians and the Church, it is the fundamental discovery that adjusts history to some extent in two respects.

Seven states supported the Union of Uzhhorod. For these people, this document is something of a baptismal certificate. It is the alpha point, the emergence of the contemporary Greek Catholic Church.

First and foremost, it is the answer to all the attacks that claimed that the Union of Uzhhorod didn't happen on that date. The next document that mentions it is in fact from 1652,

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## U.S. SUPREME COURT SENDS ZUBIK CASE BACK TO LOWER COURTS

By Carol Zimmermann; May 17, 2016, Article and Photo courtesy of Catholic News Service

**T**he U.S. Supreme Court May 16 sent the Zubik v. Burwell case, which challenges the Affordable Care Act's contraceptive requirement for employers, back to the lower courts.

The justices' unanimous decision, explained in a nine-page unsigned opinion, was based on the information that both sides submitted a week after oral arguments were heard in the case about how and if contraceptive insurance coverage could be obtained by employees through their insurance companies without directly involving religious employers who object to this coverage.

The court made clear that it is not expressing an opinion on the merits of the cases that are challenging aspects of the federal government's health legislation and it also was not ruling on the issue of a potential violation of religious freedom.

Because of the “gravity of the dispute and the substantial clarification and refinement in the positions

of the parties,” the court stated that religious employers and the government should be “afforded an opportunity to arrive at an approach going forward that accommodates petitioners’ religious exercise while at the same time ensuring that women covered by petitioners’ health plans receive full and equal health coverage, including contraceptive coverage.”

The court stressed that this approach is “more suitable” than addressing the refined positions submitted by both sides and added that “although there may still be areas of disagreement between the parties on issues of implementation, the importance of those areas of potential concern is uncertain, as is the necessity of this court’s involvement at this point to resolve them.”

Five appeals courts had ruled in favor of the contraceptive mandate and one had ruled against it. But now, equipped with the new information both sides submitted to the Supreme Court, the lower courts



Little Sisters of the Poor and supporters rally outside the Supreme Court

have been ordered to review these cases once more.

Justice Sonia Sotomayor and Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg wrote separately to stress that the court had not decided any of the legal questions in the cases and cautioned the lower courts not to read anything into the new opinion.

“This is a game-changer,” said Mark Rienzi, lead attorney for the

Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, which represents the Little Sisters of the Poor, one of the group’s challenging the federal contraceptive mandate.

He said the opinion reflects that the court has “accepted the government’s concession” that it can provide contraceptives to women “without using the Little Sisters.”

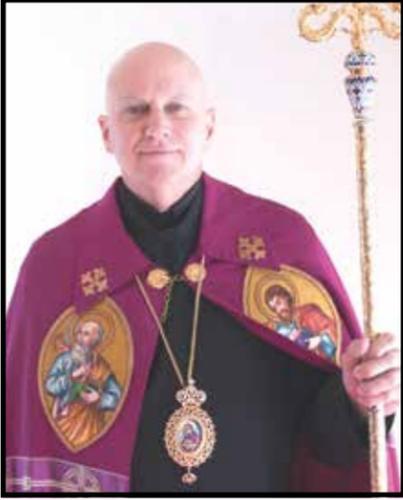
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## I LIFT UP MY EYES...

*Pastoral Reflections of Bishop Kurt*



### ON THE WINGS OF EAGLES

Last years, on September 29, Archbishop Skurla called me and told me to fly to Rome the next day to participate in the Synod of Bishops. I told him that I couldn't leave until October 3 because I had a commitment for October 2 in Dayton, Ohio. I found out the week before that my godfather, whom I only ever met once in my life, at my ordination to the priesthood 26 years earlier, would be inducted into the National Aeronautics Hall of Fame, and I immediately purchased a plane ticket to Dayton, OH, the hometown of Wilbur and Orville Wright and of their bicycle shop. As a matter of fact, my godfather was 95 years old, and no one in my family knew if he was still alive until we received a notice of his induction.

It was an exciting day for me when I flew to Dayton on a jet that used the three-axes principles of control invented by the Wright brothers, and rented a car; and drove to a banquet in a vast flight museum at the Air Force base to see the event called "the Oscar Night of Aviation". I purchased a banquet ticket online, and when I arrived, going through tight security, I learned that there were different levels of prestige, and many people had paid a lot of money to enter the inner room to meet with the four "celebrities". But when I explained that General Cardenas was my godfather, I was escorted past all the barriers and eventually found him seated in the midst of garulous gawkers and autograph seekers and people taking selfies. General Cardenas was so happy to see me that he insisted on standing up for a long time, even though his wife kept insisting that he needed to sit down again. I presented him with an Icon of Our Lord, and he began crying and saying that it was a sign of God's love for him and would be on his bedstand for the rest of his life. His wife took possession to be certain the Icon wasn't lost in the general chaos. I told him that he must have been a pretty good godfather since I turned out a bishop.



Brigadier General Robert Cardenas



YB 49 "The Flying Wing"

After a while the social hour ended, and we were sent into the banquet room, actually a lot of tables inside a vast aeronautics museum with enormous airplanes looming around us. I found myself at a table with a number of guests in some way connected to General Cardenas. I had a pleasant conversation with the woman on my left, and then met the man on my right. He was an elderly but very imposing man of large stature, elegantly dressed. He introduced himself as a German who started life in banking. Due to his talent and success, he went on to be an international banker, and then an international investment banker, and then taking his money from that success, he moved to California and is a successful San Diego real estate developer. He introduced his wife who was evidently a much younger blonde Californian. I asked him what his connection was with the inductees, and he said that he really had no connection at all, but due to his immense wealth and success and prestige he sits on a number of boards of non-profits such as museums.

Based on my clothing, he correctly surmised that I was clergy, and when I said that I'm a Catholic bishop, he was thoughtful for a moment. Then he smiled and his eyes narrowed. The smile and the eyes made me feel like I was about to find out why he was such a successful international investment banker, that is, I was about to be foreclosed on. He said in a smooth disarming voice, "Since you are a Catholic bishop, do you mind if I ask you a question?" I agreed to answer his question. Then he sat up very tall, and leaned over me. He looked to me like a cobra that had just spread out its hood, and he said, "Why did your Pope meet with Kimberly Davis?" His expression was no longer cunning, but triumphant. He knew he had asked a question that would get me into trouble no matter how I answered. If I approved of the meeting, I was out of step with American culture, and if I disapproved, then I was condemning the Holy Father. His eyes glowed expectantly. What he hadn't considered was that I had no idea why the Holy Father met with Kim Davis, and hadn't given it any thought. So I said to him, "Well, the Pope meets with everybody. He met with Vladimir Putin, and that doesn't mean he agrees

with everything that Putin says or does." Before I could finish talking, he immediately got louder and said, "That is completely different, he is the President of Russia." I said, "Well I don't see the difference; Kim Davis is a government official too." Rather than argue with my point, he took a new tack and began saying, "She should obey the law. She should obey the law." By this time, the rest of the table was starting to take an interest in the goings on, and realized they could join in humiliating the weaker party—you might say a mob started to form—so others started saying, "She should obey the law. She should obey the law." I finally raised my voice a little too, and said, "Well what about all the government officials who issued same sex marriage licenses when that was illegal. Did you demand that they obey the law?" Everyone got quiet. I don't think it was because they were thinking about what I said, I think it was because they realized I wasn't going to give in to peer pressure. Quickly, the German international investment banker real estate developer reassumed his urbane exterior and smiled and tried to move on. However, at this point, his much younger wife spoke up, "Well, I don't agree with Kim Davis because I'm a Christian and Christians are trinitarian, and Kim Davis is a Pentecostal and Pentecostals don't believe in the Trinity." Things certainly quieted down after that. I don't know what everyone else was thinking, but as an Eastern bishop I was deeply moved and exhilarated that someone was using the occasion to extol the Trinity!

After dinner, the presentations began, and it was a very educational night indeed. I learned a lot about the late Robert Hartzell. He made wooden furniture, and someone asked him to make a propeller in the early days of flight—propellers were wooden for a long time. His furniture company eventually became a major manufacturer and innovator in propellers. His sons received the award for their deceased father. I also learned about Abraham Silverstein, an engineer and mathematician, who became the first Director of the Office of Space Flight Programs at the newly created NASA. His award was also accepted by his son, who told us proudly that his father started the first Synagogue on the west side of Cleve-

land. Then we were introduced to Gene Kranz, a fighter pilot and test pilot who became the NASA Flight Director and Director of operations. He invented the famous countdown “10, 9, 8, ... 3, 2, 1, ignition, blastoff”. It was actually a highly sophisticated safety checklist that was created after the fatal Apollo 1 fire. After that tragedy, he gave a stirring speech at NASA demanding honest self-evaluation and a commitment to rigorous safety in the future.

For me the highlight of the evening was my godfather, Brigadier General Robert Cardenas. What a thrill to meet him for the second time in my life! He is still a captivating speaker at 95. Before that night, I only knew that he flew the plane that dropped Chuck Yeager when he broke the sound barrier and that he flew the “flying wing” across the country and buzzed the Capitol. I learned he is an immigrant from Mexico, from the Yucutan. He hung around the glider pilots at La Jolla (that’s where Torrey Pines is—if you watch the golf channel). They taught him to fly as a youngster, and told him that if you have a light



YB 49 “The Flying Wing” flying over the Capitol Building in Washington, DC

touch and close your eyes, you can feel the wind touching the wings. “And after awhile, you can!” he said with a glow. When World War II started, he joined the US Army ready to fight, but as soon as they found out he could fly, they made him a flight instructor. It took a little guile, but he managed to get to England and began flying combat missions. He was shot down over Lake Como, near the German side. He was a great swimmer in the California Pacific, and tried to swim to Switzerland. Because of the lack of oxygen at high altitude, and the less buoyant fresh water, and the cold, he says he nearly drowned halfway across and a Swiss fisherman saved his life. Because of their neutrality, the Swiss kept downed flyers in a prison camp. He said that if you crashed on the first pass, they took you in, but if you made a second pass, they shot you down to maintain their “neutrality”. To this day he remembers the sickening sound of hearing those planes shot down by the neutral Swiss. As a matter of fact, Switzerland was purchasing airplanes for national defense, but no one knew how to fly them. So Cardenas taught the Swiss Air Force how to fly before escaping through France and returning home. As a test pilot at the famous Skunk Works, he was in charge of the X-1 program that broke the sound barrier. He was under orders to get results fast, so he flew every drop plane himself, and flew the B-52 that dropped Chuck Yeager. Because of the urgency, he was the commander who made the decision to ignore the broken ribs that Chuck Yeager got when he fell off a horse. It would have delayed everything to qualify another pilot. I could have listened to him for hours! He stopped his speech there and apologized for talking so long. He never got around to the “flying wing”, but at my ordination in 1989 I heard part of that story. The aviation genius Jack Northrup believed that the most efficient plane would be just a wing with no fuselage. Several were built. The story repeated is that the plane couldn’t be controlled until modern computers. But my godfather flew



“This is my B-24 being shot down over Germany 18 March 1944. The flack was heavy. The first burst took out my left inboard engine. God was with me in the shoot down (last one out) and my escape through France with the help of the French underground. I knew the Sewers of Paris and the Muslim Mosque--the Nazis would steer clear.”

one across the country and you can find pictures on the internet of him flying past the US Capitol building (pictures with his autograph). In fact, the Secretary of the Air Force hated the project. One day mysterious vans pulled up and welded the file cabinets shut and drove off with them and all the flying wings were cut up for scrap. Even the Smithsonian was denied its request for one. Real X-Files stuff!!

Well, my godfather today spends his time on the internet trying to save the world from moral destruction. He sent me this email last October, “Dear Kurt, Thank you for getting in touch. I will stay in touch. We are so proud of you. I have had some tough adventures in my life and God was with me all the way. In March, I will celebrate my 96th birthday putting me one year closer to the toughest Adventure of my life. I hope and pray that I will meet it with dignity and humility as I place myself in His hands for the final time. May God be with you, Bob.” Robert Cardenas is a pioneer flyer, a family man, a hero, a gentleman, and a proud convicted Catholic!

+Kurt Burnett

## SEVEN MONTHS UNTIL ADOPTION PRIVACY DROPPED IN NJ

*This article originally appeared in the Catholic Star Herald, the newspaper of the Diocese of Camden, on April 29, 2016. Reprinted with permission.*

Birth certificates of adoptees have been sealed in New Jersey since 1940, accessible only by court order. However, beginning in January 2017, adoptees will gain access to their full original birth certificates, due to a law signed by Gov. Chris Christie in May 2014. Adoptees will be able to receive, by request, information on their original birth certificates, like their birth parents’ names and their medical history.

Proponents of the bill had been fighting for the legislation for 30 years as an issue of adoptee’s rights. However, the New Jersey Catholic Conference (NJCC), while supporting the concerns of adoptees, also worked on behalf of birth parents to ensure the privacy they were promised when they completed the adoption process.

“Thousands of birth mothers placed their children for adoption through the New Jersey courts in reliance on that statutory assurance of privacy,”

said Patrick Brannigan, executive director of the NJCC, in a 2010 statement.

The law that was signed ultimately was a compromise. Birth mothers who placed their children for adoption in New Jersey before Aug. 1, 2015 have until Dec. 31, 2016 to file a redaction form if they want their names removed from their children’s birth certificates and any other documents being released to the adoptee or relative who is searching.

Birth parents also have the option of filling out a contact preference form, where they can indicate if and how they wish to be contacted by an adoptee. There are three options: direct contact, contact through an intermediary (which can be a relative, friend or agency appointed by the birth parent), or no contact.

Those who submit a contact preference form must also submit a medical, social and cultural history form. The birth parent must update this form every 10 years until they are 40 years old and every five years thereafter. Birth parents who

choose to redact their names from their children’s birth certificates can still submit this form so that the adoptees have access to their medical history.

Redaction request, contact preference, and social/cultural/medical history forms can be submitted via mail or electronically. They are available online at [AdoptionRecords.nj.gov](http://AdoptionRecords.nj.gov). The New Jersey Catholic Conference has instituted a helpline that anyone can call to get more information about the changes to the law: 609-989-4809. More information is also available on the group’s website: [www.njcathconf.com](http://www.njcathconf.com).

As we went to press, the staff of the *Eastern Catholic Life* learned of the falling asleep in the Lord of Mr. Daniel Rabayda, father of Father Lewis Rabayda, layout editor of the ECL. We offer our deepest prayerful condolences to Father Lewis and his family. May his memory be eternal!



# PEOPLE YOU KNOW AROUND THE EPARCHY

## IN HARRISBURG

Parishioner participates in Catholic Faith Bee



Nathan and his mother Christine at the event

Nathan Mott represented Saint Ann Byzantine Catholic Church in the Catholic Faith Bee sponsored by the Diocese of Harrisburg, PA, on Thursday, April 7. The Catholic Faith Bee, started as part of the Year of Faith proclaimed by Pope Benedict XVI, encourages 7th and 8th grade students to learn more about the Catholic faith and to challenge the students through competition. This is the second year that a student from a Byzantine Catholic Church participated in this event.

Nathan is the son of Christine and Eric Mott and a member of Saint Ann Byzantine Catholic Church, Harrisburg, PA. Father Michael Popson is pastor of Saint Ann Church.

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AGES 6-17

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For questions and details contact Deacon Stephen Russo:

[DcnStephen@gmail.com](mailto:DcnStephen@gmail.com)



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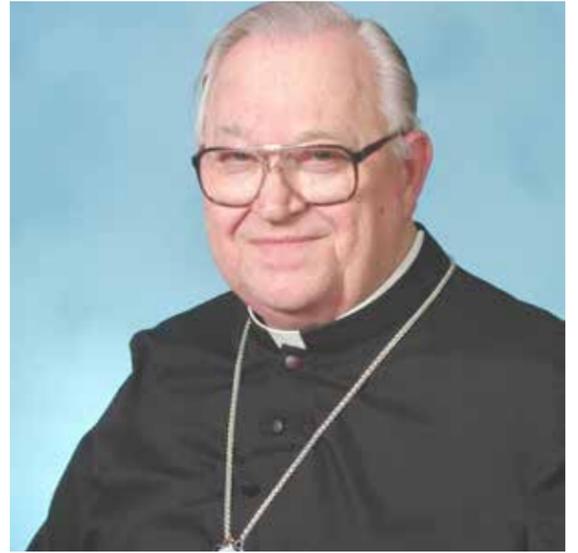
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## RETIRED PRIEST REPOSES IN THE LORD

Father + Robert J. Skurla

Father + Robert J. Skurla, a retired priest of the Eparchy of Passaic, fell asleep in the Lord in the early morning hours of Wednesday, May 18, 2016, at Queen of Peace Residence (Little Sisters of the Poor) in Queens Village, New York. Father Skurla was ordained May 20, 1956, and so was celebrating his 60th anniversary of ordination to the priesthood this year. He served in Saint Mary Church, New York City; Saints Peter and Paul in Erie, PA; Saint Nicholas in Danbury, CT; Saints Peter and Paul in Peekskill, NY; Saint

Peter and Paul in Palmerton, PA; Holy Trinity in Philadelphia, PA; Blessed Virgin Mary in Coatesville, PA; Saint Mary in Hillsborough, NJ; Saint Mary in Kingston, PA; as Blue Army Chaplain of the Byzantine Chapel at the Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima in Fatima, Portugal; Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Toms River, NJ; and his last assignment was as pastor of Saint Mary Church in Jersey City, NJ, where he served for eighteen years until his retirement.



## SISTER VITALIA TOMCHO, OSBM ENTERS INTO NEW LIFE

Perpetual Profession on Aug. 21, 1938, in the presence of Bishop Basil Takach of blessed memory.

In her vocation story, which was published a few years ago, Sister Vitalia stated that teaching became her lifelong work. In fact, at the time of her retirement from active ministry, Sister had the distinction of offering the longest active service of any of the Sisters in community. Her teaching ministry spanned 67 years, most of these as a full-time teacher and/or principal. Only the last few years were spent in tutoring on a part time basis. At the age of 90, she decided it was a good time to retire. Although Sister liked all the places where she was sent, her favorite time and place was teaching the sciences and math at Mount Saint Macrina Academy in the 1950's. It was a great joy for her when the Alumnae returned to the Mount for their reunions and took the time to visit with her. She truly enjoyed life and the people she met throughout her life.

Sister Vitalia spent the last nine years of her life as a resident at Mount Macrina Manor. When visiting her, she could often be found fingering her rosary beads, but she was always ready for a chat. Over the years, Sister became well-known to many of the caregivers. It was touching to see that during her last hours on earth, quite a few of them stopped by her room for a final farewell.

In his homily at the Funeral Divine Liturgy,

Father Andrew remarked that, in thanking God for having known and loved someone like Sister Vitalia, "we are in fact thanking God for revealing something of Himself yet again in human form." He enlarged upon this saying that "in the goodness of every human being, there is another, if different revelation of God, incomplete, flawed, but nevertheless, a mirror of His love." We are here in life to echo the life of Christ. Sister Vitalia, in her long life, learned from God to let go of herself and to live for others. We thank God for the "echo" of Christ that we glimpsed in her as she manifested her faithfulness to her vocation with a great deal of zeal and enthusiasm.

Sister Vitalia was preceded in death by her parents, her brothers Michael and Stephen, and her sister Mary Hausman. In addition to her Sisters in community, she is survived by her devoted niece Barbara Akins and her family. The Parastas Service was concelebrated on Friday evening, Apr. 29 by Rev. Michael Huszti, Monastery Chaplain, and Very Rev. Ronald P. Larko. In attendance were Very Rev. Archpriest John Petro, Rev. James Spontak, Rev. Stephen Wahal and Rev. Robert Oravetz. The Funeral Divine Liturgy was offered on Sat., Apr. 30, in the Monastery Chapel by Very Rev. Andrew Deskevich with Rev. Michael Huszti as concelebrant. Interment followed in the Dormition Section of Mount Macrina Cemetery.

May God grant to his handmaiden, Sister Vitalia, eternal memory and peaceful repose.

Teaching was her lifelong work.

Sister Vitalia would have celebrated her 107th birthday in early June. Instead, she celebrated her patronal Feast Day by entering into the Heavenly Kingdom on Friday morning, April 22, 2016. Sister Vitalia entered the community in Elmhurst, PA, in 1930, when the community was only in existence nine years. She was one of the first vocations to answer the call to the Sisters of Saint Basil.

The daughter of the late Stephen and Anna (Belley) Tomcho, Sister Vitalia was born in Walhonding, OH. She entered the Sisters of Saint Basil from Saint Gregory Church in Lakewood, OH, on Oct. 27, 1930. She pronounced her First Vows on Aug. 30, 1932, and made her Solemn

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## THE CHURCH DOME RESTORATION PROJECT 23 YEARS LATER

### Boy Scouts Eagle Scout Project at Saints Peter and Paul Church, Bethlehem, PA

Saints Peter and Paul Byzantine Catholic Church, Bethlehem, PA, began its existence on Edward Street, on the south side of Bethlehem, in 1917. After seventy-four years, overlooking Bethlehem Steel, the population of the parish began to migrate toward the north of Bethlehem and its adjacent townships.



In May of 1988, Monsignor Paul Firczak, pastor, recognized the changing demographics of the parish. Msgr. Firczak purchased thirteen plus acres of prime land located between Macada Road and Johnston Drive, on the north side of Bethlehem with the intent of eventually relocating the parish. Unfortunately, Monsignor Firczak would never realize his dream. He was called to the Lord in September, 1988.

Throughout the following years, Saints Peter and Paul Church was served by a series of interim pastors until Reverend Robert Slesinski was appointed pastor in November,

1990. Upon carefully studying the demographics of the parish, it was determined that the time was opportune to relocate and build a new parish plant which would consist of a church, parish center, rectory, and a pavilion.

The design of the new church would incorporate many of the existing church features. The original stained glass windows, chandelier, and church bells would become fixtures within the new church. Construction began with the ground breaking ceremony on October 1, 1991. Six months later, on April 16, 1992, the old main dome, which sat faithfully atop the bell tower, since 1942, was removed in order to provide access to the church bells. Since, the large dome was found to be in stable condition, it was thereafter relocated to the site where the new church would eventually be built. It was hoped that this original dome would someday become the centerpiece of a shrine at the new church.



In 2014, altar server Nicholas Chismar, of Boy Scout Troop 362



Bethlehem, PA, noticed the old dome sitting on the ground in the field behind the new church. He decided, as part of his Eagle Scout Project, to restore, relocate, and create a shrine that would blend the history of the old church with the new church. Approaching current pastor, Father Peter Hosak, with his idea, the planning process began. On October 9, 2014, the Eagle Scout Project received approval — work would begin in the Spring of 2015.

The scope of the entire project included numerous facets: power-washing the brick walls surrounding the church, landscaping, beautifying and mulching all areas surrounding the church and rectory, and of course providing a new home for the old dome. Moving the dome was formidable since the weight of the dome was estimated to be between six hundred and seven hundred pounds. The location chosen for the new shrine would be approximately one hundred and fifty feet closer to the church. By relocating the dome

closer to the church, it would enable all worshippers to clearly see and admire the newly-constructed shrine of which the dome was the centerpiece.

On April 25, 2015, seventeen volunteers, including scouts and scout leaders, gathered at Saints Peter and Paul Church. The project was underway as the photo indicates. The multi-stage project required several days to complete and its scope required the use of a crane to place the dome atop the newly-created pedestal. In total, over 220 service hours went into this project.

The rank of Eagle Scout was earned by Nicholas on August 13, 2015. Altar Server and Eagle Scout, Nicholas Chismar, photographed with the completed and restored old church dome, admires his accomplishment in the photo below. A contrasting, recently gold-leafed church dome can be seen on the new church in the background. After sitting in the field behind the new church for 23 years, the old dome finally has a new home. We are very proud of Nicholas!



## PARISH REFLECTION ON SUFFERING

### Why, O Lord?

By Jean Paslawsky

Why, O Lord?

Stop! Think for a moment. How many times in your life have you asked this question? More importantly, how did you or do you respond?

After Akathist, on Saturday, March 12th, Father Vasyl Chepelskyy of Saint John the Baptist church in Lansford, PA, offered the Faithful some answers. These answers hold true any time, any season.

As a guest speaker at Saint John the Baptist Church in Hazleton, PA, Father Vasyl gave the talk as a program for Great Lent focusing on suffering so often found in life. The program was attended by a good number of people from Hazleton, as well as other parishes in the surrounding areas. They had gathered in the social hall after Akathist that morning for some fellowship and this special talk.

The presentation analyzed the kinds, reasons, role, and meaning of suffering in the life of a Christian, focusing on the spiritual dimension of human suffering.

In his discussion, Father Vasyl said, "Suffering seems to be an inseparable element of human existence." Father further explained that, among the types of suffering, spiritual suffering is the most severe. He told the group that many great saints have suffered spiritually, calling theirs a deep "spiritual darkness" and also said that "Suffering never happens from nothing." It "always has a reason" adding that the reason "cannot always be identified."

Besides taking on the form of pain, distress and even loneliness, Father Vasyl told his listeners that to ignore pain "is to ignore an enormous part of person's life and to have a false image of man." He continued, "Suffering always brings a message; it wants to tell us something or reveal

something." He urged that in order to attempt understanding, "we have to look deeper into the mystery of evil and sin and their place within our struggle toward holiness."

He also talked about Viktor Frankl's book *Man's Search for Meaning* in which Frankl writes "When we are no longer able to change a situation, we are challenged to change ourselves." Though this book was not written to be of a spiritual nature, it bears spiritual fruit. Frankl was a Nazi concentration camp survivor. His book says much on suffering and distinctly tells readers, "In some ways suffering ceases to be suffering at the moment it finds a meaning, such as the meaning of a sacrifice."

Father Vasyl tied our suffering to Jesus' Sacrifice: His Passion and Suffering in the work of mankind's Redemption. Ultimately, he explained that though suffering often stops or slows the usual rhythm of life

and very often forces people to ask "Why?", the final answer is found in the person of Jesus Christ and His Divine plan for salvation.

Father explained that the spiritual dimension of suffering is "always an invitation to find God, Who heals and restores health and wholeness." Father hoped that we all could glean a reason for any suffering we know or have known and realize this is truly part of life and our roles in Redemption.

After his presentation, several attendees shared their personal and deep sufferings in life offering that they had found comfort in knowing Jesus, too, had suffered and in that process, has saved us all. By listening to their comments as they readied to leave, it seemed that people who attended felt lifted and encouraged by the talk and messages which were shared.

## TWO AWARDS, FOUR DAYS, TWO COUNTRIES

### Lector Jack Figel from Annandale, VA, is Honored



Earlier this year, Lector Jack Figel of Epiphany Byzantine Catholic Church in Annandale, VA, where Father John Basarab is pastor, was honored with two distinguished awards, just four days apart – one in Washington, DC, and the other in Uzhorod, Transcarpathia, Ukraine.

The first was the *Outstanding Eagle Scout Award* of the National Eagle Scout Association of the National Capital Council on March 31st. This award is given to past eagle scouts who have distinguished themselves in their professional careers. Lector

Jack was recognized for his ecumenical work in founding and continuing to manage the *Oriente Lumen* Conferences and Foundation which endeavor to unite the Catholic and Orthodox Churches at the “grass roots” level.

Lector Jack was also recognized by Bishop Milan Šašik for his work in sponsoring the Seminary Concert Tours and overall support of the Eparchy of Mukachevo. He was given the Third Degree of the Order of Saints Cyril and Methodius some years ago, and “promoted” to the Second Degree on April 3rd in



Bishop Milan Šašik honors Lector Jack Figel

Holy Cross Cathedral in Uzhorod. He will be organizing a third Seminary Concert Tour for September 2016 and more details will be announced in the future.

The 20th Anniversary *Oriente Lumen* Conference will be held on June 21-24, 2016, in Washington, DC, and over the last several weeks, Lector Jack met with a number of Church leaders who recorded a video greeting and blessing for the opening session. They included Bishop Milan Šašik of Mukachevo; Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk, Major Archbishop of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church of Kyiv; Cardinal Lubomyr Husar, Major Archbishop *Emeritus* of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church of Kyiv; Cardinal Leonardo Sandri, Prefect of the Congregation for Oriental Churches; Cardinal Peter Turkson, President of the Pontifical Council for Peace and Justice; Cardinal Kurt Koch, President of the Pontifical Council for Church

Unity; Metropolitan Tikhon, Primate of the Orthodox Church in America; Patriarch Gregorios III, Melkite Greek Catholic Church of Antioch; Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, Archbishop of Constantinople. Excerpts of the video greetings can be viewed on the website: [www.olfoundation.net](http://www.olfoundation.net).



Lector Jack Figel presents a gift to His All Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew

## 370 YEAR OLD “BAPTISMAL CERTIFICATE” OF GREEK CATHOLICS FOUND

### Continued from Page 1

that is, six years after the Union.

So now we know that there is a document from 24 April 1646 that the Union of Uzhhorod was actually concluded and thus historians have no argument for what they claimed so far—that the Union is a myth.

In terms of content, it must be said again that this document is different compared to the one from 1652. In both, the progress of the Union can be seen, namely the attitude of the priests towards the Union, towards the Catholic Church.

So when we talk about the benefits, the first level is confirmation that the Union happened and the second level is the content, which is for me personally quite surprising.

**Postoj:** What is surprising?

**Father Gradoš:** I expected it to be more like the document from 1652, which talked about the conditions of Union. The earlier document does not say that the priests would put some conditions. In today's terms, one could say that this is a document about the incardination of priests to the Catholic Diocese of Eger.

Byzantine Rite priests entered into communion with the Catholic Church by signing the Union of Uzhhorod in the local castle. (Photo [wikipedia.com/CC](http://wikipedia.com/CC) license)

**Postoj:** Is the discovery of this in-

strument also relevant for the present? Something like a symbol or message, or is its value associated only with a historical perspective?

**Father Gradoš:** It can be said that the Union of Uzhhorod Greek Catholics were reported in seven countries: Transcarpathian Ukraine, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and partly in the Czech Republic, Croatia and Serbia. [*Translator's note: these seven countries were part of the Kingdom of Hungary at that time.*]

At that time, the Eparchy of Mukachevo was in fact very extensive. For these people, this document is something like a baptismal certificate. It is the alpha point, the emergence of contemporary Greek Catholic Church.

Although there were other unions and they are still being researched, it is understood so far that the Union of Uzhhorod is a major Union, from which the Greek Catholic Church arose in the former Kingdom of Hungary.

**Postoj:** How does your discovery look?

**Father Gradoš:** It is a document a half page long, then another one and a half pages are the signatures of priests. There are only first names of the Greek Catholic priests, that is, for example, priest [pop] Ivan, priest Teodor, etc...

I am finishing my dissertation, but now I need to revise it because of the discovery. I've made only minor edits, but now I have to redo it.

**Postoj:** What language is the document?

**Father Gradoš:** The whole document is in a high quality Latin. We believe that a Slovak wrote it, and he studied abroad. At that time, education in the area of Hungary was in a poor state. The author of the document had to have studied abroad, as evidenced by the really high quality Latin and formulations used.

Signatures are written in the Church Slavonic, that is the writing from which Cyrillic arose. Some signatures also include the priest's origin, they are mostly villages around Uzhhorod.

**Postoj:** How many are there?

**Father Gradoš:** About 63, but the exact number will be examined, as some signatures overlap and it's difficult to determine where one ends and another begins.

**Postoj:** What happens next with the findings? Will it ever be on display?

**Father Gradoš:** For that, so that it would be displayed sometime, it will require approval of the appropriate minister. We want to introduce the document at the press conference, maybe at the end of May, June. It will be only after the initial research.

Meanwhile, we are working on the publication of the text of the document, which has already been translated and will be published in scientific journals.

**Postoj:** Could it be assumed, that if the original is displayed in Uzhhorod, there would be interest?

**Father Gradoš:** The original does not leave the place where it is currently housed. When I communicated with the leadership of the institution, they are not willing to lend it, let alone the original. Lending it requires agreement at the ministerial level. It is in fact one of the most important documents that has appeared in the institution.

I can reveal that negotiations are under way to make that press conference at the institution where we discovered it.

**Postoj:** What does this discovery mean for you personally?

**Father Gradoš:** I am finishing my dissertation, but now I need to revise it because of the discovery. (laughs) I've made only minor edits, such as stylistics, but now I have to redo it. And since I have to pass it by the end of May, it will mean a lot of work for me. Furthermore, I am chief editor of the official journal of the Greek Catholic Church *Slovo* [The Word], and, not least, also a married priest. (laughs)

# U.S. SUPREME COURT SENDS ZUBIK CASE BACK TO LOWER COURTS

## Continued from Page 1

He also was pleased the court was forbidding the government “from fining the Little Sisters even though they are refusing to bow to the government’s will. It is only a matter of time before the lower courts make this victory permanent,” he said in a May 16 statement.

Washington Cardinal Donald W. Wuerl had a more nuanced look at the court’s opinion, saying he was pleased that it offered a path forward, but he also acknowledged that “this struggle will continue.”

The Washington Archdiocese is one

of several plaintiffs in this case.

The cardinal said the archdiocese will continue its work to “serve others in education, health care, social services, and outreach to the poor and those most in need. We will continue to do that because we are resolute that it is precisely by being true to our Catholic identity in what we proclaim and in what we do that we can continue to help realize a truly good and just society.”

Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz of Louisville, Kentucky, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, said he was encouraged by the court’s decision. “It maintains hope that we might resolve this dispute finally and favorably sometime in the future, and in the meantime, it prevents the administration from issuing crippling fines against those who object” to the health care law’s contraceptive mandate.

Bishop David A. Zubik of Pittsburgh, for whom the consolidated group of cases is named, said in a statement that the Pittsburgh Diocese was grateful the justices “recognize our willingness to reach a resolution that allows us to abide by our faith and the government to achieve its goals.”

“We have already stated our willingness to come to such an agreement and we hope that the government shares that willingness,” he added.

“Burwell” in the case name is for Sylvia Mathews Burwell, who is secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services.

Father Frank Pavone, national director of Priests for Life, another of the plaintiffs, said he and other in his organization are “studying the implications of this development and are encouraged by it.”

He said the group, in response to the court’s request for more information, showed that there is “a way for the government to pursue its objectives without burdening our freedom of religion. We are ready to present these new arguments in the court of appeals.”

This is not the first time the court has sent a case back to the lower courts in light of new developments.

The opinion stressed that sending the case back to lower

courts should not affect the government from making sure women covered by petitioners’ health plans obtain FDA-approved contraceptives, but it also means the government “may not impose taxes or penalties on petitioners for failure to provide the relevant notice” stating their objection to the coverage.

The court’s opinion “can be seen as both a reset and a pause,” said Richard Garnett, a University of Notre Dame law professor, who said the decision doesn’t end the argument but it “wipes away” several lower court opinions that had ruled against the religious challengers. He said the court’s action also delays a further ruling until a new justice is on the court.

Garnett said if Justice Antonin Scalia were still on the bench, a majority would have likely ruled in favor of the Little Sisters of the Poor and the other challengers.

“The government’s admissions in oral argument and in the supplemental briefs appear to have made it possible for the justices to avoid a confusing and inefficient 4-4 tie and for all eight to agree on this intermediate step,” he added.

Legal analyst Lyle Denniston, who writes for scotusblog.com, a blog on the Supreme Court, similarly pointed out that the court’s attempt at compromise shows how it is “having to adjust its actions to deal with the fact that it is one justice short of its normal membership.”

He also noted that varied reactions to the court’s opinion shows that it “may take some time for observers to sort out just what the court has done and its implications.”

Oral arguments for *Zubik v. Burwell* were heard March 23 and the court asked for additional information March 29. The case involves the Little Sisters of the Poor, Priests for Life, the Pennsylvania dioceses of Pittsburgh and Erie, and the Archdiocese of Washington and other religious groups challenging the Affordable Care Act’s mandate that most religious and other employers must cover contraceptives, sterilization and abortifacients through employer-provided health insurance.

These groups, who do not fit the narrow exemption to the contraceptive mandate given to churches, argued that providing contraceptive coverage even indirectly through a third party, as the Obama administration allows through what it calls an accommodation, still violates their religious beliefs.

### Oriente Lumen XX

#### “Creation: Our Shared Inheritance”

Washington, D.C. -- June 21-24, 2016

Speakers are being invited to discuss the ecumenical dimensions of the Papal Encyclical *Laudato Si'* and the environmental symposia of the Ecumenical Patriarch.



#### Plenary Speakers

**Metropolitan Kallistos of Diokleia**  
Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, Oxford, England  
**Father John Erickson**  
Orthodox Church in America, Tucson, AZ  
**Father John Ford, CSC**  
The Catholic University of America, Washington, DC  
**Father Thomas Loya**  
Annunciation Byzantine Catholic Church, Homer Glen, IL  
“Light of the East” Radio  
**Dr. Elizabeth Theokritoff**  
Orthodox Church in America

#### Archimandrite Robert Taft, SJ (by video)

Professor Emeritus, The Pontifical Oriental Institute, Weston MA

#### Br. Guy Consolmagno, SJ (by video)

Director, The Vatican Observatory, Tucson, AZ

#### Father Ron Roberson, OP (Moderator)

Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, USCCB, Washington, DC

The agenda will begin on Tuesday afternoon and conclude with lunch on Friday. There will be plenary sessions by prominent speakers in the ecumenical dialogue between the Catholic and Orthodox Churches, a variety of liturgical worship services with full congregational participation, and many opportunities for fellowship with other participants and the speakers. Registration must be made in advance, at least three weeks before the conference begins. Conference fees are payable in advance and include lunch and dinner, materials, space usage, travel expenses for the speakers, receptions, and other related conference expenses (excluding transportation for participants). Limited accommodations (single room with shared bath) are available through the conference office for an additional cost.

Early Registration Fee -- \$325.00 (before April 15, 2016)

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Sponsored by the Oriente Lumen Foundation and Viking Travel

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- Learn about the Papal Encyclical *Laudato Si'* (On Care for Our Common Home) from those responsible for its content
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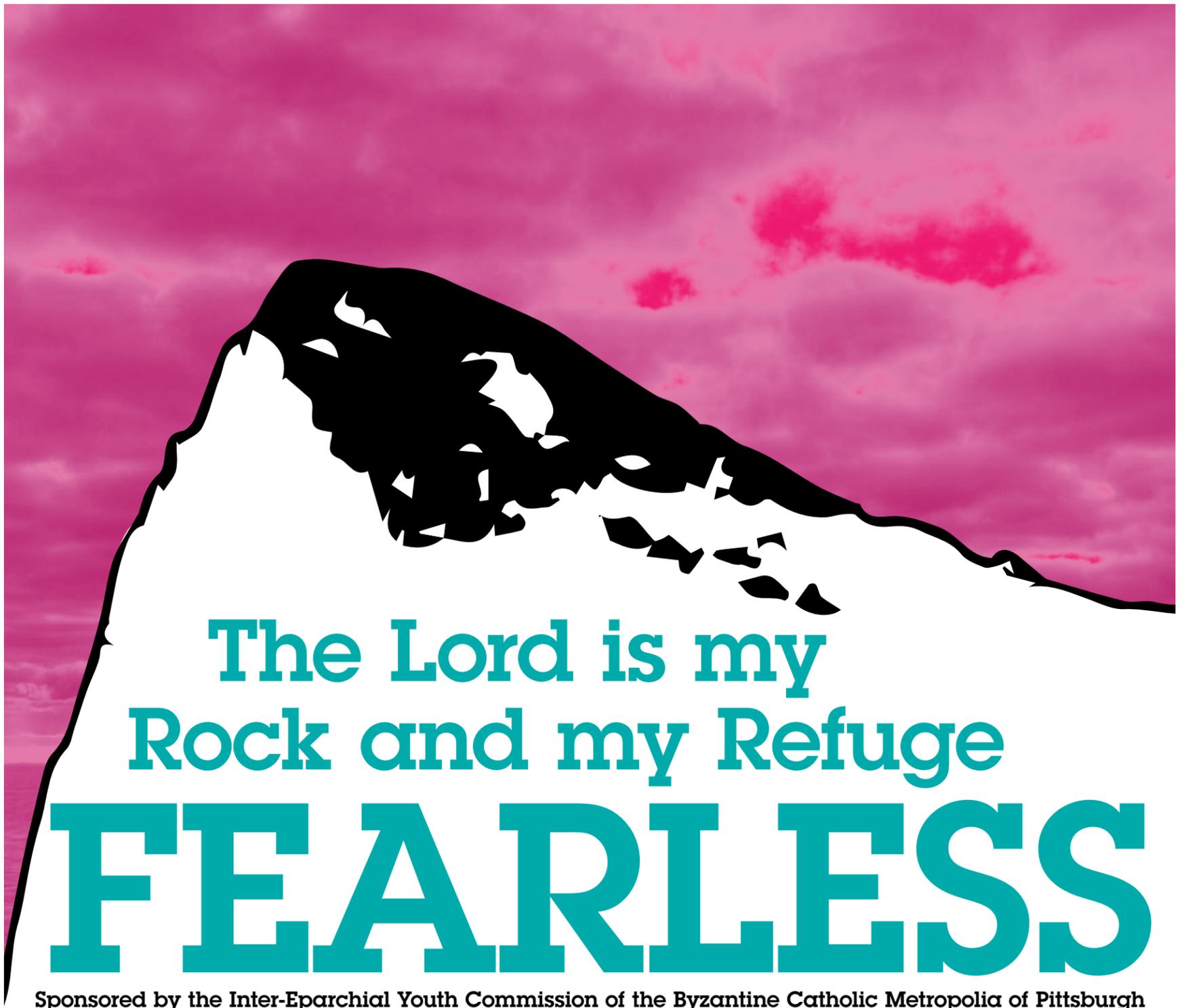


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## FAITH AND COMMUNITY ISSUES

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

### THE PLACE IN GOD'S PLAN FOR SEXUALITY

#### *The role of sexuality in Human Life*

The document *Ministry to Persons with a Homosexual Inclination* (2006) sets a perspective as a beginning point of discussion. In order to discuss homosexuality, a lucid understanding of sexuality's place in God's plan for human beings is a manifest necessity. The document takes the creation story from Genesis 1:27 to define of what the human person consists, that it was and is 'very good' (p.3). The document goes on to define humanity in terms of male and female and that complementarity between the sexes is an integral part of the design of God in defining who and what constitutes humanity. The document has Jesus quoting Genesis in Mark's Gospel of God's creation of mankind as male and female, "for this reason a man shall leave his father and mother [and be joined to his wife]. And the two shall become one flesh" (Mark 10: 6-8).

This premise sets the perspective of sexual desire within the context of uniting a man and a woman together in a covenantal relationship, a bond that brings the couple so joined to two ends, distinct but inseparable: the ever continual deepening of the love relationship between the couple and the procreation of future generations of humanity through the family unit formed from the union and the education of the children of that union. In a word, according to the document and quoting from Canon Law: "The spouses' union achieves the twofold end of marriage: the expression of marital love and the procreation of children" (MPHI, 2006, p.3).

According to the document, this understanding defines the order of nature which ultimately is founded upon God's revelation and Wisdom. In as much as a man and woman cooperate with

this Divine Vision, acting in accord with nature as God so created, they accomplish a two-fold fulfillment: That of the full maturation of their own human nature and the accomplishment of God's Will in their regard.

#### *Homosexual Acts and Natural Ends of Human Sexuality*

Given the truth of the above statements, the natural end of human sexual activity is properly fulfilled in the activity of the marital bond understood as the covenantal exclusive relationship between one man and one woman. The document makes it plain: "Any sexual act that takes place outside the bond of marriage does not fulfill the proper ends of human sexuality. Such an act is not directed toward the expression of marital love with an openness to new life" (MPHI, 2006, p.3).

The document is also clear in using the term "disordered" in describing any sexual act that is performed outside of the definition of marriage so given. The concept of disordered within the sexual context is presented as any sexual act that does not fulfill the two-fold purpose for which sexuality was made, strengthening the marriage and procreation and education of children. When sexual pleasure is sought in and of itself alone, separated from its primary purposes in marital bonding and procreation, it is seen as a moral disorder. It goes against the purpose for which it was intended.

In all fairness, the document does not limit the understanding of "disorder" to be exclusive to homosexual activity as if any other behavior is non-problematic. The document goes on to point out the gravity and consequences of Original and personal sinfulness, which carry their own moral "disorder," and lists a number of behaviors

that are by their very nature "disordered," e.g., "adultery, fornication, masturbation and contraception" as violations of human sexuality (p. 4). Homosexual acts, not being capable of being open to the transmission of human life, are seen as violating the true purpose of sexuality on a human plane both on the levels of openness to the transmission of life and the complementarity of man and woman, an integral part of God's design in the completion of man and woman's humanity and nature. In consequence, according to Catholic doctrine, homosexual behavior is "contrary to the natural law . . . under no circumstances can they be approved" (MPHI 2006, p.4, citing CCC no. 2357).

#### *The Moral Consequences of Homosexual Inclination per se*

Bottom line, because a person is homosexually-oriented does not *de facto* constitute a sinful state. It's not the inclination but the activity that constitutes sin. In the document's words: "while the former (homosexual acts) is always objectively sinful, the latter (homosexual orientation) is not" (MPHI, 2006, p.5). Insofar as the homosexual tendency is not subject to one's free will, one cannot be held culpable. When the will becomes involved, i.e., voluntarily entertaining homosexual temptations or choosing to act upon them, then there is a moral issue of culpability. Having the tendency *per se* is not sinful.

In the next installment, what is meant by the concept of objectively disordered within the context of the understanding of sexuality in general, and homosexuality in particular, will be considered. **ECL**



## SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

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

### CONTAGIOUSLY HOLY: THE SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY

June is traditionally wedding time. Whether you're walking down the aisle this June, celebrating an anniversary, or not yet sure where marriage fits in God's will for you, the Scriptures have a rich and beautiful message on marriage to inspire you.

The bride and groom enter the Church together, while Psalm 128 is chanted. The couple has been a couple ever since their engagement and marriage has existed as a natural institution ever since God gave Eve to Adam (Genesis 2:22-24). Psalm 128 lists all the natural gifts we might wish for any new couple: prosperity in their work, harmony in their home, children, grandchildren and a personal experience of God's blessing (Genesis 1:28). There is nothing specifically Christian here.

At every Byzantine Catholic wedding, the Gos-

pel reading recounts Jesus' attendance at a wedding at Cana in Galilee (John 2: 1-12). This is a story of transformations: Jesus steps in and takes on the role of the Bridegroom. He transforms water into wine. He reveals His glory as Son of God for the first time.

Baptized people have "been clothed with Christ" (Galatians 3:27). When a Christian woman and a Christian man choose to unite their lives together in marriage, they each bring their relationship to Christ with them. The man and the woman who come down the aisle as a couple leave as a trinity: husband, wife and Jesus Christ. This is why only the bride and groom receive Holy Communion at the celebration of Matrimony.

How does Christ's presence in a marriage change things? In the selection from his Epistle

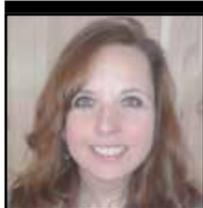
to the Ephesians (5:20-33), Saint Paul challenges Christian couples to mirror in their own love the love of "Christ and the Church" (5:32). The first two steps toward achieving this goal are "giving thanks for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" and "submitting to one another in the fear of the Lord" (5:21). Perhaps another English expression, like "put the other person first" or "go out of your way" or even "sacrifice" might help us really hear what Saint Paul is saying, but notice that both husband and wife are equally challenged here to "submit" to the other.

Saint Paul fleshes out what that submission looks like for each partner, using language and gender roles that would have been normal for his audience. If Paul urges the wife to see her husband as "head" of the household, he also challenges the husband to fulfill that role as Christ

Himself does. All those wedding guests who have turned up their noses at the sound of “submit” probably never hear this part at all: the husband is challenged to love his wife as Christ loves the Church. And how did Christ express His love for the Church? He ‘gave Himself for her’ (5:25) in His sacrifice on the Cross. Both husband and wife must take their love beyond attraction and enjoyment and convenience, discovering even deeper love by surrendering all selfishness for the sake of the other. That is when the married love of a couple begins to resemble the love Christ has for all of us.

All seven sacramental mysteries of the Church are revealed in the Scriptures, but the actual word “sacrament” (in Paul’s Greek: *mysterion*) is used only here. When Christian marriage mirrors Christ’s love for the Church, Paul says “This is a great mystery” (5:32). The possibility of God’s presence is so real in Christian marriage that Paul makes another bold claim. Writing to the first generation of Christians in Corinth about the case of one partner becoming a believer while the other remained a pagan, Paul urges them to remain married: “For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the believing wife and the un-

believing wife is sanctified by the believing husband” (1 Corinthians 7:14). The same Paul who reminds baptized Christians that they are “temples” (1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19; Ephesians 2:21) here treats a Christian spouse exactly as any rabbi would have treated the Holy Place in the Jerusalem Temple: whatever touches it becomes holy on contact (Matthew 23:17-18). To be contagious with holiness: that’s the challenge and the gift of sacramental marriage. **ECL**



## LIFE, LOVE, AND THE HUMAN PERSON

By Ann M. Koshute, MTS

### GOD THE FATHER KNOWS BEST

After the flowers, brunches and general pomp of Mother’s Day, Father’s Day always seems a bit anti-climactic. We fuss and fawn over Mom, while we joke about giving Dad yet another tie or some power tool. Mom is all “roses and kisses,” while Dad is, well – just Dad. I think this attitude is partly due to the male/female difference, and partly because of an assault on men in general. Media portrayals of men as idiots and dads as buffoons, coupled with a cultural narrative that says dads aren’t necessary, harms us as a society and as the Church. When humanity first fell into sin, the God-willed equality of men and women was wounded, and the resulting rift between us remains. Of course, the Incarnation, Death and Resurrection of Christ defeated sin and death. Because of Him it is possible for us to again acknowledge the goodness and dignity inherent in us and to cultivate right relationships among us. Yet the effects of sin remain, and we must rely on God’s grace – through prayer and the Holy Mysteries – as we work through Him to repair those wounds and regain our likeness to Him. What does all of this have to do with Father’s Day?

Whether or not you see this “holiday” as legitimate or a gimmick, Father’s Day is an opportunity to honor our dads, and to celebrate the dignity and goodness of all men. That might seem a strange statement coming from a woman (upon whom, apparently, a “great war” is being waged). Yet without a proper understanding of and respect for the masculine, we can’t properly respect the feminine – and vice-versa. Contrary to cultural trends (and recent political edicts) humanity IS sexually-differentiated as male and female. This

difference doesn’t denote inequality – nor does it mean the sexes are the same. That’s OK. Really, it is. In an effort to correct legitimate abuses of the dignity of women, we’ve so effectively leveled the playing field that we tend to deny there is any difference between the sexes at all. (This is not to mention the addition of upwards of 50 “genders” – and counting – with which one may “identify” at any given time.) The denial of difference doesn’t make us “more equal;” it destroys who we are. God’s creative intent “in the beginning” was not dominance of one sex over the other; but neither did He will us to be the same. Male and female are two ways of being an “embodied person,” and the characteristics of each form a complementary union that is apt for the fruitful communion of persons.

I don’t know what it’s like to be a man because I’m not one. But in my relationships with men – particularly with my husband, my dad and brother, and other male family and friends – I have an appreciation of what it means to “be a man.” In the masculinity of these men I am affirmed as a woman. Likewise, it is in and through his relationships with women that a man learns the meaning of his masculinity. This is nowhere more evident than in the case of a father. Apart from his intimate involvement in conception, the man is otherwise “detached” from the child in a way the woman – who bears him in her body – never is. Even in adoption, the woman – who is naturally created for and oriented toward carrying a child – experiences a bond with him that is different from the man’s. What comes naturally to a woman – motherhood – must be “learned” by a father. What a mother experiences “from the inside,” a

father must make his way toward “from the outside.” In this, the example of the woman is indispensable. Her nurturing, “soft strength” informs and balances the man’s inclination to initiate action and “fix” whatever problem is at hand. This is not to say men aren’t nurturing, nor women able to “take charge.” But each does so in ways that are different – not inferior or superior.

Ultimately men and women know who we are – fundamentally, as sexually differentiated persons – from the Author of Life. It is God, specifically through the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, who gives meaning and shape to our personhood, to our masculinity and femininity. To know who I am as a woman is to look to Christ’s love and respect for women. To know what it means to be a man is to image Christ in His strength of purpose, merciful heart and willingness to suffer and die for the sake of His bride.

Human persons are complex, each one unique and unrepeatable. These culturally and politically challenging times in which we live sometimes create confusion for us, making it difficult to understand ourselves, and each other. This Father’s Day, let’s celebrate Dad with a barbeque and a nice tie – or new lawn mower. But let’s also make the day an opportunity to recall that it is God, our Father, from whom men receive the gift of their fatherhood. Our Father who, graciously sharing His creative power with His creatures, makes sexual difference not an obstacle to be overcome, but a gift of fruitful communion in the Trinitarian image. “Male and female, He created them,” to be a gift to each other. A unique and wonderful gift from a Father who knows (us) best. **ECL**



## UNDERSTANDING ICONS

Father Joseph Bertha, Ph.D.

### INSTRUCT THE IGNORANT: SPIRITUAL WORK OF MERCY IN ICONS

Installment 9 of 12

One of my earliest recollections of the works of mercy can be traced back to my first day in seventh grade. I vividly recall almost half a century later, how thunderstruck my class was when this pipsqueak of a nun, four feet two inches, came into the classroom: Sister Julia Han-

non, CSJ. Words uttered at Saint Ann School in Brentwood, NY, on that day were simultaneously an admonishment and a blessing. She exclaimed: “I am your seventh grade teacher. My duty as a Sister of Saint Joseph is to teach my pupils the works of mercy, especially to instruct the igno-

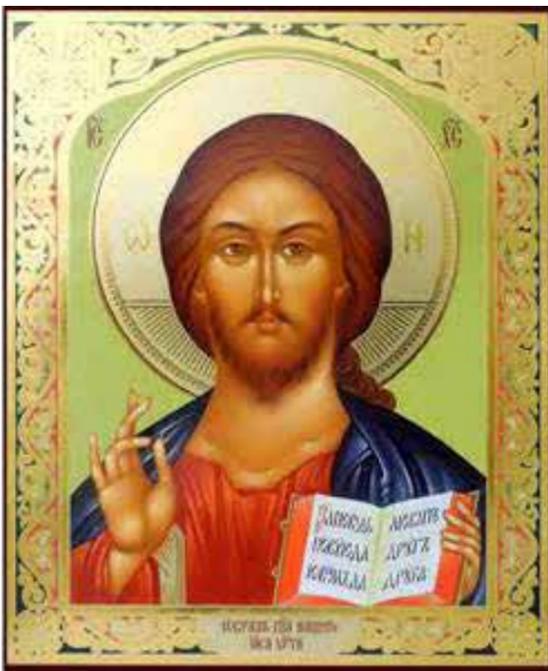
rant, and that means all of YOU!” These words have resonated throughout my ensuing life and still remain with me today. Frequently my parishioners hear me echoing Sister Julia’s admonition from long ago with a slightly different twist: “I am your pastor and my main duty is to Instruct

the Ignorant. However I amend Sisters Julia's ending: ignorance begins with "I", I must teach/learn myself in order that I may instruct others about God's works of Mercy!

The immediate icon which springs to mind in order to visualize this spiritual work of mercy is Christ the Teacher. However, throughout the centuries, this particular icon of Our Blessed Lord has been continuously confused with that of Christ the Pantocrator (Almighty). This identification error needs to be cleared up. So, please dear reader, in the spirit of Sister Julia, allow me to "instruct the ignorant" about the differences between these two types of Jesus icons!

*Christ Almighty dwells in the heights*

Pantocrator icons of Jesus Christ are located in the upper levels of the interior church, most prominently in the central dome over the nave. Here, in the highest point inside the church, Jesus is shown as Ruler over All, usually in bust, rather than full figured, enthroned in heaven as Lord/Messiah, God. He typically holds a closed Gospel book, as He blesses with the anagram of the four initials which spell the tetragrammaton of His Name, IC XC.



*Christ the Teacher walks on the face of the earth*

On the other hand, Christ the Teacher icons are found at the immediate side of the icon screen (iconostasis). Our Lord is shown either in bust, full figured, with feet standing on a dais, but ultimately, standing on the earth. He clasps an OPEN Gospel book, inscribed with visible text, while blessing with His right hand with His initials.

Therefore, both the location of the icon and the positioning of the gospel book are the two hallmarks which distinguish these two icons. One shows our Lord enthroned in Heaven, the other depicts Him on the face of the earth. We encounter the Christ the teacher icon as we approach the icon screen. Just a short distance away on the bema is the place where heaven meets earth, articulated by the church architecture. From high up in heaven in the central dome, Our Savior descends to the face of the earth via the four pillars which serve as ladders between heaven and earth. Jacob's ladder is being evoked in physical building materials and illustrated with corresponding icons.

Noteworthy among these texts can be found: "Come to me all you who are weary and I will give you rest," or sometimes simply the Greek letters for alpha and omega. Pre-eminent among

the frequently inscribed texts in Christ the teacher icons are the eight proclamations Jesus asserts in the Gospel of John:

1. "I am the Alpha and the Omega"
2. "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life"
3. "I am the Light of the world"
4. "I am the Good Shepherd"
5. "I am the Door"
6. "I am the Bread of Life"
7. "I am the Resurrection and the Life"
8. "I am the vine you are the branches"

Each of these pronouncements by Our Lord is framed in the very language hearkening back to the incident of Moses as he encounters God in the burning bush. When Moses asks God, what am I to call you? God responds by stating Exodus 3:14: "I am Who am." Our Lord follows this pattern in these eight phrases, linking Himself to the Godhead. Jews call this identification as the tetragrammaton, the four lettered abbreviation of the name of God and in deepest respect write only the four letter anagram in their scriptures as YHWH. When they speak about God, they reverently refer to Him as the Name.

In all icons of Christ, this tetragrammaton and form of respect is depicted in two ways. First, the four Greek letters abbreviated of Jesus Christ, IC XC, are always inscribed. There is always a shortening to four letters of the Holy Name out of deep respect and in imitation of our Jewish ancestors for the name of God.

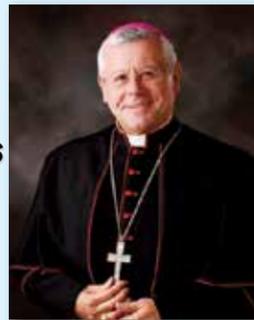
Secondly, inscribed in the cruciform halo of Christ, are the three Greek letters: o wv, which is the Greek translation of "I am who am." In the icons of Our Blessed Lord, these two Greek inscriptions reinforce the fact that Jesus is the Messiah, the son of the Living God. Furthermore, the eight Gospel texts from the Gospel of John reassert and proclaim the very same fact.

As we approach the iconostasis icon of Christ the Teacher, let us always notice these splendid features which depict Our Lord as God and Messiah. May we continue in the daily course of our sojourn here on the face of the earth to be instructing ourselves out of ignorance, into the wisdom of God's great and abundant mercy. In turn then, may we instruct the world which is ignorant of God's mercy by proclaiming Jesus as Lord! **ECL**

**HOLY DORMITION PILGRIMAGE EVENTS**

**2:00 - The Joy of Love:  
Be the Sign of Mercy  
Wherever Family Life Exists**

**Most Rev. Peter Libasci  
Bishop of the Diocese  
of Manchester, NH**



Peter Anthony Libasci was born November 9, 1951, to the late William and Florence Libasci in Queens, NY. He attended St. Margaret School, Middle Village, NY, followed by Cathedral Preparatory Seminary, Elmhurst, NY.

Fr. Libasci was ordained a priest of the Diocese of Rockville Centre on April 1, 1978 by Bishop John R. McGann. On April 3, 2007, His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI appointed Msgr. Libasci auxiliary bishop of the Diocese of Rockville Centre. He has served as the tenth Bishop of Manchester, NH since Sept. 19, 2011.

Bishop Libasci is bi-ritual and celebrates the Divine Liturgy in the Byzantine Ruthenian Catholic Church.

Sr. Kathleen Hutsko is a member of the Sisters Servants of Mary Immaculate. During her 35 years as an SSMI, she has been in education and administration. Her presentation will focus on a cluster of parables, unique to St. Luke's Gospel, which highlight the merciful love of God.



**2:45 - The Gospel of  
Mercy: St. Luke**  
**Sister Kathleen Hutsko, SSMI**

**Saturday Conferences Presented in English  
in St. Mary's Villa**

**The Door of St. Mary's Chapel has been designated an Eparchial Holy Door of Mercy. You are encouraged to walk through the Door, visit the Chapel and obtain the special blessings of this Jubilee Year of Mercy.**

**Special Video and Exhibits for the Year of Mercy  
will be on display in the Gallery**

**CHILDREN and TEEN/YOUNG ADULT PROGRAMS**

**Children's Program  
for youth up to age 12**

**Teen / Young Adult Program  
for Ages: 13 and up**

**SATURDAY - 7:15 p.m.  
Includes participation in  
candlelight procession**



**SATURDAY - 7:15 p.m.  
Includes participation in  
candlelight procession**

**SUNDAY - 1:00 p.m.**

**SUNDAY - 1:30 p.m.**

**\*\*No Youth Camp-out this year\*\***

**Questions? More information?**

**Sr. Kathleen at (845) 753-2840 [ssminy@aol.com](mailto:ssminy@aol.com)**

**Pilgrimage weekend August 13 - 14, 2016 Sloatsburg, NY**

# CATECHETICAL REFLECTIONS

Father Robert F. Slesinski, Ph.D.



## MAN BEFORE GOD

*The Marvel of the Mind: Modes of Cognition (continued) Installment 13*

If, as we have seen, the mark of the “outward man” is the predilection for sense perception viewing reality “from without” without an interest in introspection, the “inward man,” on the other hand, is governed “from within,” focusing attention on an immediate intellectual contact with spiritual reality, in a real sense, accentuating “mind over matter.” Indeed, in line with Saint Augustine, it is I, who see, not my eyes *per se*. It is the mind or soul, in other words, that is the agent of sense perception, the bodily organs themselves only being the instruments of my acts of vision, hearing, touching, smelling, and tasting.

Restricting human cognition to sense perception truly limits the capacity of the mind to soar. For example, how can blunt, empirical observation account for such a primary datum

of human experience as love? From an empirical standpoint, is it nothing other than a matter of hormones or, even more crudely, of human “electricity?” If intellectual categories are ruled out of order (they defy empirical conceptualization), are we not, then, condemned to material, “earthly” categories bereft of all things spiritual?

On a comparable subject, what about justice, another spiritual value replete with real, everyday realities? How is it to be grasped empirically? By a poll of the public? What is it based on? Common opinion? The fact of the matter is, is that spiritual realities are not measurable by any empirical standard. They defy empirical calculation. But are they, then, chimeras—unreal, imaginary realities? Love, justice, mercy, peace, joy, virtue—these are realities governing human well-being,

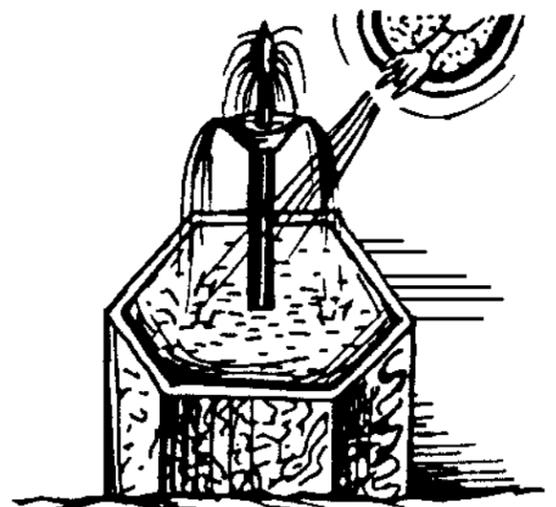
but they are decidedly not “empirical” realities—there are no empirical, measurable standards to “weigh” or “encapsulate” them. So are they mere fantasies of the human imagination? I submit no “thinking” person would sustain this thesis. And, on this score, there are so many other unempirical realities at stake, e.g., numbers, the principles of logic, moral norms, and the “laws” of beauty among other humanly meaningful concepts and realities.

So, then, what is the point of our objection? The answer is both simple and direct. There are realities governing our lives that transcend—lie beyond—empirical description. Why? Because they are of the spiritual order. They are, indeed, “eternal verities” that defy the empirical order—truth, love, justice, joy, mercy, human compassion, etc., etc. What blunt empirical (“weighable,” “measurable”) instruments can possibly account for them? In sum, they must be accountable by another mode of cognition, intellectual cognition to be exact.

Pace the voices of the British empiricists, Locke, Berkeley, and Hume, the perennial one of Augustine rings more true than ever. As we read in his treatise *On the Free Choice of the Will* (II, XIV, 151–52),

When the will to enjoy is continually present, the beauty of truth and wisdom does not shut out those who have come to hear because of the large crowd; it does not pass with time, and does not move in space. It is not cut short by night or shadows. It does not depend on the senses of the body. It is near to all men who have chosen it and love it. It is eternal for all. It is in no one place, yet it is never away. Without, it advises; within, it teaches. It changes for the better all who behold it, and is not changed for the worse by anyone. No man passes judgment on truth and no man judges well without it. For this reason it is clear that the beauty of truth and wisdom is, without doubt, superior to our minds, which become wise only through this beauty and which make judgments, not about it but through it, on other things.

Hmm! Has the voice of a Father of the Church outweighed *tout court* the commonly received voices of Modernity (to be continued)? **ECL**



### 62nd ANNUAL HOLY DORMITION (ASSUMPTION) PILGRIMAGE AUGUST 13 – 14, 2016 SISTERS SERVANTS OF MARY IMMACULATE ST. MARY'S VILLA / SLOATSBURG, NY

Theme: Jesus – the Face of Mercy;  
Mary – the Mother of Mercy

The Door of St. Mary's Chapel has been designated an Eparchial Holy Door of Mercy. We encourage all pilgrims to walk through the Door, visit the Chapel and obtain the special blessings of this Jubilee Year of Mercy.

Saturday, August 13

- 12:00 p.m. Food Available at Pavilion
- 1:00 p.m. Akathist to the Mother of God — Very Rev. John S. Custer SSL, STD, Rector  
Choir: Cathedral of St. Michael the Archangel in Passaic, NJ
- 2:00 p.m. Presentations (listed below)
- 5:00 p.m. Divine Liturgy – Most. Rev. Peter A. Libasci – Bishop of Manchester Diocese (grotto – English)  
Choir: St. Mary's Byzantine Catholic Church, Hillsborough, NJ  
Blessing of Water (front of Villa)
- 7:15 p.m. Teen/ Young Adult Gathering and Discussion (Pavilion)
- 7:15 p.m. Activity for children – Youth will also participate in the candlelight procession
- 8:00 p.m. Moleben to the Mother of God with candlelight procession (grotto – English)  
Most Rev. Kurt Burnette – Bishop of Passaic Eparchy - main celebrant / homilist  
Panakhya – St. Mary's Villa chapel

**\*\*No Teen Camp Out \*\***

Sunday, August 14

- 8:30 a.m. Materi Molitvy / Mothers in Prayer – Rosary / Singing (St. Mary's Villa Chapel)
- 10:30 a.m. Pontifical Divine Liturgy with procession to the grotto  
followed by blessing of flowers  
Most Rev. Stefan Soroka, Metropolitan Archbishop of Philadelphia  
Most Rev. Paul Chomnycky, OSBM, Bishop of the Eparchy of Stamford  
Most Rev. Bohdan Danylo – Bishop of the Eparchy of Parma  
Most Rev. John Bura – Auxiliary Bishop of the Archeparchy of Philadelphia – Homilist  
Most Rev. Basil Losten, Bishop Emeritus of the Eparchy of Stamford  
Choir: St. Josaphat Church – New Britain, CT
- 12:00 p.m. Youth Liturgy - Rev. Paul Makar – St. Michael's Ukrainian Church – Cherry Hill, NJ  
main celebrant / homilist (chapel – English)
- 1:00 p.m. Activity & Blessing for children/youth (Terrace)
- 1:30 p.m. Teen/ Young Adult Gathering and Discussion (Terrace)
- 1:30 p.m. Blessing of the Sick (St. Mary's Villa Chapel & grotto steps)  
Blessing of Religious Articles (in front of St. Joseph's Home)
- 2:00 p.m. Stations of the Cross – Basilian Father
- 3:00 p.m. Moleben to the Mother of God (Grotto - Ukrainian)  
Most Rev. Bohdan Danylo – main celebrant / homilist
- Blessing of cars and buses – Rev. Ivan Tyhovych

**Special Video and Exhibits for the Year of Mercy  
on display in the Gallery**

CONFESSION AVAILABLE THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE WEEKEND

**Presentations in English:**

- 2:00 **The Joy of Love: Be the sign of mercy wherever family life exists**  
– Most Rev. Bishop Peter Libasci (Bishop Libasci is bi-ritual.)
- 2:45 **The Gospel of Mercy: St. Luke**  
– Sr. Kathleen Hutsko, SSMI  
Rt. Rev. Mitred Msgr. John Terlecky, Pilgrimage Spiritual Moderator

# SEASONAL REFLECTIONS

Monsignor John. T. Sekellick, JCL



Given today's secular spirit, it is no wonder that over the past several weeks the celebration of Father's Day, as with Mother's Day last month, has become overly commercialized. One can hardly read any newspaper or watch television the weeks before these two special days without seeing numerous advertisements for gift items and suggestion to give Dad.

With all due respect to honoring Dad with a nice gift, Father's Day primarily is time to take stock of fatherhood itself. A good consideration is to ask what fathers give to their families. It used to be that the father was the sole breadwinner. In some households, that is pretty much true, but in many, both spouses work outside the home. Fathers share with their wives a keen sense of responsibility to ensure that their family has the basic necessities of life.

Of course, that's just the beginning. It is not enough just to provide a decent standard of living for one's family. Rather, a husband shares with his wife the responsibility of providing a secure, loving home for their children. It is important for children to know that they are loved. When a father and mother love and respect each other, even in these unbalanced times, their children are more apt to believe that mom and dad love them.

It surely helps that a father is involved in all the

activities of his family so as to bear witness to what is truly good in God's eyes. A father should always be ready to help his children find the right way to achieve what is authentically good in every situation and help them grow in virtue amid the practicalities and stress of daily living.

More than that, fathers play a critical role in helping their children become men and women of faith. When they see that Dad goes to church on Sunday, that he is a man of prayer and thankfulness to God, that he is a person of honesty and integrity, he not only provides a good example

May God grant His abundant blessings of peace, health, safety and salvation to our living fathers for many spiritually fruitful and grace-filled years!

but also equips himself to be a better husband and father. Such dynamics, especially prayer, have very good, positive consequences.

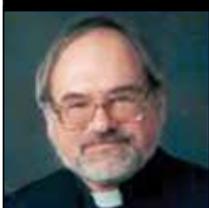
We can turn the secular view of celebrating Fa-

## FATHERS DAY

ther's Day around when we ask what can we give Dad on his day, to what should Dad be giving to his family? There is a good answer in the prayer of Saint Francis: "It is in giving that we receive." Our Lord's words, recorded by Saint Matthew (7:9-12) reinforce this: "What man of you, if his son asks him for bread, will hand him a stone? Of if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!"

In giving of themselves in love, husbands and fathers discover what kind of gifts really matter. How very gratifying it is to receive a special gift, but truly valuable gifts are not measured in dollar amounts. Think of the joy a father has to be with his family in church on Sunday, of sitting down to a family meal together, of receiving a hand-drawn card from a small child or grandchild, and especially the pledge of prayers from loves ones. Experiences like these reveal the true joys of fathers.

May God grant His abundant blessings of peace, health, safety and salvation to our living fathers for many spiritually fruitful and grace-filled years; and may He grant eternal rest to our deceased fathers in blessed repose and eternal memory. **ECL**

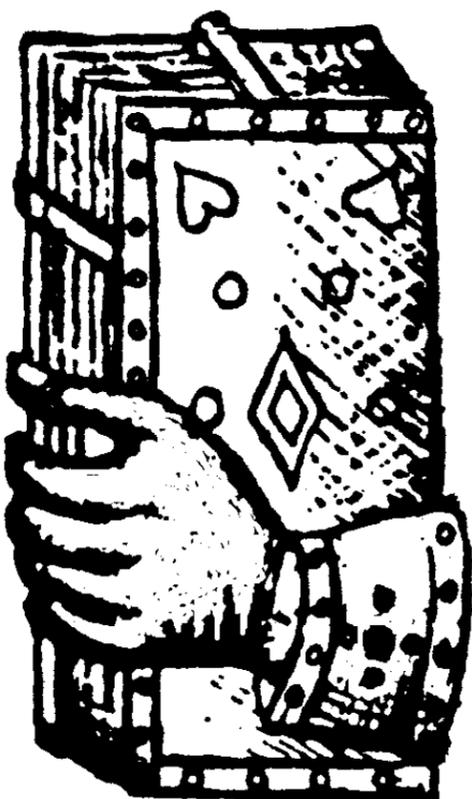


## THE BYZANTINE LITURGY

By Archpriest David Petras, SEOD

### THE PROBLEM OF FUNDAMENTALISM

I think it may be safe to say that "moderation" is not a preferred concept today. In the "culture wars" that are going on, it smacks too much of "compromise" or of "watering down basic truths" which should be strongly affirmed. I believe the problem does not lie in the word



"moderation" itself, for, as Aristotle's philosophy taught, virtue consists in moderation, but in the charged meanings we give to the word. It may be honestly said that a good Christian life is a radical commitment to the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. This, in turn, might lead to two extreme positions. The first is that the Church must always adapt to the ideas of the culture. It is true, as the Vatican Council pointed out, that the Church must dialogue with the secular world, and must preach the gospel to the world, which is shown in Scripture by the apostles preaching in a myriad of languages. At the same time, the Church sometimes needs to be counter-cultural, when popular ideas do not meet the standards of divine revelation. The other extreme is what we might call "fundamentalism," though this has a wide range of meanings. I would define it as a refusal to adapt in any way to ideas that might seem opposed to the simple surface statements of the Bible or Church dogma.

Fundamentalism is a problem of faith. In the Epistle to the Hebrews, faith is defined as "the realization of what is hoped for and evidence of things not seen. (11:1)" Faith is the knowledge of what lies beyond the powers of our natural reason. However, it is not opposed to reason. The Vatican I Council taught, "although faith is above

reason, there can never be any real discrepancy between faith and reason, since the same God who reveals mysteries and infuses faith has bestowed the light of reason on the human mind. ( Dei Filius, IV)" Faith guides us into a knowledge beyond the powers of the human mind, but faith is not opposed to reason. Human science and divine revelation are not in conflict, since God is the unchanging source of all truth, and there is a unity in human knowledge though we may attain to it by different methods. In our own lives, we grow in wisdom from children to maturity, and likewise our understanding of the one eternal God deepens as saints and theologians meditate on this mystery ultimately beyond human comprehension. The short of this is that there are not always easy answers and faith requires effort on our part. Along with this is the reality that there are a multitude of human cultures and languages and the gospel must be preached in different ways to have the same meaning. Fundamentalism, as an idea that everything is simple and clear, may distort the Christian faith and present more problems than it solves.

Fundamentalism also should not be identified with biblical literalism, the idea that every word in the Bible is exactly true in a scientific, historical sense. The Bible itself is not simply one book,

it is a series of books written in diverse styles: narratives, teachings, poetry, parables, laws, wisdom sayings, history and others. It is written in human languages, mostly Hebrew and Greek. It has been called by some as the Word of God in human words. The Bibles we have are usually not the original text, but translations into languages that we know. This is good, as it helps us to understand what God is revealing to us. I think this is a weakness of Islam, which presents the Quran as the literally dictated words of God, and hence forbids its translation. Therefore, the pious Moslem can know what is written (in classical Arabic) only through the interpretation of the imam. Our Christian problem is that the biblical literalist applies the rules of science to a religious text, therefore at times not explaining, but rather distorting what the Bible is saying. One thing is certain: the Bible is not a scientific textbook. If you want to fix your plumbing, or launch a rocket, you don't consult the Bible. Science may try

to explain creation, but it can only come up with the notion that it is meaningless. The Bible does not present a scientific explanation of creation, but it does come up with a meaning. That is what the inspired writers wanted to do, and so, using the ideas of the time (scientific ideas, by the way, are never final, but always subject to revision) taught us that God was the Creator of all by His Word alone. Biblical literalists are crypto-scientists, trying to make the Bible say what it does not intend to say, what the human inspired writers knew from the beginning.

Fundamentalists and Biblical literalists have one thing in common: the fear that what they believe is not completely true and right. Our faith may be firm and strong, but that does not mean that we are immediately absolutely right about everything without any further insight and formation. Saint Paul explains this eloquently: "For we know partially and we prophesy partially, but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass

away. When I was a child, I used to talk as a child, think as a child, reason as a child; when I became a man, I put aside childish things. At present we see indistinctly, as in a mirror, but then face to face. At present I know partially; then I shall know fully, as I am fully known. (1 Corinthians 13:9-12)" The Church has said it more recently in teaching that there is always the need for reformation. We must be open to growth in understanding, which does not in any way devalue the truth taught by our faith. It is only the necessary humility we need to have to be able to have an even fuller faith in the ineffable mystery of God calling us to holiness. God is changeless, but we, as human, always need growth in wisdom. This is ultimately the gift of our Lord's grace, "But I tell you the truth, it is better for you that I go. For if I do not go, the Advocate will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you ... when he comes, the Spirit of truth, he will guide you to all truth. (John 16:7.13)" **ECL**



## SCHOOL OF PRAYER

Father G. Scott Boghossian

### SPIRITUAL WARFARE

Saint Paul the Apostle tells us that "we do not wrestle against flesh and blood... but against the spiritual forces of evil" (Eph. 6:12). The battle that we are in is not a physical battle against other people or other nations. The battle is against the devil and his evil spirits, the fallen angels. These demons harass and attack us, seeking to discourage us, depress us, intimidate us, lead us into sin and eventually destroy us. The scriptures warn us that we have an adversary, who is the devil himself. "Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour" (1 Pet. 5:8).

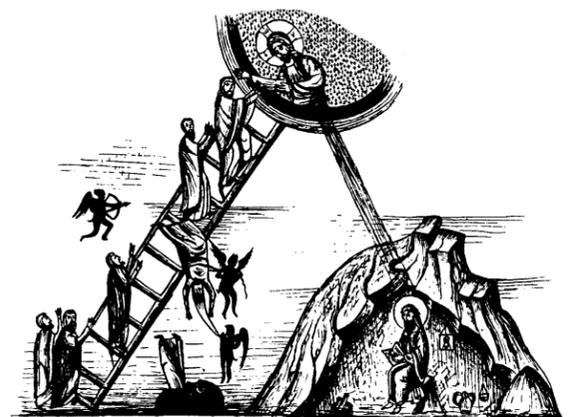
With all the confusion in the world and the Church, it seems like these words from the book of Revelation are being fulfilled in our day: "But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short" (Rev. 12:12).

Our greatest source of strength in this battle against the devil and the demons is prayer. Our Lord taught us to pray for deliverance from the devil when he taught his disciples the "Our Father." The final petition, "deliver us from evil" is sometimes, perhaps more accurately, translated as "deliver us from the evil one." This is how most of the Eastern Fathers understood this petition, and how the official Catechism of the Catholic Church understands it as well. The Catechism states, "In this petition evil is not an abstraction, but refers to a person, Satan, the Evil One, the angel who opposes God. The devil (diabolos) is the one who 'throws himself across' God's plan and His work of salvation accomplished in Christ" (CCC #2851).

When Saint Paul discusses spiritual warfare in Ephesians 6, he tells us to put on the full armor of God, and then concludes by saying, "praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication" (Eph. 6:18). Without prayer there can be no victory in this warfare.

Without prayer, we will become spiritually weak. Our conscience will slowly become lax and we will yield to temptation. The demons that our Lord and the apostles dealt with in the Gospels, or the frightening entities that we read about in the life of Saint Anthony of Egypt or Saint John Vianney will not normally bother with us. Unless we are Saints, or have opened ourselves up to the dark side by playing around with the occult, the demons that we fight will be more subtle (Gen. 3:1). Yet, they can be just as dangerous. The demon of anger, or of pride, or vainglory, or lust, or gluttony, or sloth, or greed, or sadness, will attack us. If they can get us to succumb to their wiles, they can destroy our families, our health, and ultimately our souls.

The Fathers teach us to drive away the demons with prayer. They apply Psalm 137:9, "Blessed shall he be who takes your little ones (your infants) and dashes them against the rock!" to this spiritual conflict. Remember that "the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh (human weapons) but have divine power..." (2 Cor. 10:4). The Fathers teach that the "little ones" of which the psalmist speaks are the evil thoughts, temptations, inspired by the enemy, that will lead us away from Christ. These evil thoughts must be dashed against the rock which is Christ (1 Cor. 10:4). Spiritual warfare is not passive. "Resist the



devil and he will flee from you" (James 4:7) We must act, we must resist, we must pray!

One of the most powerful and effective ways to resist the devil is to invoke the holy name of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Remember how the Apostles healed the sick and drove out demons in the name of Jesus and faith in His name (Acts 3:16). Remember God's promise that "whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" (Rom. 10:13). When the devil attacks, call on the name of Jesus. We can pray the Jesus prayer, "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner," or some shorter form of the Jesus prayer, "My Jesus, mercy!" or call on the name of the Lord in our own words, "Jesus, help me." The temptation may not abate at once, but if we persevere in calling on the name of the Lord, the demons will disperse and we will have victory.

"As smoke is driven away, so you shall drive them away; as wax melts before fire, so the wicked (demons) shall perish before God (Ps. 68:2). **ECL**

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



## SPIRITUAL REFLECTIONS

Father Lewis Rabayda

### TO BE AN INFORMATION AGE SAINT

We are facing a very difficult time in Western History, and that's not to say that there have not been difficult times before, because there have been. Each age of Christianity had its challenges. The Church began in the Roman Empire when Christianity was illegal and they were labeled atheists because they believed in the True God, who was not one of the Roman Gods. In the Middle Ages, Church members and hierarchy brought scandal and spiritual damage to some faithful. The Renaissance saw the heresy of The Reformation, when a sizable amount of Catholics left the Apostolic Church in disobedience to follow their own ideas of what the Apostles taught. Then the Enlightenment cast doubt on the long held belief of absolute truth which utilized poor philosophical thinking to bluntly say that God could not exist. And now, in the post-modern Secular Information Age, Christians are faced with the claim that supernatural events cannot be observed (which they can and have been) and are therefore figments of our imagination. In this Age, if one believes in God, they are lumped into a category of unintelligent, primitive bigots whose god is the one who brings pain to us by his outdated rules.

In each of these Ages, men and women have had to deal with an onslaught of opposition from their

contemporaries; they have been mocked, treated unjustly, abused, beaten, killed; and forced to abandon belief in Christ for another theology, ethos, or political theory. Today in our time, we are being shamed into stripping ourselves of our Faith in Christ. We are being pressured to reject our salvation and instead of embracing the peace of Christ through the order set up by God, we are being encouraged to embrace: disorder, disunity, chaos, vice, sin, and by doing so, we are being encouraged to embrace eternal damnation. They tell us that what is evil is good, what is actually dark is bright, and what is abominable to God is to be celebrated in the public sphere. These views are not alarmism, but are an objective observation of our changing culture seen through the eyes of Faith and the teachings of Jesus Christ.

No matter what Age of history Christians have lived through, there have been many Saints who, through the Grace of God overcame these very real and very demanding pressures of their world. These brave men and women, despite the darkness of the world in which they lived, held closer than most others to the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church through which we have the Teachings of Jesus Christ. Their immense faith in the Truth, their constant prayer, their read-

ing of Scripture and other spiritual works, their receiving God's Grace through participation in the Sacraments, and their discernment, has enabled them to live Holy Lives and to live according to the order of God, the creator of the Universe, rather than the disorder sown by the Devil.

In many of these cases, these Holy Saints had to be completely alone in their struggle towards God, because they chose to accept a path that few others were also willing to follow. They had to leave houses, brothers, sisters, fathers, mothers, children, property, and yes, even their close friends, in order to completely follow the teachings of Jesus Christ. They also willingly chose to take up the crosses set before them in their lives and suffer for the sake of Christ, and for the sake of following in His footsteps.

Our task then, is to also become Saints. Our task is to see what is happening in the world, and compare that to what Jesus Christ and His Apostles have taught us. We cannot imitate the behavior of those closest to us, unless, of course, they, too, have modeled their lives on Christ. In order to become saints, we must be willing to hold fast to what we have learned and to the faith we participate in. We must have the courage to acknowledge Christ and

His True Faith before our sons and daughters, our friends, our mothers and fathers, to all those who may believe something quite different, something quite disordered. Being a saint is not easy, it not merely a desire to follow God, it is not a romantic notion, it is not a fuzzy emotional feeling; rather, it is a great self-sacrifice, a great struggle, the resistance of great temptations, and often times, the experience of being rejected by those closest to us who 'think' something different.

But we should not despair, because that is an emotion of darkness. Rather, we have before us the Light of Christ and the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, and the example of all of the Saints who went before us, to guide us towards the riches of the Kingdom of Heaven. Christ is our Hope, and when we truly follow Him, we are filled with a great joy that cannot be brought on by the pleasures of the world or of conforming ourselves to the thought of the day. When we acknowledge Christ before men, He will acknowledge us before God in Heaven. And when we have left all of these earthly things to truly and properly follow Christ, then we will receive a hundredfold and inherit eternal life. What this world perceives as the last, will be shown to be first in the Kingdom of Heaven. **ECL**

## UPCOMING EVENTS FOR JUNE

### Eparchial and Parish Events

*Slava Isusu Christu! Slava vo v'iki!*

#### Eastern Catholic Life

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| <p>5 Third Sunday after Pentecost*<br/>Ordination of Subdeacons<br/>James Smith and Michael Tisma to the Diaconate<br/><i>Epiphany of Our Lord Church, Roswell, GA 10:00 a.m.</i></p> <p>24 Nativity of the Holy Prophet, Forerunner, and Baptist, John<br/><i>Solemn holyday * Chancery closed</i></p> <p>26-30 Pre-teen Girls' Camp<br/><i>Canadensis, PA * See ad on page 4 of this issue</i></p> | <p>29 Holy, Glorious, Illustrious, and Prime Apostles, Peter and Paul<br/><i>Holyday of obligation*<br/>Chancery closed</i></p> |
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