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FIRST-EVER BYZANTINE CATHOLIC YOUNG ADULT CONVOCATION HELD IN NEW YORK CITY

by Adriana Shubeck



Hosted by the Eparchy of Passaic and Theosis in Action, the first-ever Byzantine Catholic Young Adult Convocation took place August 1-4, 2019, at Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church in New York City. The convocation was the culmination of several months of planning by Christopher Russo, Adriana Shubeck, Jerry Wutkowski, and Michael Wutkowski under the guidance and support of Bishop Kurt, Father Ed Cimbala, and Deacon Tom Shubeck and Deacon Stephen Russo. Nearly fifty young adults and twenty clergy and religious participated, traveling from as far as Michigan, Indiana, and Kosice, Slovakia. As the young adults started arriving on Thursday evening, August 1 it was clear that each and every one of them was seeking the same things: fellowship with like-minded Byzantine Catholics and to grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ.

Bishop Kurt opened the weekend with Vespers and set the theme of the Convocation: "Together we are: *Called* to discipleship. *Transfigured* through a new life in Christ. *Sent* to proclaim the Gospel to the world." Throughout the weekend, three dynamic keynote speakers brought this theme to life and shared both personal testimonies and practical advice on being *called*, *transfigured*, and *sent*. Father Boniface Hicks, OSB, led the first keynote, "Called," and spoke of his own conversion story as a student at Penn State University, and how he heard God's call in his life. Mother Gabriella Houck of Christ the Bridegroom Monastery led the second keynote talk, "Transfigured," and stressed the importance of prayer in having that encounter – or "transfiguration" – with Christ. Lastly, Nick Redd of Saint Paul's Outreach, in his talk, "Sent," urged young adults to go out into the world and pro-

claim the Good News to everyone we meet. He concluded that we are *all* called to have that encounter with Christ, and through our words and actions sent to proclaim His word regardless of the sins we have committed. Together, these three speakers helped young adults recognize their own call to discipleship through the feast of the Transfiguration and represented a model for the future of our Church: priests, monastics, and laity working together for the kingdom of God.

In addition to our three keynote speakers and Bishop Kurt, we were also very blessed to have Bishop Milan (Lach, SJ) of the Eparchy of Parma and Archbishop Borys (Gudziak) of the Ukrainian Catholic Archeparchy of Philadelphia, both of whom preached to the young adults. Bishop Milan preached on vocations, a topic that is always pressing on young adults. He stressed the importance of growing

closer to Christ in our lives through our unique vocations, whether it is through marriage, the priesthood, religious life, or whatever job to which we are called. Archbishop Borys gave an inspirational homily on our Byzantine Catholic community. Though the Eastern Church may be small in number, we should be more concerned with the strength of our faith as a smaller, stronger Church. He reminded us that we can look to those who came before us in Eastern Europe, who underwent much persecution for Christ, because in the end their faith is what kept them together. The best way to grow our community is to be witnesses for Christ in our daily lives.

In addition to growing in faith, the young adults were also able to participate in fellowship activities, such as exploring the sights of NYC. While some ventured uptown to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, others went

downtown to One World Trade where Sister Barbara Jean Mihalchik, OSBM, from Mt. Saint Macrina, led the young adults in honoring those who perished on 9/11 with "Eternal Memory, *Vičnaja Pamjat'.*" Yet another group took the ferry to Liberty Island to see the Statue of Liberty, and to Ellis Island. Each night, after talks, prayers, and sightseeing, the young adults reconvened at Saint Mary Social Hall for an evening social. The Convocation was surely the beginning of many new friendships in Christ!

The Convocation concluded with a Hierarchical Divine Liturgy, celebrated by Bishop Kurt, followed by a luncheon. For many, coming to NYC for an event that had never taken place before was an act of courage. As one man said, "I had to come because I wanted this first convocation to be successful. As Byzantine Catholic young adults, we need a

place and a time where we can all come together." As the young adults departed for their hometowns, a few things were very clear. First, there is, and has been for a long time, a deep yearning for there to be a community specifically for Byzantine Catholic young adults. Second, the Convocation inspired the young adults in attendance to keep this newly-discovered sense of community alive in the years to come. Lastly, it was abundantly evident that young adults were leaving with a mission: to share the Good News as disciples of Christ. We hope and pray that the 2019 Byzantine Catholic Young Adult Convocation was the first of many young adult convocations to come.

We would like to thank the countless people who made this event possible. A huge thank you to: Bishop Kurt for his blessing and financial support; Father Ed Cimbala for his clear direction, patience, guidance, and opening up his parish; and Deacon Tom Shubeck and Deacon Stephen Russo for their guidance and support. We would also like to thank Bishop Milan for his attendance, homily, and hearing confessions; Archbishop Borys for his homily; our three keynote speakers - Father Boniface Hicks, OSB, Mother Gabriella Houck, and Nick Redd, as well as priests and religious who heard confessions, con-celebrated, or participated in the convocation events: Father Michael Lee, Father

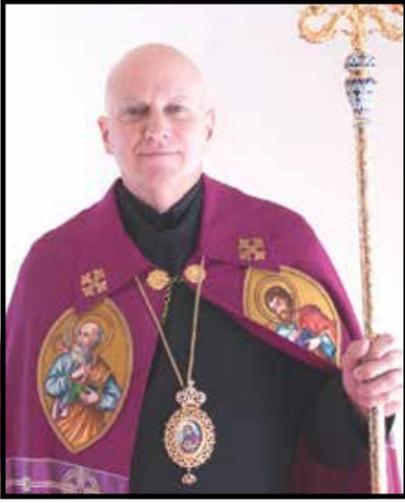
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I LIFT UP MY EYES...

Pastoral Reflections of Bishop Kurt



“YOU ARE GOD’S TEMPLE”

I travel a lot, and in the past year the high point of traveling was visiting my godfather, General Robert Cardenas. He will be 100 years old on March 10 of next year. He doesn’t drive anymore because of a recent accident, but being a former test pilot, he still dreams about getting the newest sports car and flying around the winding roads in the hills of San Diego. Many of you may remember that four years ago our newspaper published a photo of him parachuting from a plane in flames over Nazi Germany. I hope soon to publish another column of his adventures—how he trained the Swiss air force as a POW and how he escaped from occupied Europe to return to active service. He is one of the heroes we celebrate these days who liberated Germany from its own democratically elected government and liberated the rest of Europe as well from that evil regime.

As American and Russian troops advanced toward Berlin, they were horrified, even beyond the horrors of war, to open up the concentration camps, where they found that the German government was actively killing civilians by the millions. These non-combatants were being killed for many reasons: race, religion, and for criticizing the government. When I was a teenager, I personally knew an American officer who witnessed these liberations, so I am astonished when I hear about Americans who deny that it happened. There are eyewitnesses among us, both victims and liberators.

There is one horror uncovered by the allied troops that receives no publicity today either in the mainstream news media or in the educational establishment. Our troops were not only liberating death camps, but also hospitals! As the liberating armies drew near, much like the operators of the death camps, medical doctors and nurses were frantically trying to kill as many people as possible before the unsophisticated soldiers would put a stop to the slaughter. The doctors and nurses were killing the sick, the deformed, the disabled, the mentally ill, and people with lower intelligence. These so-called medical professionals were not Nazi guards nor members of the Gestapo or the SS. They were the best educated, most scientific, most professional class in the world. With the blessing of the German government and the encouragement of the Nazi Party, they called their actions *Gnaden Tod*, or Mercy Death.

When Germany rejected Jesus Christ for Adolf Hitler, it did so with great enthusiasm. When Hitler visited Italy

before the war, he was treated as a great man by the king of Italy and the dictator Mussolini. Hitler wanted to visit the Vatican museums, but the Pope, Pius XI, closed the Vatican and refused to allow him in. The Pope issued a public statement that a “new cross” (meaning the swastika) has risen over Europe, and it is not the cross of Jesus Christ.” Indeed, we read in the beginning of the Gospel of Saint Matthew that Jesus cured the people of every affliction, “the sick, those in intractable pain, the possessed, the lunatics, and the paralyzed.” These are the same people that the German doctors and nurses were frantically trying to eradicate before the invading troops could stop them: the sick, those in intractable pain, the lunatics, and the paralyzed. On the other hand, they were not trying to kill off the possessed for obvious reasons. They even killed their own veterans of the First World War, whose only disability was the loss of limb. By the time the Russian troops invaded Austria, the medical “professionals” had emptied out the mental hospitals and the veterans’ hospitals of Austria with Mercy Death. It was as though they read the Gospel of Saint Matthew and made a conscious decision to do the opposite of everything they read.

The Catholic Church was not silent through these horrors. In 1937, Pope Pius XI published an encyclical letter in German, not in the usual Latin, called *Mit Brennender Sorge*, that is, With Burning Anxiety, in which he warned the German people about the many evils of the Nazi party. By 1937, Germany was fully under the control of the secret police, and so the nuncio had the encyclical carried secretly by couriers to the bishops of Germany. They in turn had it printed by local printers and, to the surprise of Hitler, it was read out loud in all the Catholic churches in Germany. The encyclical confronts so many dangerous ideas that are commonplace today, that I encourage you to read the letter for yourself. Among other things, it denounces racism, neo-paganism, and worshipping the government instead of God. The immediate response of the Nazi government included many arrests followed by interment in death camps. For the remainder of 1937, the Nazi government mounted a propaganda campaign in which homosexual priests were prosecuted, and the Nazis portrayed all Catholic priests as homosexual predators. Although this campaign had begun in 1935, it was suspended for the 1936 Olympics, but Hitler ordered it resumed and escalated after the Holy Father’s encyclical. After a number of highly publicized trials of clergy, Josef Goebbels in 1937 took to the airwaves and in a long radio address told the German people that the Catholic Church is an “oozing ulcer on the otherwise healthy body of Germany.” Like contemporary politicians, they used real criminals for their propaganda.

The encyclical of the Holy Father in 1937 which triggered such attacks on the Church included advice for young people that is relevant today as well, for the young were especially targeted by the Nazis. Among other things, the Pope said, “Sing your hymns of freedom, but do not forget the freedom of the children of God. Do not drag the nobility of that freedom in the mud of sin and sensuality.” And also, “You are told about sports. Indulged in with moderation and within limits, physical education is a boon to the youth. But so much time is now devoted to sporting activities, that the harmonious development of body and mind is disregarded, that duties to one’s family, and the observation of the Lord’s Day are neglected.” How many children today are taken away from Sunday worship for sports.

In Germany, the killing of the sick, disabled, and mentally challenged began with killing children. I am not speaking of abortion that was legalized to further racial purity much earlier. Rather, 1939 saw the beginning of the intentional killing of children already several years old. Medical personnel all over Germany reported to a central reporting system when children were considered to be unfit for life for any number of medical or psychological reasons. A standard form was available and midwives, for example, were paid 2 Reichsmarks for each report of a defective child. The impression was given that the children were to receive specialized treatment. They were removed to special facilities, one of which was even named a “nurturing center.” A panel of three doctors voted on each child. If the panel voted for it, the child was euthanized. Typical of the lies in the culture of death, the vote said that it was for “treatment” which actually meant death. Not all of these poor children were killed immediately. Some were kept for long periods of time for medical experiments. The reports of the death to the parents was falsified, saying that the child died a natural death from some illness or problems. Because of the deceit involved, the program of killing children with problems did not generate public opposition because the public did not realize what was happening at the time. The program began with children under the age of 3, but by early 1941 was expanded to include youths up to the age of 16. As we will see soon, the new death laws in California and New Jersey require similar lies.

In 1941, began the infamous Aktion T4, which was the deliberate killing of adults whose “life was not worth living.” Brilliant movies were produced in which the disabled and mentally challenged were portrayed pitifully. The doctors and professors who favored euthanasia were portrayed as handsome and charismatic. In one such film, a young medical doctor (an actor) says

enthusiastically, “If I were one of these people, I would prefer to die!” The propaganda was not as successful as was desired by the leaders. Not all Christian leaders, unfortunately, were opposed to the massacre of the sick. One Evangelical Lutheran bishop wrote to the government minister that the program must be carried out in stealth to avoid a backlash in public opinion. One Catholic bishop only asked that the program be limited to “complete idiots” and that they be given access to the sacraments first. However, the courageous Bishop of München, Clemens August Graf von Galen, delivered four sermons in August of 1941 denouncing the Nazis, in particular their euthanasia program. Von Galen actually sent the text of his sermons to Hitler! The sermons were illegally printed and circulated. Many Protestant clergy also protested even before von Galen. On August 24, Hitler ordered the cessation of the official T4 program, but as I mentioned at the beginning of the article, many in the medical industry continued euthanizing the weak, the disabled, amputees, and the mentally ill up until the hospitals were liberated by Allied soldiers. After the war, the Allies conducted trials of physicians and, ultimately, 16 were convicted of crimes against humanity and 7 were executed. It is believed that about 100,000 people were killed by the T4 program before it was officially halted in 1941.

In 1943, Pope Pius XII published an encyclical addressing the issue while Italy was still under fascist control, *Mystici Corporis Christi*, On the Mystical Body of Christ, in which he tenderly pronounces, “to our profound grief we see at times the deformed, the insane, and those suffering from hereditary disease deprived of their lives, as though they were a useless burden to society, and this procedure is hailed by some as a manifestation of human progress, and as something that is entirely in accord with the common good. Yet who that is possessed of sound judgment does not recognize that this not only violates the natural and the divine law written in the heart of every man, but that it outrages the noblest instincts of humanity? The blood of these unfortunate victims who are all the dearer to our Redeemer because they are deserving of greater pity ‘cries to God from the earth.’” Although the encyclical is about the Mystical Body of Christ, the Church, he demands charity for others as well: “likewise we should recognize other men, although they are not yet joined to us in the body of the Church, our brothers in Christ according to the flesh, called together with us to the same eternal salvation.” He goes on to condemn the racism of the fascists: “It is true, unfortunately, especially today, that there are some who extol enmity, hatred, and spite as if they enhanced the dignity and the worth of man. Let us however look with sorrow on the di-

sastrous consequences of this teaching, follow our peaceful King who taught us to love not only those who are of a different nation or race, but even our enemies... We extol the charity of Christ, which neither diversity of race or customs can diminish, ... nor was whether just or unjust destroy."

Moving on to the current situation, Pope Saint John Paul II prophetically spoke of the "Culture of Death." God warned us through Moses at the end of the Pentateuch, "I place before you today a choice, life or death. Choose life therefore!" In our country it seemed as though it was the elite judiciary that first began to impose the culture of death on our nation. Beginning in the 1960's, the Supreme Court first unleashed the flood of pornography on the United States. Their rulings were so bizarre and ineffectual that for a while all pornography cases were referred to the Supreme Court, and a movie theater was set up to in the Supreme Court offices for judging individual movies. Soon after, the Supreme Court overturned all laws against contraception (which were written by Protestants, not Catholics). In Constitutional law classes, leading professors admit with a smirk that this famous case was based on fraud. The doctor involved had never prescribed contraception, but the prosecution was arranged by the a "rights" organization to allow the judges to change the laws passed by legislatures. Then the US Supreme Court unleashed abortion on the United States, despite the healthy democratic debate that was proceeding in the states.

Now, the open acceptance of abortion for economic reasons is quite common. A parishioner in the 1990's told me that other married mothers in her workplace (a bank) got abortions, and explained them to their other children by saying, you can have more Christmas presents because with less children we have more money. How is that any different from sacrificing a child to an idol asking for wealth and prosperity? These are the crimes that God begged the Israelites to eradicate in the Promised Land. What kind of morality will someone have after his own mother told him she aborted his brother or sister so they could have more Christmas presents? I didn't think I could be shocked nowadays. I learned something recently that shocked even me. If a healthy woman is expecting twins, it is common medical practice to advise her to KILL one of the twins so that the other one will be healthier! I have had this horrifying knowledge confirmed by numerous sources. Are terrorists running our medical system now? How could you ever trust someone who advised you to kill one of your twins to make the other one healthier? By the way, these people call killing one of your twins "therapeutic abortion."

In countries where euthanasia has been allowed for some time, the reports are sickening. In Holland, a doctor killed a woman with dementia against her will. She was first drugged in her coffee. She woke up during the injection and tried to fight off the doctor, so he had her relatives hold her down, and coldly injected her with poison. In Canada, I was told

by a witness that a Ukrainian woman was terminally ill. Her family had a prepaid vacation and was worried that her death might ruin their vacation if the timing were inconvenient. So, they told the physician that she asked to be put down. The medical staff made the necessary preparations. One of her granddaughters spoke to her in Ukrainian and explained what was happening. She was frightened and said, "I don't want that!" When the granddaughter told the physician, he could no longer legally kill her. I don't know whether the prepaid vacation was ruined by the grandmother's choice to live.



Gustav Dore, *The Suicides, from Dante's Inferno*

"And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light." The merchants of death defile the words mercy and compassion as they peddle their putrid wares. Claiming compassion for the suffering, they have worked tirelessly to bring euthanasia to our country. In a few states, they succeeded so far. In 2015, the California legislature passed a surprise law during a special session called for a different purpose that legalized killing sick people. One of the Catholic senators met with her bishop who begged her not to destroy her soul with this evil. She said she had to vote for it because of "autonomy." For once, she spoke the truth. Autonomy means "self-law," and "death and all our woes" comes from that exact choice made by Adam and Eve. Satan told them they could be equal to God if they only wrote their own laws. The Catholic educated governor of California signed the law saying he plans to use it on himself someday. Interestingly enough, the California law is currently suspended, because a lawsuit claims the legislature violated the California constitution by passing it during a session called for something else. The session was called to address rising costs of medical care. Defenders of the law say that it was relevant to rising costs, and ironically, they are right. Anyone can see that the government and insurance companies will see euthanasia as a way to save money, and have already done so in Oregon. In one news story about this lawsuit, a lawyer complains that his client was planning to take poison for his terminal illness and the judge has "destroyed his hope." Can he really say with a straight face that someone stole his clients "hope"? Is Lucifer writing jokes for him? Poisoning himself is "hope"?

Here in New Jersey, the state legislature passed a law in April of 2019 allowing physicians to participate in *Gnaden Tod*, that is, mercy death. The Catholic governor of New Jersey signed the act into law. The California law was noteworthy for its complete lack of safeguards and its requirement that the government officials lie. By "lack of safeguards," I mean that even someone who will inherit can help knock off someone with money. The law was written in such haste that this obvious exclusion was left out. The New Jersey law does exclude participation in the poisoning by anyone who might ben-

efit financially, but it also makes lying mandatory. The law says that the death is not suicide (even though the poor soul has just ingested poison) and no one who assists can be said to assist in suicide. In California, the coroner is required to lie on the death certificate, and it would seem that the same is the law in New Jersey. In my opinion, another lie is that the statute insists on calling poison "medication." The Oxford English Dictionary defines a poison as "a potion prepared with a deadly or deleterious drug or ingredient. Any substance which, when introduced into or absorbed by a living organism, destroys life or injures health." The same dictionary defines "medication" as "medicament—a substance used in curative treatment." It seems that under the new law, I am the owner of an illegal dictionary. The law goes on to say that when someone acts under the new law, for example, by ingesting poison, it is not "suicide"! Oddly enough, you can be liable for monetary damages if you choose to ingest your poison in a public place, and the state can sue your estate for damages and legal fees. Not surprisingly the mainstream news media has reported this new affront to the law of God in positive terms.

In researching the California law, I ran across the strange story that activists are complaining that only white people are killing themselves under the new law. Minority activists are complaining that not enough brown people are doing it.

At the time of this writing, the New Jersey law is on hold because an Orthodox Jewish doctor has filed a lawsuit asserting that his right to freedom of religion is threatened. The law says that a

physician may choose not to prescribe deadly poison to a patient, but in that case, he must refer his patient to another physician who doesn't believe in the Ten Commandments. If you think that my comparisons to the Nazi government of Germany was inappropriate, I can tell you that Orthodox Jews can see where the merchants of death are taking us. If you read about the Holocaust, they make a clear link between the T4 program and the Holocaust. It's an historical fact that when the German government stopped the T4 program, they moved the equipment and the personnel to the concentration camps to begin the "final solution." Furthermore, in Canada, killing sick people is not allowed at some Orthodox Jewish nursing homes. As the *Vancouver Sun* reports, the Louis Brier Nursing Home in Vancouver is an Orthodox Jewish institution that does not allow poisoning sick people on the premises. Dr. Ellen Wiebe secretly entered the facility and killed Barry Hyman. (He didn't commit suicide. She killed him.) The CEO David Keselman said, "It was hidden... Imagine the implications for our staff and our residents and their families. We have a lot of Holocaust survivors. To have a doctor sneak in and kill someone without telling anyone. They're going to feel like they're at risk when you learn someone was sneaking in and killing someone." In the weird logic of these people, she said that she wouldn't poison someone at a Catholic facility because they require "visiting privileges" to treat patients, "I would consider that unprofessional." She also defended killing Mr. Hyman at night because she works during the day. The whole story is surreal as the different players talk about professionalism and ethics and visiting privileges and the Denominational Health Care Agreement and notations and not one person mentions God's law. And murder is called "helping someone to die."

It is the Jews who taught God's law to the rest of us. Killing and suicide for personal gain or glory were the custom for my ancestors at the time of Moses. But Moses writes in the Book of Genesis that after the flood, God gave us his first law after we were driven out of the Garden of Eden for our crimes. God said, "If man shed the blood of man, then by man shall his blood be shed. For man is made in the image of God." Before that He says, "And for your lifeblood I will surely demand an accounting. I will demand an accounting from every animal and from each man as well, I will demand an accounting for the life of another man." So even before the ten commandments, God gave us his first law to help us, the law against murder. In the time of Abraham, God forbade the practice of human sacrifice found all over the world even until recent times. After the entrance into the Promised Land, God ordered his chosen people not to sacrifice their children to pagan idols as the Canaanites had done. The pagan priests promised wealth, prosperity, and good weather in exchange for child sacrifice, just as the modern materialists and atheists promise wealth, prosperity, health, and good weather in exchange for child sacrifice.

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PEOPLE YOU KNOW AROUND THE EPARCHY

IN BEAVER MEADOWS...

Eagle Scout Improves Parish Cemetery

Anthony Maguschak, son of Keith and Vicki Maguschak and a member of Saints Peter and Paul Church in Beaver Meadows, PA, recently completed the requirements for Scouting's highest rank, that of Eagle Scout. For his Eagle Service Project, Anthony volunteered to do a project in the parish cemetery.



Brother Gus, OFM, together with Anthony Maguschak and those who helped him complete the project.

Last year the remains of eight deceased monks were moved from the Holy Dormition Friary in Sybertsville, PA, to a special area in Saints Peter and Paul Cemetery

in Beaver Meadows. For his Eagle project, Anthony improved the area where the monks were re-buried. His work included removing, repairing, painting, and re-installing a metal fence and the San Damiano crucifix that hung at the Sybertsville Cemetery to the Beaver Meadows Cemetery. Also included in the project was painting of a building and doing additional cement work at the cemetery. Father James Demko is pastor of Saints Peter and Paul Church in Beaver Meadows and Father Jerome Wolbert, OFM, is the Guardian of Holy Dormition Friary in Sybertsville



Anthony Maguschak and his father, Keith, attaching the San Damiano cross.

The eight monks who were re-buried in Beaver Meadows are:

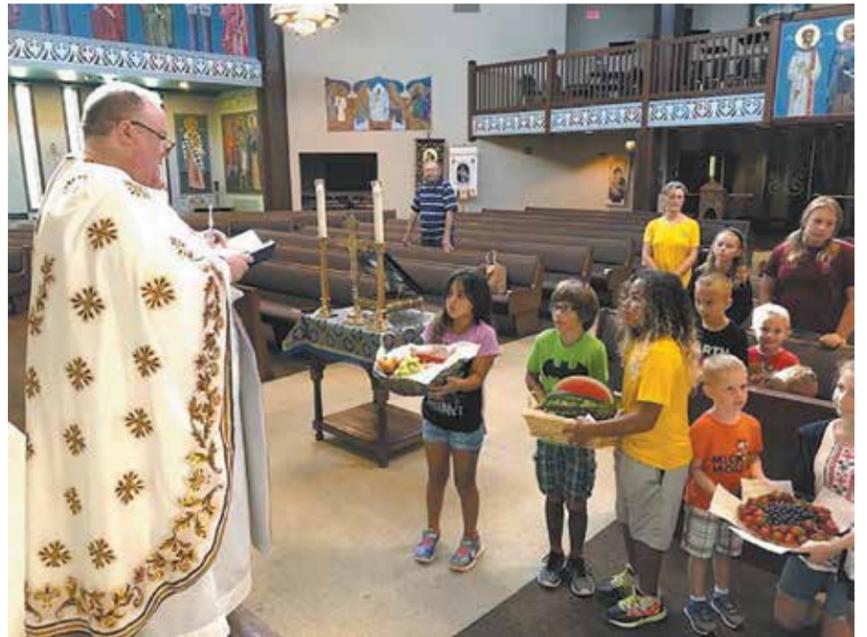
- Father Jerome Poppenberg, OFM 1877-1959
- Father Josaphat Ananevich, OFM 1888-1964
- Father Marian Rudakevych, OFM 1898-1966
- Brother Francis X. Sabini, OFM 1899-1977
- Father Theodore Weneck, OFM 1920-1987
- Father Myron A. Drozdiak, OFM 1915-1995
- Father Stephen Pinchak, OFM 1932-1998
- Father Marion Kawola, OFM 1916-2001

IN HILLSBOROUGH...

Saint Mary Parish Hosts Vacation Bible Camp

From Monday, August 4, until Friday, August 9, Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church in Hillsborough, NJ, hosted its annual Vacation Bible Camp. Children from pre-K through 6th grade came to learn more about their faith through Scripture-based activities. The theme this year was "outer space." A highlight of the week was

the Divine Liturgy for the Feast of the Transfiguration, at which the children presented fruit to be blessed. Then, the children enjoyed a snack of the blessed fruit. Julie Klikus, ECF Coordinator for Saint Mary Parish, was the director of the camp. Father James Badeaux is the pastor of Saint Mary Parish.



*Above: Father James Badeaux blesses fruit on the Feast of the Transfiguration for the campers
Left: The campers participate in the Divine Liturgy*

IN PASSAIC...

Cathedral hosts parish visit

On August 27, more than fifty parishioners of Saint Justin Martyr Roman Catholic Church in Toms River, NJ, made the Cathedral of Saint Michael the Archangel in Passaic the first stop on their day-long tour of the area.

Led by their pastor, Father Mark Kreder, and his vicar, Father Daniel Price, the group was welcomed by Father Jack Custer, rector of the cathedral, who used the cathedral's rich art and iconography to explain the history of Byzantine Catholicism and the layout of a Byzantine church. Drawing on the Epistles to the Ephesians and the Hebrews, he pointed out how a Byzantine church and its Liturgy inherit the entire Old Testament Temple tradition and show its fulfillment in Jesus Christ's sacrificial death and resurrection.

On display were liturgical items including the cathedral's original Slavonic Gospel book, sacred vessels, prosfora, wedding crowns, and an antimension. Each guest received a pamphlet about the cathedral, an Akathist book for their personal prayer, and a pamphlet about Saints Cyril and Methodius.



IN MYRTLE BEACH...

Clergy Vacation and Celebrate Liturgy for Mission Church

Father Vasyl Polyak of Saints Peter and Paul Byzantine Catholic Church in Patton, PA, and Father Ivan Rusyn of Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church in Windber, PA, celebrated the August 4 Divine Liturgy at the Blessed Basil Hopko Mission at Myrtle Beach, SC, as well as the liturgy for the Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos on August 14.

Father Sergij Deiak of Saint Gregory of Nyssa Byzantine Catholic Church in Beltsville, MD, celebrated the Divine Liturgy on August 25.



Father Ivan Rusyn and Father Vasyl Polyak with parishioners



Father Ivan Rusyn and Father Vasyl Polyak bless fruit



Father Sergij Deiak with parishioners



IN NEWARK...

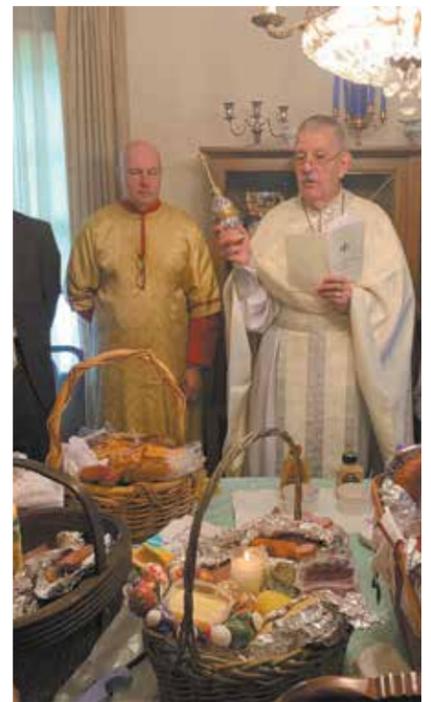
On Pascha of this year, the parishioners of Saint George Parish joined Father David Baratelli, Administrator, in the parish social center for the annual blessing of Easter foods. All of the baskets were exquisite! After the blessing of the baskets, the parishioners took part in a long-standing Saint George tradition – the sharing of the newly-blessed kielbasa for all to enjoy.

The parish celebrated the Feast of Saint Elias with the annual blessing of cars. Father Dave walked around the neighborhood blessing the parishioners' cars. All of the neighbors enthusiastically participated and also asked Father Dave to bless their vehicles, too!

Father David J. Baratelli is the Administrator and parish priest and Mr. Kenneth Dilks is the Cantor.



Father David blesses the cars



Father David blesses the Paschal Foods

IN HAZLETON...

Wedding Jubilarians celebrate with Bishop Kurt



Bishop Kurt looks on as Dr. Peter and Millie Yasenck (70 years married) cut the cake.



Bishop Kurt together with clergy and servers of the Central PA Syncellate



First row (left to right): Sister Petronilla Puhak, Sister Theodosia Alishofski and Sister Theresa Baval.

Second Row (left to right): Sister Elaine Kisinko, Sister Ruth Plante (Provincial); and Sister Carol Petrasovich.

In a spirit of gratitude and with great joy, the total community of the Sisters of Saint Basil gathered in Uniontown to celebrate the 405 years of dedicated service to God on July 30, 2019. Each of the Sisters in her own unique way expressed her commitment to be a praying, healing and life-giving presence in our Metropolitan Church and in the world beyond.

Sister Mary Ann Vasilchek, as the senior of the group, celebrated 75 years

as a Basilian Sister. Sisters from the Monastery joined in celebration with Sister at Mt. Macrina Manor since failing health did not allow her to be present at the Monastery celebration. In the Manor Chapel, an abbreviated service of the Akathist to Our Mother of Perpetual Help was sung by the Sisters. Following this, all gathered in the Oaks Dining Room to congratulate Sister Mary Ann, to enjoy refreshments and to share stories.

JUBILEE CELEBRATION AT MOUNT SAINT MACRINA

70th Anniversary

Sister Theodosia Alishofski, Sister Theresa Baval, and Sister Petronilla Puhak marked 70 years of joyful service as Sisters of Saint Basil. Serving for most of their religious life as teachers in the parish schools, each Sister then moved on to parish and/or pastoral ministry.

Sister Theodosia is presently serving in parish ministry in Wilkes-Barre, PA, and surrounding parishes. While visiting the sick is the primary focus of this ministry, Sister also is involved in catechetical ministry in the parish. Sister Theodosia's gift as an iconographer is evident in the many icons that can be seen around the monastery.

After serving in parish schools for close to fifty years, Sister Theresa and Sister Petronilla are both now sharing their gifts of compassionate care at Mount Macrina Manor. There, each Sister brings a ray of light to the residents who look forward to their presence. This same spirit also brings comfort to the families of residents, especially when the Lord comes to take their loved ones home to himself. Both Sister Theresa and Sister Petronilla share with the residents of the Manor, the same loving presence that were theirs as teachers.

60th Anniversary

Sister Elaine Kisinko and Sister Carol Petrasovich also began their ministry as Sisters of Saint Basil in the educational apostolate, both serving as teacher and

principal for a number of years. Other and varied ministries then became part of their lives which included serving on the Provincial Council.

Presently, Sister Elaine serves as secretary to Metropolitan Archbishop William, the third archbishop whom she was called to serve in this capacity. Added to her responsibilities for the archeparchy, Sister Elaine is the copy editor for the *Byzantine Catholic World*.

Sister Carol, whose background is in Formative Spirituality, continues in her position as Director of the House of Prayer. Offering spiritual direction individually, retreats and workshops is the main focus of this ministry. Additionally, Sister Carol is the coordinator for the annual pilgrimage.

The epistle read at the Divine Liturgy of Thanksgiving was from Paul's first letter to the Corinthians in which he speaks of the gifts of the spirit. In listening to this reading, one could not help but reflect upon the many gifts poured out in the lives of our Sister Jubilarians. At the festive dinner following the Liturgy, Sister Ruth, Provincial, congratulated the Jubilarians and thanked them for so generously offering the treasures of their gifts throughout these many years. For all of them, she wished that each could now draw interest from this treasury, as they continue to be a praying, healing and life-giving presence.

“YOU ARE GOD’S TEMPLE”

...continued from page 2

According to the Book of Genesis, the rainbow is a reminder of God's promise to Noah, a covenant that included his law against murder. When you see a rainbow, it should remind you that God is the God of life, not the God of death. As God says through Moses, “I place before you today a choice, life and death. Choose life!” And it says in the Book of Wisdom, “Do not bring on your own death by sinful actions. God did not invent death, and when living creatures die, it gives him no pleasure. He created everything so that it might continue to exist, and everything he created is wholesome and good. There is no deadly poison in them. No, death does not rule this world.”

With all of the lies of the culture of death, “ethics,” “professionalism,” “aid,” calling poison “medication” and calling murder “aid in dying,” the oligarchs have led the American people to new death camps. A frightening word from the Bible that describes our American death march is the word “casual.” Indeed, for something of such eternal gravity, it has seemed like a casual march. In the Book of Leviticus, God says, “If you behave toward me with casualness, I will behave toward you with a

fury of casualness.” In the 26th chapter of Leviticus, God says, “I am the Lord your God, who took you out of the land of Egypt from being slaves; I broke the bonds of your yoke and I led you erect. But if you will not listen to Me and will not obey My commandments if you consider My decrees loathsome, and if your soul rejects My ordinances, so as to annul my covenant, then I will do the same to you.” God then lists five series of seven afflictions for ignoring his laws. You may read the afflictions for yourself in your Bible. There is nothing casual about the list.

The Jewish scholars tell us that in this great admonition, there is a “chain reaction” to sin with seven steps, each one leading to the next. First, not dedicating yourself to the study of the scriptures and God's law, second, stop performing the commandments, third, be revolted by those who are loyal to the scriptures, fourth, hate the sages who expound God's law, fifth, prevent others from obeying the law, sixth, deny that God gave the commandments, and seventh, deny the very existence of God who made the covenant. In my lifetime, I have watched our society proceed through these seven stages. When the Orthodox Jewish doctor stopped New Jersey's law, the oligarch governor of New Jersey announced that he will fight him. In one final twist of dark humor



Gustav Dore, The Heaven of the Fixed Stars, from Dante's Paradiso

he said, “it was difficult for me to sign the law because I was raised Catholic.”

Many years ago, I saw Mother Angelica make an emotional plea on her television show. She said, “Mother has learned that many of the elderly people who watch my show are stockpiling their drugs so that they can end their lives with an overdose. Mother cannot sit by quietly while you send your soul to eternal damnation in hell.” Every year we read in our Sunday readings, “Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit dwells in you? But if any man destroys this temple, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which is you.” Inspired by Mother Angelica, I warn

my people every time we read this passage. Murder is a violation of the Ten Commandments, whether you murder someone else or murder yourself. Do not be deceived by the atheists or the oligarchs, or the false mercy of the angels of light. They envy your faith and desire to destroy it. Satan lies to you because he envies God and desires to destroy his beautiful creation. Life is a gift from God. We did not make ourselves. We do not have the right to end our own lives because we did not create our own lives. The moment of our conception was chosen by God, and God will choose the time of our death. It is our choice whether our death is accompanied by the sweet smell of holy incense or the rotten smell of decay.

As Christians, we have the answer to what others are asking. The mystery hidden from all eternity is revealed in the Incarnation. The answer to pain and suffering is the Cross of Jesus Christ. At the foot of His cross, the contradiction of pain and death is answered with eternal life. When Jesus was offered drugs on the cross, he turned his head away. Cast your cares on Him. He understands our suffering and sorrow. Be brave. Choose life.

+Kurt Burnett

HILLSBOROUGH TEEN PENS SCHOLARSHIP-WINNING ESSAY

By Ethan Dietzman

Ethan, the son of Curt and Lesia Dietzman of Bridgewater, NJ, is a parishioner of Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church in Hillsborough, NJ. He has been an active, practicing Byzantine Catholic his entire life and is heavily involved with the ECF Program at the parish. Throughout high school, he was an active member of Saint Mary's ByzanTEENS and served as President of Saint Mary's ByzanTEENS this past year, among other activities. Ethan wrote this essay as part of the requirements to apply for a scholarship offered by GCU Lodge 254. He has begun his freshman year at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, NJ, and continues to be active at Saint Mary Parish. This essay is printed with his permission. Father James Badeaux is the pastor of Saint Mary Parish in Hillsborough, NJ.

Our program necessarily includes the propaganda of atheism. Who said this? Many people might think it was leader of some far-reaching political party that has fewer than a dozen members or some anti-religious conspiracy theorist; however, people who guessed either one of those are wrong. This was said by the founder of the country that my mother grew up in, the Soviet Union. From the country's very beginning, all types of religion, including Byzantine Catholicism, were heavily oppressed. In the first few years following the founding of the Soviet Union, religion was completely not allowed. Clergy members and parishioners of Byzantine Catholicism were routinely imprisoned in work camps and executed for their faith. As time

went on, religion was allowed again, but it was heavily regulated and watched, with believers still being routinely arrested for being "enemies of the state". Catholics were never safe and their lives could be turned upside down any day depending on the mood of police and country leaders. Despite all of this, my mother and her family still held religion close to their hearts and their faith did not waiver.

My mother's story of her struggle has had a profound impact on my faith as a Byzantine Catholic. It makes me think that if my mother went through all of that in an atheist imposed country to be a Catholic, then I can definitely be one in a country where everyone has the freedom to practice whatever re-

ligion they want. When I think about the freedom I have, it deepens my faith and only makes me want to be a stronger Catholic. It makes me want to be even closer, to be knit into the Byzantine Catholic community we have here in America. Not so long ago, our ancestors laid down their lives to practice their faith with the government out to end them. We should do everything possible to maintain our religion as it could have very well become extinct, and especially the fact that it still made it through shows how strong and powerful it was.

My personal choices were most definitely influenced by my mother's story, and it can be seen very clearly in many aspects of my life. One big way that it



Ethan Dietzman at the Forum in Rome

can be seen is through the extra curricular activities that I do: president of Saint Mary's ByzanTEENS group, assistant teacher in Saint Mary's ECF Program, camp counselor at Saint Mary's Vacation Bible School Camp, and a runner at many Tricky Trays. I participated in many extracurricular activities that were centered around the church and church community as I think that it is very important to upkeep and support our religion. On top of being very involved in my church community, another personal choice that shows my depth of my faith as a Byzantine Catholic is how I have kept my faith, and respect other people's differing opinions about it. Many of my peers at school are not religious. However, I still remain very involved in my church and attend services as often as possible. I believe so deeply in my faith that I do not have the need to argue with them when they say negative things about Catholics or religious people in general. My mother's stories of the Soviet Union being so stringent on religion, make me realize that people will always have different opinions on religion, so there is no need to argue with people as I know what I believe in and don't need other people's negative opinions on it. My faith is deep enough that I don't have to argue with them to convince myself, and I think that makes someone an even more devout Byzantine Catholic when you come to terms with other people's opinions.

All in all, my mother was the most influential person in deepening my faith as a Byzantine Catholic. The stories she told me of the hardships she and other Catholics faced in the Soviet Union inspired me to be a very serious and devout one. My faith also spilled out into my personal choices as well which can be seen in the many extra-curricular activities I do with Saint Mary Church and my respect for others with differing opinions on our faith.

Tricky Tray Friday, Oct. 4, 2019

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BISHOP'S APPEAL 2018 – FINAL REPORT

Highlighted parishes reached their goal and received a 40% refund

| Parish | Location | Goal | Received |
|--|----------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| Saint John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church | Trumbull, CT | \$15,400.00 | \$6,095.00 |
| Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church | Danbury, CT | \$7,000.00 | \$1,300.00 |
| Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church | Meriden, CT | \$800.00 | \$800.00 |
| Holy Trinity Byzantine Catholic Church | New Britain, CT | \$4,800.00 | \$2,420.00 |
| Saint Gregory of Nyssa Byzantine Catholic Church | Beltsville, MD | \$5,400.00 | \$8,470.00 |
| Saint Therese Byzantine Catholic Church | Saint Petersburg, FL | \$10,600.00 | \$12,900.00 |
| Saint John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church | Bayonne, NJ | \$3,000.00 | \$2,610.00 |
| Saint Elias Byzantine Catholic Church | Carteret, NJ | \$4,400.00 | \$4,480.00 |
| Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church | Dunellen, NJ | \$4,000.00 | \$1,525.00 |
| Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church | Jersey City, NJ | \$3,000.00 | \$3,700.00 |
| Saint George Byzantine Catholic Church | Linden, NJ | \$8,000.00 | \$1,525.00 |
| Holy Spirit Byzantine Catholic Church | Mahwah, NJ | \$2,600.00 | \$2,640.00 |
| Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church | Hillsborough, NJ | \$30,000.00 | \$8,842.00 |
| Saint George Byzantine Catholic Church | Newark, NJ | \$2,400.00 | \$800.00 |
| Saint Joseph Byzantine Catholic Church | New Brunswick, NJ | \$3,400.00 | \$3,400.00 |
| Saints Peter & Paul Byzantine Catholic Church | Somerset, NJ | \$2,600.00 | \$2,600.00 |
| Cathedral of St. Michael the Archangel | Passaic, NJ | \$25,200.00 | \$28,350.00 |
| Saint Michael Byzantine Catholic Church | Perth Amboy, NJ | \$4,000.00 | \$1,440.00 |
| Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church | Perth Amboy, NJ | \$4,000.00 | \$1,445.00 |
| Saints Peter & Paul Byzantine Catholic Church | Phillipsburg, NJ | \$3,000.00 | \$3,300.00 |
| Saint Thomas the Apostle Byzantine Catholic Church | Rahway, NJ | \$12,400.00 | \$12,730.00 |
| Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church | Roebing, NJ | \$3,000.00 | \$3,550.00 |
| Assumption of the Virgin Mary Byzantine Catholic Church | Trenton, NJ | \$10,000.00 | \$10,000.00 |
| Holy Spirit Byzantine Catholic Church | Binghamton, NY | \$12,000.00 | \$3,990.00 |
| Saints Peter & Paul Byzantine Catholic Church | Endicott, NY | \$4,000.00 | \$2,440.00 |
| Saints Peter & Paul Byzantine Catholic Church | Granville, NY | \$800.00 | \$400.00 |
| Holy Cross Byzantine Catholic Church | New York, NY | \$1,000.00 | \$1,000.00 |
| Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church | New York, NY | \$5,000.00 | \$5,000.00 |
| Saints Peter & Paul Byzantine Catholic Church | Peekskill, NY | \$3,400.00 | \$6,450.00 |
| Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church | White Plains, NY | \$5,000.00 | \$2,050.00 |
| Saint Michael Byzantine Catholic Church | Allentown, PA | \$10,000.00 | \$14,460.00 |
| Saints Peter & Paul Byzantine Catholic Church | Beaver Meadows, PA | \$16,000.00 | \$9,835.00 |
| Saints Peter & Paul Byzantine Catholic Church | Bethlehem, PA | \$17,000.00 | \$18,805.00 |
| Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church | Brockton, PA | \$2,000.00 | \$25.00 |
| Blessed Virgin Mary Byzantine Catholic Church | Coatesville, PA | \$4,000.00 | \$820.00 |
| Saint Michael Byzantine Catholic Church | Dunmore, PA | \$12,000.00 | \$7,380.00 |
| Saint John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church | Forest City, PA | \$4,000.00 | \$1,670.00 |
| Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church | Freeland, PA | \$15,000.00 | \$15,215.00 |
| Saint Ann Byzantine Catholic Church | Harrisburg, PA | \$16,000.00 | \$16,000.00 |
| Saint John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church | Hazleton, PA | \$18,400.00 | \$8,735.00 |
| Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church | Hazleton, PA | \$12,000.00 | \$8,837.00 |
| Holy Ghost Byzantine Catholic Church | Jessup, PA | \$13,000.00 | \$3,940.00 |
| Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church | Kingston, PA | \$8,800.00 | \$4,070.00 |
| Saint John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church | Lansford, PA | \$5,000.00 | \$1,735.00 |
| Our Lady of Perpetual Help Byzantine Catholic Church | Levittown, PA | \$7,800.00 | \$2,747.00 |
| Saint Michael Byzantine Catholic Church | McAdoo, PA | \$10,200.00 | \$2,125.00 |
| Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church | Mahanoy City, PA | \$10,000.00 | \$2,110.00 |
| Saints Peter & Paul Byzantine Catholic Church | Minersville, PA | \$14,000.00 | \$4,930.00 |
| Saint Michael Byzantine Catholic Church | Mont Clare, PA | \$8,000.00 | \$3,500.00 |
| Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church | Nesquehoning, PA | \$3,000.00 | \$3,720.00 |
| Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church | Old Forge, PA | \$8,200.00 | \$4,250.00 |
| Saints Peter & Paul Byzantine Catholic Church | Palmerton, PA | \$1,000.00 | \$350.00 |
| Holy Ghost Byzantine Catholic Church | Philadelphia, PA | \$7,800.00 | \$2,800.00 |
| Holy Trinity Byzantine Catholic Church | Philadelphia, PA | \$3,000.00 | \$1,570.00 |
| Saint Michael Byzantine Catholic Church | Pittston, PA | \$8,200.00 | \$1,085.00 |
| Saint John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church | Pottstown, PA | \$13,800.00 | \$2,739.00 |
| Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church | Saint Clair, PA | \$3,200.00 | \$3,545.00 |
| Saint John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church | Scranton, PA | \$3,200.00 | \$270.00 |
| Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church | Scranton, PA | \$6,600.00 | \$3,990.00 |
| Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church | Shepton, PA | \$2,000.00 | \$2,010.00 |
| Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church | Swoyersville, PA | \$7,400.00 | \$4,100.00 |
| Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church | Taylor, PA | \$3,400.00 | \$560.00 |
| Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church | Wilkes-Barre, PA | \$19,800.00 | \$8,820.00 |
| Saint John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church | Wilkes-Barre Tw., PA | \$5,800.00 | \$1,900.00 |
| Saint Basil Byzantine Catholic Church | Miami, FL | \$6,800.00 | \$650.00 |
| Resurrection Byzantine Catholic Church | Smithtown, NY | \$8,800.00 | \$10,173.36 |
| Nativity of Our Lord Byzantine Catholic Church | East Brunswick, NJ | \$4,200.00 | \$170.00 |
| Holy Wisdom Byzantine Catholic Church | Flanders, NJ | \$1,600.00 | \$2,375.00 |
| Patronage of the Mother of God Byzantine Catholic Church | Arbutus, MD | \$9,800.00 | \$4,360.00 |
| Epiphany of Our Lord Byzantine Catholic Church | Annandale, VA | \$19,800.00 | \$21,490.00 |
| Our Lady of Perpetual Help Byzantine Catholic Church | Toms River, NJ | \$9,800.00 | \$5,643.00 |
| Saint Nicholas of Myra Byzantine Catholic Church | Orlando, FL | \$8,600.00 | \$9,005.00 |
| Saint Andrew the Apostle Byzantine Catholic Church | Westbury, NY | \$3,200.00 | \$3,900.00 |
| Saint Nicholas Chapel | Pocono Summit, PA | \$3,600.00 | \$1,700.00 |
| Epiphany of Our Lord Byzantine Catholic Church | Roswell, GA | \$10,800.00 | \$6,625.00 |
| All Saints Byzantine Catholic Church | North Fort Myers, FL | \$3,000.00 | \$1,825.00 |
| Holy Dormition Byzantine Catholic Church | Ormond Beach, FL | \$3,800.00 | \$2,871.63 |
| Saint Anne Byzantine Catholic Church | New Port Richey, FL | \$4,200.00 | \$4,200.00 |
| Ascension of Our Lord Church Byzantine Catholic Church | Williamsburg, VA | \$6,800.00 | \$7,540.00 |
| Our Lady of the Sign Church Byzantine Catholic Church | Coconut Creek, FL | \$6,200.00 | \$6,200.00 |
| Our Lady of Perpetual Help Byzantine Catholic Church | Virginia Beach, VA | \$3,200.00 | \$3,280.00 |
| Saints Cyril & Methodius Byzantine Catholic Church | Fort Pierce, FL | \$6,000.00 | \$400.00 |
| Saints Cyril & Methodius Byzantine Catholic Church | Cary, NC | \$10,000.00 | \$2,360.00 |
| Epiphany of Our Lord Byzantine Catholic Mission | Gaithersburg, MD | \$6,000.00 | \$6,180.00 |
| Blessed Basil Hopko Byzantine Catholic Mission | Conway, SC | \$600.00 | \$1,300.00 |
| Miscellaneous Donors | | | \$9,370.00 |
| TOTAL GOAL: | | \$636,600 | \$426,517.99 |

NEW CLASS BEGINS SEMINARY'S 4-YEAR SCHOOL OF DIACONATE STUDIES



A new year is beginning at the Byzantine Catholic Seminary. The preceding summer months have been anything but quiet. In addition to several projects to enhance the campus, summer classes have been conducted both online and on-property. The last two weeks of June saw intensive classes for a new group of 18 deacon students representing the Archeparchy of Pittsburgh and the eparchies of Passaic, Phoenix, and Stamford. Deacon student John Cencich of the Archeparchy of Pittsburgh had the following to share about his experience:

“There was an authentic and sincere sense of warmth as we were welcomed for a truly

unique and spiritually deepening undertaking in our lives. I was also struck by the organization of the program. The curriculum of the School of Diaconate Studies is purposefully presented in a way that follows the subject matter taught in the Seminary’s graduate degree programs, but in an abridged and rich format.

The mornings and evenings included liturgical services at which all deacon students served at the altar, and other talented members of the group undertook readings and served as cantors. It was not uncommon and quite comforting to hear chanting emanating from the chapel even in the late hours of the night.

The days were long, but in the end, we were provided with a world class opportunity to engage with some of the best professors in their fields. The two weeks were intensive indeed, but they were everything I expected plus! On top of that, the facilities and the

meals were excellent. I think I can speak for all of us by saying it was a very positive experience and one by which our life journeys not only intersected, but also deepened and expanded.”



Eparchy of Passaic first year Deacon Candidates: (From left to right) Adi Kusno of Ascension of Our Lord Parish in Williamsburg, VA (Father Alex Shuter); Alex Adekambi of Epiphany of Our Lord Parish in Roswell, GA (Father Lewis Rabayda); and Mike Sivulich of Saint Nicholas Parish in White Plains, NY (Father Ihor Vorontsov)

God With Us ✦ ONLINE ✦

GOD WITH US ONLINE is an outreach project of the Eparchial Directors of Religious Education (ECED) and the Eastern Catholic Associates (ECA) and is dedicated to the catechetical renewal of Eastern Catholics in the United States in accord with the Church’s call for a new evangelization.



THE FACE OF GOD

An Introduction to Byzantine Faith & Spirituality

Rev. Deacon Daniel Dozier

Wednesdays, September 11 and 18 @ 8:00 - 9:30 p.m. ET

“Christianity is not an abstract doctrine divorced from reality and from history. Nor is it some momentary, flickering light which shines for a brief while and then is gone. Christianity is a continual celebration of life and love between God and man lived out in concrete history.” - Archbishop Joseph Raya



MAKING DISCIPLES

The Art of Bringing Others to Christ

Rev. Alexander Wroblicky

Wednesdays, October 9, 16 and 23 @ 8:00 - 9:00 p.m. ET

Many faithful Catholics are inspired by the Church’s call to a new evangelization, yet don’t know where to begin, because evangelization is more of an art than a science. In this 3-part series, Fr. Alex will guide us to create room in our communities for people to grow into a mature and life-giving faith.



UNLOCKING THE MYSTERY

An Introduction to Eastern Christian Bible Study

Joshua Mangels

Wednesdays, November 6 and 13 @ 8:00 - 9:00 p.m. ET

“We have learned the plan of our salvation from no one else other than from those through whom the gospel has come down to us. For they did at one time proclaim the gospel in public. And, at a later period, by the will of God, they handed the gospel down to us in the Scriptures-to be the ‘ground and pillar of our faith.’” - St. Irenaeus the Godbearer



THE GIFT OF GOD

Preparing for the Feast of the Nativity

Rev. David Anderson

Wednesday, December 16 @ 8:00 - 9:00 p.m. ET

As the Great Feast of the Nativity of the Lord draws closer, using the prayers of the Church in this holy season as our guide, we will ponder God’s gift of Himself to us, and consider how we can respond by making a gift of ourselves to Him.



BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST

The Mystery of Initiation & Identity of the People of God

Rev. Sebastian Carnazzo, PhD

Wednesdays Jan 8, 15 and 22 @ 8:00 - 9:00 p.m. ET

The celebration of baptism, chrismation and Eucharist together is not simply a practicality. These mysteries are closely connected and must be understood in light of each other. Using Scripture, Fr. Sebastian will show us how these mysteries are not just a symbol, but truly make us the People of God.

2019 ONLINE EDUCATIONAL OFFERINGS

All courses are offered as live webinars, free of charge. Register at EasternCatholic.org/Events.

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 anyway, 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/>

September:
7, 14, 21, 28



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.



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 • Beer, Wine, Soda • Ice Cream • Hot Dogs

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 Silent Auction • NFL Football on TV
 • Bingo & Instant Bingo • Children's rides, games & face painting • Rummage Sale
 • Fairfax Sheriff Child ID Cards

Nourishment for the Soul
 Slavic Religious & Folk Art • Polka Lessons
 • Slavic Religious Books, Crosses & Jewelry
 • Church Tours: 12:30, 2:30, 3:30, and 4:30 pm
 Concert of Sacred Slavic Music at 1:30 pm
 Epiphany Slava Men's Chorus

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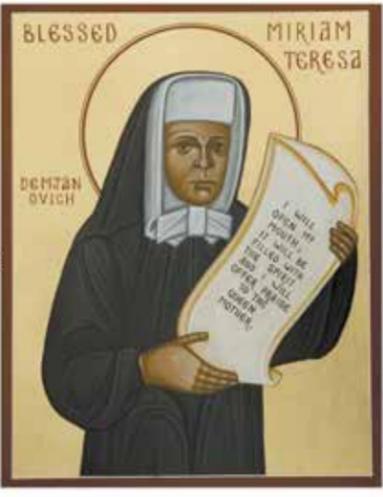
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SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Fifth Anniversary of the Beatification of Blessed Miriam Teresa Demjanovich
Saturday October 5th, 3:00pm

Please join us for the celebration a Pontifical Divine Liturgy at St. John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church, Bayonne, NJ commemorating this special event. The Most Rev. Kurt Burnette, Bishop of the Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Passaic will be main celebrant and homilist. Light refreshments to follow. RSVP by September 30

15 E. 26th Street
 Bayonne NJ, 07002
 201 339 1840
stjohnsbayonne@aol.com



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When traveling to the South, please visit our churches

| | | | | |
|---|--|--|---|--|
| All Saints 10291 Bayshore Road North Fort Myers, FL 33917 1-239-599-4023 | Epiphany of Our Lord 2030 Old Alabama Road Roswell, GA 30076 1-770-993-0973 | Holy Dormition 17 Buckskin Lane Ormond Beach, FL 32174 1-386-677-8704 | Our Lady of the Sign 7311 Lyons Road Coconut Creek, FL 33073 1-954-429-0056 | Saint Therese 4265 13th Avenue North Saint Petersburg, FL 33713 1-727-323-4022 |
| Saint Anne 7120 Massachusetts Ave. New Port Richey, FL 34653 1-727-849-1190 | Saint Basil the Great 1475 N.E. 199th Street Miami, FL 33179-5162 1-305-651-0991 | Saints Cyril and Methodius 1002 Bahama Avenue Fort Pierce, FL 34982 1-772-595-1021 | Saint Nicholas of Myra 5135 Sand Lake Road Orlando, FL 32819 1-407-351-0133 | |

FIRST-EVER BYZANTINE CATHOLIC YOUNG ADULT CONVOCATION HELD IN NEW YORK CITY

...continued from page 1



Members of the Young Adult Convocation Planning Committee (from left to right): Michael Wutkowski, Christopher Russo, Father Ed Cimbala, Adriana Shubeck, and Jerry Wutkowski. (Not pictured are Deacon Stephen Russo and Deacon Tom Shubeck)

James Ragan, Father Ron Hatton, Father Joseph Loya, Father Lewis Rabayda, Deacon Paul West, Subdeacon Tim Fariss, Subdeacon Bryan Scotton, Sister Natalia Olson, Sister Barbara Jean Mihalchik, OSBM, Sister Sue Harvey, OSBM; the volunteers of Saint Mary Parish, NYC, Gloriam Marketing, and True Goodness Films. Lastly, we would like to thank all young adults who tra-

velled near and far for helping to make the first-ever Byzantine Catholic Young Adult Convocation a success. Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory Forever!

To learn more about Theosis in Action and to find out more about upcoming events, visit us at theosisinaction.org and find us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/theosisinaction/>.



CHURCH SLAVONIC DIVINE LITURGY

With Homily Ponašemu

Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church at 8:30 AM
(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

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 is Father Gregory Lozinsky, Administrator 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 Lozinsky 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

8:30 AM – Church Slavonic & Homily Ponašemu
10:00 AM
6:00 PM



LIFE, LOVE, AND THE HUMAN PERSON

By Ann M. Koshute, MTS

BEING CHRISTIAN IN A CANCEL CULTURE

If you don't watch much cable or network news, or spend any time on social media, you may not be familiar with the new meaning of the phrase *to cancel*. Most of us use the word when we cancel a subscription to a magazine or service, or express disappointment when a favorite TV show is cancelled. It means to abandon, stop, or negate; to do away with something. It's a new world, and familiar words have taken on new meaning, or they are replaced with different, often less "offensive" ones. It's difficult to keep up, especially for any person older than a millennial, but it's easy to use the "wrong" word or express the "wrong" opinion, even if it's done so innocently. The goal posts are moving more quickly than even the most "enlightened" of us can keep up with, and it's fueling a certain amount of the division we are experiencing in our culture and in our country. Too often we care less about being *on the side of what is right*, than we do being *personally right*.

Cancellation has moved on from magazines and television to ideas, and most disturbingly, to people. It's now somewhat of a movement, originating with rejecting media or public figures with whom one disagrees, to boycotting products, companies and media outlets in protest of some offense. These days it isn't simply a matter of not buying certain products, watching a movie or seeking alternatives in the marketplace. Today the phenomenon of "cancelling" has been extended to abandoning, stopping, and negating *human beings*. In an effort to vilify, discredit, and even destroy another person or group with whom one disagrees, it is now acceptable – even a *duty* – to "cancel" another human person. We see the phenomenon played out most often – and cruelly – on social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook, where someone will post diatribes against the offending party, and proclaim him or her to "be cancelled," and encourage others to do the same. Beyond simply not associating with a person, or tussling in the ring of ideas, the righteous course of action (according to some) is to destroy reputations, disregard personal privacy, and in the most extreme cases, to resort to violence if necessary. "You're cancelled" means more than saying one doesn't exist in "my world," but that he or she has no right to exist at

all. It's scary out there, but it's not as far away from us as we think.

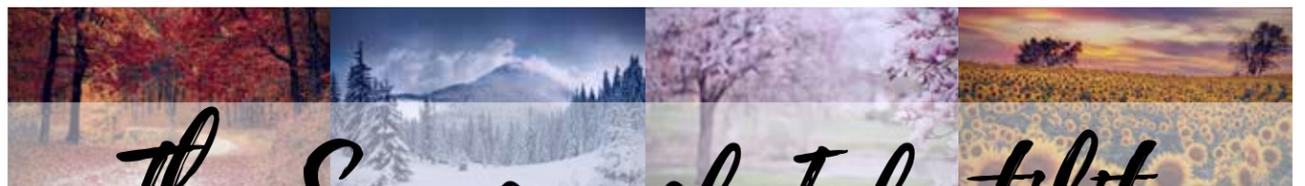
I know of Christians who pray, come to Liturgy, support charities and hold "traditional" values. I know a few of them who have spoken of others, perhaps even to them, using the most ugly and vile words. These followers of Christ answer both real and perceived affronts by tearing down others, spreading rumors and ostracizing them. They worship on the seventh day, and spend the next six criticizing, complaining about and... *cancelling* their brothers and sisters.

I know some Christians who are quick to anger, slow to giving

the benefit of the doubt and easily render judgments on others. I can spot those Christians from far away – and as near as my own mirror. I think that if we look deeply into our hearts, we can all find that we've "cancelled" our brothers and sisters in some way. We've called this one crazy, that one a liar; another is unstable, or just looking to get attention. We have all of the reasons to condemn or reject another, but so often can't recognize the one reason why we shouldn't: our own sinfulness. It is absolutely right to speak out courageously in the face of injustice, or to pull a brother or sister aside and offer charitable correction. But if "cancel culture" in-

vades our hearts, or God forbid the Church, we will have given in to the world, and given Satan the victory. So how does a Christian navigate "cancel culture" and become a sign of contradiction within it? By simply doing the opposite; that is, by following Christ.

The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, a document from the Second Vatican Council, provides the antidote to "cancel culture" in paragraph 22: *The truth is that only in the mystery of the incarnate Word does the mystery of man take on light... Christ, the final Adam, by the revelation of the mystery of the Father and His love, fully reveals man to man himself and makes*



The Seasons of Infertility

A RETREAT FOR WOMEN

Presented by: The Springs in the Desert Ministry Team

Saturday, December 7, 2019
8:30am-5:30pm

Infertility affects every woman and marriage differently. While each of our stories is unique to us, there is a shared experience of loss, isolation, self-doubt, testing of faith, and pain in our marriages.

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Please look for more details at <https://springsinthedesert.org/the-seasons-of-infertility>



Springs in the Desert is a Catholic ministry devoted to helping women and couples struggling with infertility to process and move beyond their grief to find the fruitfulness God has planned for their marriage. We hope our Springs in the Desert community can provide refreshment for your soul as you find others who share in your same suffering. Instead of suffering the additional pain of isolation, please know there is a place where others can identify with your struggle, providing solace and solidarity. You are not alone. You are not meant to bear this Cross on your own. Learn more at www.springsinthedesert.org

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"Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert." - Isaiah 43:18-19



3501 Solly Avenue
Philadelphia, Pa. 19136
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his supreme calling clear. Put another way, the Son of God became man to redeem our sinful natures and make possible our perfect union with God. But why carry out this plan by taking on inconvenient and imperfect flesh, being subject to suffering and even death at the hands of His own creatures? So that He could teach us who we are; how to be fully human, to be who we're meant to be in this life, and who we are destined to become in the next. Jesus Christ,

the Son of God, entered into humanity through a family where He learned to pray, to love and to work. His ministry was one of teaching, healing and personal encounter. His death was self-sacrificing, and His resurrection was a sign of God's ancient promise to redeem and renew His people. Each of these aspects of the life of Jesus are the antithesis of "cancelling" humanity, and instead meeting it (meeting us) and transforming it. Our sinfulness

gives Him every right to "cancel" us, but instead God's merciful love *cancel*s the debt we owe and allows us to move forward marked by His mercy and with the grace to extend that mercy to others.

How is a Christian to live in a "cancel culture?" Be a sign of contradiction in it! Praise God in times that are good and when they are bad. Examine your soul, confess your sins and be united to Christ in the Eucharist as often as possible so

that He can convert your heart. Pass up the chance to judge and criticize, but never miss an opportunity to be kind and merciful. Resist the temptation to jump to conclusions or deny truth and pray for those who hurt you and whom you have hurt. The way out of "cancel culture" is to create a culture of gratitude, forgiveness and mercy. Be an *authentic follower* of Christ, so that together with Him we may cancel evil with love. **ECL**



SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

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

THE CURTAIN IN THE SANCTUARY

The Apostolic reading for some feasts of the Mother of God is the description of the Old Testament sanctuary given in the Epistle to the Hebrews (9:1-7). While the Apostle was concerned with showing how Jesus' sacrifice on the Cross perfectly fulfilled all the Old Testament requirements for a sin offering, our Tradition also recognized how each of the details in the sanctuary points to His Virgin Mother. We sing this interpretation in the Akathist Hymn, composed in the 5th century by an unidentified genius, and in the hymns of the Paraklis and the Moleben to the Virgin, composed by Saint Theosteriktos in the 11th century. Mary is the lampstand who bore Christ, the Light of the world (John 8:12); the Ark of the Covenant who carried True God in her womb; and both the table of the showbread and the jar of manna who contained Christ, the Bread of Life (John 6:35,48). The miraculous blossoming of Aaron's rod (Numbers 17:1-10) foreshadows her more miraculous virginal birth of God's Son. In a word, by her virginal motherhood, Mary does in fact what the Temple only did in symbol: she contained God!

Prominent in the Exodus tabernacle and in the later Jerusalem Temples was a curtain or veil, which separated the Holy of Holies from the rest of the structure (Hebrews 9:3). The directions God dictated to Moses command it to be "woven of blue, purple and scarlet thread and fine woven linen" (Exodus 26:31-35). This curtain has an even deeper connection with the Theotokos.

According to one of the most ancient documents of Christian literature, the *Protevangelium of St James*, Brother of the Lord, when Mary was brought to the Temple as a little child, she was trained to weave this curtain. Icons of the Annunciation usually show Mary

holding a skein of scarlet yarn in one hand as the Archangel Gabriel appears to her. Even after she had left the Temple in Saint Joseph's care, the *Protevangelium* tells us, she continued to spin and weave for the Temple at home.

Mary's role as a sacred weaver caught the imagination of two of the greatest proponents of devotion to Mary around the time that the Ecumenical Council of Ephesus (431) defined her as "Theotokos." Saint Pulcheria, sister of the Emperor Theodosius II, gathered a community of consecrated virgins who further imitated the Mother of God by working as weavers. Pulcheria's spiritual father, Saint Proclus, Archbishop of Constantinople, observed that, just as Mary wove the curtain for the Holy of Holies, she also wove in her womb the human body of the Son of God.

In iconography, the color scarlet symbolizes both royalty and mortal human nature. Jesus Himself spoke about the "temple of His body" which would be destroyed on the Cross but raised up again (John 2:19-21). The material veil and the physical veil that Mary wove were destroyed together: the curtain in the Temple was torn in two from top to bottom at the moment of Jesus' death (Matthew 27:51), showing that His perfect sacrifice had been accepted by God as the one and only atonement for sin. The Temple was now obsolete and would be destroyed some 40 years later by the Romans. The Temple of Jesus' body would, of course, rise on the third day.

The Epistle to the Hebrews teaches that by His death, resurrection and ascension, Jesus has entered into the heavenly presence of God as our forerunner—precisely because He rose and ascended in a glorified human body—

that body woven in Mary's womb. The Apostle (Hebrews 10:20) goes on to encourage us to enter boldly into the Holy of Holies through the veil of Jesus' flesh. A few verses later (Hebrews 10:25), he warns us not to forsake the Sunday Liturgy which offers us a foretaste of our entrance into that Kingdom where Jesus has gone before us.

The curtain of the Old Testament Temple is replaced in our churches by the icon screen. Look carefully and you'll see that scarlet and blue colors

still predominate but the iconostas is not a blank barrier as the Old Testament curtain was. The Royal and Deacon's Doors offer access (Romans 5:2; Ephesians 2:18) to the Holy Place, and the Annunciation (with Mary holding the scarlet wool) is often depicted on the Royal Doors. The two main icons that invite us into the Holy Place are none other than Jesus Christ, who offered the perfect sacrifice for us on the Cross in the Temple of His Body, and the Theotokos who wove in her womb the veil of His flesh. **ECL**

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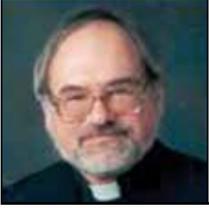
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THE BYZANTINE LITURGY

By Archpriest David Petras, SEOD

THE ANAPHORA OF SAINT BASIL: THE SALVATION OF CHRIST

The Anaphora of our Holy Father Basil has a very clear structure. It begins by describing creation of the Fall of humanity in the sin of Adam and Eve. In “righteous judgment,” then, God expelled them from paradise, but “did not turn away from” His creature forever.” After the Fall, then, God “intervened in various ways because of” His “merciful loving-kindness.” Saint Basil mentions prophets, holy ones (saints), angels and the Law itself as manifestations of his love and providence. This salvation was then fulfilled “when the fullness of time had come,” and He “spoke to us through” His “own Son.”

The narration section of the Anaphora from the Hymn of Victory (“Holy, holy, holy...”) to the words of institution at the Last Supper is the longest part of the prayer. The Anaphora of Saint Basil is a complete catechesis of the Gospel of Christ, woven together from Scripture. The most substantial part of this narration is the story of Christ. He first gives us the theology of the mystery

of the Incarnation: our faith that God took human nature. In doing so, the Son did not cease being God, for God creates and sustains all that exists. Basil, therefore, quotes the Letter to the Hebrews, “[God’s Son] is the reflection of His glory and the express image of His power, sustaining all things by His powerful word.” (Hebrews 1:3) Then, referring to Saint Paul’s Letter to the Philippians (chapter 2), that He nonetheless humbled Himself and “while remaining everlasting God,” “He appeared on earth and lived among men.”

All of Christ’s life was for our salvation. He was “born of a woman, the holy Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary.” Saint Basil does not quote the gospel accounts of Jesus’ birth, but quotes Saint Paul’s theology, that Jesus was “born under the Law” (Galatians 4:4, from the Epistle of Christmas), “to condemn sin in His flesh,” (Romans 8:3) which He had received from Mary, in this way reversing the sins of Adam, “that those who are dead in Adam might be brought to life in Him, your Christ.”

The Anaphora then continues to describe Christ’s teaching of the gospel, “Living in this world, he gave us precepts for salvation, turning us away from the deceit of idols (a reference to the opening of the gospel to the pagan Gentiles, who believed in many gods), and brought us to know You, true God and Father.” Christ’s teaching mission truly instilled in us the true concept of God, our faithful and loving Father, who welcomes back the prodigal Son, forgives us our sins, and has mercy on us in our humility. He gives us the mystery of baptism, “cleansing us with water and sanctifying us with the Holy Spirit” (Romans 15:16), that we might become “a chosen people, a royal priesthood and a holy nation” (1 Peter 2:9), not in the sense of a modern political nation, but as citizens of the Kingdom of God.

The climax of His work of salvation was Christ’s death and resurrection. The Anaphora of Saint Basil reflects in faith on these mysteries. Christ’s death on the cross: “He surrendered Him-

self as a ransom to Death,” and “[He descended] by the Cross into Hades.” He was glorified by His resurrection, “[He] rose on the third day ... since Corruption could not keep the Author of Life in its clutches.” (Acts 3:15) He preceded us in the resurrection, becoming “the first-born of the dead (Colossians 1:18) that in all things He might have pre-eminence over all.” Finally, “ascending into heaven, He has taken his seat at the right hand of your majesty,” (Hebrews 1:3) and “[He] will come to reward everyone according to his works.” (Romans 2:6) In all of this, it is striking how Saint Basil is able to pull out from Scripture Saint Paul’s theology of our salvation. The Anaphora proclaims that this is all done for life and glory, for God, through the death and resurrection of Christ, has “freed us from Death’s despair.” The Anaphora is our prayer of affirmation of hope, for in Christ we find “the way and the truth and the life.” (John 14:6) **ECL**

The more we pray and foster our relationship with God, and the more we read Scripture, the better we understand the mind of God and how He functions. When our faith is tested by minor temptations throughout our week, we often find ourselves being able to withstand those challenges because of our relationship with God, or even because of our theological understanding. We can reason and handle the small encounters we have with a difficult co-worker, or with the mood swings of our teenage children, or a neighbor who tries our patience; but how do we respond when we encounter a once- or twice-in-a-lifetime situation? Is our relationship with God strong enough, that we can properly handle major tragedies with confidence and courage? Or do we end up questioning or doubting the existence

of God when confronted with serious, life-changing situations?

This is the question that many people find themselves facing: do I have the type of faith that will bring me through a major tragedy? Or is my faith only relevant when things are going well in my life? Our answer to this question will tell us how we perceive God. Do we think of God as an entity who exists to make us happy and to give us endless good things at the cheap cost of a quick

prayer now and then? Do we think that God is supposed to protect us from all the dangers of the world, and that bad things should only happen to bad people? Or do we become resentful when something bad happens to us or to someone we love, even though we do pray everyday and perceive that God answers our prayers? The answers to these questions will show whether or not our faith is deep-rooted or if we are the rocky soil that Jesus spoke about in His parable of the sower.

When Jesus asks us to follow Him, He is asking us to accept the same level of humanity which He encountered and overcame. Too many people want to follow the resurrected Jesus, or the Jesus who Ascended into Heaven with His transfigured body. We all want to live in a Heavenly state free from all burden and pain and suffering. But Jesus did not begin His ministry in this way, He began His ministry with the usual hardships and challenges that face any human person. Jesus willingly endured pain and suffering and tragedy on the cross first, before He could be worthy of the resurrected and transfigured state. And when He asks us to follow Him, Jesus is implying that we are to follow His example of facing these hardships first, so that, with the help of God, we too can overcome the suffering of this world and be worthy of our resurrection in Christ.

When Jesus first called His Apostles, He asked them to, “Follow Me” (Matt. 4:19). Those who responded did follow Jesus and Jesus assured them that if they followed Him, they would receive the same treatment that He received because, “a servant is not greater than his master” (Jn. 13:6). Those Holy Apostles were anticipating crowns in heaven, but they knew that “if anyone would be first, he must be last of all” (Mk. 9:35). Even Saint Paul prayed to God to take away a physical pain he had, “a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan, to harass me, to keep me from being too elated” (2Cor. 12:7). If these chosen and holy men charged to bring the Good News of salvation and eternal life to the entire world suffered severe tragedies, tortures, persecutions, and execution, then why do we think that we deserve better treatment? Why do we still think that we were made for this world? Why do we fail to understand the role that suffering hardships with courage and endurance while accepting God’s will in the matter is one way in which we can follow Jesus Christ? Because the real tragedy in our lives, is when we resent our own pain, without recognizing it as a gift from God, a path in which we too can follow Jesus Christ, even to the cross if God wills it. **ECL**



Job the Longsuffering

SPIRITUAL REFLECTIONS

Father Lewis Rabayda



TRAGEDY IN THE ABSENCE OF GOD

In September of 2003, I was stationed at our parish in Williamsburg, VA. Our annual priest retreat was taking place at San Alfonso Retreat Center at the Jersey Shore, as usual, but the threat of Hurricane Isabel was greatly on my mind. The hurricane was heading for the Tidewater, VA, area, and threatened that area, changing constantly from a Category 4 to 5, then back again, as it headed our way. I had my Dachshund boarded at the veterinary clinic down the street, and I was imagining what would happen if the hurricane hit and no one was there to look after the boarded animals. Needless to say, my mind was *not* on the retreat that year!

I called one of my parishioners, who was a captain in the US Coast Guard to get any information on what was going to happen back home. He quite succinctly told me if I didn't leave by Wednesday, not to come home until at least Friday. As "captain" of our "ship," I felt that I should be back in Williamsburg when we got hit—not that there was anything I could do except have my dog with me! So, Wednesday, September 17, I headed from the safety of the retreat center to brave the storm at home. I got my dog back home with me, and I awaited whatever was to come.

As more background, the subdivision where our parish rectory is located is called Baron Woods, and true to its name, it was lots cut out of a forest of Loblolly Pines. These pines have a shallow root base apparently, and we had a history of whole trees just falling over, roots and all, so it was a tense time when the Isabel finally hit our area. Since (as

SEASONAL REFLECTIONS

Father Ronald Hatton



THE POWER OF THE LIFE-GIVING CROSS

you may have guessed!) we were still in the time of the Feast of the Exaltation of the Precious Cross of the Lord, and since we often refer to it as the Tree of the Cross, or speak of the Wood of the Cross, it felt natural, as long as I had light to see, that I take down my Book of Akathists and pray the Akathist to The Cross. Isabel came through as a Category 2 storm, but that was enough to make for a harrowing night.

The next morning, I went out to see the results of the storm. Most of the houses had trees down. The house across the street had a couple hit and moved it off its foundation. Parishioners down the street had a tree fall right across a practically-new car. Trees had fallen in the streets. Our little subdivision was devastated, yet not one tree on our property came down!

As I wandered around, talking to folks and assessing the damage, one neighbor asked me how I could be so lucky as to not have a single tree fall. I simply said, "I don't know what you were doing, but I was praying!"

Two things can be taken out of this story, as we once again enter the time of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross: one, that prayer *does* work; two, that even though praying before a crucifix, or even more, to pray *to* the Cross, may feel like a superstitious act in this day

and time, there is power in it. Yes, there is that tendency to anthropomorphize the Cross by "speaking" to it, but we must realize the power of the Tree of Life that bore on its branches the Author of Life, Who was crucified on it to destroy Death and to grant us everlasting life.

Some hymns from the Matins of the Feast:

Formerly, the tree in Paradise made me naked. In the temptation, the enemy brought death. He, the Tree of Life, Who became man and lived on earth, carried the Cross. Now the whole world is full of joy. Seeing the Cross raised up to God in faith, O people, let us cry aloud: Your Church is full of glory!

O famous Wood, you are blessed in song for being the Cross on which Christ was crucified. The fiery revolving sword by which Eden was guarded feared you, [cf. Gen. 3:22-24] and the awesome Cherubim bowed down to Christ Who was crucified upon you in the flesh. Through this mystery, peace has been granted to our souls.

And, finally:

Let all the trees of the forest exalt, for they are made holy by Christ Who planted them in the beginning and

Who was stretched out upon the Tree. On this day of its exaltation, we worship Him and extol you, O Cross.

Kind of wants you to pray the Matins, doesn't it?

Our liturgical life is so rich in the Eastern Church, and so much has fallen by the wayside as time has gone on. But we still have such feast days as the Exaltation of the Precious Cross to remind us of God's love and care for us. We are constantly reminded of all that has been done for us by Him that the chains of Death be loosened and that we attain everlasting life with Him.

May we ever stand in the shadow of the Tree of the Cross, looking upon Him Who died there for our salvation. May we always wear that Symbol of Symbols, around our necks, on our clothing, on our chotki and rosaries. May we never be ashamed of the Cross, or ashamed to venerate it with our kisses. May we always make the Sign of the Cross on ourselves, on our children.

"The Cross is the guardian of the universe; the Cross is the beauty of the Church. It is the power of kings, and it sustains the strength of our faith. It is the glory of the angels and the slayer of demons." **ECL**



SCHOOL OF PRAYER

Father G. Scott Boghossian

WORKING ON YOUR "LOVE WALK"

Are you making any spiritual progress? Are you getting closer to God? Feelings of devotion, hours spent in prayer and holy reading, attendance at every church service and parish activity, fasting and self-denial, and helping others at the local soup kitchen or food pantry, while all good, do not prove that we are making progress.

Our "love walk" is what determines the authenticity of our spiritual life. To put it simply, do you love your neighbor? Wait, don't stop reading here. Don't assume you've got this in the bag. It is easy to be loving toward a lovely person. Anybody can do that (Mt. 5:46)! What counts is whether or not we can be loving toward a difficult, irritating person. What matters is if we can be kind to a hostile party or personal enemy. The real test that determines and demonstrates our authenticity as followers of Christ is how we treat the people who make us want to scream and pull out our hair, who insult us or ridicule us, and toward whom we experience the greatest aversion and dislike. Thank God for these people,

because without them we would never know if we had even a shred of spiritual maturity.

Jesus tells us the greatest commandment is to love God with our whole heart, and the second greatest commandment is to love our neighbor (Mt. 22:36-40). The two commandments are intimately related. If you don't love your neighbor, you can be sure you don't love God. If my spiritual practices are not helping me to love difficult people, then something is wrong. Saint John says that the way we know we love God is that we love our neighbor. "If anyone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen" (I John 4:20). It's sad when we hear a fellow believer say, "I hate that person." Maybe we have even said as much. If we have hatred and malice in our hearts, we are in big trouble.

Saint Paul makes the same point in his famous love chapter. "If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but

have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing" (I Cor. 13:1-3). If we don't have fraternal charity, we are nothing!

"Christ does not want you to feel the least hatred, resentment, anger or rancor towards anyone in any way or on account of any transitory thing whatsoever. This is proclaimed throughout the four gospels," says Saint Maximus the Confessor.

OK, so you failed the test. Your "love walk" leaves much to be desired. Pick yourself up and start again. Begin by remembering that fraternal charity is an act of the will, a decision to love, not a feeling. We can't often control our emotions, but we can decide and choose to love the unlovable and forgive the unforgivable.

Pray for the people who drive you batty. "If you harbor rancor against anybody, pray for him, and you will prevent the passion from being aroused," says Saint Maximus. Wish them well and pray that God would bless them with every good thing.

Meditate daily on the great love commandment (Mt. 22:36-40). Every day read over Saint Paul's description of love in I Corinthians 13, "love is patient, love is kind, love is not jealous or boastful," etc. Look over the Sermon on the Mount, especially Matthew 5.

"Make love your aim" (I Cor. 14:1) in all your spiritual practices. When you receive holy communion, say your prayers, engage in spiritual reading, fast and offer up your sufferings, may your intention be to grow in that love for neighbor that proves your love for God. The real test that we are making spiritual progress and growing in the love of God is our "love walk." That is to say, the proof of authentic Christian spirituality is loving the people who are the most difficult to love. **ECL**



SEMINARIAN REFLECTIONS

Deacon Paul Varchola West

TALKING WITH GOD

It is often assumed that because I am in seminary, I get to spend most of my day praying and spending time with the Lord. While this ideal would be lovely, it is most certainly not the case. A life in formation, as with any life situation, comes with many, many demands on one's time. Academic classes, reading assignments, papers, house chores, and special events, in addition to my own family commitments, caring for my wife and children, the house, etc., are all aspects of life that cause me to have to "budget" my prayer time. Granted, I am fortunate enough to have daily prayer built into my liturgical formation schedule, but this is not the same as that precious "one on one" time with the Lord that one finds in a quiet place with no one else around. I often joke with people that I used to spend more time simply talking with God prior to entering seminary when I would go fishing than I do now simply based upon the number of hours in a day. I often reminisce of days gone by when I would tell my wife before going to bed that I was planning to get up early the next morning to "go spend some time with God." She knew exactly what this meant: that I was going fishing the next morning. While of course

I enjoy fishing as a sport, as well as all the gizmos and gadgets that go along with it, what I loved the most was sitting in the dirt on the edge of a river or a lake and simply staring up at the sky with my mind fixated on the grandeur of God. I would feel "in touch" with creation, with something much, much larger than myself. He and I had some pretty deep conversations. What happened? Why do I no longer feel that intimate connection as often as I used to? At the beginning of August, I was afforded a wonderful opportunity that would help answer my question.

After a very long and busy summer, I was fortunate enough to be able to do something I have not done in three years. I was able to go on a five-day fishing trip with my dad to a pristine natural mountain lake just a little north of Scranton. I probably should mention that we let my mom, Alissa and the kids come along too! Besides getting some much-needed family time, I was also gifted some insight into my spiritual life. The first morning we were there, my dad and I resumed our ritual of waking with the sun to greet the morning and the fish stirring just below the water's surface. Almost im-

mediately after launching the boat and casting my line into the water, the only thought running through my mind was, "I've missed you so much." I was then filled with a stillness I have not felt in a very, very long time. In this peace, I felt as if God was embracing me and saying, "I've missed you too." This was also the case between my dad and me as well. This was the first time in three years that we were able to go fishing together, something we used to do frequently. Not only was I reconnecting with my dad in a special way, I was reconnecting with God, my Heavenly Father, in a special way as well. For the next five days, we (God, my dad and I) sat in that leaky rowboat catching fish and enjoying each other's company, sometimes in long periods of silence. It was not until our final morning there as we were preparing to leave that all of this began to make sense to me.

As I sat sipping a cup of coffee in the coolness of the morning of the mountains of northeastern PA, staring at a crystalline lake, fog churning over the still water, it hit me: the stillness I have been searching for is not in fishing, it has been all around me this entire time. The world is constantly moving. Life

is constantly moving. All of creation is constantly moving. The stillness exists within me, within my heart. I need to look no further than myself to realize that God is there for me to spend time with. All I need to do is to sit, take a deep breath and say, "God, I've missed you," and He will most certainly respond with, "I am here." I do not even need to pick up a fishing pole to do that! I have been trying so desperately to escape the movement and business of life that I have failed to realize that it is in this very movement of creation itself that God is waiting for us to call out to Him.

As Christians, it is important for us to realize that life is not going to stop for us, but rather we need to stop in order to let God into that business. Bills, work, assignments, house repairs, children, all those things are not going to give way so that God may come to us. We need to work to put those things on hold, even if but for a few moments each day to reach out to God to simply talk with Him, to share our lives with Him. We do not need "ideal conditions" for this, we do not need a mountain lake and a fishing pole to talk with God. All we need is our heart. Opening our hearts to the truth that God is indeed present in all of creation suddenly brings Him much closer to us so that we may say, "Hello," or, better yet, simply sit with our Lord in a moment of peace and stillness wrapped in His loving embrace. **ECL**

When traveling to the Mid-Atlantic, please visit our churches

Maryland Patronage of the Mother of God

1265 Linden Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21227
Phone 410-247-4936
Web www.patronagechurch.org
Sunday Divine Liturgy 9:15 am

Patronage at Abingdon meeting at: Stone Chapel at Saint Francis de Sales Church

1450 Abingdon Road
Abingdon, MD 21009
Sunday Divine Liturgy 5:30PM

Patronage at Hagerstown meeting at: St. Ann Catholic Church

1525 Oak Hill Avenue
Hagerstown, MD 21742
Saturday Vigil Liturgy 6:45PM 2 per month
Call Baltimore for schedule

Saint Gregory of Nyssa

12420 Old Gunpowder Road Spur
Beltsville, MD 20705
Phone 301-953-9323
Web www.stgregoryofnyssa.net
Sunday Divine Liturgies
Church Slavonic 8:00 am
Sunday Matins 9:30 am
English Liturgy 10:30 am

Epiphany Mission

9301 Warfield Road
Gaithersburg, MD
Web www.eolmission.org
Sunday Divine Liturgy at 10:00AM

Virginia

Epiphany of our Lord

3410 Woodburn Road
Annandale, VA 22003
Phone: 703-573-3986
Web www.eolbcc.org
Sunday Divine Liturgies 8:00 am & 10:30 am

Ascension of our Lord

114 Palace Lane
Williamsburg, VA 23185
Phone 757-585-2878 (rectory)
Web www.ascensionva.org
Sunday Divine Liturgy 11:00 am

Our Lady of Perpetual Help

216 Parliament Drive
Virginia Beach, VA 23462
Phone 757-456-0809
Web www.olphvb.org
Sunday Divine Liturgy 8:00 am

North Carolina

Saints Cyril and Methodius

2510 Piney Plains Road
Cary, NC 27518

Phone 919-239-4877
Web www.sscyrilmethodius.org
Sunday Divine Liturgy 10:00 am

District of Columbia

Byzantine Ruthenian Chapel Basilica of the National Shrine

400 Michigan Avenue, NE
Washington, DC 20017
Phone 202-526-8300
Web www.nationalshrine.org
No regularly scheduled Sunday Liturgy.
To reserve a date and time, priests must call the Liturgy Office and submit a current letter from their eparchy's Safe Environment Office.

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UPCOMING EPARCHIAL AND PARISH EVENTS

SEPTEMBER, 2019

- 1 Uniontown Pilgrimage concludes
Mount Saint Macrina, Uniontown, PA
First Day of the Liturgical Year
- 2 Labor Day
*Civic Holiday*Chancery closed*
- 8 Nativity of the Virgin Theotokos
Solemn Holyday
- 14 Exaltation of the Precious, Holy, and Life-creating Cross of the Lord
Solemn Holyday
- 15 Wedding Jubilarians' Celebration for NY/NE and NJ Syncellates
Saint Mary Church, Hillsborough, NJ, 3 PM
- 23-26 Eparchial Priests' Retreat
Long Branch, NJ

OCTOBER, 2019

- 1 Protection of the Theotokos
Solemn Holy Day
- 14 Columbus Day
*Civic Holiday*Chancery closed*