

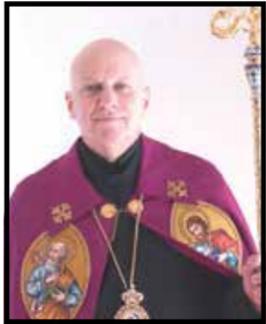


EASTERN CATHOLIC LIFE

Official Publication of the Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Passaic

VOL. LV, NO. 3

MARCH 2019



BISHOP KURT'S LENTEN PASTORAL Great Lent: New Life from Melted Snow and Ice

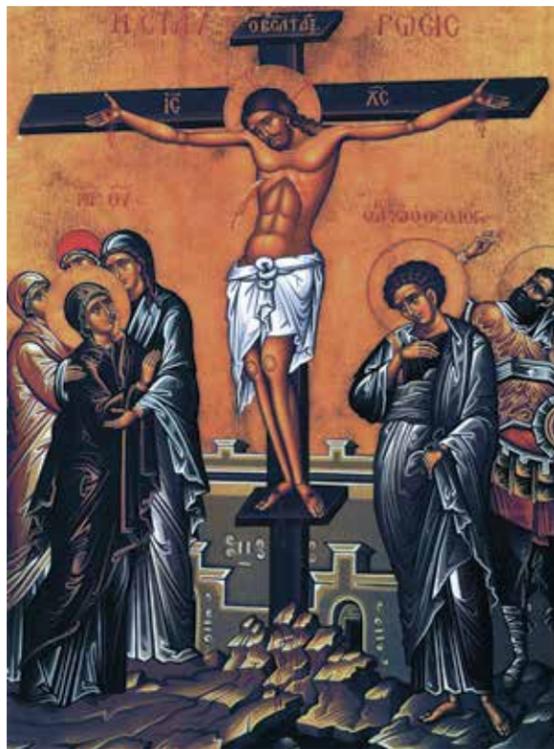


“But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of stress. For men will be lovers of self.” If you follow the news media, it certainly seems like the “times of stress” are here. On the other hand, keep in mind that the news media makes its money by creating division and fear. Because of changes in information technology, many parts of the news establishment are close to bankruptcy, and they must report or make up more and more sensational stories to stay in business. I myself avoid the news media because I see it as destructive and un-Christian. It makes its money by destroying good people and spreading vice. Nevertheless, Saint Paul did warn his young friend Timothy about the last days and the times of stress. As we shall see, Saint Paul clearly intended this warning for Saint Timothy’s own lifetime.

Who was Saint Timothy? We read in the Acts of the Apostles that Timothy was a young man whom Saint Paul met during his second missionary journey. He revisited some communities in Turkey (although it wasn’t called Turkey back then) and then had a vision urging him to cross over into Europe and begin preaching there. In Derbe or Lystra, Saint Paul came across a young Christian by the name of Timothy. Timothy is a Greek name, and Timothy’s father was a Greek. Timothy’s mother though was Jewish, and we read in an epistle that Timothy learned from his mother Eunice and from his grandmother Lois the faith in the one true God of Abraham, as well as knowledge of the scriptures and true religion. Saint Paul recognized Timothy’s value and took him with him as his missionary companion. By the way, the name Timothy means “valued by God.” Strangely enough, the Acts of the Apostles says that Saint Paul circumcised Timothy because of the “Jews that were in those places.” It seems strange because in his epistle to the Galatians, Saint Paul brags

that he publicly humiliated Saint Peter for a lesser observance of the Jewish law, and that incident is often quoted. Even more strange, in the Acts, a few verses after Timothy’s circumcision, it says that they delivered to the people the decision of the Council of Jerusalem, the Council that decided that Christians are not bound by these ritual laws. In any case, Timothy became Saint Paul’s most faithful and trusted co-worker. Saint Paul sent him on various missions and errands to troubled churches. Saint Paul ordained Timothy, and according to tradition it was in the city of Ephesus, and he shepherded the Christian flock there until his death as a martyr in the year 97 at the age of 80. He was killed by a mob while trying to quell a violent pagan festival.

Returning to Saint Paul’s letter and the “times of stress,” Saint Paul gives a list of sinful men whom Saint Timothy should avoid for his own well-being. In the season of Lent, the Great Fast, it’s time to look at ourselves and not point fingers at other people. As the prayer of Saint Ephraim



Icon of the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ

says, “Let me know my own sins, and not judge my brother.” The first sinful man that Saint Paul warns us about is the “lover of self.” Children are natural at love; they say “I love you” freely and purely. One thing we knew as children is that love always involves someone else. Even the phrase “self-love” sounds perverse. Not that long ago, psychologists referred to some sexual per-

verts by the term “inverts,” because their attraction was really to themselves instead of outward which produces life. The sin of self-love is deeply rooted in original sin. Adam and Eve said openly, we want to be our own gods! Adam was supposed to care for Eve, and Eve for him, but choosing to be his own god, Adam hurt his wife, and she hurt him, and together they brought death into

the world. And like pagan gods, they couldn’t admit to their own faults, but raged against all creation, damaging the whole cosmos with their selfishness.

The next man that Saint Paul warns about is the “lover of money.” Money is like everything else in creation, it is a good thing as long as it is used for its purpose. Money is a medium of exchange for goods and services. Money makes it possible for us to live in a society and to share our property and work in an orderly fashion. But money is not something to be loved. Even the things that money can buy should not be loved in preference to the Creator, but other things can at least be enjoyed. Money cannot be enjoyed unless it is spent. Love of money is as perverse as any disordered desire. During Lent, we can give alms, that is give money to the poor, to tame our love of money.

Saint Paul goes on to warn us about the “boastful, arrogant, abusive.” The word for boasters in the Bible doesn’t refer to honest pride, but to pretensions, to falsehood, to swagger-

continues on page 2

THEOSIS IN ACTION: THE YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY OF THE EPARCHY OF PASSAIC’S FIRST CONVOCATION

Theosis in Action: The Young Adult Ministry of the Eparchy of Passaic is thrilled to announce the first-ever Convocation for Byzantine Catholic Young Adults: **Called. Transfigured. Sent.** Planning for this event has now been underway for several months. Last October Christopher Russo, Adriana Shubeck, Jerry Wutkowski, Michael Wutkowski, Nicholas Leath, and Deacon Thomas Shubeck met with Father Ed Cimballa to discuss the exciting prospect of hosting *Theosis*

in Action’s first major event in New York City. After numerous planning meetings, several members of the planning team met with Bishop Kurt shortly after Christmas to present the proposal to him. Bishop Kurt gave the convocation his blessing.

Hosted by the Eparchy of Passaic and Theosis in Action, the convocation will take place August 1-4, 2019, at Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church in New York City and is open to all young adults ages 18-35. The weekend of the convocation will coincide

with the Feast of the Transfiguration on August 6. The Gospel narrative for this feast defines what it means to be a disciple of Christ and how to live that calling in one’s day to day life. The convocation will thus be divided into three parts, each addressing one step on the journey to discipleship:

Together we are:

Called to Discipleship.

Transfigured through a new life in Christ.

Sent to proclaim the Gospel to the world.

The goal of this convocation is to bring these themes together by engaging young adults to recognize their own call to discipleship, and to unite and foster relationships throughout the Byzantine Metropolia and beyond.

During the convocation, there will be time for prayer and self-reflection, social events providing time for fellowship each evening, special opportunities to see the sights of New York City, and three dynamic keynote speakers: Father Boniface Hicks, OSB (<http://www.fatherboniface.org>),

Mother Gabriella Houck of Christ the Bridegroom Monastery (<http://www.christthebridegroom.org>), and Katie Prejean McGrady (<https://katieprejean.com/>). These speakers were chosen because they exemplify one aspect of the convocation theme of being **Called, Transfigured, and Sent.** Together these speakers represent a cross-section of individuals dedicated to young adult ministry in the Catholic Church today.

Registration details will be made available on the Eparchy of Passaic’s website

in the beginning of April through June 15. We welcome and invite all young adults ages 18-35 throughout the Byzantine Catholic Metropolia and beyond to join us on this very special weekend!

Questions? Contact us at theosisinaction@gmail.com or [facebook.com/theosisinaction](https://www.facebook.com/theosisinaction). We look forward to seeing you in the Big Apple this August!

ing and quackery. Who are the arrogant? The verb arrogate means to take for yourself something that doesn't belong to you. Like all sin, it harkens back to the original sin in which Adam and Eve took something they had no right to take. And when Saint Paul says "abusive," it is the same word he uses for blasphemer or slanderer. In other words, people who attack viciously with their speech.

After the "boastful, arrogant, abusive," Saint Paul warns about the "disobedient to their parents." When I was growing up in the 1960's, the slogan of the young generation was, "never trust anyone over 30". Of course, the people who said that are now at least 70 years old themselves. Many of them died from their vices, some are bitter that no one listens to them anymore, and some of them became wealthy peddling their version of poverty. Then in the 1980's, I remember it became fashionable for people to appear on afternoon talk shows weeping about their parents' alcoholism or other problems. The studio audience applauded on cue as if it were now a virtue to dishonor your parents on national television. In the same era, the entertainment industry produced shows in which children corrected their parents, and parents apologized tearfully for "not being there" or "not listening." I even remember watching an evangelical Christian event on television in which a young man "witnessed to Christ" by exposing his father's sins in a large auditorium. It seemed to me like a strange "witness to Christ" to brazenly break one of the ten commandments in front of a large audience. The fourth commandment says, "Honor your father and your mother that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God gives you." God's words tell us that disrespect of parents is the gateway into the culture of death. The disrespect has come full circle. The same generation that hallowed the disrespect of parents, shows the same disrespect to their children. In 2016 there were two national conventions to choose the candidates for the presidential election. At one of the conventions, a keynote speaker joyfully told the convention she aborted her first child. The convention cheered. There was nothing wrong with the child nor with her health. She bragged, "I made the decision that was best for me--to have an abortion." In her "me first" version of right and wrong, she unwittingly summed up everything that St. Paul warned us about. God said, "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land the Lord your God has given you." After disrespecting their parents, these people rejected God's authority as well, and welcomed the culture of death into our country.

The next man that Saint Paul warns us about is the "ungrateful." Gratitude is the act of recognizing that I have good things, and that I did not give them to myself. Ungrateful people either claim they have nothing good, or claim that no one gave it to them. G.K. Chesterton said that gratitude is the foundation of all true spirituality. Interestingly enough, the word in the Bible that we translate as ungrateful is the opposite of the word for grateful which is eucharist. I am often astonished at the lack of gratitude in people who receive the Holy Eucharist. After receiving the Body and Blood of Jesus from the priest at the Divine Liturgy, the next time they open their mouths they bad mouth the priest, or the singers, or someone else in church, or someone in the social hall. In one of my parishes, I was so happy when several different women said, "Father, I love your church. I've never heard anyone say a bad word about anyone else." They went on to tell me about another congregation where they couldn't walk ten feet into the social hall without being criticized. I wonder how big our church would be today

if everyone were grateful after receiving the Holy Eucharist and never gossiped? I wonder if we would have the vocation shortage if there were gratitude instead of gossip.

Saint Paul warns about the "unholy." The word that he uses is based on an an-

obey the law written in their hearts then they will be condemned or even justified according to their own conscience. Saint Paul may have put "ungodly" and "lacking in natural affection" next to each other for poetic reasons, but they also go together for more profound reasons.

Forgiving others is not always easy, but it is a choice not a feeling. If you find it too difficult to forgive, ask for help. That's what spiritual teachers are for. It's no coincidence that Saint Paul pairs "unforgiving" with "slanderers." People who nurse their grudges and remember every injury are



"Be gone, Satan! For it is written 'You shall worship the Lord your God and him only will you serve.'" From the Painted Church of Honaunau on Kealakekua Bay. Father John Velghe built the church in 1899 and painted it himself with ordinary household paint and no professional training.

cient Greek word that means "divine law." Even the pagans had a strong sense that the gods would punish evil doers, and their myths are full of such stories. In Homer, Penelope makes a speech to the unwelcome intruders in her house, saying that they violate these unwritten divine laws by violating the laws of hospitality, the laws of courtship, and even trying to kill Telemachus the son and heir to the throne of Odysseus. The next man that Saint Paul describes after the "unholy" is the "inhuman" which is also translated "unfeeling." It refers to people who are lacking in natural affection, or people who do not cherish anything. It seems like a logical next step to Penelope's speech to the men who ignore the natural rules for treating a widow and a fatherless boy. The divine law and natural feelings go hand in hand. God Himself said that he would write His laws in our hearts, and in Ezekiel, God says He will take out our hearts of stone and give us a heart of flesh. Saint Paul also says that when the pagans

Next Saint Paul warns us against the "unforgiving" and the "slanderers." During Great Lent we hear a lot about forgiveness. Even the day before Lent starts we celebrate Forgiveness Vespers and we call it Forgiveness Sunday. Jesus warns us, if you approach the altar and remember a grievance with your brother, go and make up first with your brother and then approach the altar. And so, we dare not enter into the Great Lent, the time of personal repentance, without first cleaning out our storehouse of grudges. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus warns us even more severely, "If you forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will forgive you yours. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive you." I called it a severe warning, but we can just as well call it a great promise. No matter how dark our past, Jesus gives us a simple way to the heart of the Father's mercy—forgive those who injured us. It's like a get-out-of-jail-free card for anyone willing to play it.

the most likely to lash out with accusations and broadcast the faults of others, or even worse, to whisper them in secret.

"Lacking in self-control, brutal" is the fault that Saint Paul warns about next. What could be more appropriate for the season of Lent? Great Lent is all about self-control. Whether we are fasting, or praying more, or studying more, or giving alms, everything in Lent is directed towards self-control. If we give up eating what we like, or give up our time for better choices, or give up some of our money to someone who (we think) doesn't deserve it, we are strengthening our will over our passions in the hopes of living a more godly life this year than we did last year. And we pray more during Lent so that we can have the fire of God in our hearts and the life of God in our more souls more abundantly. The word for brutal in the epistle literally means "untamed." Have you ever known someone who is spoiled? It's embarrassing to watch them in action, isn't it? Our Lenten practices are designed to help us avoid being like spoiled children, both on the outside and more importantly on the inside.

Saint Paul also warns us about the "treacherous" man, the traitor. As we examine our consciences for Lent, most of us would not say that we commit the sin of betrayal. I pray that none of us ever performs a true betrayal as Judas did to Jesus. But I think sometimes we inadvertently may betray other people to trust us without realizing it. By being "nice," by telling "white lies," by letting someone think we are a friend, we can lead others into a confidence trap. Probably Judas himself did not realize that Jesus would be killed until it was too late. Pretending to be someone's friend can have serious consequences.

Saint Paul sums up our era when he warns against "lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God." He goes on to make a



Eve tries to wake up her son Abel, after the first murder. Eve can't understand why Abel won't wake up because no one ever died before." From the Painted Church of Honaunau on Kealakekua Bay

very profound analysis of these people, and in so doing, he indicts all of these vices. He says they "have the form of religion while denying its power." What does he mean by that? I think of all the religious and spiritual leaders and teachers in recent times who use the words of the Christian faith, or even claim to be Catholic, and teach people to ignore the law of God. They talk about love or compassion, and they use those words to justify the most grievous violations of the law of God, infanticide and unchastity and unfaithfulness and disrespect. What does Saint Paul mean when he says, they "have the form of religion but deny its power"? These people use words like love and compassion to justify sin, they even quote the sweet words of Jesus himself, and if you disagree with them they accuse you of hate and uncompassion, but they deny that God has the power to deliver us from sin. They deny God's forgiveness by telling people that they have done nothing wrong. The power of religion is God's forgiveness and mercy. Only God can remove our guilt. In a false understanding of compassion, they obsess about how people feel instead of who they are. Why was Saint Paul so emotional when he wrote to the Galatians? When he said, "foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you?" He was upset because their new doctrine denied the power of the crucifixion of Jesus. If we have no guilt, then Jesus died for nothing. In flattering the ungodly, these liars insult God. They have the form of religion, but deny its power.

When God gave us his law, He said through Moses, "I place before you today a choice, life and death. Choose life!" The Great Lent is a season of life, the season when we choose life over death. Saint Nikolai Velimirovich compares it to the sun in the spring that thaws the earth and brings new life. He writes, "The snows melt on the mountain when the sun shines, and the streams flow to cleanse the earth. What sun will melt the snow from the summits of your souls, O sons of men, and cleanse your earthliness? ...Who will absolve your sins, and will thaw your icy hatefulness. In vain do you yourselves forgive your own sins. By forgiving your own sins you make ice out of snow, providing an even smoother surface for new snow.... 'Your sins are forgiven! Arise and walk!' Do you know, O man, the One who has the authority to restore your health with these sweet words? I assure you that you will not find or meet Him on earth, even if you were to scour the entire world. ... He is the Celestial Man and the Savior of your soul. He is far away from anyone who forgives himself his own sins, but He is near, very near to anyone who despises his sins and cries out to heaven to blot them out. ... His word is more searing than the sun. He melts the snow off the soul of man and induces flowers to grow."

+Kurt Burnette

DIRECTIVES FOR THE GREAT FAST

From the Office of the Bishop



FASTING REGULATIONS

- +All who receive Communion in the Eparchy of Passaic are required to abstain from meat on Wednesdays and Fridays of the Great Fast.
- +All adults who receive Communion in the Eparchy of Passaic are required to abstain from meat, eggs, and milk products on the first day of Lent, Monday, March 4, and on Great and Holy Friday, April 19.
- +These are the minimum requirements; however, the faithful are encouraged to do more.

Dispensation

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

LITURGICAL DIRECTIVES

- Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts
 - +All Pastors and Administrators are encouraged to celebrate the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts on Wednesdays and Fridays of the Great Fast.
 - +A liturgical service at which Holy Communion is distributed may be celebrated on the other weekdays of the Great Fast.
- We ask you to pray for peace throughout the world, and for the victims of war. Please remember in your prayers all those in the military who are serving our country throughout the world.

LENTEN VESPERS SCHEDULE

Wyoming Valley Protopresbyterate

Sun., March 10, 2019	..... Saint Michael, Pittston
Sun., March 17, 2019	..... Saint John, Wilkes-Barre Twp.
Sun., March 24, 2019	..... Saint Mary, Wilkes-Barre
Sun., March 31, 2019	..... Saint Nicholas, Swoyersville
Sun., April 7, 2019	..... Saint Mary, Kingston

All Vespers will start at 3 PM and there will be light Lenten refreshments provided by the host parishes afterward.

Montgomery and Chester Counties in PA

Sun., March 10, 2019	..... Saint John, Pottstown
Sun., March 17, 2019	..... Blessed Virgin Mary, Coatesville
Sun., March 24, 2019	..... Saint Michael Ukrainian, Pottstown (Stowe)
Sun., March 31, 2019	..... Saint Michael, Mont Clare
Sun., April 7, 2019	..... Saints Peter & Paul Ukrainian, Phoenixville

EASTERN CATHOLIC LIFE
(USPS 165-600) (ISSN 0894-9786)
Official Publication of the
Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Passaic
Subscription Rate: \$15.00 per year.
News and Photo Services:
Member of the Catholic Press Association of America.

Published monthly by the
Eastern Catholic Press Association
445 Lackawanna Avenue
Woodland Park, NJ 07424
Phone: 973-890-7777 Fax: 973-890-7175
Postage paid at Little Falls, NJ, and additional office at Bellmawr, NJ.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to:
Eastern Catholic Life
445 Lackawanna Avenue
Woodland Park, NJ 07424
Most Reverend Bishop Kurt Burnette
President and Publisher
Father James Badeaux, *Editor*
Father Ronald Hatton, *Associate Editor*
Father Lewis Rabayda, *Layout Editor*

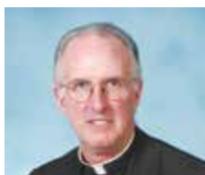
Mrs. Diane Rabiej, *Copy Editor*
Mrs. Maureen French, *Circulation Editor*
(mfrench@eparchyofpassaic.com)
E-Mail us at:
ECL@eparchyofpassaic.com
Eparchial Website:
www.EparchyofPassaic.com



PEOPLE YOU KNOW AROUND THE EPARCHY

IN NEW PORT RICHEY...

On January 21, the Knights of Columbus Father Felix Ullrich Council presented Father Olexiy Nebesnyk of Saint Anne Byzantine Catholic Church in New Port Richey, FL, with a check for the parish for \$10,000. The Knights recently sold their building and used the funds to donate to 26 local charities. Saint Anne Parish is now this council's new home. Presenting the check to Father Olexiy are Richard Arcoleo, Deputy Grand Knight, and Larry Belligiere, Grand Knight.



MY BROTHER THOMAS

Guest Editorial by
Father Robert F. Slesinski, Ph.D.

Is infanticide a truly moral option? It would seem to be so in the judgment of lawmakers in New York, the Governor of Virginia, and now before lawmakers in the State of Rhode Island and in other states who are in favor of full-term abortion. I am aghast at this very question, but feel the urgent need to share personal memories of the distant past.

With this new legislation in New York and proposed elsewhere, my own mother's precarious medical condition of decades ago would have counseled a full-term abortion. But, I stress, this did not happen—Praise the Lord! My mother was in her mid-forties. As her pregnancy progressed it became obvious that my future sibling would come into this world severely impaired. How was this situation to be addressed? My own father, a medical doctor, Frank A. Slesinski, M.D., took full charge of the situation. On the fateful day of delivery, my father, an internist, not an obstetrician, was to be present in his "scrubs" in the delivery room along with a local Worcester, MA, Polish Catholic priest also suited up in "scrubs," who was to attend to all sacramental necessities. Now, as a family, we attended a local "Irish" Catholic parish (Blessed Sacrament) as my mother, being an Arkansan with Louisiana roots, knew no Polish. My father, however, still cherished his Polish heritage. My other siblings and I (excepting the latest member of the clan) could only be baptized in a Polish Church (Our Lady of Czestochowa).

Now only to add to "things" ...my mother was of Alsatian-English descent and was a baptized Protestant, only becoming Catholic to be accepted into my father's Polish family. Complicating matters was the fact that my mother suffered from AB negative blood, always necessitating a special blood supply to the side given any particular need. Well, there was an elderly Irish lady, a Miss Mattimore, who was always at hand to be a potential blood donor for my mother. She was at hand in the hospital on the fateful day. She died years later at the venerable age of 100! If my memory serves me correctly, my mother did need a blood transfusion, and she was hospitalized for a week, so weak was she that we children were not allowed to visit with her.

It was thought that my brother would be stillborn. But that was not the case. My brother was born a blue baby. My father on the spot named him Thomas, and the priest thereupon baptized him. He was born at 1:45 PM on November 8, 1966, in Worcester City Hospital and immediately was placed in an incubator, dying at 6:00 PM, weighing one pound. These "stats" I have from my mother's own handwriting in a treasured family ancestral book.

Clearly, "abortion" is not in my family's vocabulary. May God's infinite mercy only be upon us at this time!

Choral Divine Liturgies

at
Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church,
Manhattan

Sung By Theoria Chamber Choir

(a professional choir of 8 singers)
Andrew Skitko * Artistic Director/Conductor

Sunday, March 10 - 6:00 PM

The Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom with music by Artem Vedel and Mykhailo Verbytsky (Celebrated in Church Slavonic and English)

Palm/Flowery Sunday, April 14 - 6:00 PM

The Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom with music by Dmytro Bortniansky (Celebrated in Church Slavonic and English)

Sunday, June 2 - 6:00 PM

The Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom with music by Roman Hurko (Celebrated in English)

Reception Following in Parish Social Hall

246 East 15th Street, New York, New York
212-677-0516 • stmarybccnyc.org

CHURCH SLAVONIC DIVINE LITURGY

With Homily Ponašemu

Saint Mary's Byzantine Catholic Church
(Saint Mary's Ruthenian Greek Catholic Church, Inc.)

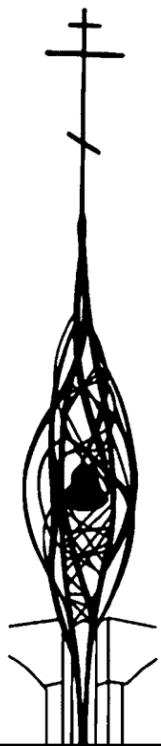
246 East 15th Street, New York, New York 10003

Telephone: 212-677-0516

Email: Fredcimbala@gmail.com

Father Edward G. Cimbala, D.Min.—Pastor

Beginning Sunday, December 16, 2018, at 8:00 AM, and every Sunday thereafter, Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church, 246 East 15th Street, New York, NY, will offer the Divine Liturgy celebrated in Church Slavonic with the homily preached ponašemu. The celebrant and homilist will be Father Gregory Lozinskyy, parochial vicar of Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church in Jersey City, NJ. This Divine Liturgy is being established as an outreach for people from Eastern Europe with the blessing of Bishop Kurt Burnette, Eparch of Passaic, NJ, at the request of Bishop Milan Šašik, Eparch of Mukachevo, Ukraine. Saint Mary Parish is located on the corner of East 15th Street and Second Avenue and is easily accessible by subway. The 14th Street-Union Square Subway stop is less than a ten-minute walk. Everyone is invited. For more information, please contact Father Gregory Lozinskyy at 201-333-2975.



Visiting New York City?

Come Worship With Us!

Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church

Father Edward G. Cimbala, D.Min.—Pastor

246 East 15th Street, Manhattan, New York
212-677-0516

Sunday Divine Liturgy

8:00 AM – Church Slavonic & Homily Ponašemu
(Beginning December 16, 2018)

10:00 AM

6:00 PM
(Beginning January 13, 2019)

SAINT MARY BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN NEW YORK CITY TO PRESENT SECOND IN SLAVIC CHURCH MUSIC PROGRAM



Bishop Kurt and Father Ed with some of the 80 young adults who attended the Choral Divine Liturgy



The faithful stand prayerfully during the Divine Liturgy

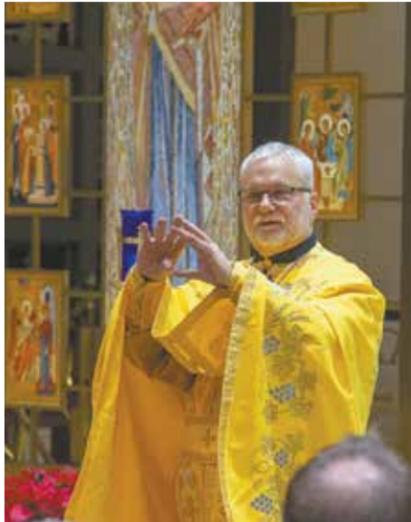
Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church, New York, NY, will present the second part of their program of classical Slavic Church music on Sunday, March 10, 2019, at 6:00 PM. The church is at 246 East 15th Street in Manhattan and is open to the public. The first Choral Divine Liturgy was celebrated on Sunday January 27, with about 175 people in attendance!

tion the opportunity to be immersed in the experience as part of their worship. The Divine Liturgy will be sung in English and Church Slavonic. Father Edward G. Cimbala, D.Min, pastor of Saint Mary Parish is celebrant of the Divine Liturgy, and a reception will follow in the parish hall.

The second program in this series will feature compositions by Artem Vedel and

composer and musician, Vedel was never able to fully recover from the blow this prohibition had on his career, and died in a mental asylum in the early 1800's. Verbytsky (1815-1870), born soon after Vedel's death, was a musician and a Greek Catholic priest. These two passions made music for Divine Liturgy and other religious events a natural conclusion of his talents, but he also ventured into theatrical music. He is best known for compos-

Carpatho-Rusyn history, language, and culture. He has also studied Russian choral music and conducting at Saint Vladimir's Orthodox Seminary with maestro Vladimir Gorbik, musical director and conductor at the Moscow Respresentation Church of the Holy Trinity-Saint Sergius Monastery, and has participated in the PaTRAM Russian-American Music Institute. Additionally, Mr. Skitko is an assistant producer, singer, and member of



Father Ed Cimbala welcomes the faithful to the first Choral Divine Liturgy



Bishop Kurt with Maryann Hogstrom, Cantor of Saint Mary Parish



Theoria Chamber Choir with Andrew Skitko conducting

Throughout the year, Saint Mary Parish presents the liturgical music of the great Slavic composers within the context for which they were written – as the music of the Divine Liturgy, giving the congrega-

Mykhailo Verbytsky. Vedel (1767-1808) composed most of his choral works at the turn of the 19th century, when Tsar Paul I banned choral music outside of the Divine Liturgy. An often misunderstood

ing the Ukrainian national anthem *Shche ne vmerla Ukraïna* ("Ukraine Has Not Yet Perished") to a text by Pavlo Chubynsky, composed in 1862.

The music will be performed by Saint Mary Parish's choir-in-residence, Theoria Chamber Choir, directed by Andrew Skitko, Artistic Director/Conductor. Mr. Skitko earned his bachelor's and master's degrees in music at Westminster Choir College and has performed with the world's leading conductors and orchestras at venues such as Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center. Mr. Skitko sings regularly with the Opera Philadelphia Chorus, The Philadelphia Symphonic Choir, and The Same Stream Choir, and participated in The Oxford University Choral Institute as a member of the Grammy-nominated ensemble, Williamson Voices. He is a cantor for the Byzantine-Ruthenian Church. He is an alumnus of the Studium Carpatho-Ruthenorum of the University of Presov, Slovakia, having completed courses in

the Ukrainian Art Song Project board.

Additional Choral Divine Liturgies will be celebrated on Sunday, April 14 (Palm/Flowery Sunday) featuring compositions of Dmytro Bortniansky and Sunday, June 2 composed by Roman Hurko.

The backdrop for the choral event is sure to be just as inspiring. Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church is one of the most unusual religious buildings in Manhattan and provides a beautiful venue for the program of Slavic Liturgical Music.

For more information call 212-677-0516 or visit www.stmarybccnyc.org.



The delegations from our Long Island parishes pose with Bishop Kurt and Father Ed

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. • *Victim's Assistance Coordinator* • 516.623.6456



BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCHES OF WYOMING VALLEY: 15TH ANNUAL RIVER BLESSING



Father Mykhaylo Prodanets, Subdeacon Richard Terza, Father Gary Mensinger, Deacon Larry Worlinsky with altar servers



Clergy and faithful process towards the river for the blessing.

The weather was chilling cold. There was a steady and challenging breeze for keeping candles lit and bodies warm. But without ice or snow creating safety problems, the parishioners of the five Byzantine Catholic churches of Wyoming Valley and several visitors gathered Sunday afternoon, February 10 at the Nesbitt River Park boat launch in Wilkes-Barre, PA. It was the 15th Annual blessing of the Susquehanna River. Despite the cold, everyone present was warm-hearted in spirit to be a part of this great community event.

What was noticeable during the blessing could be clearly seen: a swiftly flowing river, higher than normal, resulting from steady rain and a quick snow melt a few days earlier. The sudden thaw floated away the huge blocks of ice forming walls along

the river banks that were present only 5 days earlier. And so the annual blessing could continue once more!

Father Gary Mensinger and Father Mykhaylo Prodanets led the prayers together with Deacon Larry Worlinsky and Subdeacon Richard Terza. Father Michael Kerestes unfortunately was unable to be with the group this year. Cantors, parishioners, and guests joined in procession and in singing responses. A new "twist" to this year's blessing was creative problem solving at its finest. When the mold for a traditional ice cross broke, two parishioners of Saint Michael church came up with an idea. In place of the ice cross, they baked a lovely braided bread cross instead – the perfect biodegradable solution to an unexpected problem! It was a success!

Following the service, the Altar and Rosary Society of Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church, Swoyersville, hosted a social for everyone in the much warmer setting of their church hall.

With each river blessing, as the waters of the river are blessed, prayers of protection are extended for all who reside and work along its path. The waters blessed are not only the source of life for earthly sustenance, but in the Sacrament of Baptism, are the means to beginning new life in Christ. In gratitude and humility, and acknowledging that God is Almighty and Sovereign, we bless the water that binds us together as a community. Our joy as followers of Christ is looking forward to many more river blessings to come!

The five Byzantine Churches of Wyoming Valley are Saint Michael, Pittston and Saint Nicholas, Swoyersville served by Father Gary Mensinger; Saint Mary's Protection, Kingston, and Saint John the Baptist, Wilkes-Barre Township, served by Father Mykhaylo Prodanets; and Saint Mary, Wilkes-Barre, served by Father Michael Kerestes.

Additional photos are available at: www.stmichaelsbyzantine.com/annual-river-blessing/river-blessing-2019/. Photography and article by Saint Michael parishioner, Mary Anne Fedor.



Father Gary and Father Mykhaylo bless the water.



Father Gary blesses the river.

The Sisters Servants cordially invite the faithful to join us at St. Mary's Villa in Sloatsburg, NY, 150 Sisters Servants Lane, Sloatsburg, NY 10974

Thursday, April 4th

Opening of the weekend with a 2:00 pm Moleben to Blessed Josaphata, presentation and sharing by Dr. Kim Hashin and Mrs. Cookie Hashin of Blessed Josaphata's intercession in their lives, and refreshments

Friday, April 5th

6:30 pm Akathist to Blessed Josaphata, followed by a presentation and refreshments

Saturday, April 6th

1:30 Chaplet to Blessed Josaphata followed by a video/narration - Q & A period, followed by refreshments
6:30 pm Moleben to Blessed Josaphata followed by a video/narration - Q & A period, followed by refreshments

Sunday, April 7th

Closing of the triduum weekend with 1:45 Welcome by Sr. Kathleen Hutsko and a 2:00 pm Pontifical Divine Liturgy, followed by festive dinner in the Gallery

PLEASE NOTE: In order to prepare accordingly for the honor of your presence, please RSVP by March 21st to 845-753-2840 or email to: srkath25@gmail.com



TOGETHER WE ARE:
CALLED TO
DISCIPLESHIP.
TRANSFIGURED
THROUGH A NEW LIFE
IN CHRIST.
SENT TO PROCLAIM
THE GOSPEL TO THE
WORLD.

Hosted by the Eparchy of Passaic and Theosis in Action, the convocation is open to young adults between the ages of 18-35 from all Eparchies in the Byzantine Catholic Metropolia.

This event will coincide with the feast of the Transfiguration, and will challenge participants to recognize their own call to discipleship.

Information about registration, events, and lodging options will be announced in early 2019. Stay tuned and save the date!

CONNECT WITH US!

For more information please contact us via email and stay tuned on our website and Facebook page.

theosisinaction@gmail.com
theosisinaction.org
facebook.com/theosisinaction

THE EPARCHY OF PASSAIC & THEOSIS IN ACTION PRESENT

2019
BYZANTINE CATHOLIC
YOUNG ADULT
CONVOCATION

Called. Transfigured. Sent.

AUGUST 1-4, 2019

ST. MARY'S BYZANTINE
CATHOLIC CHURCH

NEW YORK CITY

"If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."
-Mat 16:24

100th Anniversary of the death of
Blessed Josaphata
Special Feature
Thurs. April 4th, 2019

Dr. Kim Hashin and Mrs. Cookie Hashin will share their personal "miracle" of Blessed Josaphata working in the life of their beloved husband, father, and grandfather +Michael Hashin.

Announcements from the Orientale Lumen Foundation

"Light of the East" Ecumenical Pilgrimage

At the invitation of Patriarch Emeritus Gregorios of the Melkite Greek Catholic Church, the Orientale Lumen Foundation is sponsoring a "trip-of-a-lifetime" pilgrimage to the three holiest cities in Christianity – Jerusalem, Rome, and Constantinople. Organized by Jack Figel, the trip is scheduled from July 10-25, 2019 and will include prayer at religious sites, visits to cultural sites, and meetings with Church leaders. The cost is \$4495 per person, double occupancy, including airfare from Washington, DC, first class hotels, all local transportation, two meals per day, and all tours. For more details and a brochure, call 703-691-8862 or go online: <https://olfoundation.net/ecumenical-pilgrimage/>

Orientale Lumen XXIII Conference

The 23rd OL Conference is scheduled for June 17-20, 2019 at the Washington Retreat House near the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, DC. The theme will be: "One City, One Bishop: Church Boundaries Past, Present and Future." Invited speakers include Cardinal Kurt Koch from the Vatican, Archbishop Job of Telmessos of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Father Andriy Dudchenko of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Deacon Daniel Galadza of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, Dr. Adam DeVille of the University of Saint Francis, and Dr. Anastacia Wooden, recent graduate of The Catholic University of America. Dr. Will Cohen of the University of Scranton will be the moderator. For more details call 703-691-8862 or go online: <https://olfoundation.net/conferences/ol-xxiii/>

OLTV Premium Website

Orientale Lumen TeleVision announces a new premium streaming video website of exclusive lectures by world-renowned educators Metropolitan Kallistos of Diokleia, lecturer emeritus of Oxford University, and Archimandrite Robert Taft, SJ, of blessed memory, professor emeritus of the Pontifical Oriental Institute in the Vatican. The site will contain up to 150 lectures on a wide range of topics including Christ, Mary, feasts, liturgy, theology, spirituality, the Fathers and history of the Christian East. Over 50 lectures are available today. Unlimited viewing of the website is only \$9.99/month. To subscribe use the following link: <https://oltvpremium.uscreen.io>

Holy Dormition Byzantine Franciscan Friary

Events: March 2019

Pysanky: the Art of Easter Egg Decoration

noon to 4pm – Saturday 3/30

No artistic skill needed to spend an afternoon learning the art of Pysanky eggs. The traditional wax-resist method, applies wax where each dye will not color the egg. Lines and images are "written" on the egg to symbolize life. Cost: \$40 includes use of instructors' material, afternoon refreshments. Registration required; payment and reservation confirmation upon arrival for class. Call Margie at 570-956-0945.



One Day Retreat: Poustinia – A Day of Quiet Prayer all day Saturday March 9

We open our home and grounds to you for a quiet refuge to listen to God. We provide a simple midday meal of soup and homemade bread. Private rooms available; reservations required. Cost: \$30. Matins ~ 7am; Divine Liturgy ~ 8am. Brief talk 9am on quiet prayer by Protodeacon Emil Gulick. Noon lunch: vegetable soup, homemade bread. Register with Fr Jerome: holydormition@gmail.com or 570-401-8684.

March Great Fast Liturgical Schedule

Divine Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts: 5pm Fridays
Confessions: 3-4:30pm, 7-8pm



LIFE, LOVE, AND THE HUMAN PERSON

By Ann M. Koshute, MTS

THROUGH MY FAULT

We live in a dangerous, violent world. Here in America we're sheltered from the near daily barrage of terroristic threats suffered in some parts of the world. Still, we regularly experience our share of violence and all manner of abuses of human life and dignity. They are splashed across newspapers, the nightly news and our social media feeds, and there is no escaping it. As if our experience of immediate threat isn't enough, there are countless "true crime" series, documentaries and podcasts to whet our appetite for the mystery and suspense surrounding some of the most horrible acts of violence against people. We wonder why someone would treat a fellow human being in the vile and terrifying ways portrayed in such television and internet series. What kind of childhood wound, brain malfunction or psychotic break leads a human being to abuse, torture and murder another? It's a question that's been raised since Abel was slain by his own brother, Cain. The answers are many and complex, but our fascination is often not with such "academic" questions, but with the gory and often titillating details of the crimes. Inhumanity (and those who perpetrate it) is strangely compelling to us, and its prevalence – in shows and podcasts, films, video games, and the evening news – either cultivates in us a perverse fascination, or cold detachment. Both are unhealthy and each depersonalizes us and the victims.

In our Eastern iconographic and liturgical tradition, there isn't a great emphasis placed on the most violent aspects of the suffering and crucifixion of Christ. Look

at your home icon of the crucifixion, or the icons in your parish, and you won't find the kind of bloody imagery seen in many Western depictions of Christ's passion. There are a few reasons why that is, but the most important is the sense of "balance" struck in the Eastern view of the Passion, namely that the Paschal Mystery (all the events leading up to the Crucifixion, the event itself, and the days following) are of a piece. Suffering, death, and resurrection are all contained here; suffering, death and the triumph of the Cross are one. Salvation is accomplished in the paradox of the Cross, where the instrument of shame and death is actually the *Tree of Life*. Perhaps there is a kind of wisdom in this "under-emphasis" of blood and gore (real as it was for our Lord) for our age of reality TV overexposure and explicit depictions of violence invading our screens. We must not become perversely fascinated by the violence done to our Lord, so as to separate the acts from the Person on whom they were perpetrated; nor so indifferent to it that it becomes another "Bible story," no more compelling than a true crime podcast. The event of Christ's Passion is salvation visited on us, God's undeserved promise fulfilled, and our confidence and hope in God's triumph over death. The balance proposed by our Eastern view is valuable. If we focus too much on victory, then the Incarnation of Christ – His humanity – is meaningless. Concentrate on bloody depictions of suffering, and the sacrifice becomes gratuitous violence perpetrated for its own sake. The crucified Christ of icons, blood from His side signifying the entirety of His self-gift

and the birth of our new life in Him, calls us to gratitude for the sacrifice and recognition that neither devil nor death can destroy us. Jesus Christ conquers!

Here we are in the midst of the Great Fast once again. It's a time for fasting, certainly, and foregoing other small pleasures we enjoy: our morning latte, a favorite food, or disconnecting from social media. All of these practices are good, pushing us to actively engage this time, rather than simply check off a list of "obligations" fulfilled. When my belly is growling, or I'm curious about what my friends are up to on Facebook, I'm forced to confront those physical and emotional promptings and seriously consider *why* I'm depriving myself. Giving up (fasting), giving more (charitable works/donations) and giving prayer more than a few minutes at bedtime are all positive, active ways to participate in the Fast. But our approach to deprivation should be similar to the one toward violent depictions of the Passion I mentioned above. We don't fast and make sacrifices simply to fulfil an obligation (though the Church does give us certain precepts to follow during fasting seasons to help our otherwise weak natures to become strengthened in holiness). Nor does God want us to engage in a kind of morbid competition with ourselves (or others) in which we go to extremes in self-denial more out of a sense of pride, or scrupulosity, rather than a sincere effort to be closer to Christ. That said, a little suffering and self-reflection can do us some good, if we maintain that *Eastern balance*.

The whole reason for celebrating Pascha is our deliverance from certain death because of our sins. A few years ago, when a new translation of the Roman Mass was promulgated, some took exception with a particular gesture made during the *Confiteor*, or penitential prayer. The people recite, "Through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault," as they beat their breasts. For some, the objection may have stemmed from a distaste for all things "pre-Vatican II." But perhaps an underlying reason is actually the distasteful act of examining our consciences, uncovering our mistakes (great and small) and acknowledging that we are at fault; that our sins were borne by Jesus in every snicker, every strike of the whip, each pounding of the nails into His flesh, and in that final plunge of the spear into His heart. All of those things, in their violent unfairness, were received willingly by Him, for us.

The Eastern balance is a good one, and we do well not to give the devil, sin, or death greater attention or power than the fulfillment of salvation in Christ's victory. But we have forty days and a Great and Holy Week before the bells ring and the ham is carved. Let's use some of that time not focused on what *I'm* going to do for Lent; *my* sacrifice, and how it can possibly exceed last year's. Let's take a few moments out of each of the remaining days to reflect on *what Jesus did* – what He continues to do – for us. We need not beat our breasts until they are bruised and bloodied, but we can walk the *Eastern balance beam*, recognizing that Christ's victory was won to save us from destroying ourselves through sin. **ECL**

Spring clean-up event at Carpathian Village

May 3rd-5th, 2019

Come help out our eparchial retreat center and get it ready for the summer season! We have many jobs lined up that need to be completed!

Food will be provided!

Lodging is very limited! The dormitory is being reserved for children and teens as well as adults 18+ who have Safe Environment certification. This is due to the potential for churches to be bringing youth groups that must stay in the dorm together.

There will be evening activities for the children and teens, including a campfire with smores (weather permitting).

Please invite everyone you can to come and help out! We have plenty of work to get around!

Please RSVP to Jon Aponick at 717-991-5204 as soon as possible so we can get the best count for food and lodging.

Carpathian Village 802 Snow Hill RD, Canadensis, PA 18326

SPIRITUAL REFLECTIONS

Father Lewis Rabayda



AN OPPORTUNITY TO ENCOUNTER MONASTICISM

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

But what about us, those who must live in the world, those who have not been

called by God to devote our lives in such a severe way? Yes, we are still called by God to follow Him and to follow the example He gave to us. But God knows that we do not always have Him as the center of our lives, and that we often stray as the Israelites did, and have followed other gods and have given in to our passions. God calls sinners to repentance, and the holiest among us cannot compare to the sinlessness that was the Son of God in the flesh. This time, this Great Fast, this great journey, is an opportunity for each of us, regardless of the intensity of our vocation, to say "Yes" to God when he reaches out for us, as did the father of the Prodigal Son.

Saint John Paul II said in his Apostolic Letter *Orientalium Lumen*, "In the East, monasticism was not seen merely as a separate condition, proper to a precise category of Christians, but rather as a reference point for all the baptized, according to the gifts offered to each by the Lord; it was presented as a symbolic synthesis of Christianity" (9). The words of Saint John Paul II remind us that monasticism is not something for a select few, but it is to be referenced by all. The Great Fast is our call to reference mo-

asticism. This is the time in which we are guided by the Church to leave the world so we can concentrate on God, and spend time in intense and contemplative prayer. This is our time to fast in a severe way and to pray with compunction so that we will be equipped to follow the greatest commandment, to love our neighbors as ourselves. For this ascetical practice forms us for the greatest task a Christian has, to give to others the sacrificial love that Jesus Christ has given to us. As the true monastic holds no personal possessions, so too, we cannot own for ourselves the love that Christ has given us, for it is a gift too abundant to contain.

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



SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

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

REJOICE, VIRGIN THEOTOKOS!

The very first word Gabriel says to Mary in the original Greek of Saint Luke's Gospel is the standard Greek greeting: *chaire* (Luke 1:28; say it like "hey Ray" and you're close). Your English Bible may or may not capture everything in this one little word. It is a normal greeting, like "Hello," in both ancient and modern Greek. But the root meaning of *chaire* is actually "rejoice." The archangel's message is, in fact, an invitation to rejoice.

There are several reasons to rejoice at the Annunciation. First and foremost, the announcement that God's Son would become the son of a human mother fulfills a promise God had made to Eve on the darkest day of human history (Genesis 3:15). Secondly, by agreeing to become the mother of the Son of God, Mary opened the way for others to experience "great joy" nine months later at Jesus' birth (Matthew 2:10; Luke 2:10). Finally, Mary's "yes" to God's will overturns the "no" of Eve's original disobedience in Eden (Genesis 3:1-6). Where Eve's sin brought sorrow (and painful childbirth; Genesis 3:16), Mary's Annunciation brings joy (and virginal childbirth: Matthew 1:25).

The word *chaire* occurs only four times in the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament made by and for Jews about 300 years before Jesus' birth. In the Old Testament, *chaire* is always an invitation to rejoice and it's always addressed to a female. That woman is "Zion." Think of the Statue of Liberty—a female figure who personifies the idea of freedom. Zion is a female figure who personifies God's people Israel, sometimes as their mother and sometimes as God's bride or daughter.

In three of these Old Testament texts, rejoicing is the reaction to the great deeds the Lord has done for His people. In Joel 2:15-23, the mood moves from repentance for past sins to a promise of restoration for the "children of Zion." In Zephaniah and Zechariah, Zion is personified as God's bride and daughter, and it becomes more and more clear that the cause of joy is the coming of the promised Messiah. "Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem" (Zephaniah 3:14); "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem" (Zechariah 9:9). In fact, we read both of these prophecies at Vespers for Palm Sunday. They are literally fulfilled by our Lord's entrance into Jerusalem.

The fourth and final occurrence of *chaire*, Lamentations 4:21, is a little different. The whole book of Lamentations is a response to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians in 586 BC. The entire

book addresses "daughter Zion" but the command to rejoice is issued to "daughter Edom," (Israel's neighbor to the East, which profited from Jerusalem's destruction). Sarcasmically, the prophet invites Edom to rejoice at Jerusalem's misfortune but then announces something positive to "daughter Zion": "The punishment of your iniquity, O daughter of Zion, is accomplished, he will keep you in exile no longer; but your iniquity, O daughter of Edom, he will punish, he will uncover your sins."

Gabriel's invitation for Mary to rejoice fits in perfectly with these Old Testament precedents. There is an antidote to the sorrow cause by Eve's sin. The promised Messiah is coming.

Under the influence of Saint Jerome's 5th century translation of the Bible into Latin, the whole western world has learned to hear the Archangel's words merely as a greeting: "hail."

As a result, Roman Catholics developed the Gospel account of the Annunciation into the prayer that begins "Hail Mary." The somewhat older Byzantine prayer derived from Luke 1:28 and 1:42 (*Bohodorice D'ivo, radujsa*) is: Rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you! Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb. For you gave birth to Christ the Savior and Redeemer of our souls.

This prayer is often sung at the dismissal of Vespers and is a popular Marian hymn in its own right with a particularly beautiful Rusyn melody. Unfortunately, as people lost Slavonic and began to pray in English, the Latin "Hail Mary" eclipsed our own traditional prayer. It's worth reclaiming that prayer, as our distinctive heritage and, more importantly, as a reminder of all the reasons to rejoice because the Son of God has become Mary's Son for our salvation. **ECL**

Saint Ann Byzantine Catholic Church

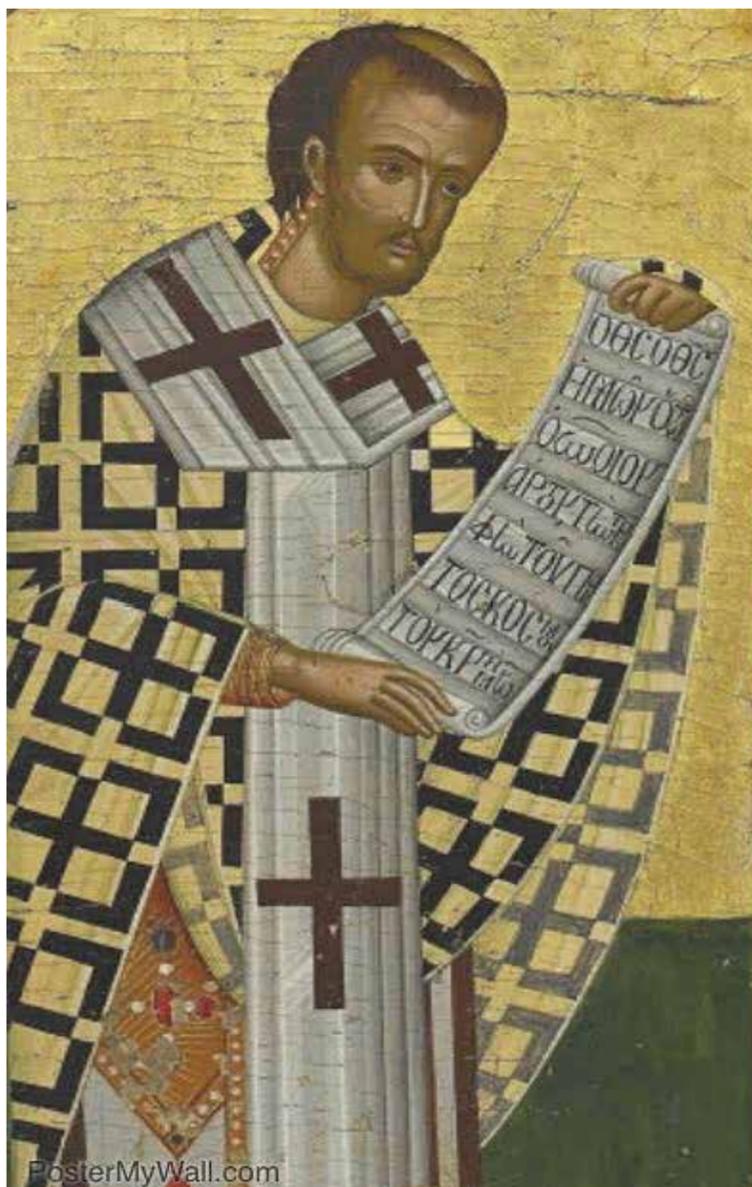
5408 Locust Lane, Harrisburg, PA

Parish Education Calendar 2019

Join the Saint Ann Parish family for these upcoming spiritual formation events

- Parish Lenten Reflection given by Father John Zeyack: Date TBA.
- Pysanky Workshop: Sunday March 24, 2019. Registration Required.
- "Being the Hands, Feet, and Heart of Jesus." Sister Ruth Plante, Provincial, Sisters of Saint Basil, Uniontown. Parish Formation Day Retreat: Sunday, May 19, 2019, following Divine Liturgy.

All programs take place at Saint Ann Byzantine Catholic Church, 5408 Locust Lane, Harrisburg, PA 17109. For more details on events, location, or speakers, please contact the parish office at 717-652-1415.



PosterMyWall.com

- THEORIA CHAMBER CHOIR -

TCHAIKOVSKY:

LITURGY OF ST. JOHN
CHRYSOSTOM

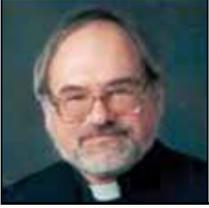
Saturday, March 30th - 4:00 pm

REV. YURIY OROS - CELEBRANT
ANDREW SKITKO - CHOIR DIRECTOR

St. Mary's Byzantine Catholic Church
411 Adeline Street
Trenton, NJ

(Corner of Grand & Malone Streets)

Parking available in church lot on
Malone St. & at Wincowicz
Funeral Home



THE BYZANTINE LITURGY

By Archpriest David Petras, SEOD

THE PRAYER OF OFFERING: WE ADDRESS GOD

The Anaphora is our prayer of offering to God, it is our sacrifice of praise. It is the most important prayer of the Divine Liturgy. We do not pray the Anaphora by ourselves, but we pray as a member of the Church, which is the Body of Christ (Ephesians 1:22-23). This means that Christ is praying with us, and is truly offering himself eternally to God through the sacrifice of praise, which we can call the Divine Liturgy, because God is acting together with us in our service. As Christians, this is what we must do. It is the commandment of Christ, who told us at the Last Supper, "Then He took the bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which will be given for you; do this in memory of me." (Luke 22:19) As we begin our prayer, therefore, we proclaim that this is what is right to do: "It is proper and just."

We first describe what "is proper and just." The priest prays in our name, "it is proper and just to sing to you, to bless you, to praise you, to thank you, to worship you in every place of your dominion." "In every place of your dominion," means everywhere, for God "is present everywhere and fills all things." The Anaphora of Saint Basil adds, "to glorify you." Hebrew prayers begin with the word "berekah," which means

all of these actions. "To bless" someone is to speak well of them and this is especially true of God, for He is good and the giver of every good and perfect gift." (James 1:17) The reality is that we, as finite creatures, cannot adequately return thanks to God for all He has done for us, for everything that we are and that we have comes from His creative love. We sing hymns, therefore, and we utter thanks and praise and glory and especially worship, which Saint Basil says "befits the magnificence of your holiness." Worship may be described as the attitude that a creature should have to the infinite love of God. Some have complained that we cannot "glorify" God, in the sense of "adding to His glory," but we can be a part of God's glory by acknowledging His loving kindness in faith and by being the person He created us to be. As rational creatures, we alone can acknowledge and proclaim the glory of God, for He has "granted us the knowledge of your truth."

We first address God, then, by recounting who He is. The Anaphora of Saint Basil addresses God as "eternal being, Master, Lord, God, Father almighty and adorable." This beginning is unique, because it solemnly addresses God in Greek as *ho On*, which means the "existing one." This is certainly a Greek attempt to translate the He-

brew *tetragammon*, YHWH, "Yahweh," "He who is." This was the name God revealed to Moses in the burning bush (Exodus 3:14), where God says "I am who I am." The Jewish people considered this name to be most holy. They would never say it, but wherever it appeared in Scripture they would substitute it with *adonai*, or "Lord." Of course, to translate it literally into English loses the force of the original, e.g. "O He who is, Master, God the Father almighty," turning the title – for the hearer – into a sentence rather than a name. The only solution seems to be to use a rather free equivalent, as "O eternal being."

The Anaphora of Saint John Chrysostom says that God is "ineffable, inconceivable, invisible, incomprehensible, ever existing, yet ever the same." We confess that God is unable to be grasped by human intelligence. In Greek this is a series of negative words expressing the holiness or untouchability of the Father. As John the Evangelist taught, "No one has ever seen God. The only Son, God, who is at the Father's side, has revealed Him." (John 1:18) Father Robert Taft has shown that John Chrysostom himself had a part in revising the Syrian Anaphora of the Twelve Apostles and was probably responsible for its introduction into the liturgy of the city of Constantinople. In these five epithets for God, we find the direct hand of John Chrysostom, for no Greek father uses all four of these epithets together, except Chrysos-

tom, and they are, in fact, an integral part of his homily entitled *On the Incomprehensibility of God*, where they are not only used together in the text, but also form the heading of the chapters of this work. This work was composed to defend orthodoxy against the Anomeans, an Arian heresy which was wide-spread in Antioch from about 355.

A later Syrian theologian who wrote under the name of Dionysius taught that God, as Ceator, simply cannot be grasped by the finite minds of created beings. The infinite and eternal remains always beyond the understanding of the limited and those bound by time, as we are in this world. However, we can know God only because God reveals himself to us. Saint John in his Gospel tells us, "No one has ever seen God. The only Son, God, who is at the Father's side, has revealed Him." (John 1:18) In this Gospel read at the Liturgy of Paschal Sunday, we hear "All things came to be through [Christ, the Word and Revealer of God], and without Him nothing came to be. What came to be through Him was life, and this life was the light of the human race; the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." (John 1:3-5) Because of this revelation, we give glory and thanksgiving to God, and the Divine Liturgy itself becomes the instrument of our consciousness of God acting in our lives. We conclude our address to God by proclaiming Him eternal, outside of the limitations of time, in which we must now exist. Everything that God has ever done for us happens now, and everything He will do for us happens now and we pray, "[You] left nothing undone, until you brought us to heaven and bestowed upon us your future kingdom." **ECL**

NEW BYZANTINE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY FORMING IN GREATER CHARLOTTE, NC, AREA

A Byzantine Catholic community is forming at Saint Philip Neri Church, 292 Munn Rd., Fort Mill, SC. Please join us as we grow our community and celebrate the Byzantine Divine Liturgy. Father Steven Galuschik of All Saints Byzantine Catholic Church in North Fort Myers, FL along with bi-ritual Deacon Ron Volek are now offering weekly Divine Liturgy in the area. This community will serve the northern part of South Carolina as well as Charlotte, NC. Please share this information with your friends and family – especially those who have moved "down South." We will be celebrating the Byzantine Divine Liturgy on Saturdays at 4:00 PM. If you would like to participate in any way, or have questions please contact Ron Somich at 440.477.6389 or ron.somich@gmail.com. Please check the website for news, upcoming gatherings, and service times at <https://carolinabyzantine.com/>

March 2, 9, 16, 23, 30



Carpatho-Rusyn Society's New Branches

The Carpatho-Rusyn Society has developed branches in Georgia (near Atlanta), Western NC (Asheville), Eastern NC (Charlotte), and mini-branches in the cities of Gainesville, Lakeland, Leesburg, Boca Raton and Nokomis in the state of Florida. Meetings are held two to three times a year to learn, share, and perpetuate the Carpatho-Rusyn culture. For more information visit the website at c-rs.org or contact Bonnie at bb@c-rs.org.

Pilgrimage to

ROMANIA & BULGARIA

with
**Fr. Ed Cimbala and
Fr. James Spera**

**12 Days
October 14-25, 2019**

For More Information Contact:
Fr. Ed Cimbala fredcimbala@gmail.com 908-872-2928
Select International Tours
800-842-4842, kristine@select-intl.com
www.selectinternationaltours.com

SELECT International
We share your faith

When traveling to the south this winter, please visit our churches

All Saints

10291 Bayshore Road
North Fort Myers, FL 33917
1-239-599-4023

Saint Anne

7120 Massachusetts Ave.
New Port Richey, FL 34653
1-727-849-1190

Epiphany of Our Lord

2030 Old Alabama Road
Roswell, GA 30076
1-770-993-0973

Saint Basil the Great

1475 N.E. 199th Street
Miami, FL 33179-5162
1-305-651-0991

Holy Dormition

17 Buckskin Lane
Ormond Beach, FL 32174
1-386-677-8704

Saints Cyril and Methodius

1002 Bahama Avenue
Fort Pierce, FL 34982
1-772-595-1021

Our Lady of the Sign

7311 Lyons Road
Coconut Creek, FL 33073
1-954-429-0056

Saint Nicholas of Myra

5135 Sand Lake Road
Orlando, FL 32819
1-407-351-0133

Saint Therese

4265 13th Avenue North
Saint Petersburg, FL 33713
1-727-323-4022

SEASONAL REFLECTIONS

Father Ronald Hatton



THE LOST ART OF FASTING

We enter once again into the time of the Great Fast, that great penitential season before the celebration of Pascha, the Feast of Feasts. In our preparations, we are always encouraged to the three pillars of penitence: *prayer, fasting and almsgiving*. Two are very straightforward in explanation: we are encouraged to pray more deeply, and more often; we are to give alms to all in need. But although we think we know what is needed in fasting, I believe that the depths of fasting have been lost on our society. Fasting has been reduced to “What are you giving up for Lent?” It seems that all Catholics say, “I didn’t think we needed to do that anymore.” During Lent, Western Catholics are now called to abstain from meat on Fridays, whereas that used to be true for the entire year. Eastern Catholics are called to complete fasting and abstinence on the first day of the Great Fast and on Good Friday, and abstinence from meat on Wednesdays and Fridays, whereas we used to fast and/or abstain from all meat and dairy for the entire Fast – thus the true import of Meat-fare Sunday and Cheese-fare Sunday.

And so, we need to rediscover fasting. Fasting has its place in every religion in the world, from ancient times. It doesn’t matter if one is Muslim, Jew, Hindu, Buddhist, Native American or Wiccan or pagan – fasting is found in all of them. In the Eastern Orthodox Churches, there is still a strong fasting tradition. But Catholics seem generally to have let it go by the wayside, much to our shame.

We need to rediscover the terms. What is *fasting*, and what is *abstinence*? Do either necessarily entail just eating, or are there other aspects of life where it can be applied? *Abstinence* traditionally refers to certain types of food, regardless of quan-

tity, while *fasting* traditionally refers to limiting the number of meals and/or amounts of food consumed, regardless of types of food. There can be abstinence from meat and meat products for an entire period of time, or fasting from every form of food for a period. Most Lenten fasts, when kept traditionally, consist of only vegetables. In our modern society, we can also abstain from certain activities, but the desirable concentration of either abstinence or fasting from food. Why this particular point? Other than the fact that fasting from food is the common fast throughout religions, it is in response to basic needs and desires. No other part of our lives is so fundamental than the need to eat. If there is one addiction that gets short-shrift in our lives it is the addiction to eating, especially in Western civilization. No denial of any aspect of our lives upset us more than when we miss our meal.

I think the main thing that fasting from foods does is remind us of how much we are slaves to our bodies. Hunger can be overpowering, to the point where dieters “cheat” or tell themselves they “deserve a reward for doing so well the past week.” And we can extend this to our treatment of sin. Sinful habits and mindsets overpower our desire to be more like Christ, and we find ourselves crying out as did the holy Apostle Paul: “Indeed, I do not know what I am doing! I do not practice what I desire to do; but what I hate, this is what I do!” (Rom. 7:15). Fasting reminds us that in and of ourselves we can do nothing, and we are in constant need of God in our lives to overcome our sinful nature.

Metropolitan Kallistos (Ware) says, “Fasting is not a mere matter of diet. It is moral as well as physical. True fasting is to be converted in heart and will; it is to return

to God, to come home like the Prodigal to our Father’s house. In the words of Saint John Chrysostom, it means ‘abstinence not only from food but from sins.’ ... It is useless to fast from food, protests Saint Basil. and yet to indulge in cruel criticism and slander: ‘You do not eat meat, but you devour your brother.’”

Many years ago, I read something from Father Anthony Coniaris that has stuck with me. His analogy is: When you squeeze an orange, what comes out? Our usual response is, “orange juice.” But Father Anthony says, “No; it is whatever is inside the orange that comes out.” In times of stress or anger, we find out what is truly inside of us. When we get angry, do we yell at a person, or go into road rage, or say things that should not be said out loud? If we do, we betray that what is in our heart is not peace or love but turmoil and anger. When we are stressed at any situation, do we panic, make abrupt, and probably incorrect, assumptions and decisions, or do we take a deep breath and really examine the situation and act prudently? Yes, it is kind of disturbing to find what is really inside us, rather than what we think is inside. Fasting shows us who we are. It shows our weakness and our need for diligence over our hearts, minds and words, and how we cannot do otherwise without the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. It is only then that we can call upon Him to heal us in the very depths of who we are.

Again, Bishop Kallistos: “Fasting, then, is valueless or even harmful when not combined with prayer.” When Jesus’ disciples were unable to cast out a demon, Saint Matthew writes, “Then the disciples came to Jesus in private and asked, ‘Why were we not able to cast it out?’ Jesus replied, ‘Because of your unbelief! Amen, I tell you

that if you have faith even like a grain of mustard, you will tell this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you! But this kind [of spirit] does not go out except by prayer and fasting.’” (Matthew 17: 19-21). So, too, it is with us: we cannot expect to make any spiritual progress during Lent without fasting accompanied by prayer.

Of course, we are in need also of the Holy Mysteries. Saint Thomas Aquinas calls the Holy Eucharist “spiritual food and spiritual medicine.” After all communicants have received the Eucharist, the priest proclaims, “Behold! This has touched your lips, and will take away your iniquities and will cleanse your sins.” Holy Confession is also necessary for us to call to mind where we fall short in our efforts to become more like Christ. We relieve the burdens on our hearts, receive counsel from our spiritual father, and received absolution and remission of our sins. This Mystery is the most neglected today, and yet we ask why it seems God does not hear our prayers: “You lust, and do not have! You kill, covet, and [still] cannot obtain! You fight and make war. You do not have because you do not ask! You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, in order to spend it for your pleasures.” (James 4:2,3).

We need to fast. We need to pray. We need to reach out to others through our giving of ourselves and our substance to others. Without all this, our fasting is doomed to failure; our prayer will be weak and ineffective; and we will not attain the Kingdom we seek. **ECL**



SCHOOL OF PRAYER

Father G. Scott Boghossian

MEDITATION ON THE PASSION AND DEATH OF CHRIST

In the Christian tradition, meditation is not a process of blanking out the mind or trying to stop one’s thoughts. Christian meditation is a careful and deliberate examination, thinking through, contemplating, studying, or examining a topic or an idea. As we carefully, slowly, and deliberately consider the truths of our Faith, they become more vivid in our minds, descend more deeply into our awareness, and have a more significant impact on our thinking and behavior. The Saints, Fathers, and Doctors of the Church urge us to meditate on the truths of our Faith. The most important mystery on which we are to meditate is the Passion and Death of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Jesus commissioned His Apostles to proclaim to the whole world that “God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life” (Jn. 3:16). Saint Paul the Apostle reminded the Corinthians, “I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified”

(1 Cor. 2:2).

Saint John Chrysostom tells us that “we should read our Lord’s Passion constantly; what great benefit we will gain by doing so. Even if you are as hard as stone, when you contemplate that He was sarcastically adorned; then ridiculed; beaten and subjected to the final agonies, you will be moved to cast all pride from your soul.” Saint John of the Ladder says that “the remembrance of Jesus’ sufferings cures remembrances of wrongs” and enables us to forgive.

In the Philokalia, Symeon Metaphrastic directs us to “think how Jesus Christ, the Son of God and God Himself, descended from the heights of glory to suffering, dishonor, crucifixion and death.” Saint Mark the Ascetic writes, “You should continually keep in mind the great humiliation which the Lord took upon Himself in His inefable love for us, the shame He suffered, the insults, vilification, ridicule and abuse; how He was scourged and spat upon, derided

and mocked; the scarlet robe, the crown of thorns; His condemnation by those in power; the outcry of the unruly Jews, men of His own race, against Him; the cross, the nails, the lance, the drink of vinegar and gall; the scorn of the Gentiles; the derision of the passers-by... and the rest of the sufferings which He patiently accepted for us: crucifixion; death; the three-day burial; the descent into hell.”

Saint Augustine says that “nothing is so profitable as to think how much Jesus has suffered for us.” According to Saint Bonaventure, “he who desires to go on advancing from virtue to virtue, from grace to grace, should meditate continually on the Passion of Jesus.” A nun asked Elder Paisios of Mount Athos (1924–1994) on what she should meditate during the Great Fast. Elder Paisios replied, “You should reflect on the Passion, the Sacrifice of Christ.”

If we make the Sufferings of Jesus our constant meditation, we will grow to hate sin more and more. How can we go on in

sin, or relapse into our old ways, when we have the Passion of Jesus before us? By thinking deeply on the painful sacrifice that Christ made for us, we will grow in holiness and make progress in the supreme virtue of love for God and neighbor. He gave all for us, now we must strive to give all for Him. To think about the Death of Christ is to remember His love for us, and to be more and more grateful for our salvation. When we contemplate Jesus on the Cross praying, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do” (Lk. 23:34), we more easily forgive all who have offended us. We are more likely to endure our trials and difficulties with patience and resignation if we consider that God Himself suffered and died to save us.

Meditation is a careful consideration of the truths of the Faith. The Fathers, Doctors, and Saints assure us that meditating on the Passion and Death of Jesus Christ is the way to holiness of life and profound intimacy with God. **ECL**



SEMINARIAN REFLECTIONS

Reader Timothy Fariss

A WORD FROM TOLEDO

Editor's Note: this is the second interview with Laura Riebe, a missionary with Culture Project, a Catholic organization dedicated to teaching young people about chastity.

A Little About Laura Riebe's Journey Just Getting Started:

March 2018 – Hired by the Culture Project Mission

May 2018 – Graduated from West Chester University of PA

June 2018 – Began mission training

2 Weeks at Saint Vincent College in Latrobe, PA

6 Weeks (6 days/wk) at Immaculate Conception Seminary in NY

Mission:

October 2018 – Moved to Toledo, OH

Months on Mission: 5

Parishes and Schools visited: 33

Team Talks given: ~150

Student Audience reached: >3,800

Adult/Parent Audience: >500

Reader Fariss: How long is your commitment to the Culture Project Mission?

Laura Riebe: Being a CP missionary is a one-year commitment. Some people only stay for one year, but many choose to serve for multiple years.

RF: What was your training program like?

LR: Each day of training was filled with community time, prayer, formation, and work. The morning started with Liturgy and a holy hour. We had the opportunity to be formed by various speakers including well-known Catholic speakers like Stephanie Gray, Matt Fradd, and Brian Butler.* During this time, we learned about topics like fertility, chastity, and gender identity.

When we weren't listening to speakers, we were working on mastering the Culture Project curriculum of three main presentations regarding Human Dignity, Sexual Integrity, and Social Media so that we could execute them at parishes, Catholic schools, and events. These presentations recognize the current state of our culture and call indi-

viduals to be a light by living out their faith. We didn't stop with the youth! We also prepared a talk so we could be a resource for parents as they navigate the difficult waters of raising pure, faithful children.

These filled up our days, but at night we always made time for community. We

"She revealed that she felt called to religious life but didn't know where to start. I was the first person she told about this calling, which blew me away!"

bonded over communal meals, dance parties in the seminary basement, and trips to NYC. By the end of our fall training, our group of 30 missionaries and staff members became a tight-knit family!

RF: What has been the most challenging aspect of living the missionary life so far?

LR: One of the most challenging parts of being a Culture Project missionary is that we often don't see the fruit of our labors. Usually, we go into a school or parish, give a presentation, and then leave. This is hard because we don't get to walk alongside students once they hear our talks. It is up to the priests, teachers, and parents to continue the conversation we started. Sometimes, God gives us a glimpse of the work he is doing in a student's hearts. We've had several students approach us after a talk, thanking us for our witness and being there, or even sharing a piece of their story with us, which is such an honor!

RF: Could you share an interaction with a student that has impacted you?

LR: One night, I gave a Sexual Integrity talk to a group of high school girls. After the talk finished and the group left, a student hesitantly approached me. She asked about my discernment process for joining the Culture Project and how I knew God called me to be a missionary. I was intrigued by her question and readily shared more about my decision. Once I finished, she revealed

that she felt called to religious life but didn't know where to start. I was the first person she told about this calling, which blew me away! Who would have thought one of my talks could motivate someone to begin discerning their vocation? It was such a blessing to walk with her, even if it just was for one evening!

RF: What is it like having a spiritually driven co-worker as a roommate?

LR: The community aspect of missionary life is one of the hardest yet most rewarding parts. Living with people I didn't choose and working with them every day comes with its hardships. But while this is true, my experience with my teammates has been overwhelmingly fruitful. Being surrounded by people who have the same faith has encouraged me to grow in ways I never anticipated! They hold me accountable when I'm trying to grow in virtue and support me when I don't always succeed. Overall, they are the reason I stay sane as I share the radical truths of the church in a very loud culture!

RF: If you could give one piece of advice to someone considering entering a missionary program next year, what would you say to them?

LR: JUST DO IT. It may seem daunting to give up an extended period of time to serve the Lord. Some missionary pro-

grams, like the Culture Project, involve each missionary raising his or her entire salary, which can be terrifying. With the combination of these and other factors, sometimes giving your "Yes!" is the hardest part. But know when you put your fears aside, God will provide and show you how he wants you to serve his kingdom. **ECL**

* Stephanie Gray is an author and international pro-life speaker who currently runs her ministry, Love Unleashes Life.

* Matt Fradd is an author and presenter for the Chastity Project, he also hosts "Pints with Aquina," a popular podcast

* Brian Butler is the founder of Dumb Ox Ministries which works with teens, young adults, and families; to cultivate an understanding of the Theology of the Body and authentic masculinity and femininity.



UPCOMING EPARCHIAL AND PARISH EVENTS

MARCH, 2019

- 4 First Day of the Great Fast
Clean Monday Fasting rules on page 3*
- 25 Annunciation of the Virgin Theotokos
*Solemn Holyday * Chancery closed*
- 26-28 Eastern Catholic Hierarchs Meeting
Saint Louis, MO Bishop Kurt in attendance*

APRIL, 2019

- 13 Saturday of Lazarus
- 14 Flowery/Palm Sunday
- 18 Great and Holy Thursday
Chancery closed
- 19 Great and Holy Friday
Chancery closed

- 20 Great and Holy Saturday
- 21 Pascha * The Great Day
The Resurrection of Our Lord
Christ is risen! Indeed He is risen! There is no fasting this week.
- 22 Bright Monday
*Solemn Holyday * Chancery closed*
- 23 Bright Tuesday * Holy Great Martyr George
*Solemn Holyday * Chancery closed*
- 29-May 2 Annual Presbyteral Days
Spring Lake, NJ

JULY, 2019

- 28-31 Eparchial Teen Rally
Carpathian Village, Canadensis, PA

Eastern Catholic Life

Circulation Department
445 Lackawanna Avenue
Woodland Park, NJ 07424

Next Issue:
April, 2019

Copy Deadline:
March 22

The current issue of the ECL was printed at Evergreen Printing, Bellmawr, NJ, and was distributed from the U.S. Post Office via second class mailing in Bellmawr, NJ.