



EASTERN CATHOLIC LIFE

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WHEN THE BRIDEGROOM IS TAKEN AWAY

Great Fast Pastoral Message 2015 from Bishop Kurt

Imagine a young man moving into a house or an apartment building or a community. The first day he has “orientation,” and they explain that there is a rule against alcohol in the rooms and a curfew at 11 p.m. Well, we all know how that comes out. Half the men in the house will be smuggling alcohol into their rooms, and figuring out ways to sneak into the building after 11 p.m. They will be climbing up the fire escape or the drain pipes. A few years ago, I got to know a number of young men who were becoming involved in FOCUS, a very successful campus ministry for Catholics. I was bemused as they told me, glowingly, that they were expected to commit to a two year “dating fast.” That’s right—they volunteered not to go on a date for two years. They were “fasting” from dating. They actually seemed relieved to get off the competitive treadmill of dating. They could get an exception if they were already in a steady relationship, but no new ones. It was quite fascinating to me. If you told these same men that there was a rule against it, they would have been talking among themselves about what a silly rule it was, and then conspiring to break the rule and cover for each other. However, when they were asked to make a voluntary commitment, they smiled and bragged about it.

I think the same contrast is evident in our Lenten Fast. In the West, they used to have laws about the Fast. Most people are surprised to learn that in the West, for the entire period of Lent, Catholics were required to have only one meal a day, and that meal could have no meat in it. I say they were required, but that doesn’t mean they actually did it. In fact, according to one of the credible Marian apparitions, the Mother of God herself visited France in the 19th century to scold them because “they flocked to the butcher shop during Lent”. There is something about a rule that makes people want to break it.

On the other hand, in the East, it was never about laws, but about tradition. We know our traditions from our prayers and services. We have a Sunday called Meatfare Sunday. Why is it called Meatfare? It is the last day to eat meat before Easter. A week later we have a Sunday called Cheesefare Sunday. Why is it called Cheesefare? You guessed it—it is the last day to

eat dairy products before Easter. But it’s not a rule, it’s a tradition. As a result, I see people in our church who keep the tradition because they have a healthy sense of pride in themselves. They try to keep the tradition to prove to themselves that they can do it. Instead of following a rule because it’s required, many people have a memory of their holy grandparents. They think to themselves, “Well, I’ll never be as holy as my grandmother, but I can try.” And with each passing year, they try to pray a little more, and fast a little more, and learn a little more. They try to keep the fast to grow closer to God for their own happiness, not because it is a rule.

Young people love a challenge. In my experience as a pastor, it was the young people who joined my parishes who were fascinated by the challenge of our Great Fast I encouraged people to try it for a week. Most Americans can’t imagine going for a whole week without meat, much less a whole week without meat or dairy products. But they say, “Well, I’ll give it a try.” After a few years in the parish, I hear people say, “I look forward to Lent. I feel better.”

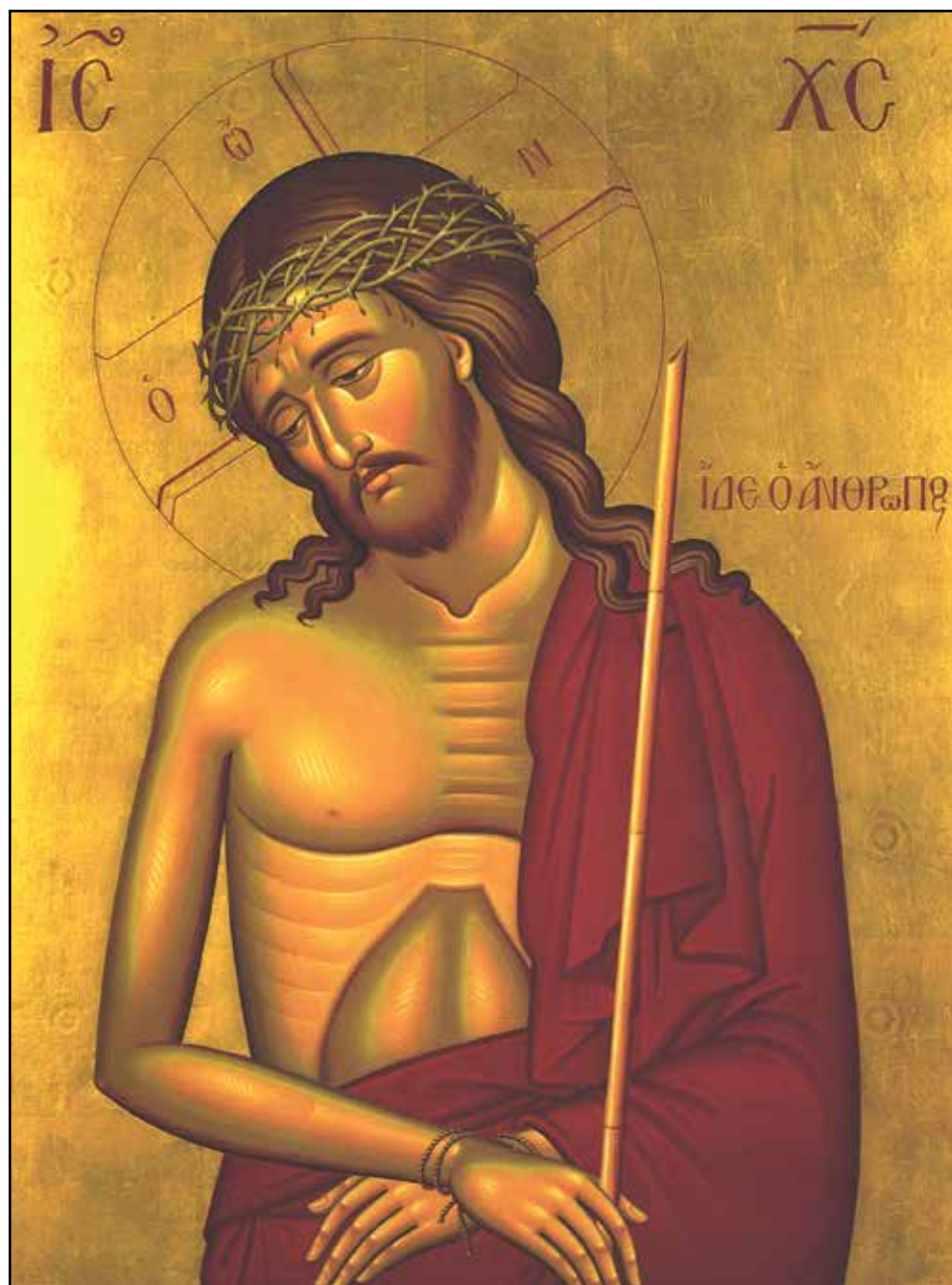
In the West, on the other hand, where there was a rule, many people broke the rule. So they finally got rid of the rule, and now no one fasts.

It seems to me that for the past fifty years, the Church in the United States has tried to attract people by making everything as easy as possible. By doing away with fasting, making excuses for immorality, abbreviating services, shrinking sermons, the priests tried to keep people in

their church with honey and sugar. But honey and sugar do not satisfy. Anyone can see that this has been a catastrophe. Our young people are leaving steadily to join churches where they are challenged to be better, to be their best

Are Christians expected to fast? Didn’t Saint Paul say that we are liberated from the Law? Didn’t Saint Paul say, “Don’t let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink”? Well, I’m glad you asked that question. Our Lord Him-

Continued on page 2



Icon of Christ the Bridegroom

Fasting Directives for the Great Fast—p3

Parish Honors Cantor—p5

Plight of Christians in Iraq—pp8-9

Carpatho-Rusyn Settlement in Alabama—p10-11

GREAT FAST PASTORAL MESSAGE

When the Bridegroom is Taken Away

Continued from page one

self said, “How can the guests of the bridegroom mourn while he is with them? The time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; then they will fast.” So Jesus Himself said that His followers will fast. Jesus Himself did many things that He was not required to do, to give us an example, and one of those things was fasting. He fasted in the desert for 40 days, and that is why we fast for 40 days.

I am so grateful that God put me in a Church that still practices fasting. One of the things I have discovered over the years is that the Fast is much more satisfying if I offer it for someone else. I pick out someone whom I believe is desperately in need of spiritual help, and I offer the Fast for that one person. There are any number of good reasons every year to break the Fast. When

I remember that I’m doing it for someone else, someone who desperately needs God’s mercy, then I’m encouraged to stick to my plan. So far in my life, I have never seen fruit from this practice, except for myself, but I know that God’s time is not my time, and I may yet see the fruits in God’s time.

Last month I wrote about the frightening new laws that are being inflicted on our country—laws that legalize the lethal poisoning of the sick and disabled. Even now, Belgium has legalized the lethal poisoning of sick and disabled children! Perhaps this new curse is the inexorable consequence of our past sins. But even the wicked city of Nineveh was spared God’s wrath when they listened to the prophet Jonah and fasted. If you need a purpose for fasting this year, please con-

sider fasting to ask for God’s mercy on our nation, and spare us from this curse. When Moses threw wood into the bitter waters at God’s command, the waters became sweet. And so the wood of Christ’s cross makes the bitterness in our lives sweet. Offering your fast for someone else, or for the good of our nation, will make your fast sweet.



+Kurt Burnett



“NOW I AM SENDING MY MESSENGER—HE WILL PREPARE THE WAY BEFORE ME...”

Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory forever!

My brothers and sisters, we know that these words from the Holy Prophet Malachi prophesy the preaching of the Holy Forerunner and Baptist, John. We have just heard these words in conjunction with the Feast of the Holy Theophany of Our Lord.

The words cited above from Malachi, while specifically referring to the Holy Forerunner, also apply to us, the staff of the *Eastern Catholic Life*, as we begin this new phase in our ministry at this publication, and, by extension, to all of you: our columnists, contributors, and our dear, faithful readership. May we always be messengers of the Gospel, preparing the way for the coming of the Lord.

With this issue, we begin a new era at the *ECL*. We bid a fond “farewell” and a heartfelt “hello” to Father James! Bishop Kurt has appointed me, Father James Badeaux, to succeed (but not to re-



Icon of the Prophet Malachi

place!) Father James Hayer as Editor-In-Chief of our Eparchial newspaper, now entering its 51st year of publication. We are all very grateful to Father James Hayer for his 18 years of service to the *ECL*. Bishop +Kurt has also appointed Father Ronald Hatton and Subdeacon (soon to be Deacon) Lewis Rabayda as associate editors to assist me in this task.

In a forthcoming issue, there will be more information about the transition and the new staff. In the meantime, we request the favor of your prayers as we begin our duties bringing you the *Eastern Catholic Life*.

In Christ our Savior,

Father James Badeaux



The World Meeting of Families will take place in Philadelphia, PA, from September 22-25, 2015. This gathering will offer an Adult Congress and a Youth Congress for ages 6 to 17. The Adult Congress, for ages 18 and older, will consist of keynote presentations and breakout session that address the many ways in which families can strengthen their bonds, especially in the face of significant challenges facing the family globally in the 21st century. The Youth Congress will provide interactive programs designed for young people to play, listen, serve build and embrace the mission of love in a family.

EPARCHIAL REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Held every three years and sponsored by the Holy See’s Pontifical Council for the Family, the World Meeting of Families is the world’s largest Catholic gathering of families. Each World Meeting of Families has a theme that energizes and enlivens the event while adding great depth of meaning to our understanding of families. The theme of the World Meeting of Families – Philadelphia 2015 is “Love Is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive,” emphasizing the impact of the love and life of families on our society.

We are hopeful that many of our families of the Eparchy of Passaic will participate.

- Please go to <http://www.worldmeeting2015.org> for more information and to register.

- Once you have registered, please forward a copy of your registration to the Eparchy of Passaic at secretary@dioceseofpassaic.org.
- Bishop Kurt is planning a special event that will bring together everyone who will be attending. The Eparchy will also be offering a partial registration reimbursement to families who attend with children.

If you have any questions, please e-mail

Father Ed Cimbala at FREDSTMARY@aol.com





DIRECTIVES FOR THE GREAT FAST

From the Office of the Bishop



FASTING REGULATIONS

- †All who receive Communion in the Eparchy of Passaic are required to abstain from meat on Wednesdays and Fridays of the Great Fast.
- †All adults who receive Communion in the Eparchy of Passaic are required to abstain from meat, eggs, and milk products on the first day of Lent, Monday, February 16, and on Great and Holy Friday, April 3.
- †These are the minimum requirements; however, the faithful are encouraged to do more.

Dispensation

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

LITURGICAL DIRECTIVES

Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts

- †All Pastors and Administrators are encouraged to celebrate the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts on Wednesdays and Fridays of the Great Fast.
- †A liturgical service at which Holy Communion is distributed may be celebrated on the other weekdays of the Great Fast.

We ask you to pray for peace throughout the world, and for the victims of war. Please remember in your prayers all those in the military who are serving our country throughout the world.

SCHEDULE OF LENTEN VESPERS AND CONFESSION

WYOMING VALLEY

Sunday, February 22	Saint Mary—Wilkes-Barre
Sunday, March 1	Saint John—Wilkes-Barre Twp
Sunday, March 8	Saint Michael—Pittston
Sunday, March 15	Saint Nicholas—Swoyersville
Sunday, March 22	Saint Mary—Kingston
Sunday, April 12	Saint Nicholas—Swoyersville

All Services begin at 3:00 p.m. followed by opportunity for Confession and Lenten refreshment Social Hour. April 12th followed by dinner at the Knights of Columbus, Luzern.

SCRANTON AREA

Sunday, February 22	Holy Ghost—Jessup
Sunday, March 1	Saint Mary/Saint John—Scranton
Sunday, March 8	Saint Michael—Dunmore
Sunday, March 15	Saint Nicholas—Old Forge
Sunday, March 22	Saint John—Forest City

All Services begin at 3:00 p.m. followed by opportunity for Confession and Lenten refreshment Social Hour.

GREATER HAZLETON AREA

Sunday, February 22	Saint Mary—Hazleton
Sunday, March 1	Saints Peter & Paul—Beaver Meadows
Sunday, March 8	Saint John the Baptist—Hazleton
Sunday, March 15	Saint Mary—Sheppton 4p.m.
Sunday, March 22	Saint Mary—Freeland
Sunday, March 29	Saint Michael—McAdoo

All Services begin at 3:00 p.m. except for Sheppton at 4p.m. All will be followed by a Lenten refreshment Social Hour.

CHESTER & MONTGOMERY COUNTIES

Sunday, March 1	Saint Michael—Mont Clare
Sunday, March 8	Blessed Virgin Mary—Coatesville
Sunday, March 15	Saint John the Baptist—Pottstown

All Services begin at 3:00 p.m. followed by opportunity for Confession and Lenten refreshment Social Hour. Dates subject to change. Please confirm with parish bulletin.

PEOPLE YOU KNOW AROUND THE EPARCHY

IN DUNELLEN...

Outgoing Lay Signatories Honored

On Sunday, December 28, 2014, Father Michael Yurista, Administrator of Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church in Dunellen, NJ, together with the parishioners, honored the outgoing Lay Signatories Don Shuryn and Pat Solgan, with plaques commemorating their many years of devoted service, and inducted the new Lay Signatories, Andrew Galida and Deborah Hoffman.



Newly-Inducted Lay Signatories: Deborah Hoffman, Father Michael Yurista, and Andrew Galida



Outgoing Lay Signatories: Don Shuryn (represented by Jean Shuryn), Father Yurista, and Pat Solgan.

IN SYBERTSVILLE...

On Sunday, December 14, a group of people gathered at Holy Dormition Chapel of the Byzantine Franciscans, traveling from as far away as Gettysburg, PA, and Endicott, NY. Together, they prayed the Emmanuel Moleben, then the Cantors of Northeast Pennsylvania sang a concert of Christmas hymns in English and Slavonic. The Emmanuel Moleben includes scripture readings and hymns to help us prepare for the celebra-



Cantors of Northeast PA sing Christmas hymns



Saint Nicholas greets the faithful

tion of the birth of our Lord. Also attending the concert was "Saint Nicholas," who gave a treat to everyone attending. Somehow, the spirit of Saint Nicholas makes him seem younger than anyone attending the concert.

Photos by: Georgette McAndrew

IN TOMS RIVER...

On Sunday, December 7, 2015, Bishop +Kurt visited Our Lady of Perpetual Help Byzantine Catholic Church in Toms River, NJ, and helped Father Charles Yastishock, the pastor, together with the parishioners and parish children, greet Saint Nicholas at their annual Saint Nicholas party.



Bishop Kurt receives a gift from Father Yastishock



Father Yastishock and Saint Nicholas welcome parishioners



Saint Nicholas and the children



Bishop Kurt anoints with holy oil

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PARISH HONORS CANTOR JAMES KUSHLAN FOR 25 YEARS OF SERVICE

Saint Ann, Harrisburg, PA

Father Michael Popson and the parishioners of Saint Ann Byzantine Catholic Church, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, celebrated the 25th anniversary of James Kushlan as cantor on Sunday, December 28, 2014. Father Michael, pastor of St. Ann Church, and Father John Zeyack, pastor of Saint George Byzantine Catholic Church, Linden, New Jersey, concelebrated a Divine Liturgy of Thanksgiving.

25 years of Jim's commitment and perseverance while knowing that Christ is the ultimate richness and the blessing of his service and ministry. This morning we'll ask Jim to renew his 'Yes' to God and to us in his ministry as cantor, and we'll make every effort to support and encourage you in every possible way."

Following the invocation, Thomas Walko, Knights of Columbus council member, gave the

staff, bingo volunteers, gift shop volunteers, Saint Ann Bakers, and Eastern Christian Formation (ECF) members presented gifts to Jim and Heidi.

Father John Zeyack, former pastor at Saint Ann Church, offered remarks before Jim offered his words of gratitude. Cantor Jim began by stating, "It has been an honor and blessing to lead the liturgical singing of Saint Ann's parish this past quarter-century. I thank each and every priest and parishioner, the living and the dead, who has joined voices with me over the years." Jim's words included insight into our Eastern Tradition: "Together, we have been the voice of what the Greek Fathers called the Kyriaki: the Bride of the Lord. At each Divine Liturgy, we have participated together in the dialog of love between the Bridegroom Jesus Christ-voiced by our presbyter-and Christ's Bride, the Church-us." His final comments reminded us how a cantor is a part of all families in the church: "It is a pleasure and privilege to be your brother in Christ. Singing your children's baptisms, your own weddings and those of your children, and helping you bury your departed loved ones has been an honor and real source of grace for me."

Throughout 25 liturgical years as cantor, James Kushlan has faithfully led with his exceptional voice the Saint Ann congregation in honoring and praising Our Lord and His Blessed Mother, the Theotokos, and Saint Ann. Father Michael and Saint Ann parishioners join in saying, "May God grant Jim and his family many blessed and happy years."



Father Michael Popson Anoints Cantor James Kushlan

A letter of congratulations from Bishop +Kurt, Bishop of the Eparchy of Passaic, was read prior to the dismissal. In the letter, he asked "But what would our Liturgy be without music?" Also, Bishop Kurt reminded Saint Ann parishioners of God's gift: "What a great blessing it is for a parish to have a faithful cantor! And what a marvelous way to fulfill the admonition of Saint Mother Teresa of Calcutta, 'to do something beautiful for God.'"

Following the Divine Liturgy, a catered brunch, sponsored by Saint Ann Knights of Columbus Council 15107, was held in the parish center. Cantor Jim and his wife, Heidi, and their children, celebrated with about 200 parishioners, family members, and friends.

Before brunch, an invocation was given by Father Michael, who announced that "today we have gathered to 'make a joyful noise to the Lord.'" He stated, "Every Christmas season we say 'thank you' to God for the gift of salvation. Now we say 'thank you' to God for gifting us with our beloved Cantor Jim." He continued, "Today we have gathered to acknowledge and celebrate

toast. Parishioners representing the parish office



Cantor James Kushlan (center) and family with Father Michael Popson, pastor, and Father John Zeyack



SUBDEACON LEWIS RABAYDA TO BE ORDAINED TO THE DIACONATE

Holy Ghost, Jessup, PA

Sunday, February 8, at 11 a.m.

His Grace, Bishop Kurt has announced the ordination of Subdeacon Lewis Rabayda to the Order of Deacon by the laying on of hands and the invocation of the Holy Spirit, at Holy Ghost Byzantine Catholic Church in Jessup, PA, on Sunday, February 8, 2015, at the 11 a.m. Hierarchical Divine Liturgy. A luncheon will follow and all are invited to attend.

Holy Ghost Byzantine Catholic Church
313 First Avenue
Jessup, PA 18434
570-489-2353



EPIPHANY BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH RESTORATION AND RENEWAL Roswell, GA

By Carol Evanco

Parishioners of Epiphany Byzantine Catholic Church in Roswell, GA, have been attending Divine Liturgy each Sunday since the arson fire on December 14, which caused significant damage, at nearby Regina Caeli Academy, a private Roman Catholic tutoring center. The Roswell Fire Department arrived at the church at 1:20 a.m. after a passer-by saw flames coming from the church and surrounding woods. The pastor, Father Philip Scott, was asleep in the rectory on parish grounds

and was awakened by a policeman knocking on his front door, alerting him to the fire.

The cost of restoration is going to be significantly higher than originally estimated due to considerable structural damage. The damage was determined after the review of the original building plans and specifications. The building, an all wooden structure built in the tripartite style of architecture that is popular in the Carpathian Mountains of Eastern Europe, has historical sig-

nificance as it is an example in the United States of church architecture originating from Eastern Europe. In addition to the damage to the building, all contents including altar linens, vestments, liturgical books, and icons were seriously damaged by smoke and water. It is still unknown if these items can be restored. It will be four to six months before the restoration will be completed and the parish can return home.

Parish members rallied together on the Saturday before Christmas to transform the Roman Catholic chapel with portable icons and altar setup for Divine Liturgy and Christmas.

Christmas trees and decorations were generously donated by the parents of the Academy students and local vendors donated more than 50 poinsettia plants for the altar. The true spirit of Christmas and community was present throughout this time. One of Epiphany's youth, who also attend Regina Caeli, left a note for the staff thanking them and letting them know that the chapel "was now 'Byzantine-ized.'"

Amid this upheaval, the first Sunday of the New Year was very special for the parish as Bishop Kurt visited



Damage to Epiphany Church

Epiphany and concelebrated the Divine Liturgy. Bishop Kurt offered words of encouragement during this unsettling time, suggesting that this occurrence be considered as a rebirth of the parish. His sentiments were well received and everyone in attendance expressed their appreciation to Bishop Kurt for his support and visit. Bishop Kurt also visited the church and inspected the damaged structure.



Epiphany parishioners pose in their new liturgical space

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10. **DVD Video "The Byzantine Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom in Church Slavonic"** church Slavonic Commemorative Production with Four Concelebrants (English Liturgical subtitles included), 90 minutes (\$21.95 each DVD)

Please add \$3.00 Shipping and handling for each order. Items 1 through 8 are offered digitally re-mastered \$12.95 CD format. Make checks payable to: Holy Ghost Choir, 2310 South 24th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19145-3207.

ALL SAINTS PARISH WELCOMES NEW PRIEST, FATHER STEVEN GALUSCHIK

North Fort Myers, FL

"Daughter, your faith has saved you," was chanted by the new resident priest, Father Steven Galuschik, from the Gospel on Sunday, November 9, 2014, during his first Divine Liturgy at All Saints Byzantine Catholic Church in North Fort Myers, Florida.

Father Steven's homily was on the necessity of faith in Our Lord even when one may believe that God is not answering. Through his brief vocation story, he illustrated that our prayers for the past ten years for a resident priest were indeed heard and answered. He also mentioned that he entered college 10 years ago and wanted to be a priest since then. He promised all the parishioners and visitors that "We will grow

together in Christ." A blessing of military veterans and mirovanije in honor of Saint Michael the Archangel followed the Divine Liturgy.

There was excitement, joy and new hope expressed among those who attended Sunday's liturgy. Irene Derr, long-time parishioner at All Saints, said "We're thrilled that after ten years we finally have a priest! We hope the church grows to at least the number of parishioners we had twenty years ago." Richard and Margaret Bacon revealed that they were relieved to have a resident priest and looks forward to the future growth catalyzed by Fr. Steven's obvious energy in "getting things done for the church." Parishioner Anne Poole enthusiastically stated



Father Steven anoints a parishioner with blessed oil

that Father Steven was "A match made in heaven. He's just great! He waited 10 years to become a [priest] and we waited 10 years to have one.

He seems perfect for the job. I'm ecstatic. I think we all are." Father Robert Evancho is the Administrator of All Saints Parish.



MEET
MARY
at the
Women's Museum

Art Exhibit Featuring the Mother of God

National Museum of Women in the Arts • Washington, DC

December 5, 2014 - April 12, 2015

Picturing Mary: Woman, Mother, Idea explores the concept of womanhood represented by the Virgin Mary as well as the social and sacred functions her image has served through time. This landmark exhibition organized by the National Museum of Women in the Arts brings together more than 60 Renaissance- and Baroque-era masterworks from the Vatican Museums, Uffizi Gallery, and other museums, churches, and private collections in Europe and the United States.

Divided into six thematic sections, the exhibition presents images of Mary as a daughter, cousin, and wife; the mother of an infant; a bereaved parent; the protagonist in a rich life story developed through the centuries; a link between heaven and earth; and an active participant in the lives of those who revere her.

The exhibition features works made by both female and male artists. Paintings by Sofonisba Anguissola, Artemisia Gentileschi, Orsola Maddalena Caccia (an Ursuline nun who ran a bustling painting studio in her convent in northern Italy), and Elisabetta Sirani highlight the varied ways in which women artists conceptualized the subject of Mary.

These artists' works are featured alongside treasured Marian paintings, sculptures, and drawings by Fra Filippo Lippi, Botticelli, Michelangelo, Pontormo, Giovanni Battista Tiepolo, and others.

During the presentation of **Picturing Mary**, NMWA's website will feature an online exhibition exploring global traditions in Marian imagery, further contextualizing the artworks on view in the galleries. **Picturing Mary** is part of NMWA's ongoing program of major historical loan exhibitions that examine humanist themes related to woman-kind.

Hours:

Monday-Saturday - 10 a.m.-5 p.m.
Sunday- 12 p.m.-5 p.m.

Location:

1250 New York Ave NW, Washington, D.C. 20005

Contact:

202-783-5000 1-800-222-7270

www.nmwa.org/exhibitions



*All photos by Allen Kakony and used with permission

THE CURRENT PLIGHT OF CHRISTIANS IN IRAQ

An Interview with Mar Barnaba by Bishop Kurt

Mar Barnaba is the Syrian Catholic Bishop of the Diocese of Our Lady of Deliverance. His diocese covers all of the United States and Canada. When I met him at a funeral today, he had just returned from a trip to Iraq. He was in pain from what he saw, so I asked him to give an interview for the Eastern Catholic Life, and he kindly came to our Chancery Office in Woodland Park. It is a great honor for our newspaper to have this exclusive interview. It was difficult to keep from crying during many of his powerful words.

Bishop Kurt: Your Excellency, tell us about your early history.

Mar Barnaba: I was born in the valley of Nineveh in a small city, called Bankdida in the Aramaic language and called Qaraposh by the Turks. The ancient city of Nineveh is now called Mosul. I am one of the sinners saved by the preaching of Jonah. I entered the seminary on September 14, 1963. There were 24 seminarians; only two became priests. The other priest is Patriarch Rafel the First Sakos, Patriarch of Baghdad.

Bishop Kurt: What was it like in Iraq at that time for Christians, in 1963? Was it better than now?

Mar Barnaba: It was a very difficult time for the Christians in that time because of the nationalism. The president, Abdul Salam Arif was very aggressive against the Christians. He was supported by Nasser, the President of Egypt. The Christians were treated very unjustly. He spoke very openly about his anti-Christian policies. The Kurdish revolution started in 1961, and so hundreds of Christian villages in northern Iraq were attacked, under the pretext that they were helping the Kurds or giving refuge to the Kurds. In that time the Christians began to leave Iraq. Most of the Iraqi Christians in America immigrated in that time. Although the Christians were in Iraq longer than anyone else, they do not feel

welcome or at home in their own country.

Bishop Kurt: Why did you decide to become a priest in Iraq at that time?

Mar Barnaba: To be honest, I didn't decide to be a priest. I was put in the path to the seminary unconsciously. I tried to resist the idea, but I really felt led by an unseen hand, by unseen love, and kindness. A wonderful hand led me to the seminary. I even left the seminary to go to the Army, the Special Forces in Iraq. In the Army I realized I must return to the seminary. I felt the hand of the Lord touching me since I was a child, and felt him leading me to the seminary, and I became a priest in 1975.

Bishop Kurt: How did you come to make this visit to Iraq this Christmas?

Mar Barnaba: I took the opportunity to go to the Synod of the Syriac Catholic Church in

Rome, then I met with the Holy Father for my *ad limina* visit. From that I was inspired to spend Christmas in Iraq with the poor and persecuted, with the suffering church, and the suffering families in Iraq. I was grateful to the people because I feel that I was blessed by them and blessed to be with them. I was with them December 22 to January 7, to show solidarity and hoping to strengthen their faith because they do need signs of hope. I told myself it's time to give this witness and to be the loving hand to touch the suffering people.

Bishop Kurt: What did you find in Iraq?

I was truly shocked by what I saw—the miserable situation. I could not believe that in the 21st century that something like that could happen in our modern days. Hundreds of thousands of people under tents—they are called “tents” but they are not really tents but more like a canopy and unfinished buildings. [Editor's note: In Northern Iraq it is often below freezing at this



Christian refugees waiting for help behind barbed wire

time of year.] Iraq is one of the richest countries in the world because of oil. How could things be so terrible here in the cradle of civilization, and the land of religions? But unfortunately I understood, where there is no truth, there is no civilization. Where there is no truth, religions could be

Mar Barnaba: Absolutely. I went to strengthen them, but I found I was strengthened by them. They came to me saying, “Don’t worry Bishop, we lost everything, but we lost it for Jesus. Jesus lost everything for us, and we are glad that we lost everything for Jesus.” They were teaching me theology.

“We are in Exodus, but we will reach the Kingdom of God, we can see the Kingdom of God through our poverty. We are happy!” The Christians of the Middle East have no pride, except the pride to be Christians. But in the end they are human beings, and they are conscious that they do have rights, and they are expecting that the Iraqi government would protect their rights.

Bishop Kurt: You told me this morning they have no clothes or medicine. Are there many health problems?

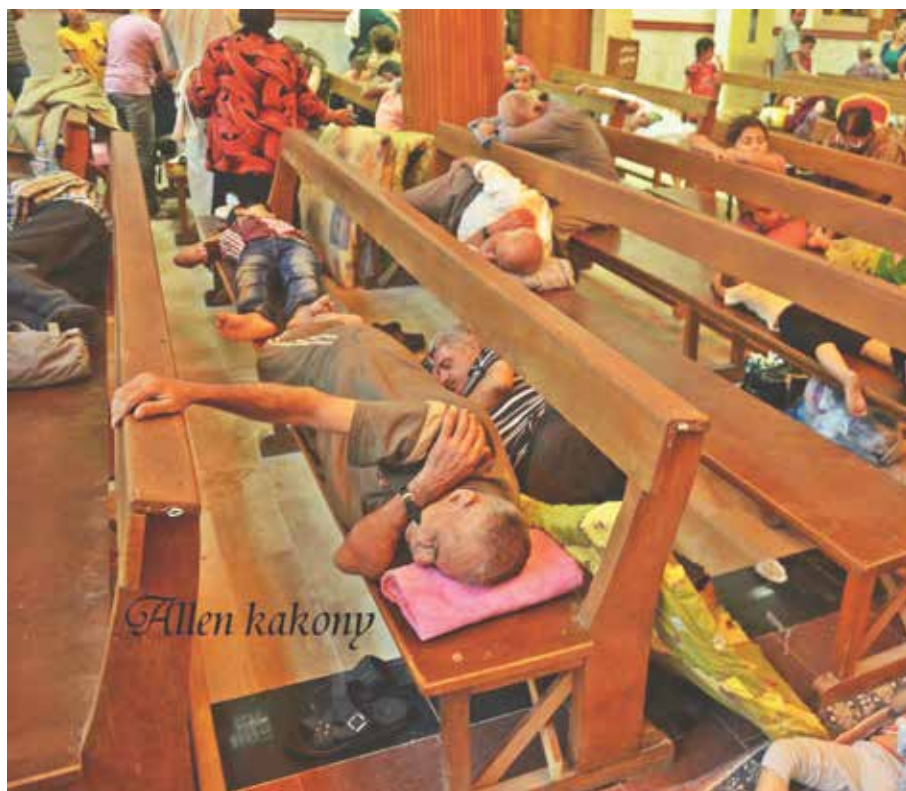
Mar Barnaba: I saw many sick people, many children are dying, and many old people are dying because there is no medicine. And in the tent, you can’t go somewhere to go to the bathroom, and so no one has any pride. And the young ladies with their special needs—it is truly shameful.

But the Christians in Iraq even consider their situation better than the Yazedies. You have heard of the Yazedies? It is a very old religion, a very primitive religion. They are very nice people, very kind people, and the Kurds were trying make them Kurdish, but they don’t like that. They hate them, and it is allowed by their scripture to kill them because they are pagan. That is why ISIS attacked them first. They killed all the men who wouldn’t convert, but the children and young ladies have been taken as slaves. Many of the women are being sold in slave markets right now for \$300 or \$400 or \$500. Right now, you can go and buy a woman at a slave market. The virgins were taken for the princes of ISIS, and the other young ladies are for sale. Once the Yazedies

had been attacked, the Christians knew the danger was headed for them, so in one night, in less than 24 hours, all the Christian villages emptied and they headed north to the Kurds for protections. There were 50,000 from my city, and they left in one night. They consider it a kind of a miracle, because there was no plan, no warning, no vehicles; they took just the clothes on their backs. In the villages that ISIS had already occupied, everyone had to convert to Islam or leave everything, or stay and pay the tax. But the knew if they stayed to pay the tax, they would still be forced to convert, and their daughters would be taken.

Bishop Kurt: You have seen the problems. What is the answer?

Mar Barnaba: I say very clearly, there will be no peace except under the tent of Christ, which is the Church. But before we evangelize others, we must evangelize ourselves. Unfortunately, today, even the Christian countries are ashamed to call themselves Christian, that they are born and reared in the Christian tent. Today, the remaining Christians in the Middle East, they will be the stone that was rejected, but this stone will be the



Christian refugees sleep in pews and on floor of church

catastrophe, tragedy. The people of the same civilization fighting each other, people of the same religion fighting each other. All of them pretend that they belong to civilizations or religions, but they act worse than the savages of the forest.

Bishop Kurt: Then why are the Christians paying for other people’s fights?

Mar Barnaba: In history, it is always the innocent and the fragile and the just; they pay for the mistakes of the others.

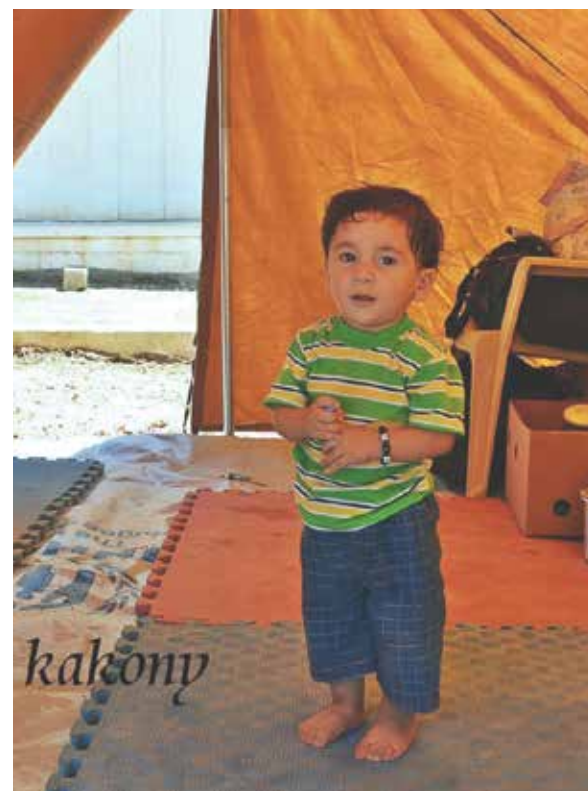
Bishop Kurt: Would you say that people of means have left, and only the poor remain?

Mar Barnaba: The rich and the powerful have been able to leave. It is the poor who have been left behind. Anyone with talent, or ability leaves because they are not allowed to grow or use their gifts. The first Caliph said about the Christians, “Destroy their schools; allow them to have their churches.”

Bishop Kurt: So did you feel closer to Jesus at Christmas, in His poverty at Bethlehem?



Christian refugees pray inside the church while children sleep



A young boy finds shelter inside a tent

cornerstone. One day the politicians of the West and the religious leaders of the Middle East, will realize that there is no peace unless they accept Jesus Christ. Europe experienced nationalism, and it gave war not peace. Politics does not give peace. Technology does not give peace. America was attacked with technology on September 11. Others can steal technology. Peace is far away if the human race doesn’t open its eyes and mind and heart to know God. And no one knows God except Jesus Christ.

Bishop Kurt: So you found the answers there?

Mar Barnaba: Yes I found them, I know them, the remaining Christians of Iraq. You will smell Jesus Christ in them. For me, I believe strongly, they will be the seeds for a wonderful future, not only for Iraq but the for the world as well. I went there to Nineveh. I came back stronger in my faith and in my hope. I have seen through the wounds of the Church what Thomas the Apostle has seen, I saw my Lord and my God, I saw my Lord and my God, in the poor people, the bare foot children, shrinking because of the cold, freezing, hungry, but the mystery of these people is that they are happy. **ECL**



AN EARLY AND IMPROBABLE SLAVIC OUTPOST IN THE DEEP SOUTH

Brookside, AL

by John Schweich

This article originally appeared in the December 2014 issue of Naše Rodina, the journal of the Czechoslovak Genealogical Society International. Photos and text used with permission.

When they arrived in the United States in the late 19th Century, Carpatho-Rusyns and Slovaks had much in common: they often hailed from the same or neighboring villages in what was then Upper Hungary, spoke mutually intelligible Slavic dialects, and came from largely agrarian occupational backgrounds. The great majority found work in the steel mills, coal mines and manufacturing plants of the Northeast¹

For those of who came from the village of Slovinky (in Spišská nová Ves in present-day eastern Slovakia), many were able to find employment in a field that was very familiar to them: mining. Slovinky had an extensive network of silver, copper and iron ore mines dating from the 1700s. By the 19th Century, only iron ore was being actively extracted. The Greek Catholic parish of Saint George dates from 1680 and according to the Slovak census of 2001, the village had a population of 1,867, with the following religious composition: 807 Orthodox, 490 Greek Catholics, 429 Roman Catholics and 6 Lutherans.²

Not surprisingly, many newcomers from Slovinky quickly found work in the bituminous coal field of Southern Ohio, settling in Pleasant City, Trail Run and Byesville Ohio.³ In the case of another group of former Slovinky miners, it can be said that work found them and in the process created the oldest and most improbable Slavic immigrant com-

munity in the Deep South, Brookside in north central Alabama near Birmingham.

In 1887 The Sloss Iron and Steel Company purchased mine acreage to supply coke to the blast furnaces of the expanding steel mills of Birmingham. Because locals were reluctant to accept mining positions, a decision was made to recruit Slovaks; among first arrivals was John Bensko, subsequently, first Slovak Mayor of Brookside.⁴

Although articles about the community often describe the early Slavic settlers there as "Slovaks," it is clear that the arrivals consisted of both Slovaks and Carpatho-Rusyns. The new arrivals reflected the religious preferences of their home village: An Orthodox Church was founded in 1894; a Slovak Roman Catholic Church, SS. Cyril and Methodius was established in 1895. The later church ran a parochial school that was open to all, regardless of their religious or ethnic backgrounds. The school closed in the 1930s. Some of the pioneering members of the parish were Joseph and Matthew Slovensky; Louis Perunko; John and Alexander Slovensky (cousins of Joseph and Matthew Slovensky); Joseph Bakosh; Mike Pator; John Mikolay; John Sikora; Peter Patchen; Mike Perish; the Duchock brothers, John, Joseph and Kiser.

SS. Cyril and Methodius' Church was served by priests of the Benedictine Order. Land for the church was purchased from Joseph and Mary Slovensky. The first resident pastor was Robert Reitmeier, a Slovak speaker. At the time of its founding, the majority of the Brookside's

population (800 families) were Roman Catholics. The first marriage recorded was that of Mary Perunko and Joseph Slovensky in June 1896. The first baptism was that of Valentine Billetz, son of Mrs. and Mrs. Joseph Billetz. A school was established and staffed by Benedictine nuns. During its first year it had 182 students. The parish numbered among its members small number of Italians, Germans and French. In 1906, according to the history of a neighboring parish, some of the congregation left to organize a Greek Catholic Church; unable to secure a priest, they obtained the services of an Orthodox priest. That departure coupled with the strikes of 1908 and 1920 had the eventual effect of causing the congregation to dwindle over the years. By 1935, the parish consisted of 30 families. In 1936, the school was closed. In 1954, after a period of physical decline, the church was torn down. A new church was constructed in 1955 and dedicated to Saint Michael. The Cemetery on "Tiger Hill," which dates from 1901 served Catholics and Orthodox; the climb was so steep that pallbearers had to work shifts transporting coffins up the hill.⁵

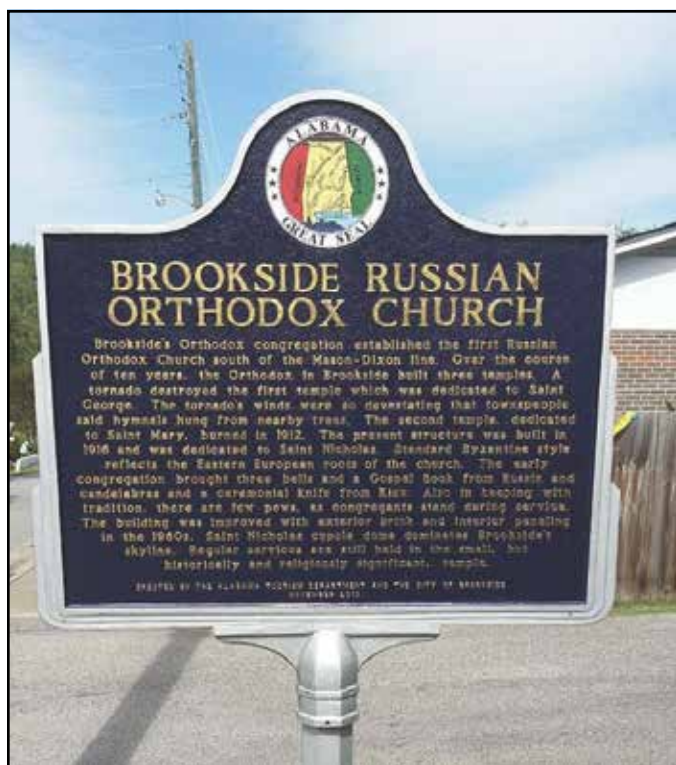
The oldest fraternal organization among Carpatho-Rusyns was the Greek Catholic Union (GCU), founded in Wilkes-Barre PA in 1892. It saw itself as the protector of the spiritual and ethnic heritage of Carpatho-Rusyn Greek Catholics. It provided death benefits to its members, whose hazardous occupations made them uninsurable by mainstream insurance companies. The GCU's newspaper, the Ameri-

kansky Russky Viestnik (ARV), was an influential source of information and opinion. The ARV was published in two editions: One, called the "Russian" version, written in Cyrillic (featuring a mixture of Russian and Rusyn dialect) and the "Slavish" edition (in an east Slovak dialect, using the Latin alphabet). The ARV published several articles dealing with the Rusyn community in Brookside.

One (March 5, 1907) was written by President of GCU Lodge 187, John Skurka. Skurka reported that the local lodge, consisting of Rusyns and Slovaks, was flourishing and had 79 members. The other lodge officers were John Slovensky, Mike Pastor, and Andro Hric. Each



(Top) The Sunday School Class of 1922 at Saint Nicholas. (Above) Gravestone of George Bencko, born in Vyšné Slovinky, Spiš, Slovakia in Brookside cemetery. Photos courtesy of Elizabeth Beck



Alabama heritage sign about the establishment of Saint Nicholas.

of the lodge members had pledged to donate \$25-\$30 to purchase a lot for the church which was not yet built. The local coal company had donated a lot but it was insufficient to support a church building. The workers were earning \$2.50-3.00 a day working in the mines. The miners had recently been on strike for 27 months but the walkout had failed to achieve its demands. The workers were being paid 57- 62.5 cents a ton of coal.⁶

Still another ARV article, (August 27, 1907) written by Ando Varholik, Lodge Treasurer, requested donations for the construction of a church. The other lodge officers at that point were Peter Bencko (President), Michael Baratka (Recording Secretary) and John Slovensky (Financial Secretary).⁷

At some point, Brookside's Greek Catholics began to be served by Orthodox priests.⁸ That posed a problem for the GCU, which required that its members be Catholics in good standing to remain members. Another ARV article, dated 29 April 1909 contained a warning from John Uhrin, President of the GCU, quoting the society's Statute #65, i.e. that GCU members of who became Orthodox would lose their membership. The warning specifically cited Lodge 187 of Brookside AL.⁹

Joseph Slovensky had written another article in the May 25, 1911 ARV reporting a liturgy held at SS. Cyril and Methodius Slovak Roman Catholic Church in Brookside on May 3, 1911. The celebrant was Fr. Michael Jackovič, the Spiritual advisor of the GCU from Scranton. In his sermon, he warned that members of Lodge 187 who had embraced Orthodoxy, would be expelled from the organization unless they returned to Catholicism. Slovensky reported that many "schismatics" (i.e., Orthodox) attended he service, heard the sermon and returned to the Catholic Church.¹⁰

Over time, the connections be-

tween the Brookside Slavs and their confreres from Slovinky in Southeastern Ohio took on a new dimension. Many of the miners in Pleasant City and neighboring Trail Run OH were, like their counterparts in Brookside, natives of Slovinky village. Those old country village ties persisted and a network developed, al-

lowing each to respond to the need for miners in both communities. After a particularly painful strike in Brookside, many of the miners relocated to Ohio, in search of stable employment opportunities. The Brookside arrivals also brought with them their newly adopted Orthodox faith which posed conflicts in the Trail Run's Saint Michael's Church, originally founded by Greek Catholics but now served by Fr. A. Solyanka, an Orthodox priest who previously resided in Brookside. The ownership of the church was decided in the courts, which ruled that Saint Michael's was an Orthodox church. Fr. Solyanka is mentioned in the Saint Nicholas' centennial history as having served in Brookside in 1911.¹¹

On January 31, 1977 Steven F, Slovensky was interviewed as part of the University of Alabama Oral History Project. Slovensky was born in Brookside in 1897 and remained there until 1920. He was the nephew of Joseph Slovensky who was a member of the local GCU Lodge. His father was born in Slovinky and lived for a time in Pennsylvania before relocating to Brookside. Slavic immigration to Brookside was at its height from the mid-1890s to 1908.

His parents were married in SS. Cyril and Methodius' Slovak RC Church in Brookside, the first wedding performed in the church. He advised that at the time he left the town for employment opportunities elsewhere, the average family earned about \$25.00. Neighboring towns included Pinckney, Daisy City, Cardiff, Gin Town and Blossburg. Most of the "Slovaks", as he called them, resided in Brookside. The congregation of SS. Cyril and Methodius' numbered 200-300.

A major source of recreation was baseball; Fred E. "Dixie" Walker (1910 - 1982) who subsequently played for the New York Yankees, Brooklyn Dodgers, Pittsburgh Pi-

rates, Chicago White Sox and the Detroit Tigers played in the local "Miners League," of which Brookside was a member.¹²

The conversion of the Brookside community to Orthodoxy, along with 19 other parishes, was cited in an August 31, 1911 letter to the Pope from 42 Greek Catholic priests as a result of the poor leadership of the Greek Catholic Bishop, at the time, Soter Ortynsky. During his tenure (1907-1916) Ortynsky was opposed by pro-Hungarian and anti-Ukrainian elements of the clergy.¹³

St Nicholas' Russian Orthodox Church remains the only spiritual vestige of Brookside's Slavic beginnings. Because of a fire there is no record of baptisms and priests assigned prior to 1911. The original church dedicated to Saint George, was destroyed by a tornado. A second church was named Protection of the Mother of God burned down. The current structure, named in honor of Saint Nicholas, constructed in 1916, was renovated in 1965. Brookside immigrants maintained contacts with their counterparts around Pleasant City Ohio who also traced to their origins to Slovinky. During the 1930s and '40s, mining activity gradually ceased in Brookside and most of the original Slavs moved away permanently. Fr. Benedict Tallant, the current pastor of Saint Nicholas', is 87 years old, is of Irish descent and a convert to Orthodoxy. He was ordained in 1962 by Bishop Dositheus of the Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate). He was assigned to Saint Nicholas' in Brookside in that year, assisting Archpriest Eugene Brown of the Russian Metropolia (today's Orthodox Church in America). In 1965, Fr. Benedict became pastor and petitioned that the church be admitted into the Russian Patriarchal jurisdiction. At that point the

membership was in excess of 100 people and is currently slightly less so. The average attendance at Sunday Liturgy is about 35. In the early years of his pastorate, Fr. Benedict transitioned the parish from the exclusive use of Church Slavonic, reducing it to once a month and currently all the services are conducted in English. Over time, the choir replaced congregational singing. Fully half of the current membership is composed of converts. Several ethnic Russians from the nearby University of Alabama at Birmingham are members. The church's Sisterhood of Saint Olga continues to host "Annual Russian/Slavic Food Festival," during the first weekend of November, which attracts visitors from as far away as Virginia.¹⁴

Footnotes:

1-Paul R. Magocsi, *Our People: Carpatho-Rusyns and Their Descendants in North America*, pp.15-20; M. Mark Solarik, "Slovaks," *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups*, pp. 927-934)

2-Paul R. Magocsi, *Carpatho Rusyn Settlement Map*; <http://www.slovinky.estranky.cz/clanky/historia/historia-farnosti.html>

3-Lorle E. Porter, *The Immigrant Cocoon: Central Europeans in the Cambridge Ohio Coalfield*, pp. 257-261.

4-Interview with Elizabeth Beck, September 8, 2014)

5-<http://www.saintpatrickcc.com/?PN=Pages&SubP=Level1Page&L=1&DivisionID=501&PageID=1148&ToggleSideNav=ShowAll>

6-ARV, March 5, 1907, p.2

7-ARV, August 27, 1907, p. 2

8-Our First Hundred Years 1894-1994, *Saint Nicholas Russian Orthodox Church, Brookside Alabama*

9-"Ot hl. Predsidelja Sojedinenija Greko-Kat. Russkych Bratsv" ("From the President of the Greek Catholic Union") ARV, April 29, 1909 p. 2

10-ARV, May 25, 1911, p. 2

11-Porter, pp. 257-161

12-<http://oh.mhsl.uab.edu/sts/>

13-Slivka, John, *Historical Mirror: Sources of the Rusin and Hungarian Greek Rite Catholics in the United States of America 1884-1963*, pp. 89-93)

14-Interview with Fr. Benedict Tallant, Pastor, Saint Nicholas Russian Orthodox Church, August 16, 2014



Exterior of Saint Nicholas Russian Orthodox Church, Brookside, Alabama



UNDERSTANDING ICONS

Father Joseph Bertha, Ph.D.

SWATCH OF RED

The Significance of Scarlet Clothing in Icons of the Theotokos and Christ the Savior

The significance of colors in icons derives primarily from the Sacred Scriptures. For instance, God specifically instructs Moses to use three colors in making priestly vestments: purple blue, crimson and white (Exodus 39). Just like every other detail in an icon, the iconographers color choice is suffused and imbued with significant connotations. Typically, we see in Byzantine icons that the cloak of Our Lord, and the veil of the Virgin is portrayed in this color. Byzantine iconographers deliberately selected royal blue for depiction of the color of the vestments of Christ and the Theotokos. The Virgin's mapho-

The healing of the woman with the hemorrhage takes place as she touches the edge or fringes of the Lord's himation.

The garments of the holy ones depicted in icons are of a liturgical nature, they are vested for a church service. While both royal blue and crimson red are both mentioned as priestly vestment colors, both Our Blessed Savior and the Holy Virgin are garbed in these colors. Clothing has taken on a priestly significance. In preparation for the celebration of Byzantine Liturgy, the priest prays Psalm 131:9: "Your priests will be clothed with righteousness; and your saints will rejoice."

The primary role of priestly service is to reconcile sinners with God. In virtue of baptism, all those who have received this sacrament have become members of the royal priesthood of Christ. The Byzantine liturgical hymn derived from Galations 3:27 speaks about the forgiveness of sins as being clothed: "All you who have been baptized into Christ, have been clothed with Christ. Alleluia!"

Certainly, the location of the apse mosaic of the Holy Virgin and Christ Child at Hagia Sophia in Constantinople also enhances the sacerdotal aspect. Not only is Virgin wearing the royal purple blue maphorion ordered by God, she is shown directly above the Sanctuary in the Great Church of Byzantium. She is the throne of God's mercy replicating the Mercy Seat in the Holy of Holies in

the Jewish Temple. The abundance of icons depicting Our Savior and His Holy Mother clothed in blue, which date from the ninth century, attest to the predilection of these iconographers which lasted until the very last breath of the Empire in the mid 15th century.



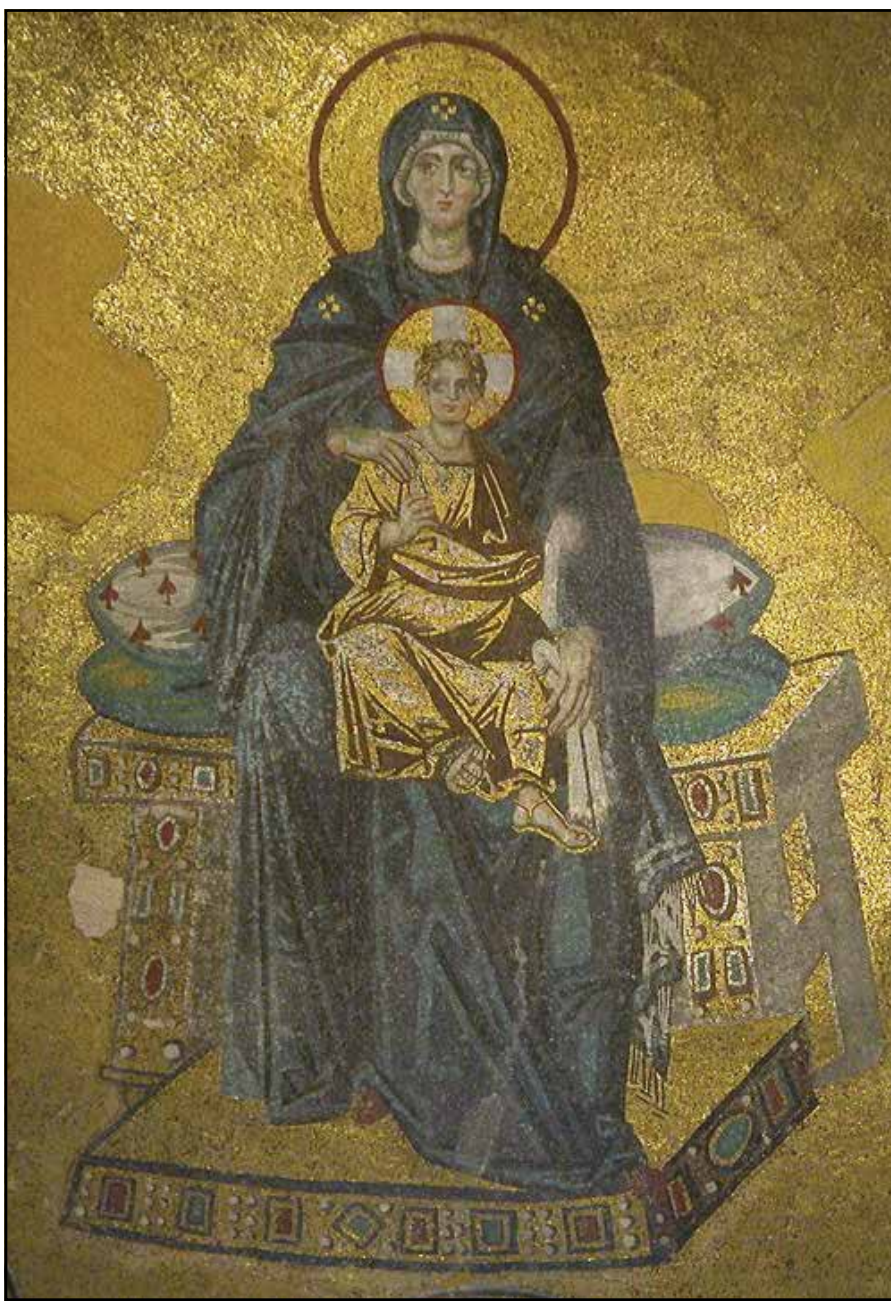
Mosaic Apse of Hagia Sophia, Kiev from the 11th C

However, beginning with the Hagia Sophia apse *Virgin Orans* mosaic in Kiev dating from the 11th century onwards, the color paradigm of the maphorion shifts from royal blue to scarlet or crimson red. As the Byzantine church expands into Slavic lands the royal blue color of the Imperial court of Byzantium transitions into the crimson red, while still highlighting the priestly role of the Theotokos because of the apse location.

Interestingly, at the Chora Church, Constantinople, an early 14th century mosaic shows the Virgin receiving a red colored skein for weaving the Temple Veil. The colors of priestly vestments are also used in threads for weaving the temple veil. The Virgin Mary participates in this priestly duty even at such an early age!

In the book of Leviticus, red is clearly indicated as the color of the wool that is placed on the scapegoat by the High Priest before it is released into the desert to bear the sins of the people. Significantly, the first public act of Our Lord after His baptism is to go out into the desert (like the scapegoat) and to forbear sins.

After the liturgical celebration of the Theophany, the Baptism of Our Lord, the Byzantine Church transitions into the Lenten Period. During the Great Fast, believers imitate Jesus by entering a period of reconciliation and atonement for sin. In Lenten icons, Our Lord is portrayed wearing a red chiton, the alb or tunic, and signifies this great priestly ministry of expiation and reconciliation with God. All believers, as members of the royal priesthood of Christ, need to strive to emulate Our Lord's most humble example. **ECL**



Mosaic of the Theotokos from Hagia Sophia, Constantinople (Istanbul, Turkey)

rion, the veil covering her head and draped over her shoulders, evokes the Jewish tallit: frequently tassels can be viewed at the edge of this garment at her shoulders. The himation (cloak) worn by our Lord around the shoulders usually reaches to the feet, also evokes the Jewish prayer shawl.

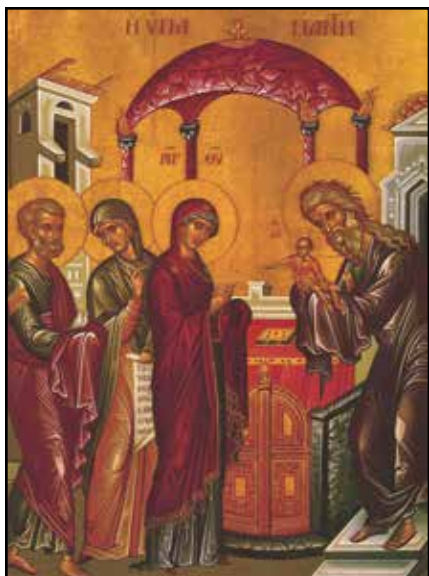
ARTICLE SUBMISSION REQUEST

Does your parish have Feast Day events, fundraisers, community service projects, special liturgical services, or any other type of happening? Speak with your pastor and become your parish media liaison!

Articles can be emailed to the editor at:
ECL@dioceseofpassaic.org

Article Submission Requirements:

- Article written in Microsoft Word
- Author's name
- Photographer's name
- Key people present in photographs
- Photographs preferred at a resolution of 300ppi, 150ppi minimum



Icon of the Presentation of Our Lord
in the Temple

According to the prescriptions of the Mosaic Law, “...when the days of a mother’s purifying after childbirth are completed, whether for a son or for a daughter, she shall bring to the priest at the door of the tent of meeting a lamb a year old for a burnt offering and a young pigeon or a turtle dove for a sin offering, and he shall offer it before the Lord and make atonement for her... This is the law for her who bears a child, either male or female. If she cannot afford a lamb, then she shall take two turtledoves or two young pigeons, one for a burnt offering and the other for a sin offering, and the priest shall make atonement for her...” (Leviticus 12: 6-8). This prescription was obliging forty days after the birth of a male child and sixty-six after a female child.

This presentation into the Temple of a first-born son also signified redemption because all first-born creatures, whether animal or hu-

man, were considered to belong to God (Numbers 18:14-18). Mary and Joseph obeyed this precept by bringing Jesus into the Temple where He was blessed by the elder Simeon and recognized as Savior by the prophetess Anna. This is the event we celebrate as a solemn Feast on February 2nd and is recounted by Saint Luke chapter 2, verses 22-40.

The Temple at the time of our Lord’s presentation was the third restoration of the original building erected by King David’s son, Solomon. By today’s standards, it was a rather modest structure measuring about 30 x 87 ft. and was 43 ft. high. A full account of how the temple was built is given in 1 Kings 5-7. Solomon spared no expense in its construction and decoration. It was the largest building the Israelites had ever constructed. King Solomon’s Temple was destroyed by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon when he captured Jerusalem in 587 B.C. Its bronze and gold items were taken to Babylon.

The Temple was rebuilt in 538 B.C. when the Persian King Cyrus allowed the Jews to return from Babylon to Jerusalem and commanded that they rebuild it. He also gave them back all the gold

and silver which Nebuchadnezzar had taken from Solomon’s Temple. It was completed some 23 years later in 515 B.C. and stood for 500 years. Although not much is known about this second Temple, it almost certainly followed the plan of Solomon’s but was not nearly so splendid.

In 168 B.C. the Syrian ruler Antiochus banned sacrifices in the Temple and defiled it by offering a pagan sacrifice initiating a revolt led by the Maccabees. Three years later the Temple was rededicated, the event still remembered as the Jewish festival of Hanukkah. This Temple too was destroyed by the Roman general Pompey in 63 B.C. In 19 B.C., King Herod the Great, wanting to win favor with his subjects and to impress Rome with his splendid building, began work on a new Temple which was the structure into which Jesus was presented. The main part of the Temple was finished by about 9 B.C. with work continuing for many years afterwards.

It was built on the same plan as Solomon’s, but this third Temple was by far the grandest. It was twice as high as Solomon’s and covered with so much gold that it was simply a dazzling sight in the bright sun. It occupied some 35 acres of space.

At its southern end, it stood about 100-150 feet above ground, forming a pinnacle from which the devil tempted Jesus to throw Himself down. In 70 A.D., a rebellion against Rome arose, causing the destruction of this Temple by the Roman military, as predicted by Jesus. Its treasures were taken back to Rome, and it was never rebuilt. Only a section of this Temple, the “Wailing Wall,” remains today and is visited not only by Jews but by pilgrims from all over the world.

Our Church celebrates the Feast of our Lord’s Encounter with His people at His presentation in the Temple solemnized in its liturgical Services such as this meaningful hymn taken from Matins: “Today the gates of heaven swing open; for the Word of the Father Who has no beginning has received beginning in time without any loss of His divinity. As a child of forty days, He is offered by a virgin Mother in the Temple according to the Law. The Elder Simeon receives Him in his arms and cries out: Dismiss me, O Master; for my eyes have seen Your salvation...” (Matins, after Psalm 50). **ECL**



SEASONAL REFLECTIONS

Monsignor John T. Sekellick, JCL

THE TEMPLE IN JERUSALEM



RESPECT LIFE FORUM

By Tom Grenchik

LEARNING TO CRY



Friends of mine recently adopted a little girl, “Annie,” from another country. As could be expected, Annie has become the center of attention of her new mom and dad and her three new brothers. One remarkable story they shared is that it took some time living in their home before Annie learned to cry.

In some crowded orphanages, they explained, children learn that crying does not elicit an immediate response. There are simply too many children in need and not enough caregivers to help. Little ones quickly learn that if no one is going to respond, crying doesn’t yield positive results. So, if a child falls down, gets hurt, or needs something, he or she just internalizes it. These children become programmed not to cry out for help. It seems other adoptive parents have shared the same experience.

The story made me stop and think just how much we take for granted. The sound that every new parent awaits in the delivery room is their

baby’s first cry. It’s the announcement of the newborn child’s presence. And that cry will be responded to countless times during his or her life.

Crying out for help is human. When we are hurt or overwhelmed, it is healthy and fitting to cry for help. And it is human to want to respond to those who are hurting. As believers in Christ, we know this is not only a human response to suffering – it is our Christian duty to serve those in need.

Our culture, however, has become hardened to many who cry out. We idolize the strong and beautiful and tend to disregard the weak and imperfect.

In our own lives, have we been programed not to call for help ourselves or to look past those who do? Consider the person who feels alone in sickness and may be tempted to feel he or she is a “burden.” Consider the family caring for a child with a disability, who may need help from their neighbors and the church community, but thinks

that no one cares. Consider the mothers or fathers of aborted children who, in coming to terms with their grief, may mistakenly assume that the Church is the last place to seek help. Consider the family that has lost employment or is facing financial hardship, but is embarrassed to ask for assistance. Look around, and listen for those cries.

Crying out for help is a good thing. Annie has happily learned this and is keeping her family busy with this wonderful new awareness that the people around her will respond to her in love. And her family loves responding.

May each of us learn (or re-learn) how human it is to ask for help without shame when we need it. May we be aware of those around us who may not have the ability or freedom to ask for much-needed help, especially during the holiday season. And may we always be ready to respond to cries that come our way.



FAITH AND COMMUNITY ISSUES

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

THE ROLE OF THE FATHER IN THE FAMILY

The Consequences of an Absent Father

Today there is an increasing incidence of one-parent families, often the female being the sole care provider. The question arises as to the importance of the father in the family: is he really needed other than providing financial resources? Can a single parent family do as good a job raising the children as two parent family? In *Familiaris Consortio*, Saint John Paul II is adamant about the importance of the father's place in the family and his role. The encyclical clearly states, "The place and task of the father in and for the family is of unique and irreplaceable importance" (*Familiaris Consortio*, 1981 §25).

The document is quick to state that a delicate balance is needed for a successful role modeling. While a father's absence in the family causes moral and psychological issues, so the oppressive 'macho' male presence supports an inferior role for the wife adversely affecting familial relationships. The role of the man in the family as husband and father, according to Saint John Paul II, is to foster healthy development of the varied personalities in the family constellation in mutual cooperation and harmony.

This fostering is accomplished by the recognition and free acceptance in generosity of the responsibilities for the conceived life being carried by the wife/mother and in the words of the text, "a more solicitous commitment to education, a task the husband shares with his wife" (*Familiaris Consortio*, 1981 §25). The role of employment on the part of the husband should be a source of unity and stability according to *Familiaris Consortio*, rather than contention or competition with legitimate familial needs. The witness

he gives to the children of a mature adult Christian will serve as an effective introduction to the children of what a dynamic Christian life in relationship to the Person of Christ Himself and His Community, the Church.

Children take pride of place in both family community and especially in the solicitous concern of the parents. The document makes this very clear, "by developing a profound esteem for their personal dignity, and a great respect and generous concern for their rights" (*Familiaris Consortio*, 1981, §26). This issue becomes more acute the younger the child is and critical when illness, physical or mental challenge, or suffering of any type is experienced by the child.

The Church, according to the sainted pope, takes seriously the mission of fostering a solicitous and tender caring for the children who are born into this world. In his words, "She is called upon to reveal and put forward anew in history the example and the commandment of Christ the Lord, who placed the child at the heart of the Kingdom of God: 'Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven' [Lk. 18:16]" (*Familiaris Consortio*, 1981, §26).

In this work, Saint John Paul II found children as a source of joy and perennial youth and life, a source of hopefulness for the future. It is in the youth of today that families, political ideologies, countries are able to envision a bright and vibrant future. The children of that future are endowed with the values, attitudes and responsibilities that have been dutifully handed down from parents, the first teachers to the country, hemisphere,

world, cosmic realities into which they and we have been born.

Saint John Paul II continues to address the issue of life and the responsibilities that parents have to support that life from the moment of conception through natural death. This most fundamental relationship defines the human person in communion with each other. In his words, "Concern for the child even before birth, from the first moment of conception and then throughout the years of infancy and youth, is the primary and fundamental test of the relationship of one human being to another" (*Familiaris Consortio*, 1981, §26). The hope is that the respect for the rights of the human person be the standard practice for the 21st century and beyond.

For Saint John Paul II, the qualities of acceptance, love, esteem, and material, emotional, educational and spiritual concerns are listed as values essential to authentic Christian witness and specifically within the Christian family context. Within that context, the qualities of wisdom, age, and grace will be manifest before God and humanity concretely expressed in the significant contribution children make in their simplicity and openness to build up the family community even to the point of contributing to the holiness of their own parents.

In the next installment, the issue and place of the elderly within the context of the immediate family as well as the larger community will be addressed and the role of the Church in the care and function of the elderly in family and community will bring to an end this segment of the study of the Christian Family in the Modern World. **ECL**



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Icon of the Theophany

The original Eastern feast of the manifestation of Christ is the Theophany. The feast of the Theophany probably originated in Egypt, because the beginning of the year (January 1) was also the beginning of the continuous reading of the Gospel of their apostle, Mark. We see even today. The Gospel of the Sunday that falls from January 1-5 is the first section of the Gospel of Saint Mark (1:1-8). The second section (Mark 1:9-11), the Baptism of Jesus, is then read on January 6. Because the Gospel of Saint Mark did not contain a Christmas story, the Church in Egypt celebrated the Baptism of Christ as His “theophany,” or “manifestation” of the glory of the Trinity. It was, in fact, called the “Feast of Lights.” Since it is a feast of beginnings, this would explain why the Birth of Christ, and also the changing of water into wine at Cana would have been associated with this feast (the beginning of Christ’s life, and the beginning of his ministry in the Gospel of John).

For Egyptian Christians, therefore, the Jordan became the Nile, the Temple becomes baptism, and the Feast of Lights becomes the Theophany. It is normal that the Egyptians would base their feast of the manifestation of Christ on His baptism. The apostle of Egypt was

Saint Mark, and he began his gospel with the baptism of Jesus. The baptism of our Lord already appears in the gospel as a liturgical event. It is a story of the whole meaning of the gospel in miniature. Jesus comes, he takes upon himself the sins of the world, he humbles himself to be baptized by John, and he is glorified by the witness of the Father, “This is my beloved Son.”

In the original structure of the feast in Egypt, the feast of Theophany began a forty-day fast in imitation of Jesus, who after His baptism fasted for forty days in the desert. At the end of this forty days, baptisms were performed. This forty day fast has now become attached to Pascha, and ends with Lazarus Saturday. Saint Athanasius brought the practices of Egypt into conformity with the rest of the Church and moved the fast to before Pascha. During the Great Lent, therefore, the reading of the Gospel of Mark takes place, which would have begun at the beginning January and would have continued immediately after Theophany. It is interrupted by the Sundays inserted between Theophany and the Great Fast. All Christian Churches had a fast before the feast of Pascha. These fast ranged from 1 to 3 to 7 days. The idea of a 40 day fast belongs with the baptism of Jesus. The two fasts, a forty day baptismal fast from Egypt, and pre-Pascha fast, were fused into one. We still have the characteristics of each: 1) a forty day fast ending with Lazarus Saturday, a day for baptisms, and

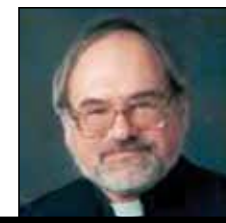
2) a one week intensive fast before Pascha.

The Feasts of Christ’s Birth and Baptism lead us on the road to Resurrection. On Christmas Eve, we sing, “O swaddling clothes that carry God, the Life that they wrap shall break the bonds of death, for Christ our God shall lead us mortals to immortality” (Christmas, Matins, Doxasticheron at the Praises). The gift of myrrh by the Magi represents the death and resurrection, “(they) offered him precious gifts ... myrrh to the immortal one, as if he were mortal, he who was to remain three days in the tomb” (Christmas, Great Compline, Apostichera). The Resurrection, Christmas, and Theophany share new creation in common, as can be seen from the reading of the beginning of Genesis and many stichera: “without changing, He took up His dwelling in a virgin womb, that He might fashion anew the corrupt Adam.” (Christmas, Great Compline, Litija stichera). The feast of Theophany emphasizes how water is now sanctified. Through water, the world is made new; we are sanctified through baptism; and it is through baptism that we die and rise in Christ “Adam, who had previously fallen into corruption (i.e., the curse of death) was refashioned in the waters of the Jordan by the Lord, the King of Ages” (Theophany, Matins, Canon, Ode 1). “Christ baptizes in the fire of the Last Day those who are unfaithful and do not believe that He is God, but through the Spirit and

by grace that comes through water, He bestows new birth and delivers from sin all those who confess His divinity” (Theophany, Matins, Canon, Ode 6). This is true faith, which transforms our lives, and not simply an intellectual opinion. “Christ will wash with the water of renewal those who run to him in faith, and He baptizes them with the Spirit who will provide them with eternal life” (Theophany Matins, Canon, Ode 9).

Saint John the Theologian and Saint Paul also have a theology of the manifestation of Christ. Saint John does not tell the story of Christ’s birth, but His birth - the eternal Word of God becoming a human being - “coming into His own” - is the subject of his preface to the entire Gospel. This Gospel is read on Christmas in the Western tradition, but on the Byzantine calendar it is read on the Sunday of Pascha itself. The Gospel of the Resurrection, is read at the Vigil Divine Liturgy on Holy Saturday evening. In Saint Paul’s letters, Christ’s birth is our adoption as children of God, and his epistle to the Galatians is read at the Liturgy of Christmas Day, “But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to ransom those under the law, so that we might receive adoption (Galatians 4:4-5).” The fullness of time would encompass the whole human life of Christ, from his birth to his resurrection.

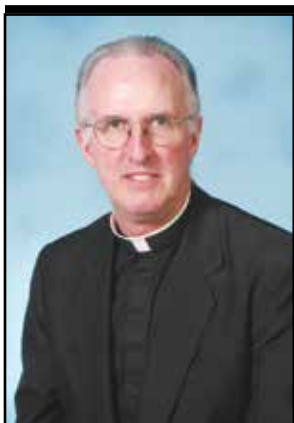
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THE BYZANTINE LITURGY

By Archpriest David Petras, SEOD

GOD WITH US COMES INTO THE WORLD: THE BEGINNING OF THE RESURRECTION



EPARCHIAL PRIEST PARTICIPATES IN ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

Father Robert F. Slesinski, Ph.D.

At the 46th Annual Association for Slavic, East European,
and Eurasian Studies Convention

San Antonio, TX. The 46th Annual Convention of the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies (ASEEES) recently took place over November 20–23, 2014, at the Marriot Riverwalk Hotel in San Antonio, Texas. The general theme of this year’s convention was “25 Years After the Fall of the Berlin Wall: Historical Legacies and New Beginnings.” Contributing to the convention’s proceedings was Father Robert F. Slesinski, Ph.D., a priest of the Eparchy of Passaic, who organized and participated in a roundtable panel discussing the charged theme of “Russian Orthodox Judeologies.” Other panelists included Brian Jay Horowitz, Ph.D., Profes-

sor and Director of Judaic Studies at Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana, and Daniel Scarborough, Ph.D., who teaches at Miami University of Ohio. The planned chair of the roundtable panel, Bernice Glatzer Rosenthal, Ph.D., of Fordham University, Bronx, New York, was unable to attend due to illness. Father Slesinski, a longtime member of ASEEES (formerly AAASS), specializes in Russian religious philosophy and is most noted for his monograph *Pavel Florensky: A Metaphysics of Love* (1984). He is presently working on a new major volume to be entitled, *The Theology of Sergius Bulgakov*.



SPIRITUAL REFLECTIONS

Subdeacon Lewis Rabayda

ROADMAP THROUGH THE GREAT FAST:

All is Necessary, All is Helpful, and All are Welcome to Try

We all have such busy lives these days that even those of us who are retired seem to be caught in the same hustle and bustle of those with young families. Some people I know in their seventies have expressed to me how there is so much distraction in their lives, so much paperwork and things to keep track of, that they have difficulty finding time for the activities they enjoy. Likewise, young people are distracted with this new myth of having constantly to be aware of everything that is happening—and are obliged to “share” their opinion about it—by making sure they are entertained by multimedia and social media at all times of the day through their computers, tablets, and smartphones.

These new distractions of legal language on bills and service contracts, as well as understanding the philosophical points of view of the next cultural battle, can be overwhelming at least and spiritually destructive at most. Such as it is, this is life today, and odds are, we are not going to get away from it, but most likely it will only become more distracting as we age. So how can we regain our attention span? How can we regain our calmness and serenity? We can again, or for the first time, experience what the great Eastern Fathers call *stillness*, by fully engaging in this period of time known as The Great Fast.

Now, more than ever, we have the greatest opportunity to rise to these challenges presented by the modern world. From the Tradition of the Apostles and Scripture, The Church gives us this

period of fasting for spiritual cleansing, renewal, and deepening our devotion to Christ. Zacchaeus, the Publican and the Pharisee, the Prodigal Son, Meatfare, and Cheesefare - the five Sundays of prologue to the Great Fast - show us the way to perfection, and give us the instructions for a productive Fast. Each one shows us how to not be a part of “the world,” but how to be a member of the Kingdom of God: Zacchaeus shows us how to freely give alms to the poor and reparation for the sins we have committed, because he sees the divinity of Christ and yearns for reconciliation with Him; The Publican shows us humility of self and the importance of sincerity in prayer; The Prodigal Son show us that true freedom and love are only found when we submit ourselves to God’s care, and, when we are repentant for the sins we commit, God Himself will come out to meet us on our journey back to Him; on Meatfare, Jesus reminds us of the Great Judgment and separation of sheep and goats. Jesus says that we will be judged on our actions of whether or not we have done well for our neighbors and fellow man. The final prologue of the Great Fast comes on Cheesefare Sunday, when we are reminded that all we do for the fast is not to be done for show, but that it is to be done in secret, so that only God knows our sacrifice, “For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Matt. 6:21).

The Church has given us the roadmap to perfection, the roadmap to *stillness*, the path to peace

through following the teachings of Jesus Christ. All aspects of the fast are important because they support each-other. We cannot simply abstain from food, or give a little extra money to some charity, or say an extra prayer. Each aspect of fasting is given to us by the Holy Trinity, each helps to complete the other, and performed together, they will bring us closer to God.

When we take this journey of a multifaceted Fast, it gives us something truly good to focus on, and when we do, we will see the distractions and cares of the world melt away—they will lose their power over us as the influence of Christ in our lives becomes more central. This is the goal of the Fast: not so much for our personal fulfillment, or worse yet, achievement, but it is to allow God to reform us to how He wants us to live—in peace. Our true reward for running the race is to be found among the sincere sheep on the right side of judgement, to be found among those who are resurrected with Him, and to praise and worship God for eternity in His Kingdom.



UPCOMING EVENTS FOR FEBRUARY

Eparchial and Parish Events

Glory to Jesus Christ!
Glory forever!

FEBRUARY, 2015

1 Sunday of the Prodigal Son

2 Encounter of Our Lord with Simeon and Anna
Solemn Holyday

8 Sunday of Meatfare
Ordination of Subdeacon Lewis Rabayda to the Diaconate. Holy Ghost Church, Jessup, PA, 11 a.m.

15 Sunday of Cheesefare

16 Presidents’ Day
Chancery Closed

22 First Sunday of the Great Fast

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