



EASTERN CATHOLIC LIFE

Official Publication of the Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Passaic

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FEBRUARY 2013

The Great Fast 2013

A Message from the Eparchial Administrator

My Dear People of the Eparchy of Passaic,
Happy Great Fast!

Many people associate the season of the Great Fast, the time of spiritual preparation for the Easter celebration, with sadness and grief. And sometimes people actually think the Great Fast is a season that is to be avoided, or at best, to be patiently endured. But it is not like that at all. The Great Fast can be the most joyful and enriching time of the church year us as Eastern Catholics!

That is because the Great Fast is not simply a “giving up” or a “turning away” from the things that make us happy, but rather it is a “re-turn” toward the life of joy that our Creator intended for us to have. The Great Fast does not turn us *away* from life, but it turns us *towards* God, so that we might become more fully the person He wishes us to be.

The time of the Great Fast is an opportunity for us to take stock of ourselves, our feelings, and our lives. It is an opportunity for us to do some “spring cleaning” of the compulsions, bad habits, and the things that we think make us happy but really lead us away from God. It is an occasion to find the real happiness of knowing that our life has deep meaning in God’s eyes, and that our relationship with God - and neighbor - are primary to who we are.

We are reminded of this through faithful participation in the special services and fasting regulations of the Great Fast.

During this time, we are invited to take on the special “disciplines” of prayer, fasting and sacrifice not as a punishment, but as an opportunity to deepen our relationship with God. Participation in the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts and other services, as well as the weekly abstinence from meat on Wednesdays and Fridays, are an invitation to reorient our priorities away from ourselves, and to re-focus our sights on God and neighbor.

This is all part of the “re-turn” toward the life of joy that God wants us to have. It isn’t easy and it takes work. But, the work we are called to do is a work of joyful sacrifice of repentance, fasting, prayer, and acts of love. Repentance means a “turning around,” changing course, leaving sin behind to walk toward God. We do this through an honest examination of our lives, by holding the mirror of God’s grace and mercy up

against our own selfish and sinful deeds, and understanding in a new way how gracious is God’s love for us.

During the Great Fast we are invited to “re-turn” to God’s grace and turn away from the old wounds and hurts that afflict us. The Great Fast begins with the celebration of Vespers of Forgiveness in order to remind us that to receive God’s forgiveness, we must be willing to share that forgiveness with others. In our daily prayers, especially during the Great Fast, we should examine our life honestly and ask God to forgive us and lead us into new ways of loving Jesus and neighbor more deeply. If there is conflict or tension between us and someone else in our life, we should seek to resolve it so that it does not become a stumbling block to our faith and spiritual growth.

We are also called to offer sacrifice during the Great Fast. We might consider going out of our way to do something nice for somebody at least once a week during the Great Fast. Or we might make a donation for the needy through the church. We could volunteer an extra portion of our time, or say a special prayer for someone in need. Whatever we choose to do, we should recall the words of Our Lord Who said, “As you do it for the least of My brothers or sisters, you do it for Me.” (Matthew 25:40)

The Great Fast is full of many opportunities to “re-turn” to the life of joy that God wants us to have. God calls each of us to a closer and deeper relationship with Him. We fast for a reason and for a purpose, and that is to “re-turn” to a life of joy in the Lord. It is my prayer for you that you live your journey of the Great Fast with happiness, and that it will bring you to a Joyful Pascha!

Please know that you are always in my prayers and I ask that you keep me in yours.

Sincerely yours in the service of Christ and His people,

Very Rev. Edward G. Cimbala, D.M.A.
Administrator of the Eparchy of Passaic

+Sister Mary John Semon, OSB Called to Eternal Repose

WARREN, OH – Sister Mary John Semon, OSB, a member of the Benedictine Sisters of the Byzantine Church at Queen of Heaven Monastery in Warren, OH, fell asleep in the Lord following a brief illness on December 20, 2012 at The Assumption Village in North Lima, OH.

She was born in Glen Campbell, PA on May 10, 1916, the daughter of the late Peter Semon and Susan Franko Semon and the oldest of eleven children. At the age of 17, she left home to work in New York City. She joined Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church there and became active in the Legion of Mary and the Sodality of Our Lady, attending the Divine Liturgy frequently.

Encouraged by friends, she entered the newly-formed community of the Sisters of Christ the Teacher in Pittsburgh, PA on December 7, 1959, and made her final profession of vows on January 6, 1964. She taught at Byzantine Catholic parish schools in McKees Rocks, PA; Carteret, NJ; and Lakewood, OH. When the community of Sisters of Christ the Teacher disbanded, she transferred to the Benedictine Sisters of the Byzantine Church at Queen of Heaven Monastery in Warren, OH in 1973 where she taught elementary grade students at Saints Peter and Paul School, Warren until 1989.

For many summers, Sister Mary John also volunteered with the Appalachian Project in Vanceburg, KY.

She also worked with the young children at the Benedictine Early Learning Center on the property of Queen of Heaven Monastery in 1989. When the BEL Center closed, she volunteered as a teacher aide at the Children's Rehabilitation Center in Warren from 1999 to 2007. In 2009, she was one of the two honorary co-chairs for the Retirement Fund for Religious appeal in the Diocese of Youngstown. She celebrated her silver jubilee of religious profession in 1985 and her golden jubilee in 2010. Sister was a member of the Greek Catholic Union, the Society of Saint John Chrysostom, the Carpatho-Rusyn Society, and Howland Scope.

Sister Mary John enjoyed life and God's blessings. She was a strong-minded, gifted woman, enjoying books, quiz shows, word puzzles, opera, ballet, art museums, sports, plants, vegetable gardening, yoga, arts and crafts, traveling with Scope, the annual pilgrimage to Uniontown, and the activities of the Carpatho-Rusyn Society. She also volunteered at the Saint Vincent DePaul Dining Hall in Warren, OH.

Sister Mary John leaves behind four brothers, Edward, Albert, John, and David Semon, and three sisters, Irene Semon Verbiak, Dorothy Ann Semon Callaghan, and Margaret Semon Rudin. She was preceded in death by two brothers, Joseph and Michael Semon, and a sister, Mary

Semon Moe.

A Parastas was celebrated Wednesday evening, December 26, 2012 at Saints Peter and Paul Byzantine Catholic Church in Warren by Father Andrew J. Deskevich, Chancellor of the Archeparchy of Pittsburgh and Pastor of Saints Peter and Paul Church in Warren, OH. Responses were led by Mary Beth Byers, Cantor.

The Office of Christian Burial with Divine Liturgy was concelebrated at Saints Peter and Paul Church on Thursday, December 27th by Metropolitan William, Father Andrew J. Deskevich, and Abbot Leo R. Schlosser of Holy Trinity Monastery, Butler, PA and Pastor of Saint John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church, Lyndora, PA. Also present were Monsignor Alexis E. Mihalik, pastor emeritus of Infant of Prague Byzantine Catholic Church in Boardman, OH; Father Robert J. Karl, Pastor of Saint Andrew the Apostle Byzantine Catholic Church, Gibsonia, PA; and Father Christopher R. Burke, Pastor of Infant Jesus of Prague Church, Boardman, OH. Wiley Byers, Bill Catlin, and Jacob Mosko served as acolytes. Mary Beth Byers cantored the Liturgy and Stephen Byers chanted the epistle.

Family members present included Edward and David Semon; Irene, Frank, Cathy and Bob Verbiak; Margaret Rudin; Karen and Kerrie Riegel; and Tonda Gaddy.



Besides the Sisters of her Religious Community, Sister Valeria Evanyo, OSBM and Sister Elaine Kisinko, OSBM of the Sisters of Saint Basil the Great, Uniontown, Pennsylvania attended, as well as Sister Mary Ann Diersing, OSU of the Ursuline Sisters of Youngstown. Also present were members of Saint Benedict's Auxiliary, the Oblates of Saint Benedict, the Carpatho-Rusyn Society, and the Society of Saint John Chrysostom, as well as parishioners and friends. The committal service took place at Saints Peter and Paul Cemetery in Warren, OH.

Sister Mary John had a deep spirituality and love for prayer. Although her last days were often filled with pain, she took comfort from the Sacraments, which she asked to receive as often as possible. As Father Deskevich remarked in his homily, "she left a mark on the lives of many."

Grant, O Lord, to the nun, Sister Mary John Semon, blessed repose and eternal memory!

Lenten Vespers and Confession Schedule Northeast Pennsylvania

Scranton Area - 3PM

- | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Sunday, February 17 | Holy Ghost – Jessup |
| Sunday, February 24 | Saint Nicholas – Old Forge |
| Sunday, March 3 | Saint Michael – Dunmore |
| Sunday, March 10 | Saint Mary – Scranton |
| Sunday, March 25 | Saint John – Forest City |

Wyoming Valley Area - 3PM

- | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Sunday, February 17 | Saint Mary – Wilkes-Barre |
| Sunday, February 24 | Saint John – Wilkes-Barre Twp |
| Sunday, March 3 | Saint Nicholas – Swoyersville |
| Sunday, March 10 | Saint Michael – Pittston |
| Sunday, March 17 | Saint Mary – Kingston |



All services begin at 3PM and will include the celebration of Vespers, the opportunity to receive the Holy Mystery (Sacrament) of Reconciliation, and will conclude with a Social Hour.

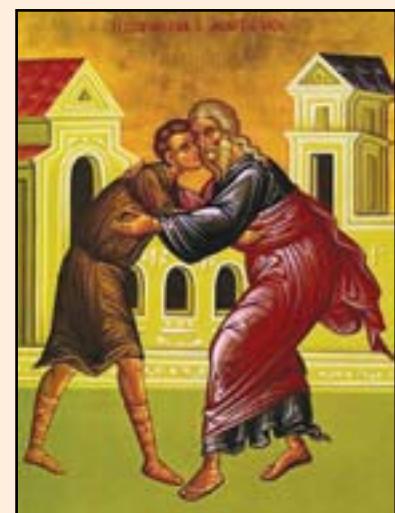
All are welcome to attend!



Forgiveness in the life of the Church

Forgiveness Vespers 3pm - Cheesefare Sunday February 10, 2013

Franciscan Friary, Sybertsville, PA



Most Rev. Joseph Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, homilist

The Franciscan friars welcome those who do not have forgiveness vespers in their parish to join and pray these moving prayers to start the Great Fast. Let us turn to God our Father with repentant hearts and strive to reconcile with our brothers and sisters that we will become ever more people of mercy and peace.

Cost: Free-will donations accepted. As the prophet Isaiah says: *come without money, without cost...* If you would like to bring baked goods for the reception, please let us know by email at holydormition@gmail.com – or by phone: 570-788-1212 x 400.

About the homilist: Bishop Joseph Bambera, a native of Carbondale, PA, has served the Diocese of Scranton as priest since 1983, becoming the bishop of Scranton in 2010. Among his former assignments, he served as pastor of nearby St John Bosco Parish in Conyngham and as diocesan director of ecumenism and interfaith affairs. Bishop Bambera will preach on the theme: Forgiveness in the Life of the Church.

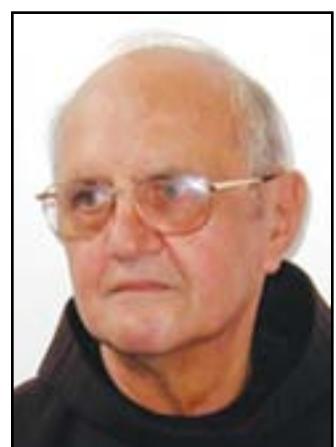
Forgiveness Vespers is the traditional preparation for the Great Fast in the Byzantine Church. With the regular vespers Psalms, we sing hymns to prepare our hearts for reconciliation with God and neighbor that is the motivation for all our penitential acts. We exchange peace and reconciliation, asking those we pray with to forgive us of the ways we may have hurt them in the past. Please encourage your neighbors and fellow parishioners to attend with you. Reception following vespers.



*Holy Dormition Friary, 712 State Highway 93 – PO Box 270 – Sybertsville, PA 18251
570-788-1212 website: <http://hdbfm.com>
email: holydormition@gmail.com*



Franciscan Father Michael Derbish, OFM Reposes in the Lord

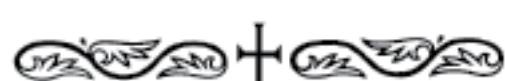


SYBERTSVILLE, PA – Father Michael (Charles) Derbish OFM fell asleep in the Lord on Sunday, December 2, 2012. Father Michael was a member of the Byzantine Franciscan Friars and served for many years at Saint Peter and Paul Ukrainian Catholic Church in Aliquippa, PA, until declining health prompted his move to the Vincentian Home in Pittsburgh.

Before his service in Aliquippa, he served Ukrainian Catholic parishes in Pennsylvania and Connecticut, and he served in various capacities in the monasteries of the Byzantine Franciscans (Sybertsville, PA and New Canaan, CT).

The Office of Christian Burial was held Monday December 10th at 5:30 PM at Holy Dormition Monastery in Sybertsville. Divine Liturgy was celebrated the following day on Tuesday, December 11, 2012. Father Michael was interred at the motherhouse of the Franciscan Province in Pulaski, WI.

In blessed repose, grant, O Lord, eternal rest to your servant the Friar-Priest Michael and remember him forever!





People you know... ...Around the Eparchy

In Freeland...

..Welcome, Saint Nicholas!

FREELAND, PA – Saint Nicholas of Myra visited the children of Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church in Freeland, PA on Sunday, December 2, 2012 and filled all present with the joy of the Christmas spirit! To honor their patron saint, the parish children enjoyed a Christmas celebration and lunch, followed by a greeting from Saint Nicholas himself!

Monsignor Nicholas Puhak hosted the visit and led the children in song before the arrival Saint Nicholas, who had many smiles – and gifts – for all the children present! The



event was sponsored by the Saint Nicholas Apostolate and organized by Lee Ann Baskin.

In Rahway...

...Community Service Donation



(l. to r.): Sandy Yelenovsky, Tricky Tray Co-Chairman; Vivian Cappolla, Children's Specialized Hospital's Community Engagement Coordinator; Mary Bannworth, GCU Lodge 340 President; and Barbara Mytrowitz, Altar Rosary President.

RAHWAY, NJ – The parishioners of Saint Thomas the Apostle Byzantine Catholic Church in Rahway NJ, recently held their annual Tricky Tray Auction in support Children's Specialized Hospital in Mountainside, NJ.

GCU Lodge #340 and Saint Thomas the Apostle Altar Rosary Society once again teamed up to

make the table a wonderful success. Over 300 people attended this parish event. At the conclusion of the event, \$2,535 was collected for Children's Specialized Hospital for purchasing gifts for the children for Christmas.

Saint Thomas Parish is served by Father Michael Mondik.



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Eparchial Website: www.EparchyofPassaic.com



Visiting New York City?

Come Worship With Us

St. Mary's Byzantine Catholic Church

Sunday Divine Liturgy
10:00 AM

246 East 15 Street
Manhattan, New York
212 677 0516

Subway Station:
14th Street – Union Square



Florida's Ormond Beach Parish

Bustling with Activity!

Holy Dormition Byzantine Catholic Church in Ormond Beach, FL has been bustling with activity over the past few weeks. Among the many activities, the parishioners recently held their annual Chinese Auction (Tricky Tray), which is the primary fundraiser for the parish. The church hall is full-laden with an assortment of donated prizes that are raffled off to patrons eager to win that special gift!

Parishioners come out in full force to assist at the auction by selling tickets, calling the winning numbers, and delivering prizes to the lucky winners. Other parish volunteers make sure that refreshments, such as hot dogs and homemade cakes, are readily available and plentiful!

Among others, one parish volunteer stand out in a special way – his name is Tommy, and, although he is diagnosed with cerebral palsy, he happily volunteers his time to sell red tickets at the event. He even goes so far as to wear his lucky red shirt so people will know he is the one who is selling the red tickets. All and all, the Tricky Tray auction is a tiring, but fun and rewarding day thanks to Tommy and all the dedicated volunteers like him!

As the calendar turned to December, on the first Sunday of the month, the parish then held its annual Saint Nicholas Dinner. The pot luck

meal brings the parishioners together in honor of Saint Nicholas of Myra, Patron of the Byzantine Catholic Church and beloved by children and the young at heart everywhere! This year, there was a special occasion at the annual Saint Nicholas celebration as the parish honored their Cantor, Robert Shihinski, for his 25 years of dedicated service to the church.

acknowledged the dedication of Cantor Robert and spoke of the virtues of charity and generosity in imitation of Saint Nicholas of Myra. He also spoke of Saint Romanus the Hymnographer, patron of cantors, who authored the Christmas Kontakion and other hymns that are sung on a regular basis, as a model for cantors and all who are dedicated to singing the praises of the Lord.

After the services, all present broke bread together, sang Christmas Carols, and welcomed their special patron, Saint Nicholas, who was present with gifts for the children and good cheer for everyone.

The year closed with the celebration of a milestone of a special parishioner - Anna Kritak, who recently celebrated her 90th birthday. In joyful celebration, the parishioners honored her with a birthday cake and rendition of *Happy Birthday* at the weekly coffee hour following the Divine Liturgy. The parish looks forward to a blessed New Year and invites anyone traveling to Florida to join them for the celebration of the Divine Liturgy!

Father Sal Pignato of Saint Nicholas Church, Orlando, FL is Administrator of Holy Dormition Church, in Ormond Beach, with the assistance of Father Vince Brady, Associate Pastor in Residence.



Saint Nicholas, Father Vincent Brady, Cantor Robert Shihinski and the children of Holy Dormition Parish

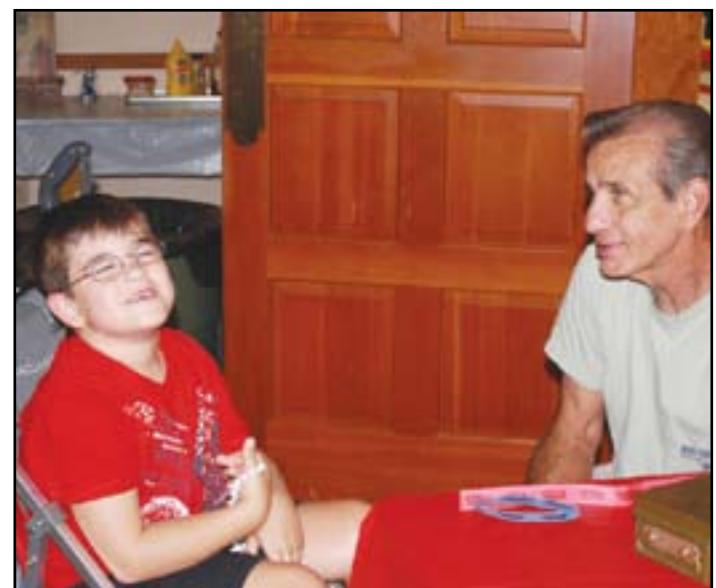
At the conclusion of the Sunday Divine Liturgy, a Moleben Service was celebrated offered for the intentions of Cantor Robert and in thanksgiving for his years of service. Father Vincent Brady



Ann Kritak celebrates her 90th birthday with a surprise cake and a blessing from Father Vincent Brady.



Saint Nicholas loves visiting Florida in the winter!



Tommy and Grandpa share a moment of laughter while selling tickets.



Cantor Robert Shihinski and his family honoring him for 25 years of service.



Cantor Robert Shihinski calls the lucky number.



Cantor Robert Shihinski, Father Vince Brady and Server Dave Lizzanich.

Kingston and Wilkes-Barre Township Parishes Welcome Bishop Šašik



A special visitor graced Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church of Kingston, PA and Saint John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church in Wilkes-Barre Township (Georgetown), PA for the Christmas holidays. His Grace, Bishop Milan Šašik of the Greek Catholic Eparchy of Mukachevo, Ukraine, paid a special visit to one of his priests - Father Mykhaylo Prodanets, who is currently assisting in the Eparchy of Passaic and serving as Pastor of Saint Mary Church and Saint John Church.

Bishop Milan arrived before Christmas and visited both parishes served by Father Mykhaylo. The parishes were pleased and honored to have the Bishop serve as the principal celebrant at not just one, but four Hierarchical Divine Liturgies at Saint Mary Church in Kingston, and two Hierarchical Divine Liturgies celebrated at Saint John Church.

in Georgetown. The Bishop graced the parishes with his visit on the Sunday before Christmas, Christmas Eve and on Christmas Day before his return to Ukraine.

The parishioners of both parishes were honored not just by the Bishop's visit, but by his homilies and warm expression of friendship from our Mother Church in "the Old Country." The parishioners were also spiritually uplifted by the Bishop's account of both the spiritual and physical growth of our Greek Catholic Church in Eastern Europe.

As a special treat for the Bishop, the ECF teachers and students presented a Christmas Play on December 22nd at Saint Mary Church Hall in Kingston, PA, entitled *The Way Home* – authored by parishioner Jason Marcin.

Participating Teachers included Marlene Williams (*Angel*); Laure Marcin (*Temptor*); Jason Marcin (*Narrator*). Participating children included: Haley Habrach, Gabriele Rakowski, Alyssa Rakowski, Ivan Prodanets, Stepan Prodanets, Jason Marcin, Thea Seasock, Paul Seasock, John Seasock. Panni Ivanna Prodanets served as Music Director and Ivan Prodanets and Stepan Prodanets also served as soloists. ECF Teachers Laura Seasock, Barbara Zelnick, Mary Ann Evans were in charge of rehearsals and decorations and GCU Lodge 182 and parishio-



Bishop Milan with the parish children following the Christmas Play.

ners supplied refreshments after the presentation.

Liturgy, much to the delight of the Bishop and all present!

The ECF Children also portrayed the Birth of Jesus Christ in their Annual Christmas Pageant on Christmas Eve before the Divine

Truly, it was a celebration of the Nativity of Our Lord that the faithful of both parishes will not soon forget!



Angels, shepherds and wise men, all with smiling faces!



Bishop Milan, Father and Panni Prodanets with the ECF students.



People watch the children's play attentively in the Church Hall.

Old Calendar Easter in the Old Country A Pilgrimage Tour - April 28 - May 10, 2013

Join Father Ed Cimbala and Father Charles Yastishock for a pilgrimage to the "Old Country." During this thirteen day tour (April 23 to May 3, 2013) we will visit Poland, Slovakia, Ukraine and Czech Republic. The trip cost includes airfare, hotel accommodations two meals daily, special performances, English speaking guide, and admissions. Taxes, fees and tips will be extra. Spend "Old Calendar" Easter in Uzhhorod on Sunday, May 5. This will certainly be a memorable experience.

Cost will be announced shortly. For a brochure and detailed information, please contact:

**Father Ed Cimbala, St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church, 1900 Brooks Boulevard,
Hillsborough, NJ 08844 Or call 908-725-0165 email: FrEdStMary@aol.com.**



History of the Eparchy of Passaic

Preparing for the 50th Anniversary of the Eparchy of Passaic - November 10, 2013

Part 4 - Decisions, Decisions *A new bishop and a new seminary*

By Father Jody J. Baran



Bishop Basil Takach

The world became embroiled in the Second World War with Bishop Takach at the helm of our Byzantine Catholic Church in America. At the end of the war, a change in leadership became necessary for our church. Bishop Takach was diagnosed with terminal cancer and became increasingly incapable of discharging his many official duties as Bishop. This prompted a petition to the Holy See to appoint an Auxiliary Bishop to help in the administration of the Exarchate. On November 5, 1946 Father Daniel Ivancho was ordained as the new Coadjutor (having the right of succession) Bishop of the Exarchate. He did not have long to be Coadjutor. On May 13, 1948, Bishop Basil Takach lost his valiant battle with cancer and died at Saint Francis' Hospital in Pittsburgh. Because of his position as Coadjutor, Bishop Ivancho assumed the responsibilities of leading the Pittsburgh Exarchate.

With his new position came the daunting task of making a significant decision regarding the training

of future priests. In this regard, Bishop Ivancho was to decide whether or not to establish a new seminary for the training of future priests, or to build a new cathedral in order to truly establish the place of the Exarchate in the ranks of the Church in America. The decision was not an easy one. The Bishop's Consultors found it necessary and reasonable to push for the building of a new cathedral; however, the Bishop felt the need for a seminary was more

pressing. Therefore, in a pastoral letter to the clergy and faithful of the Exarchate, dated June 14, 1950, the Bishop laid the plans for the construction and operation of the first Byzantine Catholic Seminary on these shores of America.

On a beautiful Fall morning, October 18, 1951, Bishop Daniel Ivancho presided over the consecration and blessing of the brand new seminary building. The building was complete with the golden onion-



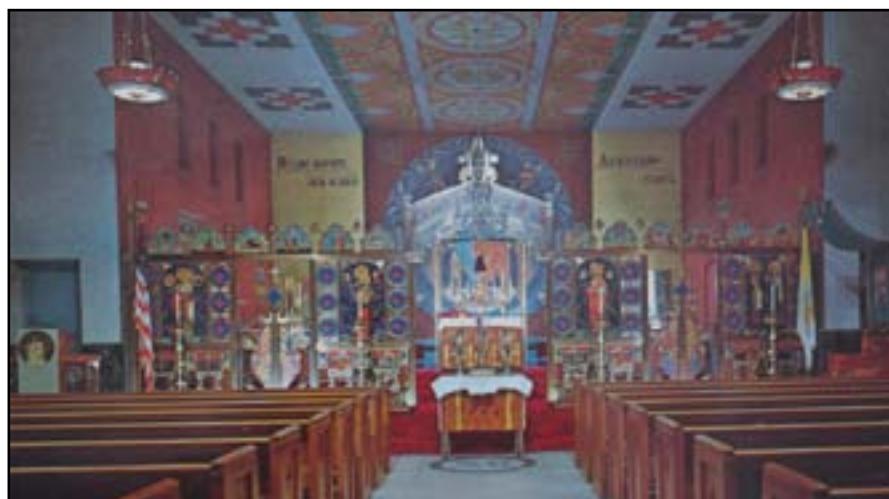
Bishop Daniel Ivancho

shaped dome, mosaics, and chapel in the Byzantine Style. The seminary was placed under the patronage of Saints Cyril and Methodius, the two brothers who were the first to bring Christianity to the Slavic peoples.

Also, under Bishop Ivancho's direction, new religious orders were established. An order of Byzantine Catholic monks who followed the Rule of Saint Benedict was established in the late 1940's. They began their first independent friary in Saint Nicholas Byzantine Church in McKeesport, PA, and then later in the Monroeville area of Pennsylvania. In 1954, a group of Benedictine Sisters from Lisle, IL established a Byzantine Catholic order of Sisters at Saints Peter and Paul Byzantine Catholic Church in Warren, OH. The Byzantine Franciscans also arrived with monasteries in New Canaan, Connecticut and Sybertsville, PA. (To be continued)

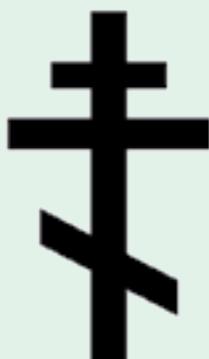


Saints Cyril and Methodius Byzantine Catholic Seminary.



The original Chapel of the Byzantine Catholic Seminary.

Visiting Myrtle Beach this Winter?



If so, plan on attending the Divine Liturgy at the new
Blessed Basil Hopko Byzantine Catholic Mission!

*The Divine Liturgy is celebrated two or three Saturdays each month at 5:00 PM.
To find out a schedule of Liturgies, call the Parish Office at 843-347-6750.
Or, call Don and Jean Wirth at 843-249-9502.*

**The Basil Hopko Mission is located at 3059 Highway 90, Conway, Myrtle Beach,
SC. It is located between Routes 22 and 501 on Highway 90.**

Visiting clergy are the celebrants of the Divine Liturgies.

For further information, call Father Conan Timoney at 410-247-4936.



“Lord I Believe and Profess” - A Presented by Father Frank Hanincik * Sponsored by

As part of its commemoration of the Year of Faith, the Eparchy of Passaic is offering a parish mission to be preached in the parishes of the eparchy.

What is a Parish Mission?

A Parish Mission is a time of personal renewal, where we are challenged to “commit ourselves and one another and our whole life to Christ our God.” (Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom) During three evenings of prayer and preaching we are invited by the Lord Jesus to renew our faith in Him and in the teachings of His Church.

The Mission will consist of three weeknight sessions in church. Each session will begin with a brief prayer service and include a 35 to 45 minute sermon. There will be an opportunity for you to participate in the Mystery of Reconciliation both before and after the service. You are warmly encouraged to receive the Mystery of Reconciliation (Confession) This Mystery is an encounter with the Lord’s merciful love and can be a wonderful first step in renewing our decision to follow Him.

Mission Schedule:

First Night - What is The Year of Faith? Some of the Holy Father’s reflections in *Porta Fidei* and his upcoming encyclical on faith. What is faith - belief in the things revealed by God in scripture and through the teaching of the Church but also faith is trust in and relationship to a person, Jesus Christ. On this night we are encouraged to commit ourselves to the teachings of the Church.

Second Night - Faith as Trust. The primary object of faith as trust is a person, Jesus Christ, who loves us and whom we can trust because He is like us in all things but sin. He is the “author and perfecter of our faith.” (Hebrews 12:12) He is God and yet suffered like

us and knows our suffering. His answer to suffering on the Cross was faith in His Father (He is the pioneer of faith) and the Risen Christ leads us to faith (He is the perfecter of our faith). On this night we are encouraged to come to a relationship of trust with Jesus who loved us and gave His life for us.

Third Night - Mary, the Model of Faith. We will meditate on examples of Mary’s trust in God throughout her life: The Annunciation, the birth of Jesus, the Presentation, the marriage at Cana, the Cross and the ways in which Mary trusted God in all these situations. On this night we are encouraged to take Mary as our model of trust in God.

Who is invited to the Mission?

In a word: everyone! The Mission is not limited to parishioners. You are encouraged to invite family and friends, churchgoers and non-churchgoers, Catholics and non-Catholics. The Mission is an opportunity for us to meet Jesus again or for the first time.

About the Mission Preacher



The mission will be preached by Father Frank Hanincik. Father Frank is a graduate of the Pennsylvania State University and obtained his Master of Divinity degree from Saints Cyril and Methodius Byzantine Catholic Seminary. He is a member of the Youth Secretariat of the Eparchy of Passaic and of the Inter-eparchical Evangelization Commission. He has given a number of retreats and talks for the Eparchy of Passaic and the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. He is currently pastor of Saint John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church in Trumbull, CT and administrator of Holy Trinity Byzantine Catholic Church in New Britain, CT.



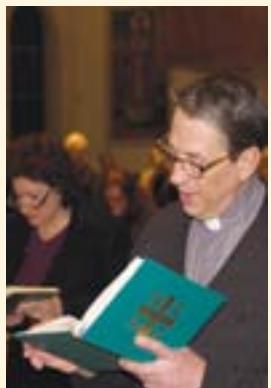
YOUR
To Schedule a mission, pastors may contact
or e-mail

Upcoming Mission locations:

- Saint Ann Church, Harrisburg, PA - February 5th, 6th, 7th
- Saint John Church, Forest City, PA - March 17th, 3PM

A Parish Mission for the “Year of Faith”

*by the Eparchy of Passaic * All Parishes Invited to Participate!*



Photos from the recent Mission in the Wyoming Valley

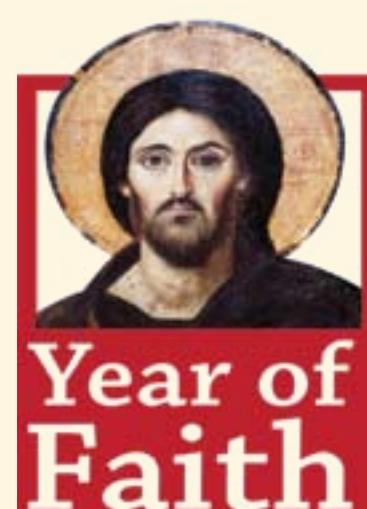
Father Frank preached at Saint Mary Church in Wilkes-Barre, Saint Mary Church in Kingston, and Saint Nicholas Church in Swoyersville, PA during the week before Christmas. The evening began with a brief moleben service celebrated by Father Frank, followed by a 45-minute mission talk, and concluded with the opportunity to receive the Holy Mystery of Confession. Following this, all were invited to a fellowship social where the conversation could continue! The Parish Mission was very well received by all who attended!

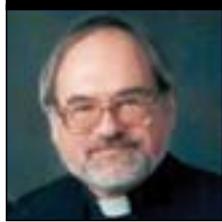


Which parish can be NEXT!

Contact Father Frank at 203-377-5967
email him at stjohnbyz@gmail.com.

- Holy Ghost Church, Jessup, PA - March 18th, 6PM
- Saint Michael Church, Dunmore, PA - March 19th, 6PM
- Saint Mary Church, Scranton, PA - March 20th, 6PM





THE BYZANTINE LITURGY

By Archpriest David Petras, SEOD

Receiving Communion

When it is time to receive Communion, the priest first invites us with the words, "Holy gifts for holy people." The "holy people" referred to here are those who have been baptized. Saint Paul calls all baptized Christians "holy," because they have renounced the evil one and have accepted Christ. The reception of Communion is a renewal of our faith in Christ, because it is in faith that we receive the body of blood of the Lord in the form of bread and wine. If we approach sincerely, and if there is any further unworthiness, this is healed by Communion itself which is given "for the forgiveness of sins and life everlasting." After the priest's invitation, the priests and deacons receive the body of Jesus under the form of bread into their hands, and then the whole community together recites aloud the prayer, "O Lord, I believe and profess that you are truly Christ ("Christ" is the Greek word for "Messiah"), the Son of the living God, who came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the first" We again protest our unworthiness, which God heals by accepting us as partakers in His mystical supper. The priests and deacons then partake of the Body of Christ and drink from the cup containing His blood in the form of wine. The Body and Blood of Christ that we receive is His glorified, risen body which brings life, as our Lord promised, "whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life whoever eats My flesh and drinks my blood remains in Me and I in him." (John 6:54.56)

After the clergy have received,

the deacon again invites the faithful. Holding the chalice which contains the holy Body and Blood of Christ in the form of bread and wine, now mixed together, the deacon intones, "Approach with the fear of God and with faith." The faithful then come forward and receive Communion by way of a spoon, which is dipped into the chalice and used to place the Holy Body and Blood of the Lord into the individual's mouth. In the Melkite and Romanian Churches, the distributor does not use a spoon, but with his hand places the holy Body, in the form of bread and dipped into the chalice, into the mouth of the recipient. The clergy and the faithful, therefore, receive Communion in different ways.

There is much that can be said about this practice, which is now firmly established tradition. Saint John Chrysostom taught clearly that in Communion, all who receive are equal in dignity. He said, "All things are equal between us and you, even to the very chief of our blessings. I (as bishop) do not partake of the holy Table with greater abundance and you with less, but both equally participate of the same With us all things are equal. The saving life that sustains our souls is given with equal honor to both. I do not indeed partake of one Lamb and you of another, but we partake of the same." (Homily 4 on 2 Thessalonians) This is reasonable, for Christ is the Son of God, infinitely greater than all of us, and if we are all united in Him, how is it possible for anyone to be greater than another. The method of reception does not signify greater honor, but it is merely practical, since some-

one must receive first and then give the Communion to another.

There were actually many ways in which the equality in Communion was symbolized. In the early history of the Church, no one actually took Communion for themselves, but always had to receive it from another. Even the bishop received from the hand of a priest and a priest from the hand of a deacon. Later this was simplified so that distribution was done according to rank. The distributor of Communion is our Lord Himself. At the Last Supper, it was Jesus who gave the bread that He had blessed to His disciples, explaining that it was His body, and he gave the cup to His disciples to drink. Mystically, it is the Lord Who distributes Communion to all, through the human hands of one blessed for the task. The Lord is the host of the banquet of life. This is why the priest receives first, because if he, the priest, were the host, like a good host, he should receive last.

Originally, too, all received in the same way. Saint Cyril of Jerusalem, in the fourth century, gave an instruction to the newly-baptized about care in receiving the Eucharist, "When you approach, do not go stretching out your open hands or having your fingers spread out, but make the left hand into a throne for the right which shall receive the King.... but take care that no particles fall, for what you lose would be to you as if you had lost some of your members." (Mystagogy 5.1) Saint Basil the Great likewise wrote, also in the fourth century, that "the recipient takes it (the portion of the Eu-



charist) with complete power over it, and so lifts it to his lips with his own hand." (Letter 93) This custom was practiced as late as the eighth century (Saint John of Damascus witness-es), but then was restricted, possibly to prevent abuses in the handling of the Eucharist.

There was also an equality in where Communion was received. Even to the present day, the Orthodox faithful generally receive Communion right at the Royal Doors in front of the Holy Table (altar). This signifies their right to enter the holy of holies, since if Christ is present within our bodies through Communion, how could the sanctuary be a holier place than our bodies themselves. Saint Paul writes, "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own." (1 Corinthians 6:19) (Note that after Communion we sing, "we have received the heavenly Spirit.") Though it is customary now to receive before having to climb the steps of the solea, perhaps this imagery could be partially restored. We have servers who are considered worthy to serve within the icon screen, would it not be a form of clericalism to expel them from the altar just because they are not ordained? At least those who serve within the altar should also be able to receive our Lord within the altar area.



LETTERS FROM THE EDITOR

Compiled by Father James Hayer, Editor

America's Drug Problem

The other day, someone at a store in our town read that a methamphetamine lab had been found in an old farmhouse in the adjoining county and he asked me a rhetorical question, "Why didn't we have a drug problem when you and I were growing up?"

I replied: I had a drug problem when I was young: I was drug to church on Sunday morning. I was drug to church for weddings and funerals. I was drug to family reunions and community socials no matter the weather. I was drug by my ears when I was disrespectful to adults.

I was also drug to the woodshed when I disobeyed my parents, told a lie, brought home a bad report card, did not speak with respect, spoke ill of the teacher or the preacher, or if I didn't put forth my best effort in everything that was asked of me.

I was drug to the kitchen sink to have my mouth washed out with soap if I uttered a profane four-letter word. I was drug out to pull weeds in mom's garden and flower beds and cockleburs out of dad's fields.

I was drug to the homes of family, friends, and neighbors to help out some poor soul who had no one to mow the yard, repair the clothesline, or chop some firewood; and, if my mother had ever known that I took a single dime as a tip for this kindness, she would have drug me back to the woodshed.

Those drugs are still in my veins; and they affect my behavior in everything I do, say, and think. If people today had that kind of "drug" problem, America would be a better place!

[Many thanks to Sister Regina, OSBM for sharing this story!]

Yes, this story has been around before, but its message, like God, is timeless!

If you have an inspiring story or article you wish to share you may send it to Father James at: "Letters from the Editor" c/o: Saint Mary Church, 695 N. Main St., Wilkes-Barre, PA 18705. or E-Mail him at EasternCatholicLife@verizon.net.

Father Nil Yuriy Lusnak, OFM Ordained as Auxiliary Bishop of Mukachevo



Metropolitan William with the newly-ordained Bishop Nil and other hierarchs at the episcopal ordination in Mukachevo. Metropolitan William was a Co-consecrator of the new Bishop.

UŽHOROD – On Saturday, January 12, 2013 in the Greek Catholic Cathedral of Holy Cross of the Eparchy of Mukachevo, Father Yuriy Nil Lusnak, OFM was ordained to the episcopacy and appointed Auxiliary Bishop of the Greek Catholic Eparchy of Mukachevo.

The principal consecrating bishop was Bishop Milan Šašik, Bishop of the Eparchy of Mukachevo. Co-consecrators included Archbishop Cyril Vasyl, Secretary of the Congregation of Eastern Churches, and Metropolitan William Skurla of the Byzantine Catholic Church of Pittsburgh, USA.



Bishop Milan congratulates his new Auxiliary Bishop as Metropolitan William looks on.

Many other hierarchs were in attendance, including Archbishop Thomas Edward Gullickson, Apostolic Nuncio of Ukraine, and Major Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk of the Ukrainian



The newly-ordained Bishop blesses with the trikirion and dikirion.

Greek Catholic Church. Also in attendance was Father Edward Cimbala, Administrator of the Eparchy of Passaic, as well as numerous Byzantine Catholic clergy and faithful from the United States and other countries for which the Eparchy of Mukachevo is the “Mother Church”.

In his homily, Archbishop Cyril Vasyl noted that, as a Franciscan, the new Bishop is a spiritual son of Saint Francis. He commended Bishop Nil to always keep Christ in the center of his life so that he may faithfully guide his people, encourage them, and represent the entire humanity before



Father Nil Lusnak, OFM processes into the Cathedral prior to his ordination as a Bishop.

the Lord. To his people, and to all around him, the new Bishop must always and faithfully show the image of Christ, the Archbishop said.

Bishop Nil was born on May 22, 1973 in Užhorod. He completed his studies for the priesthood at the Mukachevo Eparchial Seminary and, on July 2, 1996 was ordained to the Priesthood of Jesus Christ by the late Bishop Ivan Semedi. Following his ordination, he worked in various parishes and later continued his education in Rome where he received a Licentiate in Philosophy. Following his advanced studies, he began his novi-

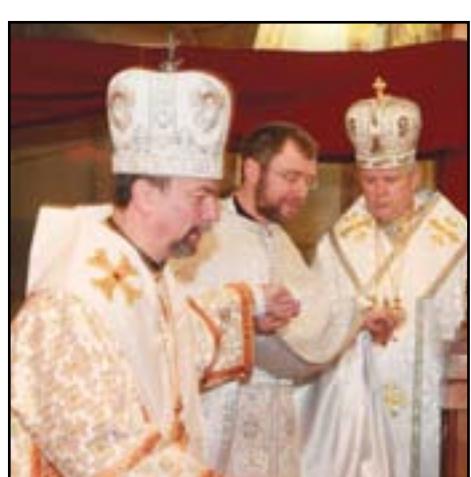


Father Edward Cimbala, Eparchial Administrator (left) looks on at the ordination.

tiate with the Franciscans and took the monastic name Nil. In 2012, he made his Temporary Profession of Vows and, during that same year, began teaching Philosophy in the Blessed Theodore Romzha Seminary.

May God grant him many blessed years! Axios!

(Excerpted from the website of the Mukachevo Eparchy. Translation by Father Mykhaylo Prodanets. Photos courtesy of the Mukachevo Eparchial website.)



Father Nil is escorted by Archbishop Cyril Vasyl and Metropolitan William.



Bishop Milan (center), Metropolitan William (left) and Archbishop Cyril (right) invoke the Holy Spirit.



The newly-ordained Bishop and other hierarchs receive the Bread of Life.



SEASONAL REFLECTIONS

Msgr. John. T. Sekellick, JCL

Walking the Year of Faith

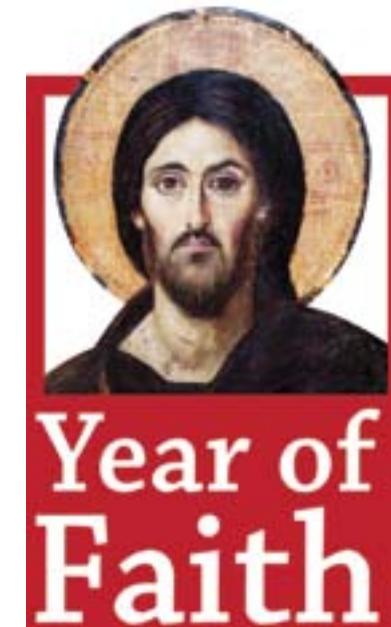
A physical therapist once wondered how far the average American walks in a lifetime. According to his calculations, most people walk about 65,000 – 70,000 miles which would be almost the equivalent as trekking from New York to California and back again thirteen times – all on the same pair of feet!

Our feet are remarkable structural masterpieces. Each one contains no less than 26 bones, linked through 33 joints, secured together by 107 ligaments and supported by 19 muscles. This does not include the miles of blood vessels traversing each foot and the sensitive nerves connected to strong muscles which move our feet. The intricacy not only of our feet but of the whole human body is cause for marvel at the design of its Creator.

For centuries walking was the usual mode of transportation. How accustomed we are in modern times to the use not only of bicycles, automobiles, buses, trains, subways, but of huge airplanes as well to take us on our way. In a spiritual sense, our Church has us walk now the spiritual pathway of the Great and Holy Fast (Lent). During this Year of Faith, our journey through this holy lenten season has us focus spiritually on the support and use of faith as our body is physically supported on our feet.

Writing to the Corinthians for the second time, Saint Paul tells them (and us), “We walk by faith, not by sight” (5:7). Our focus then is on spiritual matters through discipline over the physical body by abstinence. Among the hymns of the Matins for Cheese-fare Sunday leading us into the lenten season, we find this exhortation: “...Prepare yourselves for the struggle of the Fast: those who strive valiantly will receive the crown! Let us put on the armor of the Cross to combat the Enemy, taking faith as our unshakable rampart. Let us put on prayer as our breastplate and charity as our helmet. As our sword, let us use fasting, for it cuts out all evil from our hearts. Those who do this shall truly receive the crown from the hands of Christ, the almighty One on the day of judgment.” (Matins, at the Praises)

This short hymn from Matins gives us tools to succeed in the spiritual struggle of a lenten discipline: the strength and power of the Cross, belief in its graces, prayer to quench the soul’s need for nourishment and outreach in charity towards others. We are to practice what we profess and live our faith through our love of God for Whose sake we are to love our neighbor in whom we must see Christ Who tells us, “As long as you did it for one of these, the least of My brethren, you did it for Me” (Matthew 25:40).



Such charity goes beyond faith to reach the One in Whom we believe. From this, love for God and neighbor reaches out to all whom His providence places, even so casually, into our lives. In so doing, our walk through Lent will surely follow Him Who is the way, the truth and the life (John 14:6): “Let us walk with a light step on the path that leads to heaven, where the choirs of angels sing unceasingly and praise the indivisible Trinity, so that we may contemplate the striking beauty of the Lord....” (Matins, Cheese-fare Sunday, at the Praises).

The Presentation of Our Lord in the Temple February 2nd

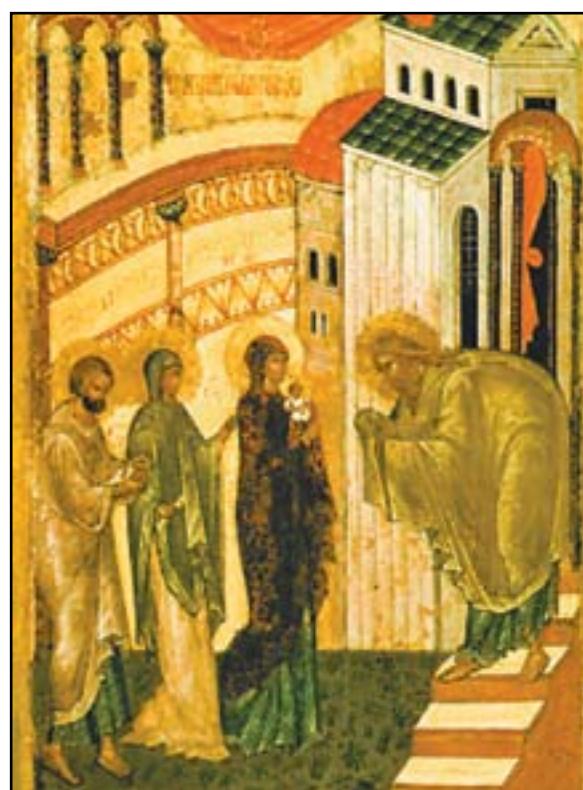
Father Joseph Bertha, Ph.D.

The icon used to portray the Presentation/Encounter/Purification of the Lord in Jerusalem derives from the gospel account found in Luke 2:22-40. Saint Luke the iconographer uses his words to ‘paint’ the details of this event, which takes place forty days after the Nativity of Christ. Saint Joseph offers two turtledoves, prescribed by Jewish law (Exodus 13:2), while the Virgin holds and offers the Christ Child to Simeon. The gospel describes this encounter occurring in Jerusalem.

The earliest surviving depiction of this scene can be found in a fifth century mosaic at Santa Maria Maggiore Church in Rome, where it is depicted in the triumphal arch. This architectural feature of the church, the triumphal arch, stretched from the floor and above the apse and over the sanctuary like an inverted ‘u’, and recalls the pagan custom of erecting magnificent elaborately ornamented gateways to the city, which welcome the returning victorious emperors and his armies. The very same meaning has been utilized by the Christian mosaicists at Santa Maria Maggiore. Christ the Lord is victoriously presented into the holy temple (city of Rome) and welcomed into the world. He is also present in the Eucharistic sacrament on the altar below and meeting the world as the Messiah.

There is a wide gap in the portrayal of the Presentation of the Lord between this early Christian monument in Rome and its subsequent form as portrayed today. We have to wait five hundred years before we recognize the familiar type of Presentation icons that we use today. Already by the eleventh century this scene is de-

picted as unfolding in the inner sanctuary, where a baldachino covered altar is shown. Recall that in the gospel account Simeon is not called a priest, but is described as a ‘pious man, awaiting the con-



The importance of the gesture of offering/encountering/presentation, as Simeon awaits receiving from the Virgin the Christ Child into his embrace, highlights the intensity and duration of time spent in anticipation of this encounter. Simeon was promised by the Lord that he would see the Messiah before he died.

The Theotokos always offers her Divine Son to Simeon. This gesture is replicated even today in the Byzantine Churching ceremony administered to mother and child after Baptism 40 days after the birth. The priest receives the first born son into his arms and bears him into the sanctuary while praying Simeon’s canticle.

As Simeon prays his great canticle, which the Byzantine church uses at every Vesper service the “Now you may dismiss your servant O Lord.” Simeon appeals to the sense of sight/vision three times during his prayer. This mention is significant for the world of icons in that through icons we can see with our earthly eyes, just as Simeon did, the Son of God, present here on the face of the earth.

Anna, the prophetess, constantly in the temple worshipping day and night in fasting and in prayer is shown head bowed and covered with a maphorion, usually standing alongside Simeon.

After Simeon blesses Him, he offers a dire prophecy to the Theotokos: Luke 2:34-35: “This child is destined to be the downfall and the rise of many in Israel; a sign that will be opposed and you yourself shall be pierced with a sword so that the thoughts of many hearts may be laid bare.”

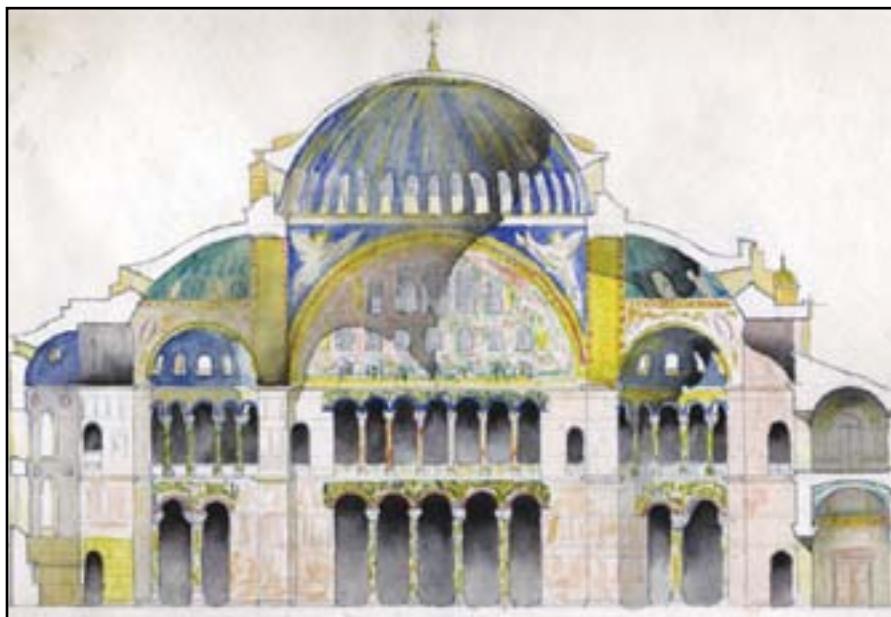
solation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him.’ He typically stands on the right of the image and is shown wearing the vestments of the high priest, sometimes even wearing a mitre and twelve stones, representing the twelve tribes of Israel, on the front of his tunic.

UNDERSTANDING ICONS

By Father Joseph Bertha, Ph.D.



Holy Icon Commemoration - The First Sunday of the Great Fast



The Great Church of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople.

One of the unique commemorations made on the First Sunday of the Great Fast in the Byzantine Catholic Church is that of the Triumph of the Holy Icons. On this day, our Church recalls the re-establishment of icons in their churches, from the Seventh Ecumenical Council held in Nicea in the eighth century (787). Typically, parish students process carrying icons into the nave of the church to observe this event. While this concept of a themed Sunday dates back centuries, the original intent and purpose has become somewhat obscured by the proliferation of images from contemporary media sources. The Byzantine ancestors not only intended to commemorate the re-introduction of icons to churches after a century of iconoclasm, during the eighth and ninth centuries, but also sought to underscore the evangelization properties inherent in images which are of great benefit in the teaching and passing on the faith. The faith is proclaimed through architecture and art simultaneously.

Basically, the argument can be boiled down to a simple theological precept, since the Son of God became a man, we can represent Him using art and architecture. The

Byzantine Church has, as one of its many resources, the surviving architecture of ancient Byzantine churches, as well as hundreds of icons in the multiform media, perhaps most notably mosaics. In this tremendous catalogue of inventory, the church can reach out to educate and evangelize the faith to the local community and indeed to the world at large.

This is indeed what the Byzantines accomplished. Emperor Justinian was known to have stated at the dedication of the Hagia Sophia (the Great church) that he cried out on Christmas day, "O Solomon, I have outdone you!" Closer examination of these words reveal not only idle boasting of a Byzantine emperor, but the incarnation of God's merciful, expiating Temple (the fulfillment of the great Jerusalem Temple) or Church as a physical reality, and it still exists in its Justinian shape to this very day in Istanbul! While the emperor solemnly proclaimed these words on the day on which the "en-flesh-ment" of the Son of God takes place, His Nativity the 25th of December; every Byzantine church world-wide strives to imitate not only the style of architecture, iconographic display in the interior, the iconostasis, but also the typikon

of this Great Church for its rules on celebration of the services.

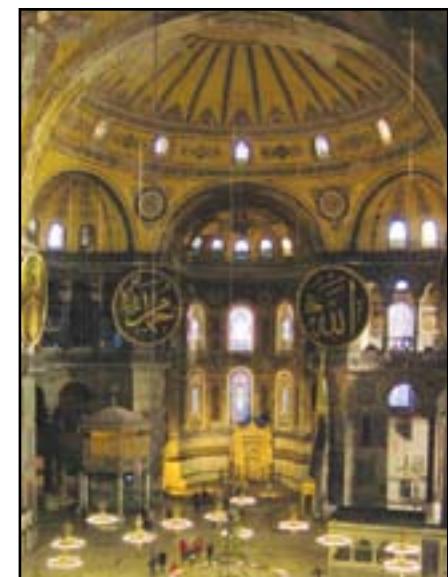
The Byzantine Church typified in Hagia Sophia depicts to the world the spiritual cosmology: the soaring central dome displays the heavenly sphere, the piers (the four support columns for the central dome, which are not visible in Hagia Sophia) communicate and serve as the ladders between heaven and earth as they rest on the earth and reach to the heavenly expanse. Hagia Sophia brilliantly portrays this ladder (experienced by Jacob the Patriarch while he slept at Beersheba as he flees his brother Esau and he fears retribution) as mystically unseen giving the viewer inside the jaw dropping experience of perceiving no visible means of support between heaven and earth. This vertical dimension is typical and common to all Byzantine architecture, the descent of the Son of God in the incarnation from heaven down to the face of the earth.

The pagan, tenth-century Kiev Rus delegates who traveled to Byzantium and witnessed the Divine Liturgy there upon their return are known to have remarked: "we did not know whether we were in heaven or on earth, the whole experience was so captivating." Further examination of this historical remark presupposes that the Byzantines invited non-Christians to their celebration of the Liturgy. One of the most important components and characteristics of our Christian faith is that of invitation, asking people to come to God's house to see, smell, taste, hear and be touched by this earthly experience, to be lead to the spiritual dimension already portrayed here in magnificent churches.

The Byzantines also devised a sophisticated and elaborate method of displaying icons within the interior of their churches. Seemingly growing up out of the floor, and thus replicating a living tree rooted in the earth and reaching with its branches

to the heavens, at the threshold of the sanctuary of the church, intricate and complex ranks or tiers of icons populate the icon screen, which literally and physically places skin on the bone structure of the church architecture. The icon screen can be viewed as the living genealogy of the growth of faith. From the Holy Virgin giving birth to Jesus Christ displayed at the very origin in the horizontal dimension of the icon screen, then growing vertical through the articulation of the life of the Holy Virgin and the Savior Jesus Christ, the growth of faith is proclaimed and disseminated throughout the world by the Holy Apostles. It is preached by the Holy Prophets, and crowned by the Crucifixion of Our Lord, the apex of the interior space of the Temple, accomplishing the expiation of sins before God.

Through a sophisticated elaboration of architecture and art, the Byzantine Church evangelizes this world. As Byzantine believers we need to become more deeply aware of this great teaching dimension already displayed for our education. Let us not only plumb the depths of the wisdom which we so richly have at hand, but also let us invite those around us to enter this Kingdom of Splendors!



Interior of Hagia Sophia Church.

Jersey City Choir Offers CD's and Cassettes

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Hillsborough Parish Presents *Lenten “Munching & Learning”* Fridays During the Great Fast at Noon and 7 PM

**“Beholding The Face Of God”
Presented By The Institutue For Christian Spirituality At Seton Hall University**

On the first four Fridays of the Great Fast 2013 (February 15, 22, March 1 and 8) a short Lenten Service will be celebrated at Noon and 7:00 PM in St. Mary's Church. The service will be followed by a Lenten fasting meal with a series of guest speakers in the St. Mary's Parish Center. The service, program and meal are scheduled to last 90 minutes. The speakers will stay for a while if the conversation wishes to continue. St. Mary's is located at 1900 Brooks Boulevard, Hillsborough, New Jersey. For more information call 908-725-0615.

Beholding the Face of God in Scripture

**February 15
Noon and 7:00 PM**

**Presented by Jennifer
Kaalund, M.H.A., M.A.**



To behold an object/person is very different from simply seeing it. Jennifer will share four Bible stories that demonstrate four ways in which we can behold the face of God. These stories will teach us that we behold the face of God in forgiveness, in conversation or prayer, in instruction, and finally, in love.

About the presenter: Jennifer is currently pursuing her doctorate in Biblical studies at Drew University and holds a Master of Arts in Theology with a concentration in Biblical studies at Immaculate Conception Seminary School of Theology. Before pursuing a career in theology, Jennifer was a healthcare executive. She earned her Master of Arts in Healthcare Administration at Virginia Commonwealth University and a Bachelor of Arts in Chemistry at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She lives with her husband Sekou and their son and daughter in the New York City metropolitan area.

Beholding the Face of God in the Mirror

**February 22
Noon and 7:00 PM**

**Presented by Stephen
Kass, M.A**



When you look in the mirror, what do you see? Do you like what you see? What do you see in your own reflection? Steve will help us understand that the image staring back at us is nothing short of a trace of the divine in ourselves. Using examples from the life of Jesus and the Saints, Steve will challenge us to look at our reflection in the mirror as a reflection of God's unconditional love for us.

About the presenter: Stephen Kass is director of the STEPS program, which is a graduate theology program for lay students that is run out of Immaculate Conception Seminary at Seton Hall University. Prior to that, he spent 11 years in the energy industry in various sales and marketing positions. Steve also spent five years on active duty and nine years in the active reserves as an officer in the U.S. Navy. He has a bachelor's degree from the University of Rochester, a master's degree in nuclear engineering from NC State University and a master's degree in theology from Seton Hall. Steve is currently in formation for the Permanent Diaconate in the Diocese of Paterson, NJ, and is also working on his Ph.D. He is the director of adult faith at St. Mary's in Pompton Lakes, NJ, and has given numerous retreats, lectures and workshops on our faith over the years.

Beholding the Face of God in Your Work, Co-creating in the Vineyard

**March 1
Noon and 7:00 PM**

**Presented by Carol C.
Keilp-Tobin, M.A.**



“Work”, as described by our former Pope, John Paul II, is any productive activity. Whether any one of us is out of work, in a full-time job, a parent or a student, we are all engaged in “work” in this world. And so is God. But how do we see God in that work? By reflecting on the activities at the Wedding Feast at Cana, Carol will explore the different expressions of the Face of God in our everyday activities.

About the presenter: Carol received her Master of Arts in Moral Theology in 2006 from Immaculate Conception Seminary School of Theology and is certified as a Spiritual Guide. For over 15 years, she has served her parish, Our Lady of the Mount in Warren, N.J., in spiritual enrichment, parish planning, RCIA and Pre-Cana. Carol is currently the Principal of Via Veritas, LLC, and consults in the areas of leadership development, organizational alignment and formation retreats. She helped launch the Micah Leadership Project at Seton Hall as a series of Ignatian retreats for executives and students, and spent 14 years in program management, product delivery, and governance with AT&T. Carol also holds a master's degree in electrical engineering and a project manager certification. She is married and enjoys all interchanges of spirituality and life that bring each of us one step closer to God.

Beholding the Face of God in People who are Difficult to Love

**March 8
Noon and 7:00 PM**

**Presented by Marie
Harwanko, M.A.P.M**



Most of us have people in our lives that are difficult to love. Marie will use a three-step process to help us behold the Face of God in people who are difficult to love. The life of Jesus was filled with people who are difficult to love. Yet, Jesus looked beyond their human limitations, loved them and did not abandon them. Beholding the Face of God in people who are difficult to love will help you look at others with the eyes of faith and love others as Jesus loved them.

About the Presenter: In 2006, Marie earned her Master of Arts in Pastoral Ministry from Immaculate Conception Seminary School of Theology with a concentration in Christian spirituality. She is completing her training as a Spiritual Director at the Quellen Spiritual Center in Mendham NJ. Marie has a business background with extensive experience as a corporate trainer. She is a member of St. Bernard of Clairvaux in Bridgewater, N.J. where she serves in ministry as an RCIA teacher; part of the IHN network and a Eucharistic Minister to local nursing homes.

ALL WELCOME!





RESPECT LIFE FORUM

By Susan E. Wills



Over-the-Counter Contraceptives: A Terrible Idea

ACatholic governor who describes himself as “an unapologetic pro-life Republican” recently announced his support in the Wall Street Journal for making oral contraceptives (OCs) available over-the-counter (OTC). He cited two reasons.

First, he thinks it would take the issue of birth control out of the political arena where, he claims, Democrats insulted Republicans by saying they’re against birth control and “demagogued” the issue during debates over the HHS contraceptive mandate.

The HHS mandate, you’ll recall, tramples on the religious freedom of Catholics, Catholic institutions and others who object to birth control, by forcing virtually every employer to provide all forms of birth control—including \$1,000 IUDs—“free” in the health insurance plan they offer employees and their families. Surely he’s not suggesting that political leaders capitulate on matters of principle or policy simply to avoid insults?

Second, the Governor claims making OCs available OTC will reduce the costs of healthcare and of OCs themselves, as women would no longer have to visit a doctor once a year to get a new prescription. But that annual visit saves lives. OCs are contraindicated for many women due to their increasing the risk of cancer, heart attacks and strokes. The visit may also be the only opportu-

nity for doctors to test for and treat STDs. About sixty million Americans have an STD (including 40 percent of sexually-active teens) and 19 million new cases occur annually. Many STDs are asymptomatic and if not treated early can cause pelvic inflammatory disease, infertility and tubal pregnancies. Some strains of human papillomavirus, the most common STD—found in 25 percent of teens and 45 percent of people aged 20-24—cause genital warts; other strains cause cervical cancer.

OCs cost \$9/month at the big discount chain stores. How much cheaper can they get? But consumer savings should not dictate policy any more than avoiding insults should.

The Governor states OCs “are safe” per the “research.” Really? The World Health Organization declared synthetic estrogen to be carcinogenic in humans, raising risks of breast and cervical cancer. OCs can also significantly increase the risk of blood clots that can lead to heart attacks, strokes and pulmonary embolisms.

Research shows that OCs are not very effective in preventing pregnancy, especially as used by teens: Almost half of low-income cohabiting teens using OCs will become pregnant within 12 months. True failure (i.e., pregnancy) rates were rarely admitted publicly, but now that very expensive long-acting reversible contraceptives (LARCs)—implants and IUDs—are available

for “free” under the mandate, OC failure rates are openly discussed as justification for getting women to switch to the more effective LARCs ... more effective mainly because of their significant abortifacient mode of action, by making the uterine lining so atrophied that the week-old human embryo is deprived of nutrients to survive, even if she succeeds in implanting there.

Research also shows that by increasing access to OCs, rates of unintended pregnancies and abortions do not decline. In Spain, for example, a 63 percent increase in contraceptive use between 1997 and 2007 was accompanied by a 108 percent increase in the abortion rate. Greater availability leads to more young singles becoming sexually active because they think they’re protected from the consequences. A Google search for “risk compensation” will show why.

Instead of basing public policy on insult-avoidance and reducing the price of a harmful product, wouldn’t it be refreshing for policy to be based on sound science and the true good of our citizens?

[Susan Wills is Assistant Director for Education and Outreach, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities. To learn more about the bishops’ pro-life activities, go to www.usccb.org/prolife.]

God our Father, Giver of Life, we entrust the United States of America to Your loving care. You are the rock on which this nation was founded. You alone are the true source of our cherished rights to Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness. Reclaim this land for Your glory and dwell again among Your people. Send Your Spirit to touch the hearts of our Nation’s leaders.

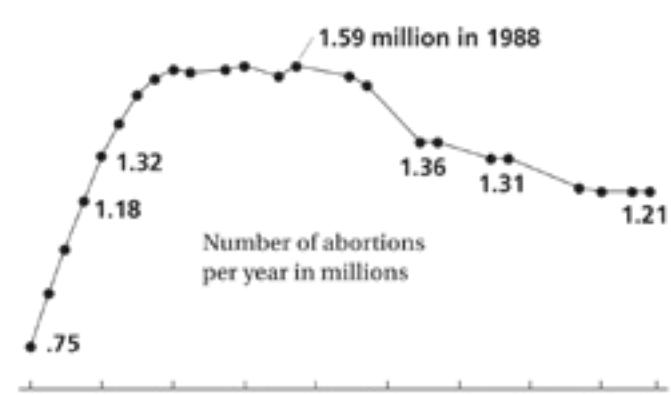
Open their minds to the great worth of Human Life and the responsibilities that accompany Human Freedom. Remind Your people that true happiness is rooted in seeking and doing Your will.

Through the intercession of Mary Immaculate, Patroness of our Land, grant us the courage to reject the “culture of death” which now prevails. Lead us into a new millennium of life.

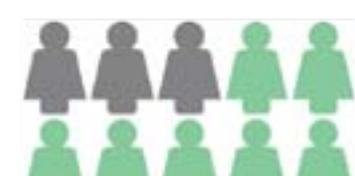
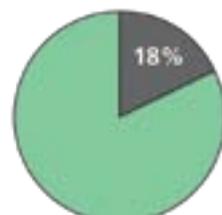


Abortion in America

The number of abortions performed annually in the U.S. hit a high point in 1988 and has been on a decline since.



Pregnancies ending in abortion in 2008



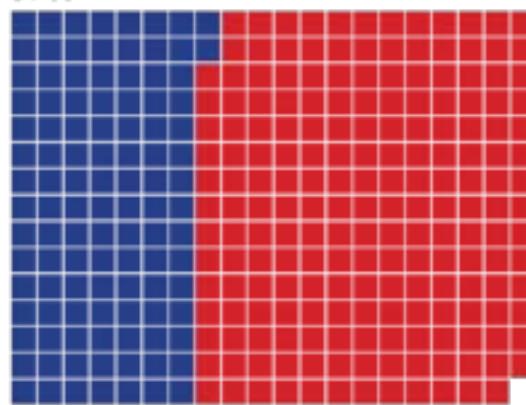
At the current rate, three in every 10 women will have an abortion by age 45.

Faith and the 113th Congress

The majority of members adhere to faith groups in the Protestant tradition.

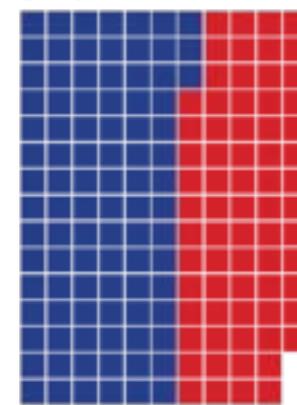
PROTESTANT

299 members
57%



CATHOLIC

163
31%



JEWISH

33
6%



Democrat

Republican

Source: Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion & Public Life

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SEMINARIAN REFLECTIONS

Seminarian Lewis Rabayda

The Path Towards Discipleship

When I travel to different parishes and meet the faithful of our Church I am often greeted with excitement and wonder. They ask me what it is like to live at the seminary and they treat me with a respect that is usually reserved for bishops. They are glad to see a young person devote himself to the Church in an age when our society thinks very differently about that decision. They are also proud and happy to meet someone who—God willing—will be a spiritual father to them and their children through the office of ordained priesthood. These encounters are uplifting and support me and other seminarians in our vocational discernment.

But in these encounters there is something more that is not always verbally communicated. Some people have a reverence for the devotion a seminarian has to God and think that they are not able to attain the same grace and holiness. It is true that as seminarians, we pray at least an hour of liturgical services each day—on Saturdays it could be as much as three hours. We also keep our individual prayer-life each day, and we have been given the opportunity to study every aspect of God and His Church. To some people, and to us seminarians, this life is a blessing.

However, I question this separation of devotion to God between priest (seminarian) and laity (the rest of us). It can be argued that the priest/seminarian has the *free time*—because in essence, this is his job—to devote to intense study of Sacred Scripture, theology, and a prayer-

life. He is also going to be a spiritual leader and will be responsible for the souls of his portion of Christ's flock. But this does not mean that the rest of us are not called to a similar devotion to the spiritual life—all of us are called to radical discipleship.

All of God's children are called to devote their lives to following Christ as one of His disciples. This is our *job* as Christians. If you are reading these words, know that you have been called by Jesus Christ to lay aside your worldly life and to follow Him by the example He gives us in Sacred Scripture. The call to holiness and to worship God in heaven has been addressed to YOU. And the path to answering this call is an active reading of Sacred Scripture and participation in the life of Christ's Church. When this path is worn-in, travelers will find themselves in a greater joy, their lives will fill-up with virtue and their vices & evil passions will be muted—unending love will permeate all.

But what does the moment of this transition, no, *transformation*, into a disciple feel like? When will I know if I have begun to let God rewrite the actions in my heart with His love and understanding? When will I, the person in the pew, begin to feel the same love and devotion to God that the priest has?

I know for myself, that God was calling me for service to Him for several years, but I did not accept God's call to the priesthood until I had accepted His call to a more spiritual life first. I then began to read theological and spiritual

books as well as introducing myself to the New Testament. I had heard the passages from attending Divine Liturgy, but the words of Christ came alive for me and touched my heart when I read them at my own pace and in my own space. I began to become more comfortable with who Jesus is; I now know Him as a close friend and I no longer see Him as a distant law-giver. By getting close to Jesus through reading his words, parables, and what happened to Him and His disciples, I see His courage, wisdom, and I understand His gift of salvation. Without a diligent reading of His words and an open heart to God's will I would not have written these words you are reading now, I would not be in the seminary, I would not have offered my life to Jesus, and I would not have experienced this joy that God has given me.

Most every priestly & religious vocation, every saint, martyr, and pope began their lives in the same place—the pews. These planks of wood and padded kneelers are not restrictions to our holiness; they are the indicators of where God pours His merciful love. We, the people of God, those called to be His disciples, have no boundaries between us except for our sins—which are taken away by Christ's sacrifice of Love. Let us follow Jesus by freely sacrificing our own wills and desires so that He can replace them with His divine Will, thereby making us His disciples. **ECL**

Upcoming Events for February

Eparchial and Parish Events

FEBRUARY, 2013

- | | |
|---|---|
| 2 | ENCOUNTER OF OUR LORD WITH SIMEON AND ANNA (SOLEMN) |
| 3 | SUNDAY OF MEATFARE |

- | | |
|---|--|
| 10 | SUNDAY OF CHEESEFARE |
| 11 | First Day of the Great Fast
(no meat, egg or dairy) |
| Each Wednesday and Friday of the Great Fast
<i>Fast Day - No meat</i>
<i>Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts</i> | |
| 17 | 1 st SUNDAY OF THE GREAT FAST |
| 18 | Chancery Closed
<i>President's Day</i> |
| 23 | Second All-Souls Saturday |
| 24 | 2 nd SUNDAY OF THE GREAT FAST |

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Encounter with Simeon and Anna

