



# EASTERN CATHOLIC LIFE

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## 40th Anniversary of Byzantine Chapel *National Shrine · Washington, DC*

By Debra Bass

More than 100 individuals, many Eastern Rite Catholics, came to the Byzantine Ruthenian Chapel in the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, DC, on September 27 to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the installation and blessing of the Chapel.

The Basilica - a majestic work of Byzantine-Romanesque architecture and sacred art near Catholic University - is the Patronal Church of Catholics in the U.S. and is America's preeminent Marian Shrine. More than 70 chapels and oratories that relate to the Catholic faith are housed in the Basilica, but one stands out for Eastern Rite Catholics - the Byzantine Ruthenian Chapel.

The 40th anniversary celebration included a Moleben to the Theotokos, Panachida for deceased founders, bishops, priests, and laity, singing of Marian hymns, led by the Slava Men's Chorus of Epiphany of Our Lord Church in Annandale, VA, and a Divine Liturgy of Thanksgiving by Bishop Kurt Burnette. Father John Basarab, Pastor of Epiphany, Father Conan Timoney, pastor of Patronage of the Mother of God Church in Baltimore, MD, Father Michael Kerestes, pastor of Saint Gregory of Nyssa Church in Beltsville, MD, and Father Edward Cimbala, pastor of Saint Mary Church in Hillsborough, NJ, concelebrated. Father John Zeyack, of Saint George Byzantine Catholic Church in Linden, NJ, celebrated the Moleben.

Epiphany parishioner Steve Seman, who was at the blessing of the Chapel 40 years ago, attended the anniversary event. He recalled that special day - October 6, 1974 - when thousands of pilgrims witnessed the blessing. "It was unbelievable," Steve said. "I remember it was a beautiful sunny day with all the bishops and other dignitaries participating in a huge procession," he added. Since that day, the Chapel has been a special place for his family.

Several other Epiphany parishioners were there in 1974 and returned for the 40th anniversary. Monica Koshuta was among the throngs that came "by the bus loads" 40 years ago - many immigrants from Eastern Europe

- to celebrate this major milestone for Eastern Catholics. "With our own Chapel, we felt a sense of ownership and recognition....it gave us all goosebumps," she said about the three-day affair in 1974 that included banquets, music, and lots of pomp and ceremony.

Father John Basarab, then a seminarian, recalls traveling with 33 other seminarians for the dedication in 1974. He also recalled that the Basilica was packed with pilgrims. "There was hardly any room to move....the procession with the archbishop and bishops could barely move to process to the chapel," he noted. In the Great Upper Church of the Basilica, "every seat in every pew was occupied and others were standing....we seminarians had to stand behind the high altar with the people from every parish in the United States who were carrying processional crosses with the name and city of their parish," he added.



***Bishop Kurt with Iconographer Christina Dochwat and other clergy and concelebrants following the Anniversary Divine Liturgy of the Ruthenian Chapel at the National Basilica in Washington, DC. Pictured are (l. to r.): Father Richard Rohrer, Deacon William Szewczyk; Father Edward Higgins, Father Michael Kerestes; Father Conan Timoney, Christina Dochwat, Msgr. Walter Rossi of the National Shrine, Bishop Kurt, Father John Basarab, Father Edward Cimbala, Deacon Elmer Pekarik, Father John Zeyack, and Lector Peter Turko.***

Among those celebrating the anniversary was the artist and iconographer, Christina Dochwat, whose stunning icons grace the Chapel. After experiencing the horror of concentration camps, Ms. Dochwat escaped from western Ukraine with her mother and sister and came to the U.S. in 1947. Her father was arrested in 1939 and sent to Siberia. In the

U.S., she studied many forms of art at both the University of the Arts in Philadelphia and what is now called the Ringling College of Art & Design in Sarasota, Florida. Along the way, she was asked to paint an icon. "There were no iconography schools, books, or examples at that time," Christina said in an interview prior to the anniversary celebration. That did not stop her from answering the call. A self-taught iconographer, she eventually worked under several bishops and her work is in more than 80 Eastern rite churches in the U.S. today. Her work is highly respected in Ukraine, where she is recognized as a premier iconographer.

Prior to 1974, she was asked to sketch ideas for the Basilica's new Byzantine Ruthenian Chapel and much to her surprise, she was selected

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# I Lift up My Eyes...

## *The Pastoral Reflections of Bishop Kurt*



### Saint Joseph, Man of God

Many people say that we live in an era without good role models for males. If you read enough history, you will find out that they have always been hard to find, starting with Adam. The Sunday after Christmas we find two admirable men, King David and Saint Joseph. I've heard it said that Saint Joseph was neglected in the East compared to the West, but it seems to me that we honor him even more since he is celebrated on a Sunday.

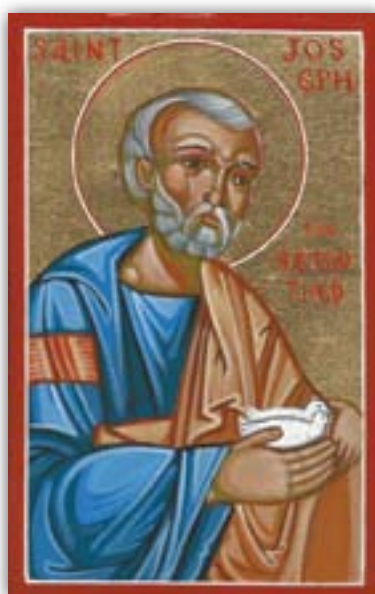
In the beautiful poetry of our Liturgy, Saint Joseph and King David are linked in the Good News. The hymns say to Joseph, "Tell David what you saw." The hymn is saying that when Saint Joseph died and arrived in the underworld, he could tell David, "Isaiah's prophecy was fulfilled. The Virgin has given birth. Your throne will last forever. The universal Shepherd is now on the earth." A few years later, Jesus Himself arrived to liberate the underworld, or as we say, to despoil Hades, and to conquer Death.

What can we learn about Saint Joseph from the scriptures? Although he is named in Saint Luke's Gospel, almost everything we know comes from the first two chapters of Saint Matthew's Gospel. In fact, Saint Joseph really dominates the action in those passages. He is truly a man of action, the great protector. By listening to the Word of God, he acts as God's agent in protecting the Messiah and his mother from the forces of evil.

In the first event, Saint Joseph is a just man who tries to follow the law of God, as he understands it. He learns that Mary is pregnant, and so cannot go through with his marriage knowing that he is not the father. But while respecting marriage and chastity, he does not desire to add to her burden by publicly denouncing her. He tries to follow the law but also practice charity. At this point he receives his first visit from an angel. In fact, there are five special revelations by God

in this passage, three of them mention an angel. Four of these revelations are to Joseph, including all three of the angelic ones.

In this first revelation, the angel says, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit; she will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus,



*Courage does not mean a lack of fear;  
courage means acting despite fear.  
Joseph is able to be courageous  
because he trusts the word of God.*

for he will save his people from their sins." From this revelation, we learn several things about a good man. The first is that even the best men have fear. Courage does not mean a lack of fear; courage means acting despite fear. Joseph is able to be courageous because he trusts the word of God. The angel tells Joseph to name the child, an act of a father. We learn that a good man must act like a good father, even when a child is not his own child.

The second revelation is to the three magi, but

the third revelation is again to Saint Joseph. In this one an angel speaks to him and says, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there till I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child to destroy him." From this revelation we learn that a good man will sacrifice his own comfort, time, and even career to protect those entrusted to him. How often, when I was counseling a young man against fornication, I have said, "God made men to protect women, not to use them for our own pleasure." What a delight it is to see a young man straighten his posture and relax his shoulders and look thoughtful, when moments earlier he looked ashamed, or cocky, or jocular! And what a contrast Saint Joseph is to King Herod. Herod's idea of manliness is to constantly increase his own power and wealth. And like so many men today who are deluded by materialism, Herod killed the very children that God gave him to protect.

In the fourth revelation, the angel says to Saint Joseph, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead." Notice how the messages from the angel are full of activity. Saint Joseph didn't hideout or use subterfuge or clever words, but he took action, and swift action to protect his family. In fact, Saint Joseph is one of the most important men in history, and he never utters a word in the Scriptures.

Finally, on the way back to Judea, Saint Joseph receives his last revelation and moves to Nazareth. No doubt he was looking forward to returning to his original home, his relatives, his friends, and his business contacts. However, in his final sacrifice, Saint Joseph starts a new life in a different country to protect his family and to obey the word of God. We don't all have the best role model in this life, but God shows us a good man in the Scriptures. Saint Joseph follows God's law, practices charity, trusts God, acts decisively, keeps his mouth shut, and protects those whom God has entrusted to him.



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](mailto: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 Cimballa at  
[FREDSTMARY@aol.com](mailto:FREDSTMARY@aol.com).

# “I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse.”

## *A Message from Bishop Kurt...*

St. John Paul, who lived through occupations by Nazi Germany and Communist Russia, accurately described certain current ideas as “the Culture of Death.” I avoided calling these ideas “modern” because they are very ancient. God has been trying to teach us to respect life for thousands of years, starting with the Covenant with Noah and when He stopped the Sacrifice of Isaac and banned child sacrifice. Re-legalizing infanticide and homicide is not progressive, but a return to ancient barbarism.

There is a powerful political drive right now to legalize killing sick people. The advocates call it by the euphemism “physician assisted suicide.” If we allow them to choose the vocabulary, we have already lost the battle. We are killing sick people, no matter who does it or what they call it.

The Culture of Death began here in the United States with the mass sterilization of poor people in the early twentieth century. Other countries sent “scientists” to the United State to study our methods. Germany was one of the countries that studied our system for sterilizing poor people and criminals. California had the largest number of forced sterilizations which continued into the 1950’s. You may learn about this part of the story from *War against the Weak, Eugenics and America’s Campaign to Create a Master Race* by Edwin Black. Please purchase a copy of this book for your education.

In Germany in the 1930’s, after adopting the American sterilization program wholesale and after legalizing abortion, the government and medical establishment turned their attention to killing people after they were born. There was an extensive program of propaganda and education. Some of their most effective tools were movies produced by the German film industry in cooperation with the government. The government was very careful to make this phase of the program appear to be medical in nature. Working through the medical establishment, the German government began screening all children three years old or younger. Midwives were required to report any observed medical issues to a central office, and a panel of three experts ruled on whether or not to eliminate the child. A unanimous vote was required to execute the child—incredibly the vote to execute was called a vote for “treatment” (Behandlung). By 1940, the government had built thirty centers in Germany, Austria, and Poland to carry out the enormous number of killings of sick children. The children who were marked for death were kept at “therapeutic convalescent centers” for several weeks to give the appearance of treatment before they were killed by physicians or other medical workers.

*Why does the Culture of Death want to co-opt medical workers into this project? ...The answer is simple: they want someone in a position of authority to tell them that it is OK.*

Soon the German government turned its attention to killing mentally ill adults. Institutionalized adults from all over Germany were marked for death if they suffered from certain specified mental illnesses, or if they had been institutionalized for five years or more, or if they were classified as criminally insane, or if they were not German citizens or German blood. It was required that the actual execution be done by a physician—to quote Dr. Victor Brack, one of the leaders, “the syringe belongs in the hands of a physician”. Throughout this period, the government always used terms like mercy killing (Gnadentod) and compassion to describe their actions.

You may well ask what the Church was doing about these programs in Germany. As the killing of the sick became more exposed,

the German Catholic bishops issued a letter challenging the practice, and in August 3, 1941 Bishop Galen of Munster preached a famous sermon beginning with “Jesus, the Son of God, wept.” In response to these very public denouncements by the Catholic bishops, Hitler cancelled the government program of mandatory execution of sick and disabled adults, however, the killing of children continued and by now the German physicians were enthusiastically carrying out “mercy killings” all over Germany. The Wikipedia article on this

*The Nazi response to criticism by the Catholic Church was a lengthy campaign of highly publicized trials to prove that Catholic priests were homosexuals and corrupters of young people.*

program falsely states that before this event the Catholic Church in Germany had a policy of avoiding confrontation with the Nazis after 1933. In fact in 1934, Father Josef Spieker was sent to a concentration camp for preaching sermons against the Nazis and saying that, “Germany has only one Fuhrer, Jesus Christ.” The historical fact is that in 1937 Pope Pius XI issued an encyclical in German that was read in every Catholic Church in Germany on March 21, 1937, Palm Sunday, warning the people about their leaders. The Nazi response to criticism by the Catholic Church was a lengthy campaign of highly publicized trials to prove that Catholic priests were homosexuals and corrupters of young people. This campaign climaxed in a national radio address by Dr. Goebels in May of 1937, in which he called the Catholic Church “the ulcer on the healthy body of Germany”.

- To educate yourself about the German program for killing the sick and disabled, please purchase a copy of *The Nazi Doctors, Medical Killing and the Psychology of Genocide* by Robert Jay Lifton. The campaign against the Catholic Church is documented in *Nazi Terror, The Gestapo, Jews, and Ordinary Germans* by Eric A. Johnson.
- One of the best resources for learning about the promotion of euthanasia in Germany is a documentary called *Selling Murder: the Killing Films of the Third Reich* by BBC Channel Four. It was shown in the United States on the Discovery Channel. I cannot find out how you can purchase the DVD, but the entire documentary is on YouTube, and I encourage you to watch it and discuss it. In this chilling documentary you can see the slickly produced films that were used to convince medical workers to participate in these horrors.

Isn’t it interesting that the American film industry is also promoting the culture of death in our time? In 2004, *Million Dollar Baby* was produced that used every form of emotional manipulation to justify the poisoning of an injured woman. Hollywood cheered and nominated it for seven Oscars, and awarded it four Oscars. It was awarded or nominated for fifty “best” awards by 26 different film critic organizations. Clint Eastwood, the producer, director, and actor, said his movie is about “Americana.” The entertainment industry was more outraged over spoilers than the malevolent message of the movie.

Why does the Culture of Death want to co-opt medical workers into this project? Why are they so intent on perverting the healing arts into the art of death? The fact is that people are quite successful at killing themselves and each other with no help from physicians. It doesn’t take eight years of medical training to kill someone! The answer is simple: they want someone in a position of authority to tell them that it is OK.

Does the Catholic Church teach that we must prolong life at all costs? No. Many people, even Catholics, are unaware that the Catholic Church says we do not have to prolong life with extraordinary means. In fact, Pope Pius XII invented the term Death with Dignity

*Culture of Death, continued on page 15*



# PEOPLE YOU KNOW

## AROUND THE EPARCHY



### BLESSED BASIL HOPKO MISSION • MYRTLE BEACH, SC

#### GROWING PARISH CELEBRATES FEAST

The growing community of Blessed Basil Hopko Byzantine Catholic Mission in Myrtle Beach recently observed the Feast of Saint Nicholas of Myra with the celebration of the Divine Liturgy, followed by a fellow-

ship dinner.

Father Thomas McCann, C.P. was the celebrant of the Divine Liturgy. Father Conan Timoney serves the community of Blessed Basil Hopko.



### SAINT JOHN CHURCH • BAYONNE, NJ

#### SISTERS PILGRIMAGE TO BAYONNE

On Friday, November 28, a group of over 40 nuns and novices from the Sisters of the Servants of the Lord and the Virgin of Matara, based in Washington, D.C., made a pilgrimage to Saint John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church in Bayonne, NJ to visit the home parish of Blessed Miriam Teresa Demjanovich who was recently beatified.

A Moleben service to Blessed Miriam Teresa was offered, followed by a presentation on the Byzantine Ruthenian Catholic Church. The parish is served by Father Ronald Barusefski, JCL.

### PATRONAGE OF THE MOTHER OF GOD CHURCH • BALTIMORE, MD

#### LUNCH WITH THE PASTOR PROGRAM

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The Patronage of the Mother of God Byzantine Catholic Parish in Baltimore, Maryland recently held another "Lunch With the Pastor" program. It is a monthly get together with a box lunch from "The Lunch Box Lady" in Baltimore.

The topic of this gathering

with the latest pastoral letter from the Bishops of Maryland entitled: "Comfort and Consolation (Care of the Sick and Dying)." Ms. Lisa Guba, a retired Air Force Nurse, and Father Conan H. Timoney, Pastor, a former VA Chaplain, shared insights and information on health care issues.



## 40th Anniversary of the Byzantine Ruthenian Chapel

### *Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception*



*Iconographer Christina Dochwat.*



*The Ruthenian Chapel in the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, DC.*

#### **CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE.**

to design the chapel and write the icons for it. Years later, she was contacted again, this time by Bishop Pataki, who asked her to lead a renovation effort, which she began in 2001. Visits by some 13 million pilgrims over 27 years had taken its toll on the Chapel. The mosaics needed to be cleaned, the iconostasis dismantled and taken off site where it would be cleaned, polished, and lacquered. Lighting needed to be improved and the marble walls and floor needed to be refinished. The work was completed and the chapel was revealed as even more beautiful than it was at its dedication and blessing.

As part of the anniversary celebration, Basilica Archivist and Curator Dr. Geraldine M. Rohling prepared an exhibit of liturgical and cultural objects that was on display through November 30, 2014. The exhibit, on loan from the Eparchy of Passaic, included Crowns, the liturgical headdress worn by eparchs or bishops in the Eastern Catholic Church, vestments, icons on loan from Christina Dochwat, sacred vessels, and other items and photographs from the archives of the National Shrine.

In addition to the 40th anniversary of the Chapel, 2014 marks the 90th anniversary of the establishment of the original Exarchate of Pittsburgh and the 40th anniversary of the proclamation that dedicated the Byzantine Ruthenian Metropolitan

Church to the Holy Protection of the Mother of God. The original blessing of the Chapel was timed to commemorate one of the most sacred holy days in the Eastern Rite: Protection of the Mother of God on October 1st each year.

*The Basilica, located at 400 Michigan Ave., NE, in Washington, DC, is open 365 days a year and is host to nearly one million visitors annually. There is no admission fee. [www.nationalshrine.com](http://www.nationalshrine.com)*

*The Ruthenian Chapel was installed in 1974 and blessed on October 6, 1974. It is on the lower level of the Basilica. <http://bit.ly/1sUX20T>*

*Photo credit: Rand M. Bass. Debra and Rand Bass are parishioners of Epiphany of Our Lord church in Annandale, Virginia.*



*Bishop Kurt and Father John Basarab.*



*Bishop's mitre on display*



*Steve Seman reflects on Chapel's dedication in 1974.*



*Icon of the Mother of God by Christina Dochwat.*



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6. "Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom in Church Slavonic" – Original Soundtrack from the 50th Anniversary Commemorative Video
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8. "Marian and Eucharistic Songs of Praise" – Collection of Byzantine BVM and Communion Hymns in Slavonic and English
9. DVD Video "Gubi – Jaslickari" – Male Chorus presentation of The Bethlehem Carolers in Slavonic – Carpatho Rusyn. (\$16.95 each DVD).
10. DVD Video "The Byzantine Divine Liturgy of St. 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 24<sup>th</sup> Street, Philadelphia, PA 19145-3207.



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. It is organized by the National Museum of Women in the Arts and 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.

### HOURS:

MON-SAT - 10 A.M.-5 P.M. SUNDAY- 12 P.M.-5 P.M.

INFORMATION: 1250 NEW YORK AVE NW, WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005

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

WEB: [WWW.NMWA.ORG/EXHIBITIONS](http://WWW.NMWA.ORG/EXHIBITIONS)

### TICKETS:

[HTTP://NMWA.ORG/PICTURING-MARY-TICKETS](http://NMWA.ORG/PICTURING-MARY-TICKETS)





*Saint Nicholas church exterior.*

## Roebling Parish Observes 100 Years

*Bishop Kurt joins clergy and parishioners for a day of celebration and rejoicing*



*Bishop Kurt with concelebrants, clergy and servers following the Anniversary Liturgy.*

**ROEBLING, NJ** – On Sunday October 12, 2014, Bishop Kurt Burnette joined the parishioners of Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church, Roebling, New Jersey to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the church.



*Cantors, Stephanie Hennessey, Andrew Skitko, Martin Vavrak, and Nicholas Lodomirak.*

Concelebrants of the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy of Thanksgiving included Father Michael J. Mondik, Pastor of Saint Thomas the Apostle Byzantine Church, Rahway, NJ and regional Syncellus; Father Gregory J. Noga, Administrator of Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church and Protopresbyter of Central New Jersey; Father John G. Basarab, Pastor of Epiphany of Our Lord, Annandale, VA, Syncellus of the Middle

States Syncellate and Vocation of Saint Nicholas Church; and Father George David, Pastor of Saint Basil Romanian Catholic Church, Trenton and Administrator of Saint Mary Romanian Catholic Church of Roebling, both in NJ. Father Edward J. Higgins, Pastor of Holy Ghost and Holy Trinity parishes, both in Philadelphia, PA, served as Master of Ceremonies for the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy.

Father Basarab presented an artoforion (a small container) to Father Noga containing the relics, myrrh and manna of Saint Nicholas of Myra, the patron of the church for veneration by the faithful, especially on the Patronal Feast Day.

Saint Nicholas Parish was founded in 1912 with Divine Liturgies celebrated in a hall above the town's Drug Store. The parishioners set the cornerstone for the church in 1914. The first Divine Liturgy was celebrated in the fall of 1914. After a fire partially destroyed the church in 1945, the parish rebuilt in 1946 and rededicated in 1947.

The Church was refurbished again in 2014 to celebrate the 100-year anniversary. A new Iconostas and altar were installed and the whole church was repainted and re-carpeted. Bishop Kurt blessed the church, parishioners and those worshipping with the parish.

Liturgy concelebrants and family members of former Pastors joined the Saint Nicholas parish families and friends in a celebratory dinner after-

ward. Township and County Officials declared October 12, 2014 Saint Nicholas 100-Year Anniversary Celebration Day and presented Father Noga with the official proclamations.



*Father Noga (l.) receives a gift of relics from parish vocation, Father Basarab (r.)*

Saint Nicholas parishioners thank Almighty God for sustaining them for over 100 blessed years. They humbly ask God's blessings on the founders and benefactors of the church, as well as the many Pastors who shepherded the parishioners in their faith journey.



*The beautiful interior of St. Nicholas church.*



*Father Gregory with parishioners following Liturgy.*





*Bishop Kurt addresses the deacons and wives on retreat.*

*RETREAT MASTER  
FATHER MARTIN VAVRAK*



## Eparchy of Parma Villa of Our Lady

From September 19 to 21, our Eparchy's Deacons, Diaconal candidates, Lectors and their wives met at The Villa of Our Lady Retreat House in the beautiful Pocono Mountains for their annual retreat. Following dinner on Friday evening, Father Martin Vavrak, Retreat Master, led a conference which set the tone for the weekend. Each day began and closed with prayer. On Saturday afternoon, Bishop Kurt concelebrated the Divine Liturgy with Father Martin.

A highlight of the weekend was the presentation of the video on the Mystery of Crowning prepared by the Eparchy of Parma. All agreed that this instructive video effectively addressed in a practical fashion the real-life problems couples encounter in their lives from the time they begin dating, during the early years of their married life, and throughout their marriage and into their senior years.

During the video's presentation and following its conclusion, Father Martin engaged the retreatants in fruitful discussions which provided the opportunity not only for reflection and comment on the particular situations portrayed in the film but also for further exploration into a variety of situations affecting the lives of those joined in marriage. The film served as a spring board for additional discussions of events and issues the retreatants have faced, or can be

expected to face, in their ministries.

Also attending the retreat was Father Edward Cimbala. This was Father Ed's final gathering with the diaconal candidates as his tenure as Director of Deacon Formation is ending. Father Ed's duties now are the responsibility of Deacon Nicholas Daddona (Director) and Deacon Larry Foran (Assistant Director).

On Saturday evening, Deacon Daddona led a roundtable discussion with the Deacons and Diaconal Candidates. During this gathering, issues such as continuing education opportunities, problems encountered by the Deacons in fulfilling their call, and the success in the enrollment of candidates for the Diaconate program scheduled to begin next June at Saints Cyril and Methodius Seminary in Pittsburgh.

During the men's roundtable discussion, Maureen Daddona shared a Power-Point presentation with the wives focusing on various aspects of Christian spirituality. The presentation was based on the book *A Travel Guide to Life* by Anthony DeStefano.

To conclude the retreat Bishop Kurt and Father Martin conducted the Service of Holy Anointing which was a very enriching experience for all. After this celebration a delicious brunch was served before departing for home.



*Bishop Kurt with Father Martin Vavrak and other clergy members.*





# Archial Deacon Retreat 2014

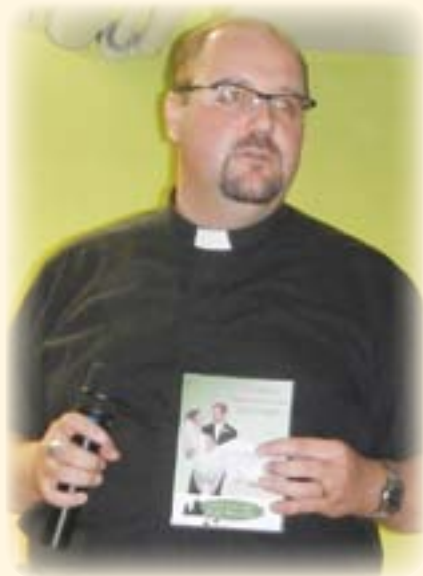
Retreat House · Mount Pocono, PA



Retreat Master, and eparchial deacons and wives at the annual retreat.



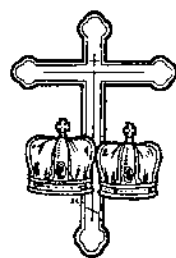
Director of Deacon Formation,  
Deacon Nicholas Dadonna  
shares a light moment of reflection  
and conversation.







# **Wedding Jubilee Celebration** *Central Pennsylvania Syncellate* **Minersville, PA**



*Bishop Kurt with Father Frank Twardzik, host pastor and Protopresbyter, along with Father Peter Hosak, Syncellus, and other clergy and servers following the Divine Liturgy.*



*65 Year Jubilarians Cantor Peter and Mildred Yashchak of Saint Mary Church in Brockton cut the Anniversary Cake!*

**MINERSVILLE, PA** – The clergy of the Central Pennsylvania Syncellate, along with their Chief Shepherd, Bishop Kurt Burnette, recently honored Wedding Jubilarians. Once again, the annual event was graciously hosted at Saints Peter and Paul Byzantine Catholic Church in Minersville, PA.



The Liturgical Master of Ceremonies was Father Edward Higgins, pastor of Holy Ghost Church and Holy Trinity Church, Philadelphia. Responses were led by Cantor Paul Konkus and the parish choir, along with guest cantors from the Syncellate. Assisting were parish altar servers. Following the liturgical celebra-



and Saint Mary Church, Saint Clair, PA. Also in attendance were Father James Carroll, OFM, pastor of Saint Mary Church, Mahanoy City, and Saint Mary Church, Brockton, PA; Monsignor Nicholas Puhak of Saint Mary Church, Freeland, PA; Father James Demko, pastor of Saints Peter and Paul Church, Beaver Meadows and Saint Mary Church, Shepton, PA; Father Carmen Scuderi, OFM, then-pastor of Saint John the Baptist Church, Hazleton, PA; Father Peter Donish, pastor of Saint Mary Church in Hazleton; Father Jerome Wolbert, OFM, of the Byzantine Franciscan Friary in Sybertsville, PA. Also in attendance were Father James Badeaux, pastor of Saint Michael Church, Mont Clare, and Saint Mary Church, Coatesville, PA; and Father Nicholas deProspero, pastor of Saint John the Baptist Church, Pottstown, PA.



A Hierarchical Divine Liturgy was celebrated by Bishop Kurt, along with Father Peter Hosak, regional Syncellus and Pastor of Saints Peter and Paul Church in Bethlehem; Father Frank Twardzik, regional Protopresbyter and pastor of Saints Peter and Paul Church, Minersville



tion, a delicious banquet dinner was held in the parish's Hillcrest Catering Facility at which all couples were honored, including Dr. and Mrs. Peter Yashchak who were given special recognition for 65 years of marriage! May God grant them all many blessed years!



*Father Nicholas deProspero smiles as he offers the toast*



*Father Frank Twardzik, host pastor.*



*Bishop Kurt greets the jubilarians as Father Peter Hosak looks on..*



*Msgr. Nicholas Pubak offers a prayer.*



# Catechists' Day of Spiritual Renewal for Pennsylvania Syncellates

## Franciscan Friary · Sybertsville, PA



*Father Jerome, OFM with the catechists from the two Pennsylvania syncellates gather for lunch at the day of Spiritual Renewal.*

SYBERTSVILLE, PA – Scripture, the spiritual, the sacred, the stillness, the sounds, the scents – all so familiar but yet so new. These words describe the experience of the twenty-one Catechists of the Pennsylvania Syncellates attending the Day of Spiritual Renewal on Saturday, November 22, 2014 at Holy Dormition Byzantine Franciscan Friary, Sybertsville, PA

Father Jerome Wolbert, OFM of this Friary and pastor of Saint John the Baptist Church, Hazleton, PA, expertly planned, organized and facilitated the day. It was a perfect mix of listening and reflecting, peace-filled silence in the chapel, cleansing confession, group interaction and sharing stories, hearing and reading scripture in a new way, and praying Vespers with 'one voice.'

In the first session, Praying Scripture and Praying with Scripture, Father Jerome led us to delve into the Psalms and how we can

connect the realities of our daily lives to these prayers. When we repent by praying Psalm 50; for joy in remembrance of God's works, Psalm 66; for trust in God, Psalm 22; when we are downcast, Psalm 102; and for praise and gratitude, Psalm 104. We were encouraged to use Psalms to transfigure our emotions; stories of Scripture to get to our hearts and imaginations.

The vocation of Catechist has an important place in the Church; transmitting the faith to another generation. Father Jerome's encouraging words to "understand our own vocation so that the children or adults to whom we minister can see Christ in us and hear His words with an open heart." He continued, "Read Scripture every day, share the message and in everything we do, our lives should live out Scripture." We were then reminded of Saint Francis' advice to "Preach always; use words sparingly." Saint Augustine captured

the same sentiment as he stated, "Our words can diminish the more our lives speak Jesus Christ."

Catechists who attended were from Saint Mary Church and Saint John Church, Hazleton; Saint Michael Church, Dunmore; Saint Mary Church Mahanoy City; Saint Mary Church, Wilkes-Barre; Saints Peter and Paul Church, Beaver Meadows;

Saints Peter and Paul Church, Minersville; Saint John Church, Lansford and Saint Ann Church, Harrisburg.

Comments from the attendees were, "This was a wonderful day. Father Jerome was excellent, appreciated his manner, gentleness and wonderful insights." A father of three and high school teacher said that he really appreciated the quiet time in the chapel, another mentioned that it was a wonderful day of reflection and study of Scripture and, one who spoke the hearts of all, "this day was so wonderful, we need more of these!"

The Catechists of the Pennsylvania Syncellates were privileged to be in the beauty and holiness of the only Byzantine Catholic Franciscan Friary in the U.S. Our gratitude to Bishop Kurt for providing this day, to Father Jerome for his particularly spiritual and insightful presentations, to Father Gregory Noga, Director of the Office of Eastern Christian Formation for his efforts in promoting the day, and, thank you to all the loyal Catechists who attended. *Mnohaja L'ita!*



*A moment of quiet, contemplative prayer.*

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## *10th Annual Byzantine Liturgy* **Mount Saint Mary's Seminary • Emmitsburg, MD**



*The clergy and servers just before the celebration of the Byzantine Divine Liturgy at Mount Saint Mary's Seminary.*



The 160 Latin Catholic seminarians and some of the parishioners of Epiphany Mission were in attendance.

Father Gross is a bi-ritual priest of the Diocese of Arlington, Virginia, who assists Father John Basarab at Epiphany Mission in Gaithersburg, Maryland and Epiphany Church in Annandale, Virginia. During the last decade, he has scheduled this annual Divine Liturgy on November 30th the feast of Saint Andrew the First-called Apostle who founded the Church at Byzantium or November 12th the feast day of the great Ukrainian Catholic martyr for unity, Saint Josaphat. Besides Father Gross' class lectures, this Liturgy is

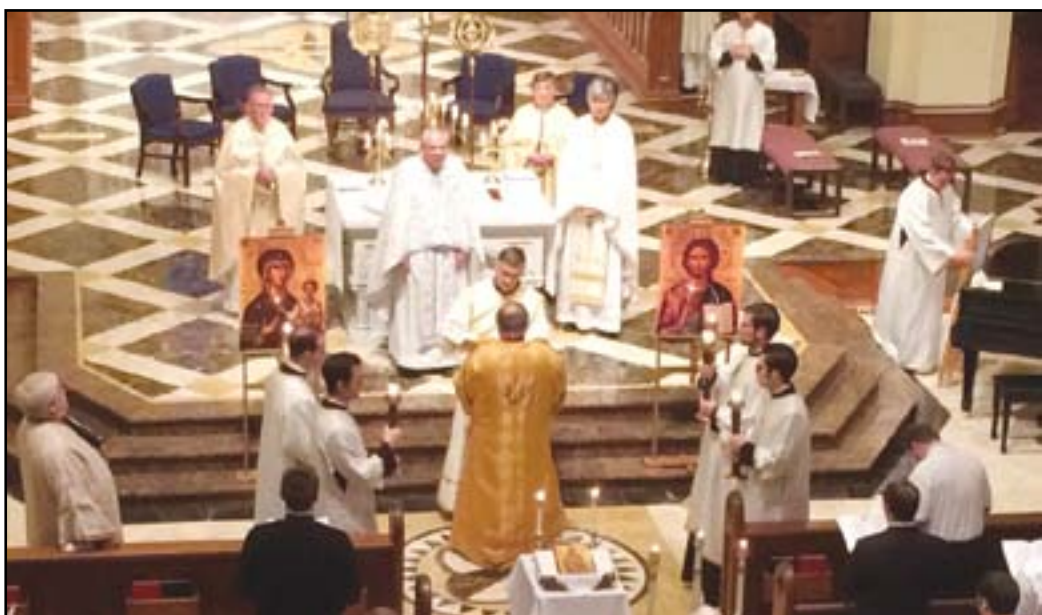
a way for the seminary to fulfill the Vatican II mandate in the Decree on Eastern Catholic Churches, reiterated by Saint John Paul II in the apostolic letter, *Light of the East*, that calls on Latin Catholic seminaries to provide instruction about the Eastern Catholic Churches.

Mount Saint Mary Seminary is one of the two seminaries of the Archdiocese of Baltimore and is the oldest Roman Catholic seminary in the United States, founded in 1808. On the grounds of Mount Saint Mary Seminary and Mount Saint Mary University is the log cabin where Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton lived when she arrived in Emmitsburg to found the Sisters of Charity.

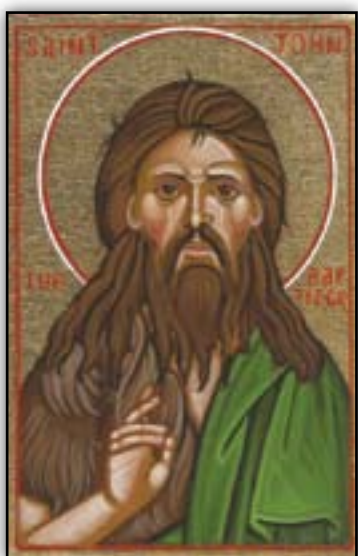


The tenth annual Byzantine Divine Liturgy was celebrated at Mount Saint Mary Roman Catholic Seminary, Wednesday, November 12th, the feast day of Saint Josaphat. The principle celebrant was Father Lee Gross, Dean of Students and a professor of Sacred Liturgy at the seminary. Concelebrating were Father John Basarab, regional Syncellus, Father Conan Timoney, protopresbyter, and Father Dr. Robert Oravetz, a priest of the Archeparchy of Pittsburgh and an alumnus of the seminary.

The Latin Catholic priests of the seminary concelebrated as well. Deacon Elmer Pekarik served as deacon for the Divine Liturgy. The responses for the Liturgy were led by the seminary schola cantorum in four-part Carpathian plain chant which the Roman Catholic seminarians of the schola study in preparation for this Liturgy. Seminarians were altar servers under the direction of Rick Neimiller of Epiphany Mission. Lector Jack Figel of the Eparchy of Passaic chanted the epistle.







## SEASONAL REFLECTIONS

Msgr. John. T. Sekellick, JCL



### SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST

As our Church solemnly celebrates the Baptism of our Lord and Holy Theophany this month, a singular figure, other than Jesus Himself, emerges - His cousin, John, son of the aged Zachary and Elizabeth. Although he is perhaps remembered more for his outspoken condemnation of King Herod's adulterous marriage which resulted in his beheading, John's greatest role in the plan of salvation took place on the shores of the Jordan River as he baptized Jesus. For this reason, from the earliest times, our Church has dedicated the day following Theophany to John's memory (January 7th). He is commemorated as well several other times throughout the year, principally his conception (September 23rd), his birth (June 24th) and his death (August 29th).

John, as the last of prophets, proclaims the arrival of the Messiah and so stands at the crossroads of the Old

Testament and the New. Within the Church from its earliest times, John has been seen as the "Forerunner" leading to his proclamation, "Behold the Lamb of God Who takes away the sins of the world!" (John 1:29) His baptism of Jesus is the point at which the ministry of Jesus begins.

John attracted vast multitudes from Jerusalem and the surrounding areas. His message was truly solemn and quite stern: "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruit that befits repentance." (Matthew 3:7) John was a strict legalist, somewhat like the Pharisees but whom he excoriated for their hypocrisy. He enjoined his hearers to share clothing and food with those in need. This struck at the heart of Jewish society at the time bent on acquisition. Our Lord Himself addressed that very issue when a rich man asked Him what he should do to have eternal life. When Jesus told him to sell all he had and give to the poor, the man refused and went away sad prompting Jesus to remark, "With difficulty

will a rich man enter the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 19:16-26)

John's preaching and influence eventually from the point of view of the Jewish authorities grew at an alarming rate for which he was incarcerated in the remote military stronghold of Macherus as a prudent move to stop a menacing messianic movement by removing its instigator as far as possible from the multitudes who flocked to hear him. Even King Herod "liked to hear him" (Mark 6:20).

John's nature was of such moral purity that he is referred to as an angel-in-the-flesh. In some icons, he is depicted as a winged figure. He differs from all the other prophets in that he was privileged to show to the world the very One Whom he had foretold: "One mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to loose. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire...." (Luke 3:16)

There is a legend that the evangelist Luke wanted to remove John's

headless body to Antioch, his own birthplace. He succeeded, however, in acquiring and taking only one hand which was kept there in Antioch until the tenth century when it was moved to Constantinople from where it disappeared during the Turkish occupation. According to the legend, each year on his feast-day, the archbishop would expose it for veneration. Sometimes the hand appeared open, and sometimes, clenched. In the first instance, it indicated that there would be a fertile year, and in the second that it would be a year of famine.

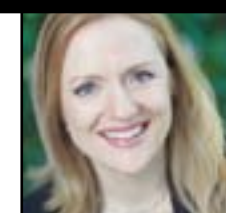
From the Vespers commemorating John the Baptist on January 7th, our Church reverently chants: "O luminary in the flesh and Forerunner of the Savior, O offspring of the barren one, O friend, by leaping in the womb you adored the One Who is born of the Virgin, and you baptized Him in the waters of the Jordan. O prophet, we pray to you: Implore Him that we may escape future torments."



## RESPECT LIFE FORUM

By Mary McClusky

### A Picture is Worth a Thousand Lives



I'll always remember the first picture I saw of Christopher. I was flipping through my friend's photo album and suddenly encountered an ultrasound photo slipped loosely between the pages. Andrea's creative way of announcing the impending arrival of her first child revealed the immense power of images to grab our attention and spark a human connection. Ultrasounds are not simply medical information - they are family photos and videos.

Thanks to advances in ultrasound technology, trained medical professionals at pregnancy care centers can increasingly harness the power of images and sounds to introduce parents to their unborn child in a particularly concrete way. Often the mother and father begin to understand that they are parents of a child worthy of life, and they are spared the medical risks and physical and emotional pain of abortion when they choose life for their child. Given the beautiful opportunity ultrasound machines provide to save lives and begin parents' loving relationship with their child, it is quite fitting to celebrate a milestone in their availability and use: The Knights of Columbus, a Catholic fraternal benefit society dedicated to charitable service, recently presented their Ultrasound Initiative's 500th ultrasound machine to a Baltimore pregnancy care center.

The Ultrasound Initiative encourages local Knights' councils to collaborate with diocesan Respect Life directors and other community members to find qualified pro-life centers in their area. These centers are dedicated to offering support and care to parents, to help them choose life-affirming options for themselves and their unborn children. The local council partners with a pregnancy care center to raise half the cost of an ultrasound machine. The Knights' national Culture of Life Fund matches these local dollars, enabling cash-strapped centers to help reluctant or abortion-minded parents to see their children in a new light.

Though difficult to measure, the impact this program has made in many communities is beyond question. Many of the ultrasound machines offer the latest three-dimensional technology, allowing parents to see detailed, real-time video images of their child. Several machines are mobile medical units the size of a laptop, allowing technicians to share with clients the "whoosh-whoosh" of their baby's heartbeat. Informal surveys by pregnancy centers confirm the anecdotal evidence that most abortion-minded parents who view an ultrasound end up choosing life for their child. Imagine the effect of 500 ultrasound machines and thousands of ultrasounds!

The initiative has expanded to all 50 states as well as Canada and Jamaica. "When we began this program five years ago, we hoped to put a machine in every state," said Supreme Knight Carl Anderson. "But this program has been even more successful because of the great need and the generosity of brother Knights from coast to coast. . . Not only has this program saved the lives of countless unborn children, but it has saved many mothers - and fathers - from a lifetime of regret."

The Ultrasound Initiative is a wonderful example of a partnership to support countless mothers and fathers in choosing life for their children. We should all consider supporting such initiatives in our own communities. Through the Knights of Columbus Ultrasound Initiative and other programs to expand the use of ultrasound technology, more parents will experience the reality of their unborn children and connect with the many resources and people who can help support them through an unexpected or challenging pregnancy.

[Mary McClusky is the Assistant Director for Project Rachel Ministry Development at the Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. To learn more about the bishops' pro-life activities, go to [www.usccb.org/prolife](http://www.usccb.org/prolife). Join the Bishops, Call to Prayer for Life, Marriage & Religious Liberty by visiting [www.usccb.org/pray](http://www.usccb.org/pray), or text FAST to 55000.]





## FAITH AND COMMUNITY ISSUES

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

### The Role of Women at Home and in the Workplace

*THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WORK AND FAMILY*

What exactly, if that is possible is the relationship that should be had by women at the workplace and within the family? Not an easy question to answer; even more so in light of the women's equality issues of recent time. Section 23 of the document on the Christian Family St. John Paul II and the council fathers deem it a "vast and complex theme . . . the relationships between women and society" (John Paul II *Familiaris Consortio*, 1981). Yet these same council members observe that within the context of family life, the exclusivity regarding the role of the women to that of "housewife" and mother appears to be a cultural phenomenon, sharply delineating role specific to men and exclusive to women. Though the documents makes clear that prime of place belongs to the roles of maternal and familial nature, yet it also states that "these roles and professions should be harmoniously combined, if we wish the evolution of society and culture to be truly and fully human" (§23).

What makes the role of mother and heart of the family so important to the Church in the eyes of the council fathers? While the council fathers are very clear about the rights of the woman as being equal to that of the man, and that the church must "in her own life promote as far as possible their equality of rights and dignity . . . for the good of all, the family, the Church and society" (*Familiaris Consortio*, 1981, §23), the Council fathers make it clear that this equality does not mean the women automatically renounces her role as female, assuming a "male" role. Far more is the accurate and honest expression of femininity's role as true, full and human. This expression is

concretely found in day-to-day life of the woman, family or outside employment position notwithstanding taking into account cultural and custom differences.

A major obstacle to a universal acceptance of this view is the phenomenon of objectification. According to the document human dignity is undermined severely by the persistent thinking that human beings are considered as things rather than persons an object of trade or exchange much like currency in the economy. According to the document, women will find themselves often at the behest of selfish interests foci of pleasure in the forms of "oppression of the weak, pornography, prostitution—especially in an organized form-- . . . various forms of discrimination that exist in the fields of education, employment, wages, etc." (*Familiaris Consortio* 1981, §24).

In addition to position, perception of status is also a major concern, widows, childlessness, divorced or separated women, unwed mothers; these prejudices are deplorable in the vision of the Council Fathers and in their own words, "The Synod Fathers deplored theses and other forms of discriminations as strongly as possible. I (Pp. St. John Paul II) therefore ask that vigorous and incisive pastoral action be taken by all to overcome them definitively so that the image of God that shines in all human beings without exception may be fully respected.

Concomitantly, men's role within the context of the family is the living out day-to-day life of the husband and father, seeing in his wife the fulfillment of God's intention for the husband's

welfare the completion of the man as a fully alive human being and the wife finding her fulfillment as a fully living human being. The Council Fathers are adamant in the understanding that the authenticity of conjugal love unconditionally demands as a presupposition a boundless respect on the part of the man for the dignity of his wife who is to be recognized as equal. The Council Fathers recognize the eloquence of the Great Hierarch, St. Ambrose in his own words:

She was not given to you to be your slave, but your wife . . . reciprocate her attentiveness to you and be grateful to her for her love . . . a man should live a very special form of personal friendship (*Familiaris Consortio* 1981, §25).

The Christian Man is challenged to relate to his wife in a charity that is both "gentle and strong, like that which Christ has for the Church" (*Familiaris Consortio*, §25). Concomitantly, on the part of the man, the Council Fathers see the fulfillment of the role of fatherhood in the family manifested in the love the man has for his wife as the bearer of their children as well as his own love for them along with the love of the wife. The Council Fathers also make it plain that efforts must be made to restore the conviction on a social level the role and work and place of the father for the family is of a profoundly irreplaceable position of importance in places that encourage the man to be less concerned or involved with matters directly concerning the family. The effects upon the family if a father is not present and the role of the father/husband in the family will be examined in the next installment.



## Byzantine Catholic Church Torched by Arsonist

*Roswell Parish Damaged  
Prayers Requested  
Support Appreciated*



Early in the morning on Sunday, December 14, 2014, an arsonist torched Epiphany of Our Lord Byzantine Catholic Church at 2030 Old Alabama Rd.; Roswell, GA 30076. The man was not connected with the parish and was apprehended walking down the street. He also attacked another church in the area. Fortunately, no one was injured.

The damage to our parish is between \$200,000 and \$300,000.

The church does carry insurance, but all donations are appreciated. Please pray for Father Philip Scott, the pastor, as well as his congregation, and the poor soul that torched the church.

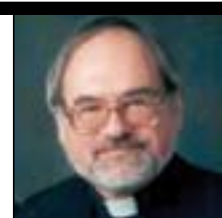
Donations may be made online by visiting <http://www.gofundme.com/iwzd9w>. Or you may mail checks directly to the parish (address above) or to the Eparchial Chancery Office at 445 Lackawanna Ave., Woodland Park, NJ 07424.





# THE BYZANTINE LITURGY

By Archpriest David Petras, SEOD



## Foreseeing the Resurrection

There is only one human story: how someone will give up his or her life for another. This is the story of Jesus, how the Son of God “emptied himself” to take human nature and then laid down his life for all other human beings, in order to “trample upon death” and bring us resurrection. The followers of Jesus at first had a more limited expectation. They thought Jesus was the “Anointed One,” who would bring them political victory over the Roman oppressors. They foresaw a simpler, more straight-forward human story - you overcome power over the oppressed by seizing power for yourself.

This was not the divine answer, and Jesus corrected His followers, much to their astonishment, “for whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and that of the gospel will save it.” (Mark 8:35) Jesus would free His people not only from the Romans, but from sin and death itself, and he would do this by what is often called the “Christian paradox”: the power of death is destroyed by death. Therefore, Jesus foresaw, contrary to His disciples, that He would triumph and bring life through death on the Cross.

These foreshadowings of death and the consequent resurrection are revealed to us in the Gospels, which the Church then arranges in a series

of readings on the Third, Fourth and Fifth Sundays of the Great Fast (Lent). On the Third Sunday, we hear the Christian principle that in order to gain life, we must first lose it. Our Lord predicts: “He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer greatly and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and rise after three days. (Mark 8:31)” On the Fourth Sunday, we hear the Gospel of Jesus expelling a demon from a young boy, probably afflicted with epilepsy. Jesus’ disciples could not cure him, but Jesus tells them that this kind can only be healed by prayer and fasting, supporting the Lenten discipline. Jesus then adds, “The Son of Man is to be handed over to men and they will kill him, and three days after his death he will rise.” (Mark 9:31)

Finally, on the Fifth Sunday, the Gospel is the story of James and John seeking special places in the kingdom. Jesus tells them that “... the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (Mark 10:45) This gospel has the most detailed prediction of the passion and resurrection: “... the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death and hand him over to the Gentiles who will mock him, spit upon him, scourge him, and put him to death, but after three days he will rise.” (Mark 10:33-34)

These three gospel readings indeed prepare us for the Feast of the Resurrection. They emphasize the theme that runs throughout the whole gospel, the “good news” of Jesus our Lord. God has humbled

Himself to take our nature, so that we might be raised to a share in divine life. Each of the gospels teach us the value of humility. In the third week we are told that we must follow Christ on the road of the Cross if we are to have a share in his life. The second week tells us that we cannot overcome the force of evil by our own strength, but only through the grace of God who suffered and died for us. We must unite ourselves to him in prayer and fasting, which is what Lent is all about. In the fifth week, we learn that to share in the life of Christ is by becoming servants to one another. “Whoever wishes to be great among you will be your servant; whoever wishes to be first among you will be the slave of all.” (Mark 10:42-43) This is the genius of our faith, for it does not depend on human but on divine wisdom.

The resurrection of our Lord is also foretold in the Gospel of Saint John, but in a different way. When He cleansed the temple by expelling the tax-collectors, His authority to do this was challenged. Jesus told His detractors, “Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up .... He was speaking about the temple of His body. Therefore, when He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this, and they came to believe the scripture and the word Jesus had spoken.” (John 2:19.21-22) Saint John was careful to always underline the reality of the body of our Lord. When He is raised from the dead, he tells Thomas “Put your finger here and see my hands, and bring your hand and put it into my side, and do not be unbelieving, but believe.” (John 20:27) Through the Eucharist, we partake of the Body of Christ, as Je-

sus teaches us, “Amen, amen, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you. (John 6:53)” That is why Communion is given to us “for the forgiveness of sins and life everlasting.” (Communion formula)

For Saint Paul, the body is the connection point between God and us. Saint Paul writes: “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?” (1 Corinthians 6:19) In our bodies, therefore, we share the hope of the resurrection of Christ. Saint Paul further observes that we have become the body of Christ through our faith, our baptism and our Communion in His body, “[God] put all things beneath his feet and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His (Christ’s) body, the fullness of the one who fills all things in every way.” (Ephesians 1:22-23)

The result is our union and intimacy with God, “for He is our peace, He who made both one and broke down the dividing wall of enmity, through His flesh, ... and might reconcile both with God, in one body, through the cross, putting that enmity to death by it ... for through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.” (Ephesians 2:14.16.18) This is why the fathers taught that the body is essential to our human existence, and that our faith and our hope is in the resurrection of the body, “I expect the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.” (Creed)

## Culture of Death

*Continued from page 3.*

when he taught that we have a right to die a natural death. But this new threat is not about allowing people to die a natural death. This new movement seeks to actively kill sick and disabled people with poison.

Even as I write this article, the New Jersey legislature is preparing to turn New Jersey hospitals and doctors’ offices into execution chambers and New Jersey physicians into executioners. For decades now, American politicians and judges have believed that they have the power to rewrite the Ten Commandments. “They set their mouths against the heavens, their tongues roam the earth.” (Psalm 73:9)

Here is what God has to say about this evil: “Do you not know that you are the temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwells in you?

If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy that person; for the temple of God, which you are, is holy. Let no one deceive himself.” (1 Corinthians 3:17)

My dear friends, I beg you, do not let anyone convince you that killing the sick is a good thing, and do not let anyone deceive you into ending your own life this way. Neither your body nor your life is your property. They belong to God. As Moses said at the end of his life, “See, I have today set before you life and good, death and evil. ... I call heaven and earth today to witness against you: I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. Choose life, then, that you and your descendants may live, by loving the Lord, your God, obeying his voice, and holding fast to him.” (Deuteronomy 30:15-19) Please join me in praying and fasting to ask God that He spare us this new curse.

+Kurt Brunette





# SPIRITUAL REFLECTIONS

Subdeacon Lewis Rabayda

## “Forgiveness: for Our Own Sake, and the Sake of the World”

Many bad things happen to us through our busy and complicated lives. Some difficulties are our own fault, some are caused by others, while more-yet are caused by a combination of circumstances. Regardless of which party or conglomerate is to blame, the ability to retain or release the guilt and fault is ours. When we look for the other to ask for forgiveness first, we place the responsibility for our healing in their hands. While the other may be solely to blame, we can give them the power to perpetuate an open wound in our conscience, if we wait for them to act first. If we seek healing, and are ready to forgive, then we need not wait for a prompt, but rather, we should forgive them their offense as Christ has forgiven us our offenses.

Too often in situations when others have hurt us, we tend to focus on the trespass of the aggressor, the one who caused us pain or injustice. But this intense dwelling on how we were hurt can have an even more negative impact on us. When we do not forgive the other for their trespass, then we have let them damage us even more than the original hurt, especially if we recall the event over and over again through our lives. Each time we recall the hurt, we reopen the original wound and give power back to the one who hurt us, and in effect, we give power back to evil. Each time we recall the offense in bitterness, we take back our forgiveness—if of course we forgave them to being with—and thereby re-condemn ourselves.

It is not that we should forget what happened, as the saying goes, “forgive and forget,” but that we simply forgive. Forgetting an offense is not only impractical, but also spiritually unhealthy. Christ never advised His followers to forget anything, for we are to constantly be aware of our surroundings and also of our relationship with God. By forgetting the wrong, we deny an aspect of our life, we deny an occasion we had to offer others forgiveness. When we truly forgive someone for a wrong they have done, we no longer recall the situation with anger, bitterness, jealousy, shame, resent, or mistrust. No, when we truly forgive them, we recall a situation in which we have been hurt, but in which we recall the fallen humanity of the one

who hurt us. We can also recall our own sins, and see that we are usually not too much better than they are. When we forgive and remember, we reinforce in our own minds and hearts the power of love, and that no sin or wrong is too great to be forgiven.

There are some hurts and abuses that may seem too violent to forgive: manipulation, sexual abuse, physical violence, and murder. But as Christians, we have been charged with a sacred and humble mission, to forgive others as Christ has forgiven us. Jesus Christ instructed us to forgive EVERY offense. Jesus Christ has showed us by His actions, that we are to forgive even those who unjustly sentence us to death. One of Pope Francis’ themes of Christian action in the world is to show mercy. He is suggesting that we follow his example to show mercy to the world, the mercy that we have received from God, and the mercy that is present in the Scriptures.

Jesus prayed for those who assailed Him. While on the cross, suffocating from the fluid build-up in His lungs, He prayed to God to forgive those who did this to Him, because, “they know not what they do.” Likewise, if Jesus prayed for those who unjustly murdered Him, then we too can pray for those who have wronged us. If we can forgive them from our hearts, then the next step would be to pray that God forgive them their sins, especially if they are unaware of their sin. Praying for our enemies and those who have hurt us is surpassing forgiveness to show mercy and love.

Forgiving those who have wronged us in any capacity is a command that God gave to us. Jesus taught His disciples in the Lord’s Prayer, that we are to ask God to “forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.” Elsewhere in the Gospels, Jesus says that we will be shown mercy as much as we give mercy to others. While forgiving others for our benefit may seem to be a self-serving end, it is also for the benefit of those who have wronged us, and in turn the whole world. When we are at peace within ourselves and with those around us, the good and the bad, we show the love of Christ to all.

## Upcoming Events for January

### Eparchial and Parish Events

Christ is Baptized!  
In the Jordan!

### JANUARY, 2015

1 Circumcision of Our Lord (Solemn)  
*Chancery Closed - Happy New Year!*

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5 Vigil of Theophany  
*Great Sanctification of Water*

6 Theophany of Our Lord (Obligation)  
*Chancery Closed*

11 Sanctification of the Susquehanna River  
*Wyoming Valley, 1PM*

18 Sunday of  
Zacchaeus

25 Sunday of the  
Publican and  
Pharisee

30 Feast of Three  
Holy Hierarchs  
*Simple Holyday*

