



EASTERN CATHOLIC LIFE

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CONGREGATION CENTENNIAL: SUPPORTING EASTERN CATHOLICS AGAINST ALL ODDS

By Cindy Wooden, Catholic News Service



Pope Francis addressing those gathered for the Mass to celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the Congregation of Eastern Church in Santa Maria Maggiore, Rome

The Vatican is celebrating the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the Congregation for Eastern Churches, an office that supports the Eastern Catholic Churches and strives to ensure that the universal Catholic Church treasures its diversity, including in liturgy, spirituality, and even canon law.

Coincidentally established five months before the Russian Revolution, the Congregation continually has had to face the real persecution and threatened existence of some of the Eastern churches it was founded to fortify.

Until 1989-90, many of the Byzantine Catholic churches – including, notably, the Ukrainian Catholic Church, the largest of all the Eastern churches – were either outlawed or severely repressed by the communist governments of Eastern Europe, said Archbishop Cyril Vasil, a member of the Slovak Catholic Church and Secretary of the Congregation.

No sooner had the Soviet Bloc disintegrated and once-persecuted churches begun to flourish, then the first Gulf War broke out and then there was the invasion of Iraq. And the turmoil of the Arab Spring across North Africa and the war in

Syria. And Israeli-Palestinian tensions continue. The Chaldean, Syriac Catholic, Coptic Catholic, Melkite, and Maronite churches have paid a high price.

“In all of this, the Eastern churches suffer the most because they find themselves crushed in the struggle between bigger powers, both local and global,” Archbishop Vasil said in mid-August. Even those conflicts that are not taking direct aim at Christians in the Middle East make life extremely difficult for them, and so many decide to seek a more peaceful life for themselves and their families outside the region.

One impact of the “exodus,” he said, is the greater globalization of the Catholic Church. While 100 years ago, when the Congregation for Eastern Churches was established, only a few Eastern churches had eparchies – dioceses – outside their traditional homelands, today they can be found in Australia, North and South America and scattered across Western Europe.

“In Sweden today, a third of the Christians are Chaldeans or Armenians,” he added. “In Belgium and Holland, where Catholicism has suffered a decline, communities are re-born

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(from left to right) Father Yuri Oros, Father Michael Popson, Father Charles Yastishock, Bishop Kurt, Father Michael Yurista, Father Boniface Hicks, Father Iaroslav Korostil

2017 ANNUAL PRIEST RETREAT

By Father Joseph Bertha, Ph.D.

For almost three decades, our eparchial clergy have gathered together at the San Alfonso Retreat House in Long Branch, NJ. Located directly seaside, the ocean breezes and waves enhance and enrich the prayerful environment. The clergy, together with our eparchial bishops through the years, have joined together here for Bishop’s Appeal meetings; the inception of the Emmaus Program; and for the annual priest retreats.

Typically, these occasions for prayer and fellowship coincide with or complement the local Jewish seaside communities’ celebration of the high holidays of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur usually falling during the latter half of September. These Jewish holydays make an interesting parallel with our Byzantine liturgical calendar which commences on the first day of September, followed two weeks later by the solemn feast of Exaltation of the Holy Cross. Both First Covenant and New Covenant believers mirror one another in commemorating the start of a new year linked together with a day of atonement for sin, a perfect opportunity and environment for our annual priest retreat.

The first conference began on Monday evening with the retreat master: Dom Boniface Hicks, a hieromonk (priest monk) from Saint

Vincent Benedictine Monastery, Latrobe, PA (near Pittsburgh). As the evening conference began, one could sense a new development among our eparchial clergy. Joining us for the first time in our annual retreat were many of the newly arrived European married clergy, who presently constitute approximately twenty percent of our eparchial priests.

Father Boniface’s main theme and challenge for the retreatants was to not only reflect on, but to practice silence. Afterwards, his invitation to prayerful silence was echoed and reinforced by one of my favorite lines which was chanted the Akathist Hymn: “O Theotokos we see most eloquent orators mute as fish before you; for they are at a loss to explain how you gave birth and yet abide a Virgin...”

Throughout the ensuing thought-provoking presentations, Father Boniface continually focused on and stressed the virtue of *apatheia*, passionlessness, as taught by the Desert Fathers. These monks emphasized and highlighted the need for all followers of Christ to empty their hearts of the passions, to allow the refugent light producing presence of our loving Savior to flow in, heal and abide within us.

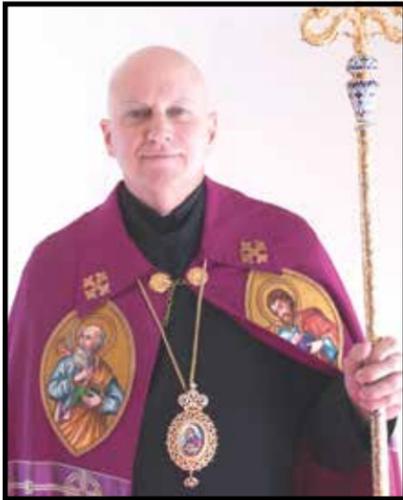
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I LIFT UP MY EYES...

Pastoral Reflections of Bishop Kurt



A GREAT CHASM IS FIXED BETWEEN US

“Be compassionate as your Father is compassionate.” For a month or so we have been reading from “The Gospel of Compassion”, that is to say, “The Gospel according to Saint Luke.” Some people call Saint Luke’s Life of Jesus the “Gospel of Compassion” because the word “compassion” appears so often. The most striking example is in the verse where Jesus says, “Be compassionate as your Father is compassionate.” In Saint Matthew’s Gospel, the parallel verse says, “Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” Some translations use the word *mercy* instead of *compassion* in the English language. Either way, you get the idea. Not only does the word *compassion* appear a great deal, but several of our favorite stories of God’s mercy are in the Gospel of Saint Luke and nowhere else, for example, the lost coin and the prodigal son.

As we read through the Gospel in the last few weeks, the general thrust of the public life of Jesus was similar to the other Gospels. Jesus is identified at His Baptism in the Jordan by the Holy Spirit and voice of God the Father—we call it the Theophany or Epiphany. Jesus then went on to show His identity by His works, not by His claims. He showed that He had power over all disease whether physical, spiritual, or mental, and that He had power over demonic entities, power over the weather, and even the power to call the dead back to life. This sequence of events is summarized when Jesus says to the followers of Saint John the Baptizer, “Go tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have the good news preached to them.” Saint John the Baptizer would surely recognize these works as the credentials of the Messiah, the One foretold by Moses and the prophets.

Having established his identity, and confirming it at Caesarea Philippi and the Transfiguration, Jesus begins to teach more extensively, and Saint Luke’s Gospel does seem to have a special emphasis on the mercy and compassion of God. Nowadays, there is a lot of talk about God’s infinite mercy, and the phrase “unconditional love” is very popular. How far does God’s mercy go? It is safe to say that God’s mercy goes further than any of us can possibly imagine; after all, God Himself is so far beyond our comprehension or imagination. But, we still have the question, can God forgive every possible sin, and will God forgive every possible sin?

Some years ago, I took my first and only trip to the Holy Land. I wore my clerical suit on the long flight from Los Angeles to Tel Aviv. I sat next to an older man who made it a point to tell me that, even though he was Jewish, he greatly respected my beliefs and my life work. He had an interesting story. He was a Russian Jew who

studied advanced physics, emigrated to the United States, built and sold a highly successful scientific company, and was comfortably retired but still working as a consultant for Boeing. He was going to visit his relatives in Israel who now spoke Hebrew, but they all shared the common language of Russian.

He said that although he was Jewish, he was not an orthodox Jew, and rejected most of the teachings of the Bible. He could not accept the violence and savagery of the early parts of the Jewish Bible. I offered my own opinion, that all of ancient history is extremely violent and savage, that homicide was an accepted tool in every ancient culture, and according to archeologists, even more so before civilization. I believe that it is in the Jewish scriptures, or what we call the Old Testament, that we can see God gradually trying to teach us NOT to act that way. I showed him examples from the scriptures how it was his own ancestors who taught the rest of us to live by God’s law, and to give up murder, adultery, stealing, and all the other savagery of the ancient world. Even, for example, capital punishment in the law of Moses was implemented in ways to avoid sadism. The Jews were even required to show respect for the corpse of an executed criminal, because he was still made in the image and likeness of God. Moving forward in the Bible, the Jewish prophets taught that God was angriest at us when we mistreated the poor and helpless, and that mercy and compassion were more important than all the rituals of the temple. The Russian-American physicist said that he had never looked at it that way before, and he was going to reconsider his own heritage.

This Russian-American Jew then asked me an important question. He said, “Do you believe that God will forgive any sin?” I told him that I believe that God can forgive any sin. He told me he could not accept that. He said, “What about Stalin? How could God ever forgive a man who caused so much suffering and death to so many millions of people?” Well, I had to answer that even though I believe God can forgive that, I don’t believe that He does. In the case of Stalin, there is no evidence that Stalin ever repented of his choices. Stalin rejected all of God’s laws and made himself a god, even the only god, not tolerating any rivals. Even up until his death, the most powerful men in Russia were terrified of his bloody jealousy. I suppose we parted with mutual respect—he gave me his business card and said he would like to continue our discussion someday.

So, we still have the question, does God forgive everything? I think that the answer to that question is related to another question, will God ever take away your free will? All of our spiritual and moral tradition, from Moses to Jesus to the great saints, agree that God always gives us freedom, and sin takes away our freedom. It seems to me the question is not will God always forgive, but rather, do we have the power to reject God’s mercy. It seems to me that when someone chooses evil as the final answer, that when someone definitively rejects God’s mercy, then final condemnation is respect for our free will.

When I was living in Southern California, I was called out by the police one night to a corpse lying in the middle of the street. A teenager was attempting to rob a house, but the homeowner was an off-duty policeman. The teenager shot at the homeowner, who was only standing in the door of his own home, and the homeowner then drew a weapon and killed the teenager. The young man died in the very act of breaking one of the Ten Commandments, and doing so for greed. The young man was of a Mexican-American heritage, which is why the police called a Catholic priest to be present. However, the family had rejected the Catholic faith in order to join a Pentecostal church. Their church had no absolution or last rites and no prayers for the dead, so they had to accept that there was nothing their pastor could offer except comfort and soothing words. One of my saddest memories of my life is leaving that scene with the teenager dead in the street, the phalanx of law enforcement vehicles with their lights flashing, and the family that had left their Catholic faith for the Church with no absolution or prayers for the dead. Even though he was struck down in the act of violating God’s law, I don’t know what became of his soul, so I still pray for him today from time to time.

Getting back to the Gospel of Saint Luke, in a lengthy section on the mercy of God, Jesus tells us a series of stories about God’s search for the lost. What man among you, He says, if he has lost one of his sheep, will not leave the others and search for the lost one? Just so I tell you, there



Icon of the Last Judgment

will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance. Then Jesus talks about the woman who searches her house for the missing coin, and joyously tells all her neighbors when she finds it. And then Jesus tells us the story of the Prodigal Son. All of these stories are such a comfort to us as we fall into sins of weakness throughout our lives. Perhaps we fall briefly, like the coin that rolled under the couch. Or perhaps we completely abandon the right path for a while, like the Prodigal Son. He experienced the pleasures of some parties in his father’s house, and

so he took all of his inheritance to the city where he heard the parties never stop. When that party finally stopped, and his money ran out, he goes home with a changed heart and his father comes running out to meet him.

But soon after, Jesus shocks us. Jesus tells us the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus, the poor man. The rich man parties all the time in luxury while the poor man sits outside the gate longing to share just enough to eat. He is diseased from malnutrition, and Jesus even adds the touching detail that the dogs came and licked his sores. This pitiful story has a happy ending for the poor man: when he dies, he is carried by the angels to the bosom of Abraham. What about the rich man? He is taken to a place of torment in the underworld, Hades. But can't God forgive the rich man? Jesus says definitively in the story, between the paradise of Lazarus and Abraham and the place of torment there is a barrier that cannot be crossed. As Abraham says in the story, "between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us." There are many people nowadays who do not believe in an eternal hell, and many people who say that everything will be forgiven. But the words of Jesus in the Gospel of Saint Luke, sometimes called the Gospel of Compassion, are clear for anyone to read and understand. It seems from the teachings of Our Lord that God can forgive any sin, but God does not have to forgive every sin. He gave us free will, and He respects our free will. We can choose to reject His law right up to our last breath, whether we die in the act of committing a murder, or whether we die a peaceful death surrounded by luxury, or whether we combine both sins by choosing euthanasia.

There is a traditional distinction between sins of weakness and sins of malice. When most people talk about sin; when they confess their sins; and when they talk about God's limitless mercy, they are talking about sins of weakness, and you could see a parallel in the stories told by Jesus. In the stories with the happy ending, the sins may have been sins of weakness or ignorance or foolishness. In the final story, where the man is tormented for eternity, he knew God's law and was confronted with his selfish choice every day at his gate. Perhaps he was guilty of a sin of malice, not a sin a weakness.

Even if God does treat sins of weakness with more mercy than He does sins of malice; even if it is easier to repent from sins of weakness than from sins of malice; nevertheless, the great spiritual masters warn us severely: sins of weakness will inexorably lead to sins of malice! The teenager who died in the street was led into his gang life by peer pressure. The rich man ended up selfish from indulging his sensual pleasures. Even evil Stalin began in a seminary, but was seduced by the glamor of revolution. There is no doubt that sins of weakness, when they are indulged, will lead to sins of malice.

In our Church, we are blessed with four fasting periods. Actually, by ancient tradition, Christians should fast two days out of every week (except festal weeks). We know from the very beginning the Christians fasted on Wednesdays and Fridays. This tradition continued until recently in our church. (I remember in seminary some of the guys laughing affectionately at lunch on Wednesday. "I know what my grandmother is eating." Then others would finish his sentence, "... a cheese sandwich!") But on top of the tradi-

tion of fasting on almost all Wednesdays and Fridays, there are four periods in our Church when we are encouraged more serious fasting. There are smaller fasts before the Feast of Saints. Peter and Paul on June 29 and before the feast of the Dormition on August 15. Then there are two great fasts. The greatest is before Easter and we call it by the ancient Anglo-Saxon word *Lent*. And the other great fast is before Christmas and is called the *Philipovka* or the Saint Philip Fast. It is called the *Philipovka* because it begins on November 15, the day after the feast of Saint Philip the Apostle. The fast runs from November 15 through December 24. It is because of this ancient fast that December 24 is a day of strict fast, and our ancestors served so many wonderful vegetarian dishes at the Holy Supper on Christmas Eve.

In the Gospels, we read that Jesus told the Pharisees that His followers would fast after He was gone. We keep these traditional fasts in order to support and encourage each other in this holy practice. Fasting is one of the traditional ways to repent and discipline ourselves to avoid sins of weakness. The disappearance of fasting from our culture has been in tandem with the loss of belief in sin and the loss of fear of hell. It's fascinating (sort of like the same fascination of a train wreck) to watch our culture reject fasting, reject sin, and reject fear of hell, while embracing every other strange diet or exercise based on fads or ignorance or even pagan religion. It is a great blessing to be in a Church that still encourages traditional fasting. The Saint Philip Fast is coming soon. Make the most of it!

+Kurt Burnette

Parish Education Calendar 2017-2018

Wednesday November 29, 2017 at 5:30 PM: Meager Meal (Soup, bread, PB & J) in the Parish Hall and Reflection by Kathy Szarko "On the Nativity Icon," followed by Emmanuel Moleben @ 7 PM

Saturday December 2, 2017 from 10 AM- 3 PM: Parish Education Day with Basilian Sisters Sr. Joann & Sr. Ann and Ann Koshute & Marie Nester "Living As Missionary Disciples"

Sunday December 10, 2017 at 9 AM: Maternity of Anna & St. Nicholas Celebration with Parish Brunch

Wednesday December 13, 2017 at 5:30 PM: Meager Meal (Soup, bread, PB & J) and Reflection by Fr. John Szada followed by Emmanuel Moleben @ 7 PM

Wednesday December 20, 2017 at 5:30 PM: Meager Meal (Soup, bread, PB & J) followed by Christmas Hymn Sing-a-long and Emmanuel Moleben @ 7 PM

Sunday December 24, 2017 at 8:30 PM: Christmas Pageant and Vigil Liturgy

Saturday February 7, 2018 from 10 AM- 3 PM: Pysanky Workshop taught by Maria Cicarelli and assisted by Keith Koshute. Fee: \$5 per family, includes materials.

Wednesday February 21, 2018 Same session given at Noon AND 6 PM followed by prayer: Parish Lenten Education session with Fr. Jim Spera "Living As Missionary Disciples" (snowdate Wednesday Feb 28)

Saturday March 3, 2018 from 11:30 AM - 3 PM: Parish Education Day on End-of-Life Issues and Ethics with Mr. Dominic Lombardi

Sunday March 25, 2018 at 9 AM: Palm Sunday & The Feast of the Annunciation Liturgy followed by Parish Brunch and Easter Egg Hunt

Saturday June 2, 2018 from 10 AM - 3 PM: Parish Education Day with Fr. Alexei Michalenko with Sr. Victoria and Sr. Mary Ann of the Community of the Mother of God of Tenderness (CMGT), "Living As Missionary Disciples"

All programs take place at St. Ann Byzantine Catholic Church, 5408 Locust Lane, Harrisburg, PA 17109. For more details on events, location, or speakers, please contact Angela Sedun at StAnnByzEvents@gmail.com or at 717-490-1284.

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PEOPLE YOU KNOW AROUND THE EPARCHY



IN BALTIMORE...

Father Conan Howard Timoney, pastor of Patronage of the Mother of God Parish, received an invitation to attend an academic convocation at the Yale University Divinity School in New Haven, CT. Father Conan was celebrating forty years since

receiving his doctorate at the Andover Newton Theological School in Boston, MA. His classes there were taken at the Andover Newton campus and the Harvard University Graduate School of Business.

Andover Newton is now in a process of merger with Yale University at the New Haven campus. The convocation was focused on the process of its merger with Yale University.

IN BINGHAMTON...

Members of GCU Lodge #47 and parishioners of Holy Spirit Byzantine Church in Binghamton, NY, have been meeting weekly for Pan'i Michelle Tomas' Crochet Club. Beginners and experts have enjoyed the tutoring and leadership that Pan'i Michelle has to offer. The ladies have crocheted lovely hats for the oncology department of our local hospital. These hats are available to chemotherapy patients free of charge.

In the future, the Crochet Club is looking forward to stitching other items, such as lap afghans, for nursing home residents. This is a wonderful way to spend an evening!



40TH ANNUAL SLOVAK HERITAGE FESTIVAL OF NEW JERSEY

By Father John Zec, photos by Pan'i Anna Vavrak

The Slovak Heritage Festival of NJ celebrated a milestone of 40 years this September. This year's festival was held on the 16th of September at the Middlesex County, Fairgrounds in East Brunswick, NJ. As has been the custom for many years, Slovaks and Rusyns from a wide area of the Northeast gathered to honor the Slovak and Rusyn culture, language and heritage with songs, dances and most importantly faith, prayer, and thanks to God.

The day began with Divine Liturgy concelebrated at 11:00 AM by Bishop Milan Lach, SJ, Administrator of the Eparchy of Parma, and Bishop Kurt, Bishop of Passaic, and various clergy from the Eastern and Western churches. Among the clergy were Father John Zec, Father Richard Baker, Father Jozef Krajnak, Father Stefan Chanas and Father Martin Vavrak and two seminarians: Myron Kerul-Kmec, Jr., and Michael Kunitz. Among the more than 3,000 thousand people in attendance, and at least 500 just at Hierarchical Divine Liturgy, was Miroslav Lajcak, Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic and President of the 72nd UN General Assembly, and other dignitaries from the Slovak Republic.

Traditional Slovak food was offered as well as souvenirs and items from the "Old Country." The program included the national anthems of Slovakia and USA; greetings, performances by children from Lipka Academy; folk ensemble Limbora; Slovak singers: Nika Karch and Beata Dubasova, Arian Lem Joy Trio; and Vox Ethnika.

Editor's Note: John Duch, Esq., parishioner of Saint Michael Cathedral in Passaic; a leader in NJ's Slovak and Rusyn Community; and former Deputy Mayor of Garfield, NJ, was a co-chairman of this event. He fell asleep in the Lord before this year's festival. May his memory be eternal! Vičnaja jemu pamjat'!



Bishop Milan delivers remarks.



Left to Right: Mrs. Nina Holy, chairperson of the Slovak Heritage Festival; Father Richard Baker; Bishop Milan Lach, SJ, Administrator of the Eparchy of Parma; Father Stefan Chanas; Bishop Kurt Burnette of Passaic; Seminarian Michael Kunitz; Father Martin Vavrak; and Seminarian Myron Kerul-Kmec, Jr.

CONGREGATION CENTENNIAL

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(standing, from left to right) Bishop Milan Šášik of Uzhorod, Ukraine (facing away); Metropolitan Archbishop Jan Babjak, SJ, of Presov, Slovakia; and Metropolitan Archbishop William Skurla of Pittsburgh. (seated, from left to right) Cardinal Angelo Bagnasco of Genoa, Italy; Cardinal Péter Erdő, Primate of Hungary; and Major Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk, Archbishop of Kiev, Ukraine.

Archbishop Vasil said others risk losing their Eastern Catholic identity through assimilation. Some of the blame, at least before the Second Vatican Council, lies with the Vatican and the Latin-rite hierarchy and religious orders, who, for decades encouraged Eastern Catholics to be more like their Latin-rite brothers and sisters.

Vatican II urged a recovery of the Eastern Catholic traditions, liturgy and spirituality. But, especially for Eastern Catholics living far from their churches' homelands, uprooting vestiges of the "Latinization" can prove difficult, Archbishop Vasil said.

Using his own Slovak Catholic Church as an example, he said parishes have been asked, beginning September 1, to return to the Eastern Catholic tradition of administering baptism, chrismation (confirmation) and the Eucharist together at the same liturgy, even for infants. In Slovakia, as in some parishes in North America, Eastern Catholics adopted the Latin-rite Church's practicing of withholding the Eucharist until a child is about 7 and then celebrating the child's first Communion.

Especially for Eastern Christians whose ancestors immigrated two or three or four generations ago, the archbishop said, maintaining their specific identity as Chaldean, Ruthenian or Syro-Malankara Catholics is a challenge.

"The greatest danger in the coming years is extinction," Archbishop Vasil said. "We don't know what history has in store for us, but we must make sure we have done everything possible to avoid this danger."



Metropolitan Archbishop William Skurla of Pittsburgh is greeted by Pope Francis at the Wednesday Papal Audience

with the arrival of new Christians, which is a reminder of the importance of immigrants bringing their faith with them."

In countries like Italy, where thousands of Ukrainians and Romanians have come to work, they add ritual diversity to the expressions of Catholicism already found there, he said.

The growing movement of people around the globe means that part of the Congregation's job is to work with the Latin-rite bishops and dioceses, "sensitizing church public opinion" to the existence, heritage, needs, and gifts of the Eastern Catholics moving into their communities, the archbishop said. Where an Eastern Catholic hierarchy has not been established, the local Latin-rite bishop has a responsibility "to accept, welcome and give respectful support to the Eastern Catholics" as their communities grow and become more stable.

The idea, Archbishop Vasil said, is to help the local Latin-rite bishop seriously ask himself, "How can I help them free themselves of me and get their own bishop?"

Although it has only 26 employees – counting the prefect, Cardinal Leonardo Sandri, and the receptionist – the Congregation for Eastern Churches works with 23 Eastern Catholic churches and communities, fulfilling the same tasks that for Latin-rite Catholics fall to the Con-

gregations for Bishops, Clergy, Religious, Divine Worship, and Education. It supports the Pontifical Oriental Institute, which offers advanced degrees in Eastern Christian liturgy, spirituality, and canon law. And it also coordinates the work of a funding network known by the Italian acronym ROACO; the U.S.-based Catholic Near East Welfare Association and Pontifical Mission for Palestine are part of that network.

The Congregation's approach in some areas is different than its Latin-rite counterparts because it follows the Eastern Catholic traditions and the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches. For instance, some of the Eastern churches ordain married men to the priesthood.

And, like the Congregation for Bishops, the Congregation for Eastern Churches helps prepare the nomination of bishops by Pope Francis, but only for dioceses outside the Eastern churches' traditional homeland. The Eastern Catholic synods of bishops elect new bishops closer to home and submit their names to the pope for his assent.

But the Congregation's primary concern is the survival of the Eastern Catholic churches, which is an issue not only in places where Eastern Catholics are threatened with death or driven from their homelands by war.

Eat In

SLAVIC FOOD Festival and Bake Sale

Carryout

—Featuring Eastern European ethnic foods—

Holupki, Pirohi, Haluški, Kielbasi, & Sauerkraut

—Bake Sale—**Including "our own" Kolachi/Kalácsi:**
nut, poppyseed, lekvar/prune, apricot, and raspberry
Plus a wide selection of cakes, pies, cookies, and many other sweet treats

—Raffle—**1st Prize: Apple iPad 32gb, 2nd Prize: \$250, plus 4 additional prizes**

Saturday, November 4th, 2017 10AM to 3PM

St. Gregory of Nyssa Byzantine Catholic Church
12420 Old Gunpowder Road Spur, Beltsville, MD 20705
For information, call: (301) 953-9323 or (301) 474-2219



DAY OF SPIRITUALITY

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2017

Saints Peter and Paul Parish Center, WARREN, OH

The Benedictine Sisters of the Byzantine Church at Queen of Heaven Monastery, Warren, Ohio, are offering a Day of Spirituality in preparation for Christmas on Saturday, December 9, 2017, from 1:00 PM to 4:30 PM. It will be held at Saints Peter and Paul Parish Center at 180 Belvedere Ave., N.E., Warren, OH. To register, please call 330-856-1813 or e-mail qohm@netdotcom.com by Friday, December 1, 2017.

The presenter will be Bishop John M. Kudrick, Bishop Emeritus of the Eparchy of Parma. His presentation considers answers to the questions: "Where should we seek the Lord?" and "Why do we need to seek Him? Why doesn't He just show himself?"

There will be time for reflection, questions, and refreshments, and an opportunity to receive the Mystery (Sacrament) of Reconciliation. You are welcome to pray Vespers with the sisters.

Benedictine Sisters of the Byzantine Church Queen of Heaven Monastery • 169 Kenmore Avenue NE #301 Warren, Ohio 44483 • 330-856-1813

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2017 Bishop's Annual Appeal



O Most Holy Theotokos

You are the Gardener of the Gardener of Life. You are the Soil whose Fruit shall not perish, You are the Key to Paradise. You are the mother of both Lamb and Shepherd, You are the Protection against unseen enemies, You are more Spacious than the Heavens. You are the trust of mortals before God, You are the Unfading Rose.

October, 2017

My dear friends,
Glory to Jesus Christ!

If we look around in our society now, it seems as though the news gets worse and worse. It seems as though a spiritual darkness is descending on our country, what the scriptures call, "the web that is woven over all nations, the veil that veils all people". If we ignore the news, and focus on our own community and family, we cannot escape it. I asked a local priest the other day how he was doing, and he said he had a rough week, a thirteen year old girl committed suicide in his parish—bullied by schoolmates. In my own family, a young enlisted man has buried too many of his close friends in the military—all suicides. These were not returning warriors with trauma from battle. These were healthy young men who seemed to have everything in life, but found no happiness or purpose in this world.



I thank God that I have our Church for support in these times. I can receive the Body and Blood of Christ, and I can go to confession to a priest. In our Church, we have the light of Jesus Christ to guide us through the darkness. We are guaranteed the truths of the Gospel in times of doubt. The ancient comfort of the Gospel is preserved from Apostolic times fresh and always new. The prophecies about the Messiah are fulfilled today as they were 2000 years ago, "The deaf shall hear the words of a book, and out of the gloom and the darkness, the eyes of the blind shall see. The lowly shall find fresh joy in the Lord, and the poor will rejoice in the Holy One of Israel." The Word of God is spoken to us in the Holy Scriptures and in our sublime Liturgy, filling up the emptiness in our souls and giving us eyes to see beyond the materialism and false friendship of this world. God has blessed our Church on the east coast so abundantly in the past 125 years. And the generous and faithful people of our Church have built a system of parishes from the north to the south so that we can usually find one of our communi-

ties a reasonable distance away. Even now, God has sent us young dedicated priests with families to renew our communities, and two young men in the seminary preparing for the priesthood. I am in awe of the dedication and hard work of so many of our priests, both young and old. God has been so generous to our Eparchy that we in turn have been able to help others.

Every year, I ask you to help with the financial support of the integral Eparchy. Your generosity allows us to support struggling parishes and to establish new missions. Even this summer promising new missions have been established in the South to accomodate our faithful moving there. Your support also aids eparchial activities such as pilgrimages and education, to educate seminarians, to bring new priests from Eastern Europe, to care for priests who are unable to work, and even to be generous to our Church in Eastern Europe. You make it possible to bring the Light of Christ to the east coast.

+Kurt Bunette

Pledge now Through December 31, 2017

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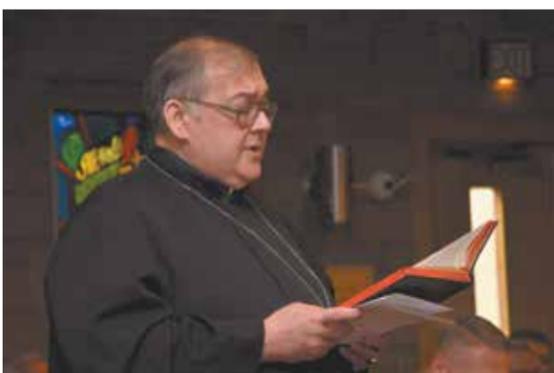
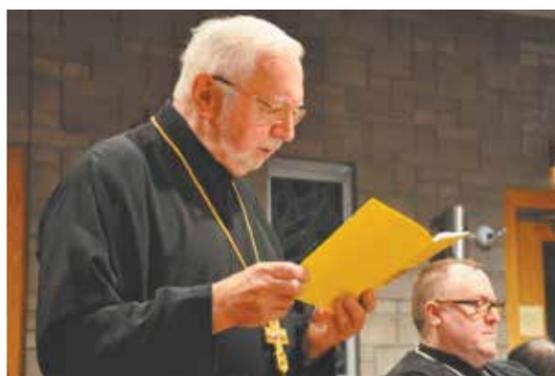
2017 PRIEST RETREAT

...Continued From Page 1

Of course, silence was interrupted during the social events which punctuated the three days of recollection: meals, free time periods, and rest; the priest brothers practiced the virtue of gracious hospitality by welcoming, and becoming acquainted with our recent arrivals from Europe.

The interaction between the clergy came to a dramatic climax one day during the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. In a quiet moment in the middle of the Liturgy, one could hear the faint cooing of a priest's baby echoing through the otherwise silent chapel! An historic event occurred during our annual retreat normally populated with celibate clergy; a child's voice, for the first time ever at our priests' retreat, rang out to the glory of God. In the United States of America, a country where married Catholic clergy was prohibited since 1929, out of the mouth of a Byzantine Catholic "PK" (priest's kid) came the praise of God!

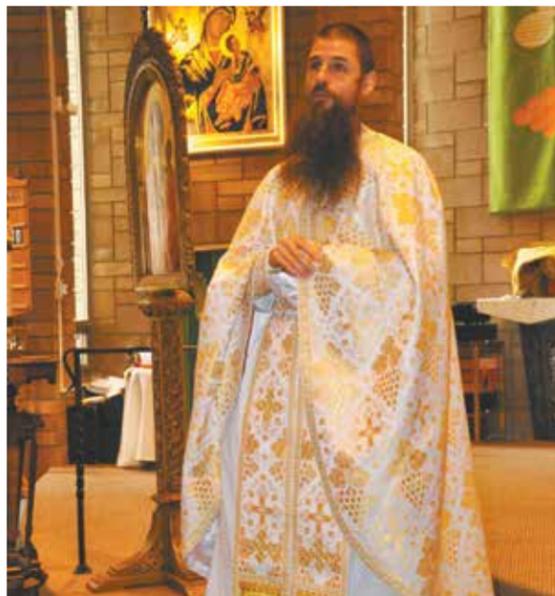
Throughout the retreat, we were invited to confess our sins in the Mystery of Reconciliation. We

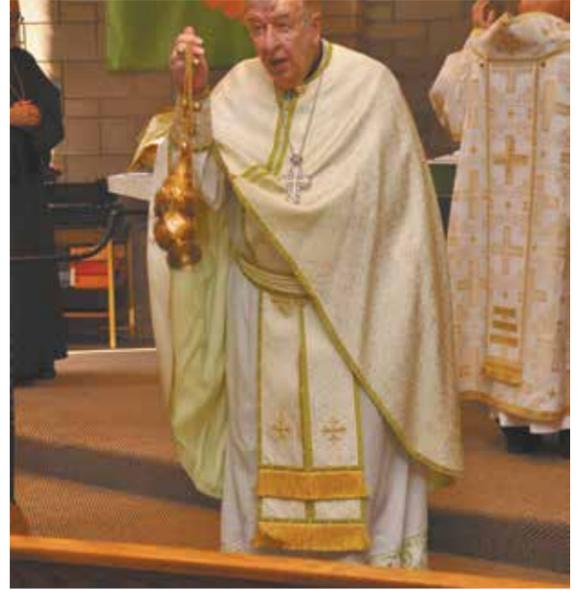


received the Anointing with Holy Oil. The spectacular setting of the San Alfonso Retreat House on the Jersey shoreline combined both God and sea. Above the continual crescendos and rhythm of the Atlantic waves, the washing, rolling and encountering the American shore; these very same swells which carried our first Byzantine Ruthenian Bishop, Basil Takach, to our country; you could hear the voices of the Rabbis petitioning the Lord to pardon transgressions mingled with the similar request for reconciliation from the mouth of Cardinal Keeler on October 3, 1999: Latin Catholics ask for pardon as we recall the suffering, pain and loss experienced by our brothers and sisters from Eastern Catholic Churches!

This remarkable act of reconciliation, and the restoration of the married priesthood in the United States, served as a clarion call to Byzantine Ruthenian Catholics, indeed all Eastern Catholics to the New Evangelization of the 2000 Jubilee year.

As the retreat drew to a close, our hearts abounded with the joy of this opportunity of the Twenty-first century! The married priesthood is now restored in the United States. The honored tradition of our Eastern Church not only enriches our eparchy, but allows us as Byzantine Catholic to evangelize in our own unique way this beloved country in which we live. **ECL**





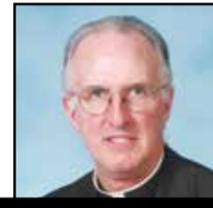
83RD PILGRIMAGE IN HONOR OF OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP

Uniontown, PA – Photos continued from October Issue



CATECHETICAL REFLECTIONS

Father Robert F. Slesinski, Ph.D.



MAN BEFORE GOD

Selfhood as Understood in the Slavic East—Installment 2/3

V. S. Solovyov's "Syllogism" On the Occasion of the 100th Anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution



Christ in the Garden with Adam and Eve

Far from denying the personhood of revolutionaries, Berdyaev aptly tags them as “step-children of God” and not as “children of God,” eluding to the fact that somehow they view themselves as beyond the ken of God, bereft of the loving blessings of Divine Providence. In line with Dostoevsky’s character Ivan Karamazov, one of the protagonists of *The Brothers Karamazov*, who, in face of the tears of a child, could not but return his “admission ticket” back to God, thus consciously rejecting Him, the social revolutionaries of Berdyaev’s time were of the same ilk. But, for his part, Berdyaev could not but bemoan an undeniable Bolshevik social reality, scornfully observing “and when the hour of your domination came, you manifested an unheard-of severity, you transformed your country into a sea of tears and harmed your people with a limitless quantity of sufferings.”

Another imagery for the revolutionary comes into play with Berdyaev. Affirming once again that “in the revolution sonship without fatherhood is affirmed” and that “the Son of Man does not have

a Father,” he proffers the thought that “the sons of revolution are *parvenus*,” noting that “revolution according to its nature is a rupture with the fatherly and sonly hypostases [persons].” He returns to this imagery when he expounds upon culture in contrast with civilization. “Culture,” Berdyaev affirms, “is of noble origin;” it “was born from [religious] cult.” In effect, he implies that culture is “aristocratic,” whereas civilization suffers from “democratization,” levelling it among the masses, thus insisting that “civilization always has the air of the *parvenu*.” Culture, on the other hand, is always rooted in the past, steeped in the traditions that undergird its *creative* openness to the future, heralding new values. In this perspective, “the revolutionary principle,” to Berdyaev’s mind, “by nature is hostile to culture, is anti-cultural,” adding that, given civilization’s accent on the present and the acquisition of benefits, “it is not by accident, you revolutionaries so love to talk about the bourgeois-ness of culture.” Contrasting the two again, Berdyaev pointedly states: “Culture has soul. Civilization only has methods and instruments of production.”

In this fashion, Berdyaev willingly admits the revolutionaries of his time had caught the spirit of the age, itself being the fruit of the positivist outlook on life of nineteenth-century scientists and seers, smug in their stance that the religious worldview is by now passé and only reflective of humankind’s alienation from the truly important in life, namely, economic well-being and prosperity owing to advances in science and technology.

At this juncture, Berdyaev is wont to appeal to a philosopher-forebear of his, V. S. Solovyov (1853–1990), the father of Russian philosophy. He too was unmoved by all the positivist currents reigning in intellectual circles of the time, indeed, openly abhorring them as antithetical to true human development and enhancement. Decrying this rampant positivism, Solovyov deftly captures the intellectual spirit of his age in an inartful syllogism that Berdyaev was to quote with relish in a number of his own works like his essays in

Landmarks, *The Philosophy of Freedom* (1911), and *The Worldview of Dostoevsky* (1923). In the mocking words of Solovyov, “the Russian intelligentsia always reasons according to a strange syllogism: man is descended from the apes, therefore we ought to love one another.”

Now what are we to make of this reasoning? What does the first affirmation have to do with the second one? Indeed, there seems to be some incoherence here. But, Solovyov would boldly proclaim that the reasoning found here is, in fact, the ethical reasoning of the typical intellectual of his time. Let us examine the “syllogism”—*more a witticism than anything else*—in closer detail. The first assertion “man is descended from the apes” is pure Darwinism. It is the thesis of scientific materialism and positivism; we need not quibble on this point. The second one, the conclusion of a “reasoning process,” “therefore we ought to love one another” is of an entirely different order; it is a thesis of liberal humanism. The two sets of “belief” simply do not belong together; a misconnect is at work. In a word, one cannot leap from the materialist, scientific order into the realm of the ethical, i.e., *spiritual* order. If man is one with the apes, there is no reason why one cannot expect humans to act like brute animals, the survival of the fittest being the one true implacable reality.

This late nineteenth and early twentieth-centuries debate, not surprisingly, is not outdated; it is supremely relevant to our *own* times, wherein the vanguard cry of secular humanism seems to hold sway: “Science will produce the reign of love among men.” The Bolsheviks were clearly wrong on this point; the *moral truth* of the likes of Solovyov, Dostoevsky, and Berdyaev has perdured. Indeed, the clash of worldviews is before us right now. It is a question of the *empirical versus the empyrean* (heavenly). **ECL**



LIFE, LOVE, AND THE HUMAN PERSON

By Ann M. Koshute, MTS

HUMBLE GRATITUDE

It’s happened to all of us on occasion at Divine Liturgy: we step into line to receive the Eucharist, preparing our hearts to receive our Savior. Our attention is drawn away, noticing the people who leave the pew to let others get in line, but step back in without joining them. With every step, we draw closer to our encounter with the Living God, but our thoughts aren’t on the miracle about to take place (our Creator uniting

Himself with us, His lowly creatures). “I wonder why he/she isn’t going to Communion?” is more often the thought that pops into our heads. As we make our way to the altar, we can’t help but notice others not presenting themselves, and we wonder, “What did they *do* that prevents them from receiving?” These thoughts flow in and out of our consciousness, until finally we reach our destination and come face to face with the risen

Christ. We receive, and make our way back to the pew, perhaps joining others who didn’t make the journey through the line with us. “Why didn’t they go to Communion?” we think to ourselves. The better question is, “Why am *I* going to Communion?”

Two words describe the reality of partaking in the Holy Mystery: Communion and Eucharist.

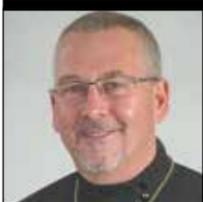
Both tell us something about the One Whom we receive, and about ourselves. We stand in lines all the time: at the store, outside a stadium or theatre, or in any number of situations that take us outside of the home. The “Communion line,” however, is nothing as mundane as any of those. Each step forward in that line brings us closer to our Lord, God and Savior, Jesus Christ. Christ is as present to us as He was on this earth two millennia ago. The One Who allowed Himself to be contained in the womb of Mary allows Himself to be contained once again in the chalice as a means of meeting each of us here and now. The “communion” taking place is between Him and us, and it’s a union more intimate than between husband and wife, or a mother and the child she carries in her womb. It is a union of body and soul – creature and Creator – and it is a miracle that happens in our presence at every Divine Liturgy. By His generosity and the grace given us to approach, Christ permeates every inch of our being: every cell in our body, every thought and memory, filling us with Himself. Communing with Christ opens us to be transformed by Him, to be re-created, to be changed. This change is a conversion of heart that must be on-going; one which calls us to not just “get in line” out of habit, but teaches us to approach Him, and others, with reverence and love. Communion with Christ must lead us to deeper communion with each other.

Eucharist is the other word to describe the communion between Jesus and us, and it’s particularly apt to consider at this time of year. The word comes from the Greek “eucharistia,” and it means “thankfulness.” The Gospels tell us that before Jesus instituted the Eucharist (Communion), He first gave thanks. Saint John (17:24) clues us in on what Jesus is thankful for: “Father, they are your gift to me.” What happened at the institution of this Holy Mystery – and happens each time the Mystery is re-presented in the Liturgy – is truly remarkable. “They” refers to us, believers in Jesus. Jesus is thankful for the self-sacrifice given on our behalf. He is thankful for each one of us, and for the gift that we are to Him. Imagine yourself having to go through something difficult or hurtful, and being grateful for the opportunity it affords you to help a loved one, or draw closer to God through suffering. If you’re like me, it’s pretty much unimaginable! We do our best to escape suffering, and even little inconveniences often seem monumental. But Jesus, our God, shows us the depth of His love and His high regard for us as His icons by willingly and thankfully embracing the suffering and death that sets us free. By His example of selfless sacrifice and humble gratitude, Jesus teaches us the meaning of our humanity: to make a gift of ourselves, and to receive others as gifts with gratitude.

Among the many beautiful hymns in our Byzantine tradition, one of my favorites contains this line: “Lord, in this Holy Mystery, we give our love to You, Offering our lives completely, humbly in gratitude.” This sums up the transformative power of the Eucharist in us, and what should be our attitude each time we approach Him. Communion is not merely our duty to fulfill; nor is it a reward or “prize” for good behavior. We have no “right” to receive Communion. Nor do we have a right to make assumptions about those who don’t present themselves. The Eucharist is our personal encounter with Christ, shared with each other in the communal experience of the Liturgy. It is the Holiest of Mysteries, the greatest of gifts, and should inspire awe, wonder and humility in us.

Next time we “get in line,” let’s keep our eyes, and our minds, on the One waiting to meet us. If we notice some of our fellow worshippers not approaching for Communion, let’s not pass judgment, but offer a prayer for them. If we’re busy asking why others are staying in the pew, we’ll have little appreciation for why we’re leaving it. Let’s approach the chalice – ordinary vessel containing the awesome God – with a renewed sense of wonder, and Christ’s own “humble gratitude.”

ECL



SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

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

HOW TO BUY A BIBLE

Are you considering giving someone a new Bible this Christmas? Whether you do your shopping in a bookstore or online, you will be overwhelmed with options. What should a Byzantine Catholic look for in a Bible?

THE TEXT: Make sure your Bible is complete. Protestant editions lack seven Old Testament books and some portions of others. Make sure the index lists: Tobit, Judith, 1 and 2 Maccabees, Baruch, the Wisdom of Solomon and Sirach. Some Bibles may call these “Deuterocanonical” or “Apocryphal” books and include them in an appendix.

THE TRANSLATION: Bibles are marketed with all sorts of names. What really matters is the particular English translation. Look for an acronym like NAB (*New American Bible*), RSV (*Revised Standard Version*), KJV (*King James Version*), NKJV (*The New King James Version*) or NIV (*New International Version*). There are two questions to ask about any translation: 1. What language is the Bible translated FROM? 2. What kind of English is the Bible translated INTO.

Translations from the original languages are preferable. That means Hebrew (with some Aramaic) for most of the Old Testament, Greek for a few Old Testament books, and Greek for the entire New Testament. Most modern translations (beginning with King James) do just that. The “Confraternity” edition or the “Douay-Rheims” translation, the Bible of choice in Catholic homes for decades, does not. It rather puts into English a Latin translation of the Hebrew and Greek original. Some Orthodox Bibles (like the *Orthodox Study Bible*) translate the Old Testament from the pre-Christian Greek

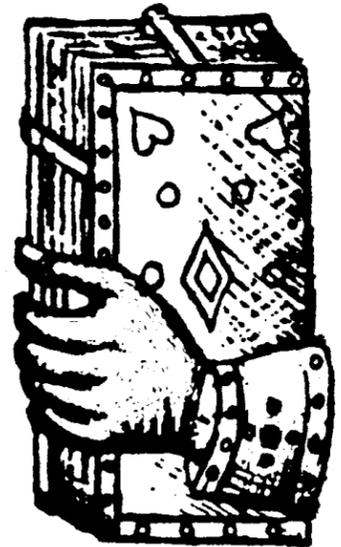
Septuagint version rather than from the Hebrew.

You should choose a readable English translation. The style of the King James version is majestic but does not always make immediate sense Americans four hundred years removed. At the other extreme, the “Good News” Bible is less a translation than a paraphrase into a very simple form of English for use in mission countries where English is not the first language. Some translators stay very close to the original word order, which can produce clumsy English sentences. Some translators try harder than others to translate the same Greek or Hebrew word by the same English word every time.

One handy test is to look at a few key passages in any Bible you’re thinking of buying. Try Genesis 1 and Psalm 51 (Psalm 50 in translations from Latin or Greek), the first chapter of St. John’s Gospel and Jesus’ Eucharistic teaching in John 6. If you’re comfortable with how those read, you’ll probably be comfortable with the rest of the translation too.

STUDY OR DEVOTION? Will the Bible be used primarily for prayerful reading or for study? A devotional Bible should have as few distractions as possible (subject headings, extensive footnotes, etc.). It should be easy to hold and easy to read. The RSV edition found in the pews in every parish of our Eparchy is a good example of a devotional Bible.

A study Bible will be bulkier. It should include notes explaining unfamiliar persons, places and things. It should have cross references showing how Old Testament texts are quoted or fulfilled in the New Testament or how different biblical



books treat the same themes. It should have information about the author, date and context of each book. Many study Bibles include a concordance, which lists words in alphabetical order and directs you to every place these words occur. Many Bibles also include a thematic index, to help you do extended study on specific topics.

These study aids are where you will find any particular preferences and prejudices. The biblical basis for the Liturgy, the Sacraments, the role of the Mother of God and the saints will not be highlighted in Protestant study guides. Bibles marketed as “Catholic” will contain all sorts of references to specifically Latin practices that are not part of our life and worship. The *Orthodox Study Bible* reflects the Byzantine liturgical and spiritual Tradition better than any other current English edition. Its preference for the Greek version allows us to read the Old Testament as the Fathers of our Church would have read it. Its study guides sometimes take a partisan tone.

In the Eparchy of Passaic, you hear two different translations in liturgical services. The Epistle and Gospel are taken from the *New American Bible* (Roman Catholic, 1970) while the Psalms are the *Grail* version produced in England in 1963. Some altar Gospels contain the translation of Baron Jose de Vinck (Melkite, 1979). **ECL**



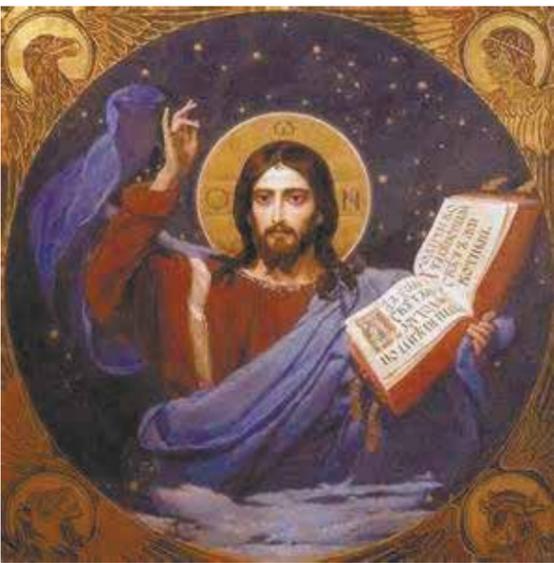
UNDERSTANDING ICONS

Father Joseph Bertha, Ph.D.

THE ART HISTORY OF THE PANTOCRATOR The Baroque Period Pantocrator Icons

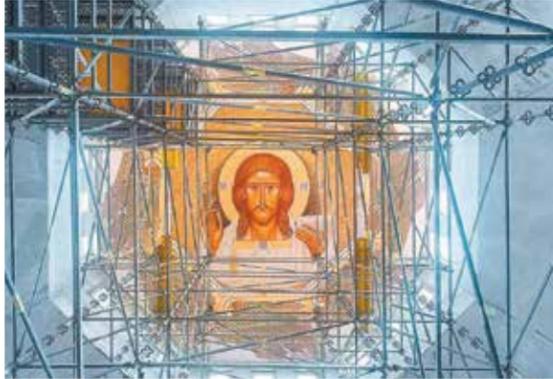
The Baroque period encompasses the 16th -17th-18th centuries. During this artistic period, the Pantocrator icon in churches of Byzantine design moved their location from the apex of the dome to the topmost part of the floor-to-ceiling iconostasis. Our Lord still maintains His position at the very highest location in the church architecture. However, Jesus is now shown as an enthroned, crowned sovereign, an iconography which not so subtly stresses His power as the All-Mighty, or Ruler over all. This change in emphasis seems to occur because of the lack of central dome or central planned church architecture. It also coincides with the rise of European kings, leaders, and emperors who displayed and wielded their rule and power over their populace. The Baroque period is also the period during which the Reformation occurred, the challenging of Catholic doctrine; followed by the Counter-Reformation and the emphatic demonstration, bolstered by the Jesuit order, of the Catholic faith and doctrine defined at the Council of Trent.

The Baroque period is also the era when the (Greek Byzantine) Catholic churches were initiated. At the union of Brest-Litovsk in 1596; and fifty years later at the Union of Uzhorod 1646, we witness the beginning of the Greek Catholic Church. Greek Catholics continued the Baroque use of the Pantocrator, which imitated their Orthodox counterparts, with the depiction of Our Lord as the Sovereign ruler enthroned and located at the apex of the iconostasis. This location continued through the ensuing centuries and was even brought over to the USA as the Greek Catholics arrived in North America.



Pantocrator of Vasnetsov

At the turn of the twentieth century the Art Nouveau style of icon painting, especially the iconographers Vasnetsov and Nesterov, produced the softer, less intense models of icons exhibited in the Pantocrator of Vasnetsov (see image above). Here Christ is shown as the Byzantine Merciful Pantocrator, the Sustainer, the Provider, with hair and himation freely flowing in the winds of the Holy Spirit. He holds an open gospel book, with the pericope from John 8:12: "I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." This style of portrayal places emphasis on the merciful aspect of the All-Powerful Godhead.



Pantocrator of Luba Yatskiv in Lviv, Ukraine

Contemporary use of the Pantocrator icon

The brand-new Luba Yatskiv's Christ Pantocrator in Lviv, Ukraine, shows Our Lord surrounded by seraphim in the original Byzantine location. As can be seen in this photograph, the installation scaffolding for the iconographer rises to the central dome of the church. The scaffolding in this photograph recalls Jacob's Ladder from Jacob's dream of a ladder reaching from heaven to earth with angels descending and ascending. Luba Yatskiv, a present-day iconographer, borrows the depiction of the flowing hair of Our Lord, from Vasnetsov. Our Savior's flowing hair, animated by blowing wind of the Holy Spirit, reaches out from heaven in the dome in the Lviv church, in this magnificent Pantocrator. (see image above)

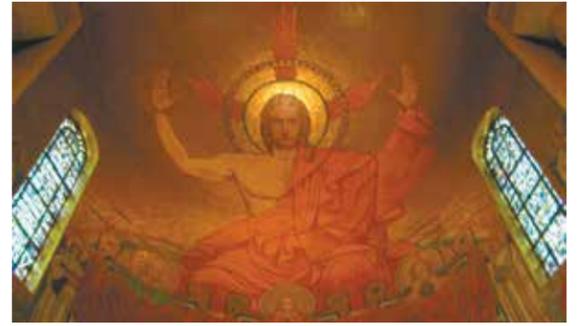
After Vatican II, with the urge to return to the origins of Byzantine usage taught by the docu-



Pantocrator in Trumbull, Connecticut

ment on the Eastern Churches, we begin to see the use of Pantocrator in American Byzantine-Ruthenian churches. For instance, in Saint John Parish in Trumbull, CT, the Pantocrator is situated in the central dome surrounded by the Apocalypse text: "I am the alpha and the omega, Who is and Who was and Who is to come, the Almighty." (see image)

Contemporary Roman Catholics also have used the Pantocrator image into their churches as well. Most notably the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, DC. This Roman Catholic Basilica, built in Byzantine style architecture, features Jan de Rosen's Christ Pantocrator in the eastern sanctuary apse mosaic. De Rosen, a Polish nobleman who painted many churches in the US, draws his inspiration from William Blake's God the Father iconography for this depiction of the Pantocrator, which evokes the apocalyptic imagery of the Book of Revelation in the same vein as the Norman Sicilian churches discussed earlier.



Pantocrator at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, DC

Some final thoughts and considerations

After the careful analysis of the origin and development of the Pantocrator icon, several thoughts immediately come to mind. The single most indication and qualification of the Pantocrator icon is the *location* of the icon! It is almost taken for granted that the Pantocrator image of Christ is inserted in the central dome of the Byzantine church.

Many art historians through the years have attempted to isolate individual characteristics which display the Pantocrator aspect of Jesus Christ. As we have read over the past articles these include:

1. two strands of hair over the forehead of Jesus
2. the arrangement of the fingers of Our Lord in the tetragrammaton IC XC
3. the arrangement of the right and left eyes of Our Savior, right eye directly at the viewer, the left eye gazing off to the distance
4. the three-quarter positioning of the head of Our Lord
5. the open/closed Gospel book
6. the bust figure compared with the full figured enthroned
7. whether the figure is labeled Pantocrator in Greek

In an art history review, all of the above characteristics of the icons of Our Lord Jesus Christ are common to every icon of Our Lord and Savior, however, none of them can be isolated to demonstrate the specific *Pantocrator-ness* of the icon. Only a single characteristic, which many scholars have curiously overlooked, is the location! Whether in the central area of the interior of the Byzantine Church, the central dome, the apex of the sanctuary apse, or even the heights of the iconostasis, the location within church architecture determines and serves as the delineation and designation of the Christ icon entitled the Pantocrator.

Also necessary for the title and delineation of the Christ Pantocrator icon is the scriptural definition of the Hebrew origin of the Greek word Pantocrator, *El Shaddai*. At the establishment of the First Covenant with Abram, God refers to Himself as *El Shaddai*. This Hebrew term, besides meaning the All-Powerful or Almighty One, also connotes the Sustainer, the Provider. It is in this latter definition that the icon of Christ Pantocrator derives its fullness of meaning.

In the New Covenant (Testament), God sustains us through the Eucharist, which enables, strengthens, and sustains us through our earthly sojourn. Therefore, the Christ Pantocrator icon, wherever it is located inside the Byzantine Church portrays God's role as the Sustainer and Provider of Abraham's descendants! **ECL**

ASK A PRIEST A QUESTION

Father Vasyl Chepelsky



CAN CATHOLICS ATTEND A NON-CATHOLIC CHURCH SERVICE?

Dear Father,

We have non-Catholic friends and non-Catholic family members. I would like to ask them to attend Liturgy with us sometimes, but if they should respond by suggesting they would if the next time we go with them to a non-Catholic service, I'm not sure how to respond without sounding offensive.

We received at least three more questions about attending non-Catholic Church services. So, it appears to be a question and many people look for it to be answered.

Our world is marked by ever-increasing communication between diverse groups of people. In *Nostra Aetate*, the Second Vatican Council's Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, the Council Fathers recognized that we are in an age "when men are drawing more closely together and the bonds of friendship between different peoples are being strengthened" (no. 1). In our daily lives, we are more likely than ever before to encounter a mix of people from different religious backgrounds. As a result, the opportunity may arise for Catholics to attend non-Catholic worship services.

Non-Christian religions contain elements of the truth, and the Church "rejects nothing of what is true and holy" in non-Christian religions (*Nostra Aetate*, no. 2). Church regards with sincere reverence those ways of conduct and of life, those precepts and teachings which, though differing in many aspects from the ones She holds and sets forth, nonetheless often reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all men. Indeed, She proclaims, and ever must proclaim Christ "the way, the truth, and the life" (cf. John 14:6), in whom men may find the fullness of religious life,

and in whom God has reconciled all things to Himself. At the same time, non-Christian religions also contain elements that are not true. So while Catholics respect and affirm the truths of other religions, we do not affirm error.

The question here of course is more complex as it involves members of the same family (and/or close friends). I think one has to be very prudent and has to have the feeling of the situation and great sensitivity as to how to deal best with it, as it may differ from case to case, and it is not possible to give just one answer which would apply to each case. Nevertheless, there are some general guidelines which I will discuss here, which come from the teachings of the Church.

No Church law prohibits a Catholic from attending a non-Christian worship service, but certain considerations should be kept in mind.

While considering the attendance of non-Catholic services, Catholics must use their own prudential judgment in making the decision, keeping in mind the necessity to uphold the Catholic understanding of the sanctity of Divine Liturgy. There is also a difference between attending as a non-participating guest and actively involving yourself in the service. They must evaluate a given situation and make the best decision they can.

The Church urges her sons and daughters to enter with prudence, charity, and humility into discussion and collaboration with members of other religions (cf. *Nostra Aetate*, no. 2). Before deciding whether to attend a non-Christian worship service, a Catholic should evaluate his reasons for attending. For example, is he motivated by a desire to better understand another faith? Is the intent to find what is

common, or to find differences and divisions? Is there a sense of respect for persons of other faiths? Is this a family situation where a Catholic has a non-Catholic spouse or family member?

Certain services are not appropriate for Catholics to attend. Catholics should not attend any service that is explicitly anti-Christian. For example, activities associated with the New Age movement or the occult should be avoided (cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nos. 2115-17).

Catholics may attend other churches' services and may sing, pray, etc., but they cannot and should not ever receive communion in a non-Catholic church.

So, attending non-Catholic prayer services is not forbidden. Receiving any sacrament or alleged sacrament in a non-Catholic church is forbidden. Catholics also cannot consider other church's worship service as fulfilling their Sunday obligation.

As human beings, we constantly search, our human minds always wondering about things, trying to find explanation and understanding. The quest for integral human fulfillment and our own destiny, other more-or-less important matters can leave us with many questions. In our lives, it is very important to find right answers to all the questions we have. It is especially important when it concerns our faith and our spiritual journey. Finding the truth and getting a right answer is always liberating and helps us to make better choices, it brings us inner peace. It can be life changing.

If you have ever wondered what Catholics really believe or just questioned "why is that" about a certain topic, you now have the opportunity to find out. We look forward to your many questions....so ask away! **ECL**



SCHOOL OF PRAYER

Father G. Scott Boghossian

"OUR" FATHER

Our Lord Jesus Christ gave us the perfect pattern for prayer in the Our Father. In this model prayer, He teaches us that God is the Father of all and that we are His children through faith, repentance, and baptism. Therefore, our fellow believers are closely related to us. They are our spiritual brothers and sisters. In the Our Father, we use the plural pronoun "our" to remind us that we are part of the Family of God and that we do not pray only for ourselves as individuals, but we pray for one another, all of our brothers and sisters in Christ.

One of the devastating results of the sin of our first parents is that each one of us comes into the world turned in on ourselves. We are born with a strong inclination to-ward self-centeredness. It seems natural to put ourselves before others, to look out for ourselves first, and to assume that everyone else's lives revolve around our own. Depending on the conditions of our own childhood, family life, and personal history, we are all more or less narcissistic and self-absorbed. This tendency toward selfishness is at the root of our sin problem. Any violation of the law of God as found in the Ten Commandments is rooted in our distorted egocentrism. Selfishness is at the root of idolatry, blasphemy, murder, adultery, theft, and lying. Every vice, whether it be pride, greed, lust, envy, glut-

tony, wrath or sloth is born out of a disordered love of self.

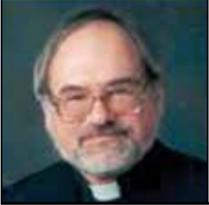
The whole project of the Christian life is to overcome our inner selfishness. Our Lord says, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me" (Lk. 9:23). Frequently throughout his writings, Saint Paul the Apostle refers to the "flesh." This term does not necessarily refer to the physical body, but rather to our fallen human nature, our sinful selfishness. He writes, "those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires" (Gal. 5:24). Praying for others helps us to engender a spirit of generosity and service and crush our excessive self-love.

When we pray in accord with the spirit of the Our Father, we pray for others. What we pray for ourselves, we also simultaneously intend to pray for all. When we present prayers of adoration, contrition, thanksgiving or petition, we offer them together with, and on behalf of, our brothers and sisters in Christ, and all of humanity in need of God's saving grace provided for by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

There is nothing wrong with praying for our own individual needs, and our Heavenly Father wants us to come to Him with our personal concerns. At the same



time, we must not neglect to pray for others, and we should ask others to pray for us. Let us bring to God prayers on behalf of our family, our friends, our bishop, our priests, our nation, our civil authorities, our military, the poor, vulnerable, and defenseless unborn children, as well as our enemies, those who mistreat us, or have injured us in the past. Let us remember to pray for our deceased relatives and friends, and all of the deceased members of the body of Christ. Let us lift up in prayer the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church in communion with the Successor of Peter, the Bishop of Rome. Because there is nothing more important than eternal salvation (Mt. 16:26), let us beg the grace of conversion for everyone who does not yet know, love and serve Jesus Christ, the only savior of mankind. When we pray the "our" of the Our Father, we step out of our self-centered concerns and embrace the self-emptying servanthood of Christ (Phil. 2:7). **ECL**



THE BYZANTINE LITURGY

By Archpriest David Petras, SEOD

WHAT GOD DESIRES IS MERCY

Our Lord once said, “Go and learn the meaning of the words, ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice.’ I did not come to call the righteous but sinners” (Matthew 9:13). The evangelist here has listened to Jesus quoting the prophet Hosea: “For I desire mercy, not sacrifice” (Hosea 6:6). Our Lord is truly in the prophetic tradition of the Old Testament. The Hebrew word that Hosea uses is *khésedh*, which means “merciful loving kindness.” We see this word repeated in every verse of Psalm 135: “...for His mercy endures forever,” which is sung in the Church at Festal Matins, and is called by the Greeks the “polyeleos psalm,” that is, the “psalm full of mercy.” The Greek word is *leos*, which is repeated often in our Liturgy. It is the refrain for most litanies, “*kyrie eleison*,” “Lord, have mercy.” Commenting on this passage, John Chrysostom preaches, “Great is the principle of mercy to God. Not only His to us, but also that issuing from us to our fellow servants. In the Old Testament and the New, God lays down innumerable laws pertaining to this matter. He orders us to be benevolent continually in all quarters, through words, money and deeds.” (*Homilies on Repentance and Almsgiving* 10.5.22).

Does this mean that our Divine Liturgy, the true sacrifice of Christ present in our worship is of lesser value than works of mercy performed in our social lives? By no means. The Divine Liturgy is the solemn commemoration of the Cross and Resurrection of Christ. The salvation of our Lord is truly present. As such, it is an act of mercy, for the cross and resurrection is Jesus’ mercy and loving compassion. Saint Paul wrote, “God proves

His love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). In the Anaphora (the Prayer of Offering) of Saint John Chrysostom, we quote John 3:16: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him might not perish but might have eternal life.” In His last discourse with His disciples, Jesus teaches them, “This is My commandment: love one another as I love you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends” (John 15:12-13).

When we celebrate the Liturgy, we live in God’s mercy and love. At the very beginning of the Anaphora, the deacon says, “Let us be attentive to offer the holy Anaphora in peace.” We respond, “Mercy, peace, a sacrifice of praise,” which means: “This anaphora is mercy; this anaphora is peace, this anaphora is a sacrifice of praise.” The Divine Liturgy that we offer is both mercy and sacrifice. The cross, in fact, reveals to us the true meaning of sacrifice; it is the fulfillment of all prophecies. We offer it, therefore, for communion in the Holy Spirit, for the fullness of God’s kingdom of mercy and peace, and “not judgment or condemnation” (*Epiclisis of the Anaphora of Saint John Chrysostom*). When we leave the Divine Liturgy, we “go forth in peace, in the name of the Lord.” In Holy Communion, we have been united in God’s merciful loving kindness, and as followers and imitators of Christ, we are to carry this mercy into the world.

In our own time, the importance of mercy has again been placed at the center of our faith. Pope Francis has actively sought ways that the Church can be more merciful in its laws, in this way defending the in-

tegrity of our faith. All Christians, both those who are more rigorous, and those who are more open, know that the God in Whom we believe is a God of mercy. Psalm 102:8 proclaims: “Merciful and gracious is the Lord, slow to anger, abounding in mercy.”

Mercy does not deny the reality of sin, but seeks to overcome it by love. We pray Psalm 50 in our worship services frequently, it is a central psalm in Matins, and it begins, “Have mercy on me, God, in accord with Your merciful love; in Your abundant compassion blot out my transgressions. Thoroughly wash away my guilt; and from my sin cleanse me” (Psalm 50:3-4). Holy Communion is the gift of God to us, it brings us life and also wipes out our sins, as the priest prays when giving Communion, “The servant of God receives the holy Body and precious Blood of our Lord for the remission of sins and life everlasting.” When we are united in Christ, we are able to see the image of God in every person, and God’s judgment is about our mercy, “Then the king will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by My Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you

clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me. ...Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for Me” (Matthew 25:34-36.40). Mercy must be the mark of a Christian life.

Some may say that God is just and punishes sin. This is true, but we see in the story of the Last Judgment in the Gospel of Saint Matthew, chapter 25, the greatest sin is the absence of mercy, love, compassion, and kindness toward others. It is the absence of love that condemns the sinner goats. The Christian principle is to hate sin, which brings death, but to love the sinner, for love is the fountain of life. We must have a true concept of Who God is. Theologically, we must understand that God is the loving Creator, Who has given existence to all that is, and life to us who are capable of faith, hope and love. In God, all is one, and His justice is His mercy. Cardinal Walter Kasper helps explain: “The call for mercy surpasses the cry for justice in the Bible. The Bible understands mercy as God’s own justice. Mercy is the heart of the biblical message, not by undercutting justice, but by surpassing it.” (*Mercy: The Essence of the Gospel and the Key to Christian Life*). Sin is its own punishment, because it closes us to God’s mercy.

ECL

Why did God create us male and female?

MAN & WOMAN HE CREATED THEM: THEOLOGY OF THE BODY

*What is God’s plan
for human love and
sexuality?*



*How do we know
how God is calling
us to live?*

**Saturday November 4 at 10am
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Fr Vasyl Chepelsky, pastor of St John’s in Lansford and adjunct lecturer at DeSales University, will help us look for these answers in the teaching of Pope St John Paul. With prayer and trust, God’s grace will help us to continue to grow in our relationship with God.

“The human body includes right from the beginning ... the capacity of expressing love, that love in which the person becomes a gift – and by means of this gift – fulfills the meaning of his being and existence.” St. John Paul II

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SPIRITUAL REFLECTIONS

Father Lewis Rabayda

COURAGE THROUGH CHRIST

People often pine for and search their whole lives for perfection in humanity. They usually have an ideal in mind of how the best possible human culture and society should function; they are searching for and striving to help create this utopia by their own power. However, there has never been evidence of this utopia through all the stages of human history. This utopia cannot exist in our time—or in any time yet to come—until the world as we know it passes away at the second coming of Christ. As Psalm 127 says, “Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain” (Ps. 127:1). There is a lot of vain building going on these days. People all over Western Civilization are attempting to create what they see as a utopia to correct presently perceived injustices and imbalances. Men and women are currently expending immeasurable amounts of human energy and capital to create their vision of a perfect world, or at least, a world that adheres

to their ideals. But the question to be asked is: Are their ideals the same ideals as God’s? Are the current popular social efforts in line with the laws of God given to us through Sacred Tradition? Surely, if all of this human energy were given towards the direction of God and His laws for humanity, then peace would abound and all of humanity would be experiencing this sought after utopia — but this is not our experience. Our current experience is a state of complete social upheaval, complete rejection of God’s laws, and a complete inversion of the application of justice in human systems. This house is poised to fall because it has not been built by the Lord, but rather, it has been built by the Great Deceiver, the Great Adversary, the Father of Lies, the Devil. It is up to each of us to discern the truth of our current situation, and it is up to each of us to act accordingly. Referring back to Psalm 127, if we discern our situation from the perspective of God and His Laws given

to us through the Divine Revelation of His One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, then we will not be discerning in vain, and we will be properly equipped to apply the correct response to this chaotic experience in our society. When God builds the house, it is perfect, it is just, it is merciful, it is loving, it is life-giving, and it is courageous. As faithful Catholics, we should never be afraid to stand up for the divinely-revealed Truths present in Sacred Tradition. As faithful Catholics, it is our obligation and our joy to share with the entire world and especially with our flawed society the Laws of God that have been given to us for OUR benefit, for our earthly happiness, and ultimately, for our eternal salvation. Utopia, and earthly happiness and justice, are only possible in a system that is based on unconditional love and free will, the two fundamental gifts that God so richly pours out upon us. It is how we use these gifts that will determine the state of our house, and as Christ taught us, “the tree is known by its fruit.” We must have courage to soak up the nutrients of our faith, to bear good fruit so beautiful and bright, that when hanging from our limbs, it is admired by all who see it. “Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain.” **ECL**



With November, we celebrate the Feast of the Holy Archangel Michael and all the Heavenly Hosts (November 8), the Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple (November 21), and prepare ourselves to enter into the time of Saint Philip’s Fast and the Advent season. At this time, I will confine myself to the two feasts, and speak about Advent in my next installment.

Angels are an integral part of the Christian life. In the Eastern Churches we acknowledge their role in our daily lives, and even identify ourselves mystically with them in our liturgical life. Our lives begin with the baptismal prayer which includes the line, “During (his-her) lifetime, give (him-her) the companionship of an angel of light to rescue (him-her) from every snare lying in (his-her) path, from the encounter of the evil one, from the noon-day demon and every evil imagination” (*The Rite of Christian Initiation*). In our Morning Prayers, there may be this prayer, which I learned during my time in seminary: “O holy Angel of Christ! In homage I come to you, my holy guardian who, since my baptism, has been assigned to me to protect my body and soul. I beseech your powerful intercession. I have often offended you by my indolence and bad habits. You are without stain in

SEASONAL REFLECTIONS

Father Ronald Hatton



TOUCHED BY AN ANGEL?

your glory, and I have often driven you away by my sins. I pray and beseech you, most holy guardian, be merciful to me, your sinful and unworthy servant. Be my defender and aid me against my enemies. Through your intercession, make me worthy to be a partaker of the kingdom of God with all the saints forever. Amen.” During our Divine Liturgy, we constantly identify ourselves with the angels, who celebrate the heavenly liturgy: “Around the throne, and on each side of the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind: the first living creature like a lion, the second living creature like an ox, the third living creature with a face like a human face, and the fourth living creature like a flying eagle. And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and inside. Day and night without ceasing they sing, ‘Holy, holy, holy, the Lord God the Almighty, who was and is and is to come.’” (Rev. 4:6-8, NRSV:CE). “Let us, who mystically represent the cherubim, and sing the thrice-holy hymn to the life-creating Trinity, now set aside all earthly cares., that we may receive the King of All, invisibly escorted by angelic hosts. Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!” (*The Cherubic Hymn*). We acknowledge that they are worshipping with us at the priest’s prayer at the Entrance with the Gospel Book: “O Lord, our Master and God, Who established orders and armies of angels and archangels for the service of your glory in heaven, make this our entrance an entrance of holy angels, concelebrating with us and glorifying Your goodness...” We even have symbolism in the liturgical role of our deacons, from the flowing of their orarion reminiscent of angels’ wings, to their moving from the Holy of Holies (the Altar) to the Holy Place (the Nave), being a symbol of angels moving between heaven and earth (cf. Gen. 28:12, John 1:51). So, angels are with us, every waking moment and while we

sleep, while we worship and while we work or play. “Leaders of God’s armies and ministers of divine glory, commanders of angels and guides of mortals, plead on our behalf for what we need and for great mercy, since you are the leaders of the heavenly host” (Kontakion for the Feast).

The Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple is an historical feast. According to Tradition, the Theotokos was taken – presented – by her parents Joachim and Anna into the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem as a young girl, where she lived and served as a Temple virgin until her betrothal to Saint Joseph. One of the earliest sources of this tradition is the non-canonical *Proto-evangelion of James*, also called the *Infancy Gospel of James*. Mary was solemnly received by the temple community which was headed by the priest Zachariah, the father of John the Baptist. She was led to the holy place to become herself the “holy of holies” of God, the living sanctuary and temple of the Divine child who was to be born in her. The Church also sees this feast as a feast which marks the end of the physical temple in Jerusalem as the dwelling place of God. Many hymns are offered for the Vespers and Matins of this feast, but I will offer only one for you here, which highlights the glory of the Theotokos replacing the glory of the Temple: “O faithful, let us leap for joy today, singing psalms and hymns of praise in honor of Mary, His Mother, the holy Tabernacle and Ark that contained the Word Whom nothing can contain. She is offered to God as a child in a marvelous way, and Zechariah the high priest receives her with great joy, for she is the dwelling place of the Most High” (Vespers, At Psalm 40). How fitting that we celebrate this feast in the midst of the Philippian Fast as a deeper preparation for the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord. **ECL**



SEMINARIAN REFLECTIONS

Seminarian Paul Varchola West

THROUGH THE EYES OF A CHILD

Although seminary formation is extremely demanding and does require me to spend a great deal of time away from my family, I am fortunate that families are welcomed and encouraged to attend the liturgical services held at the seminary. One of our new “family-time activities” since my entering seminary is attending Great Vespers on Saturday evenings prior to a communal meal held at the seminary. This has proven to become a greatly anticipated event for our four-year-old daughter and is a wonderful opportunity to gain some extra prayer time together as a family. Not only does this give me a precious extra hour with my children, it has granted me an opportunity to gain tremendous insight in regard to prayer by watching my children throughout these services.

As my eight-month-old son blossoms into a little boy and is becoming more and more aware that there is indeed a world around him in which he may fully participate, his interactions with the vespers service itself have been extremely enlightening. For a moment, I ask you to imagine that you know nothing of what an icon screen

is. The concepts of bells, a *kadilnitsa* [censer], incense, candles, light, and singing; all of these things have absolutely no meaning to you. These standard components of any liturgical service are not tangible or explicable in any concrete way, they are purely experiential. This is the level at which my son is currently experiencing these concepts. There is no point of reference. He does not care about the quality of the singing. These objects are merely part of this “world” he happens to be in at that moment.

As we enter the dimly lit seminary chapel, the bells toll and shake the room. The golden icons are delicately shimmering in candle light, with the setting sun providing less and less illumination. As we take our place, my son will interact with those imaged in the icons before him. He will coo and giggle, conversing with the icon of St. Nicholas directly in front of him as if he is interacting with one of us. As the chapel is incensed, he becomes captivated by the jingling of the bells of the *kadilnitsa* and enthralled by the incense rising from it, reaching out to touch the smoke as if he could easily contain it within his tiny fingers.

His eyes wide with amazement, he is not in a church nor is he in this material world. He is not seeing icons and smoke, nor is he hearing bells, but rather, he is simply experiencing what these things create. It seems as if he is completely removed from his reality of mashed sweet potatoes and being forced to play with his older sister’s dolls and is transported to a place of awe and wonder in which he truly has no earthly cares. This is the transformative experience that prayer is supposed to have on each of us; however, is that always the case?

How often do we enter a church, bless ourselves, go to the same pew that our family has occupied for generations, sit down, and look at our watch anticipating the end of the service because we have other things we need to get done such as deadlines for work or fixing that leak in the roof? I know I fall into this trap all the time! It seems to me, because we have assigned names and meanings to the various items I mentioned earlier, they tend to become material things and perhaps lose some of their transcendent qualities. Rather than allowing the liturgical items to bring us to a place outside

of time, our logical brains keeps us firmly grounded in time, on earth and focused on the tangible nature of our reality.

As children of God, we must view these physical aspects of our liturgical life as simply that, children. We must try to remove ourselves from what these objects are and allow them to be pure experience. Allowing these things to be what they truly are—the shimmering comfort of the saints bringing us into the presence of God, the Almighty Father—will assist us in finding that place snuggled in our parents’ arms that we grew out of so long ago. Approaching liturgy through the eyes of a child will grant us the much-needed rest from our worldly lives that we all so desperately need. Entering into prayer with child-like innocence, feigning the physical nature of the world around us, will liberate us and bring us closer to being in the presence of our Heavenly Father. **ECL**

WHEN TRAVELING TO THE SOUTH THIS WINTER PLEASE VISIT OUR CHURCHES

<p>All Saints 10291 Bayshore Road North Fort Meyers, FL 33917 1-239-543-6363</p>	<p>Epiphany of Our Lord 2030 Old Alabama Road Roswell, GA 30076 1-770-993-0973</p>	<p>Holy Dormition 17 Buckskin Lane Ormond Beach FL 32174 1-386-677-8704</p>	<p>Coconut Creek, FL 33073 1-954-429-0056</p>
<p>Saint Anne 7120 Massachusetts Ave. New Port Richey, FL 34653 1-727-849-1190</p>	<p>Saint Basil the Great 1475 N.E. 199th Street Miami, FL 33179-5162 1-305-651-0991</p>	<p>Saints Cyril and Methodius 1002 Bahama Avenue Fort Pierce, FL 34982 1-772-595-1021</p>	<p>Saint Nicholas of Myra 5135 Sand Lake Road Orlando, FL 32819 1-407-351-0133</p>
		<p>Our Lady of the Sign 7311 Lyons Road</p>	<p>Saint Therese 4265 13th Avenue North Saint Petersburg, FL 33713 1-727-323-4022</p>

UPCOMING EPARCHIAL AND PARISH EVENTS

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NOVEMBER

- 1 Feast of Holy Martyr Theodore Romzha, Bishop of Mukachevo
- 7 Election Day
Remember to vote.
- 8 Holy Archangel Michael and All Holy Bodiless Powers of Heaven
Solemn Holy Day
- 11 Veteran’s Day
Civic Holiday
- 13-16 USCCB Fall Plenary Session
*Baltimore, MD * Bishop Kurt in attendance*
- 21 Entrance of the Virgin Theotokos into the Temple
Solemn Holy Day
- 23 Thanksgiving
Happy Thanksgiving!
- 23-24 Thanksgiving Holiday
Chancery closed