



# EASTERN CATHOLIC LIFE

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## POPE FRANCIS VISITS THE UNITED STATES

### Pope Francis, Religious Freedom and Independence Hall

By Joseph Ryan and the Catholic News Service, Sept. 30, 2015



Pope Francis address the crowd in front of Independence Hall as Archbishop Charles Chaput, OFM Cap., of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia listens.

As a native Philadelphian, I'm proud of the city's Independence Hall, the Pennsylvania Statehouse that became the birthplace of the United States when the Founding Fathers approved the Declaration of Independence there in 1776.

The lightning of history struck the building again, in 1787, when during what's been called the "Miracle at Philadelphia," a federal convention there produced the resilient Constitution of the United States.

When Pope Francis spoke Sept. 26 at Independence Hall about religious liberty, he mentioned Philadelphia's founding by the Quakers, led by the Society of Friends' William Penn, who established religious tolerance in his colony.

Penn anticipated the First Amendment of the Constitution when he wrote in the Pennsylvania Charter of Liberties, "No people can be truly happy, though under the greatest enjoyment of civil liberties, if abridged of the freedom of their conscience as to their religious profession or worship."

With the pope spoke on religious freedom at Independence Hall, it was easy to wonder how many

Founding Fathers would have been appalled by the "pope of Rome" being welcomed to speak to the U.S. Congress or in front of the hall.

When Al Smith, a Catholic governor of New York, ran for president in 1928, and even when John F. Kennedy ran in 1960, anti-Catholic bigotry was stirred.

But Francis spoke to Congress and even uttered a prayer, "God bless America," and the country did not become a Vatican state.

Speaking of the pope, religious liberty and Independence Hall, I was privileged to attend a prayer service at Independence Hall in 1983. That's when members of Catholic Press Association gathered for a convention in Philadelphia and we were welcomed into an "upstairs room" in the Hall by the National Park Service. The prayers were led by Archbishop Stephen Sulyk, then head of the Ukrainian Catholic Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

The park's service representative told Msgr. John P. Foley, the editor of *The Catholic Standard & Times* back then, that the journalists' prayers in the long gallery marked the first time in its history that Independence Hall had been

used for a prayer service.

Next time I accompany friends from out of town to Independence Hall, I'll glance at those stairs up to the now off limits second floor and credit the Catholic Press Association for paving the way for another Catholic event at the Hall's front door 32 years later—Pope Francis' address.

The pope last week echoed both Penn and the First Amendment during his speech when he stated, "I would like to reflect with you on the right to religious freedom. It is a fundamental right, which shapes the way we interact socially and personally with our neighbors whose religious views differ from our own."

"Religious freedom certainly means the right to worship God, individually and in community, as our consciences dictate. But religious liberty, by its nature, transcends places of worship and the private sphere of individuals and families."

The U.S. bishops have been concerned about religious liberty for several years because they want to maintain the right of faith to be exercised in the public square beyond church walls and private spheres.

If the pope addressing Congress is a milestone of religious tolerance on a large federal stage, it becomes diminished, the bishops would note, when religious exercise appears thwarted by public policy, such as the contraceptive mandate in the Affordable Care Act.

When Pope Francis visited with the Little Sisters of the Poor in Washington last week, Father Federico Lombardi, a Vatican spokesman, said that visit was a sign of support for the sisters' lawsuit against the Obama administration's mandate that employers offer contraceptive coverage in health plans or participate in a religious "accommodation" that the sisters have refused.

So U.S. courts are now deciding if religious liberty "transcends places of worship," and if the First Amendment's prohibition against restriction on the free exercise of religion applies to the imposed contraception mandate.

Religious freedom has an impressive history in the United States; it will be interesting to see what happens next.

Maybe there should be a prayer service at Independence Hall.

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# I LIFT UP MY EYES...

*Pastoral Reflections of Bishop Kurt*

## GREETING FROM THE SYNOD ON THE FAMILY IN ROME

Greetings from the Synod of Bishops in Rome. In 1968, Pope Blessed Paul VI wanted to call a worldwide synod of bishops of the Catholic Church. His advisors convinced him that it was too soon after *Humanae Vitae*, and the synod would be overshadowed by controversy. Ten years later, Pope Paul believed that it was time to put into practice the collegiality of bishops encouraged by the Second Vatican Council. He died in 1978, and Pope John Paul I then signed the order to call the first Synod of Bishops, but he died shortly after his election. Pope Saint John Paul II was elected and immediately put into effect this desire of his two predecessors and the first Synod was in 1980 and was a synod on “the family” just as the one in 2015.

In our Eastern Church, many of our feast days and traditions remind us that in the early Church, there were many meetings of bishops that made important decisions that affect us to this day. The Church was truly collegial and not controlled by a central office as people perceive the Catholic Church today.



*Icon of the Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council*

It seems that Pope Paul truly wanted to hear from the Catholic bishops around the world because he made the Synod office separate from the rest of the Vatican bureaucracy; he didn’t want to hear from the same people who already controlled access to the Pope. Pope Saint John Paul II continued this system, and Pope Francis especially wants to hear frank talk from people around the world. He called even lay people and non-Catholics to address the Synod. Pope Francis has encouraged everyone to speak their minds.

How is a worldwide synod different from an ecumenical council? An ecumenical council should have all the bishops of the world present. There are so many bishops in the world now that it is impractical to have all the bishops present very often. So the popes since Vatican II have tried to call together a representative cross section from around the world.

I must be the most junior bishop at this Synod, having come here because our Metropolitan Archbishop had emergency eye surgery a few days before the first day. It’s strange rubbing

elbows with all these senior cardinals and archbishops, but the American delegation treats me as an equal. It was providence that I arrived for the first session with Cardinal Dolan. Even the Vatican guards come running out of their booths to shake his hand. With his arm on my shoulder, no one questioned my credentials. I am certain there would have been a number of roadblocks without his beaming presence. I’m happy to say that Archbishop William’s surgery was successful, and he thanks everyone for their prayers.

What’s it like here? Well, every morning I get up very early to concelebrate Mass with the other American bishops. After breakfast, some of us ride a bus to the Vatican, but I usually walk—sometimes I get there before the bus. I’m staying at the North American College. The North American College is completely full of seminarians to overflowing. It seems that the vocations “crisis” is turning around in the United States. They are all from the United States, except for a handful of Aussies.

The Synod hall is very beautiful and high tech. Each seat has a microphone, and if your microphone is turned on, you automatically appear on all the large screen televisions. Everyone is allowed to talk for three minutes, and no more, whether it’s a senior cardinal, or a patriarch, or a non-Catholic, or a lay man or woman who is lecturing the Pope and bishops. In some ways though, it is a very western event. For example, the official languages are Italian, Spanish, French, English, and German. Did you notice? There is no Slavic language on the list, despite the fact that every slavic country is Christian, either Catholic or Orthodox. It seems that several hundred million traditional Christians are unintentionally excluded. I said that everyone can only talk for three minutes. Of course, Pope Francis can talk as much as he likes, but in an amazing display of humility, Pope Francis listens very carefully to every speaker, and never, ever comments.

Hearing from bishops from all over the world has been quite an education. Divorce and homosexual unions are considered to be important topics by people from Europe and the Americas, but, for the African and Indian bishops, these are unthinkable. The Indian bishops explained that a marriage is not just between two people, but between two families. There is a whole support system that makes divorce almost impossible. On the other hand, for those living in a heavily Muslim society, divorce is a serious issue even for traditional Catholics. Muslim men are allowed to marry non-Muslim women, according to their laws, and can freely divorce. The husband is often under pressure from his family to divorce a Christian wife if she does not convert. Also, Muslim men may take another wife, practicing polygamy. In Malaysia, for example, a non-Muslim spouse has no custody rights after a divorce, so some spouses convert; but then after a divorce they may find they have lost their home, their children, and their religion because it is illegal to return to the Christian faith. Christians in many coun-

tries live with problems far beyond anything we would imagine in the United States.

One of the most thought provoking and impassioned speeches was by a woman, a doctor, from our Church in Romania. Her father was imprisoned for his faith, and her mother waited faithfully for 17 years for him to be released so that they could marry. She began by quoting the famous words of Our Lady of Fatima that Russia will spread its errors throughout the world. She then referred to “Lenin’s sexual revolution”. After the revolution, Russia was the first nation to legalize abortion, and all communist countries followed the lead. The communists worked tirelessly to break up families, creating work schedules so that couples could never be together, and taking children away to educate them by the state. She said that now western governments are “spreading cultural marxism of population control and homosexuality and gender ideology”. She concluded by saying, “the Church should be spreading salvation by liberation from sin.”

On Sunday, October 18, Pope Francis canonized the parents of Saint Therese of Lisieux. It is not the first time that a married couple has been canonized, but it is the first time a couple was canonized together. They are Louis and Zelig Martin. They had three daughters; their youngest daughter is Saint Therese. Another daughter Leonie is being considered for canonization; her cause was opened last July 2. Louis was a watchmaker, and according to their biography, they were “an industrious family concerned for others, generous to the poor and inspired by an exemplary missionary spirit, ever ready to help with parish activities”. (They sound like a lot of couples in our parishes!) (I would like to say that one of the joys of being a parish priest is that you meet a number of great saints in your life, saints who will never be canonized or famous, but are truly great saints.)

One of the great joys of visiting here is seeing Father Ron Barusefski, a priest of our eparchy, who has been working hard for months to become fluent in Italian, and finally began his doctoral classes this week. He asks for your prayers. It is really a great sacrifice for the church to leave everything behind and study in a foreign country, especially when you are not a youth anymore. My first Sunday here, we concelebrated a Divine Liturgy at our Ruthenian chapel in the American College. We acquired our own chapel when Father Tom Loya of the Parma Eparchy painted icons on all the walls of a large room while he was studying here in the early 1980’s. If you come to Rome, you must see our chapel. Then, Deacon Steven Russo arrived in town on a business trip. So Saturday evening, all three of us sang full vespers in our Ruthenian chapel. It was as the ambassadors from Kiev said back in the 900’s, we didn’t know whether we were in heaven or on earth!

+Kurt Brunette







## +SISTER DOROTHY LOUISE BALOCK, OSBM Enters Into New Life

Uniontown, PA

God graciously granted Sister Dorothy Louise's wish to attend the Pilgrimage one more time. Just a few days after it concluded, Sister Dorothy Louise (former Sister Joachim) peacefully fell asleep in the Lord Jesus at Mount Macrina Manor on Thursday, Sept 10, 2015. The daughter of the late Michael and Barbara (Reyta) Balock, Sister Dorothy Louise was born in Patton, PA. She entered the Sisters of Saint Basil from Saints Peter and Paul Byzantine Catholic Church in Patton, PA, on September 15, 1950. She pronounced her First Vows on November 27, 1952, and made her Perpetual Profession on January 1, 1956, in the presence of the late Father George Bonchonsky.

Sister Dorothy Louise spent the first years of her sixty-five years as a Sister of Saint Basil in the teaching ministry. She then served a term on the Provincial Council and Coordinator of the monastery community. From 1977 to the end of her life, Sister Dorothy Louise's ministry was in one way or another involved in health care. She served as the Administrator of Mount Macrina Manor from 1977 through 1993. For the next few years, Sister resided at the monastery tending to personal health needs.

Probably what became her best-loved ministry began in 1997 when she worked as a Spiritual Counselor

for what was then Albert Gallatin Hospice. When declining health required that she limit her work hours, she continued to volunteer her services assisting patients and families with addressing their spiritual needs, especially those facing the crisis of terminal illness. As a cancer survivor three times, she was well prepared to walk these paths with those who came within the sphere of her care and concern. Her empathy with her patients was so well-regarded that she was named as *Volunteer of the Year* by Amedisys (Albert Gallatin Hospice). Her nomination stated that she is "Albert Gallatin Hospice's Angel on Earth." In the last years of her life, she resided at Mount Macrina Manor where she became the recipient of those services which she so ably offered to others.

In her personal request form, Sister Dorothy Louise noted that she would want to be remembered for the faith and trust she had in God's love in overcoming physical challenges and for enjoying the good times in life. Her family, her relatives and her many friends would willingly attest to both. In her vocation story, Sister wrote, "Much of my inspiration comes from the quote from Isaiah 43: 'I have called you by name and you are mine.' It helps me have an attitude of gratitude – counting your blessings takes one across the valleys of life and builds confidence in God's goodness, I have learned."

In his homily, Father Michael Huszti, monastery chaplain, alluded to Sister's work in health care, stating that it could not have been more in line and consistent with the emphasis Saint Basil himself urged for his own community, when as Bishop, he established

homes for strangers and travelers and hospitals for the sick and infirm of his time. Father went on to state, "Sister Dorothy Louise's vision and her contributions, along with her ongoing concern for health care improvements for the residents, involved providing care of a dual nature, enriching and vitalizing the whole person, body and soul, by sharing her love for Christ and instilling the same empathy among her peers, the health care nurses, aides and other employees." Father concluded his homily with the prayer, "Never setting Sun, we beseech you to intercede for the nun, Dorothy Louise, whom many have come to know and love, present her in the court of the saints, as heir to the treasure of heaven and for her eternal memory."

Sister Dorothy Louise was preceded in death by her parents; her sisters, Elizabeth Somics, Ann Schaefer, and Catherine Pinksaw; and her brothers, Michael, John and George Balock. In addition to her Sisters in community, she is survived by her many devoted nieces and nephews and their families. The Parastas Service was celebrated by the Father Robert Pipta with Father James Ragan in attendance. The Funeral Divine Liturgy was celebrated by Father Andrew Deskevich; concelebrants were Father Michael Huszti, Monastery Chaplain; Father Vasyl Symyon, Father Vasyl Banyk and Father Mykhaylo Shkyndya. In attendance were Father Dennis M. Bogda, Father Ronald P. Larko, Father James Spontak and Father Stephen Wahal. Interment followed in the Dormition Section of Mount Macrina Cemetery.

May God grant to his handmaiden, Sister Dorothy Louise, eternal memory and peaceful repose.

## SYNOD SPIRITUALITY EAST

### Spiritual Practices Key to Keeping Family Strong, Indian Cardinal Says

By Cindy Wooden Catholic News Service, Vatican City, Oct. 16, 2015

Spirituality is "the backbone" of Christian family life, and it must be encouraged and nourished, especially when it is threatened by a culture focused on making money and having the latest modern conveniences, said Indian Cardinal Baselios Thottunkal.

The Cardinal, Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church [of India - ed.], said he is grateful that Christians in India have held on to their spiritual and cultural tradition of strong family life, and he was proud to share that with other members of the Synod of Bishops on the family.

Speaking to Catholic News Service Oct. 15, Cardinal Thottunkal said most Christian families in India still have a strong conviction that "a family that prays together stays together."

Particularly for the Eastern Christians -- Catholic as well as Orthodox -- that includes "family prayer, the common Bible reading, the fasts, the abstinences" as well as cultural family traditions, he said. "Spirituality is the backbone of the family; it doesn't survive by itself. It needs to be nourished by the Christian virtues, the Christian practices and the religiosity of the Christian church."

The variety of spiritual traditions and cultures within the universal Catholic Church is not something to fear, the cardinal said, but an opportunity to share for the benefit of all.

"The Catholic Church is a beautiful blend of the Western and Eastern traditions, and also the various cultures, the countries, they can offer positive solutions to the issues which we have in common," he said.

Differences of opinion and approach at the Synod of Bishops were to be expected, he said. The task of synod participants is to come up with suggestions for strengthening families and ministering to those in

need. "Then we will submit it to the Holy Father and he will take it up. That is what the synod is supposed to be. And I am happy about the way it goes on."

"Why should we be worried? Why should we be anxious?" the cardinal said.

The bishops' suggestions are given to the pope, he said, "because he is the guarantor of unity and he is the guarantor of catholicity and he is the one who has to provide what the people of God -- the clergy, the bishops -- all need for today."

"And, of course, as the Holy Father very clearly mentioned, nobody is going to touch the doctrine," he said. "Apart from that, as the pastor of the universal church, we leave (the final decisions) to the Holy Father for his discretion and his leadership role as the successor of the apostle Peter."

Cardinal Thottunkal insisted the church's ministers must be present with families "and accompany them, not only in their moments of joy, but also in their moments of distress and the moments where they need encouragement and where they are totally in pain. We have to be with them."

Eastern Christians in India, both Catholic and Orthodox, he said, have a pastoral approach to the family that others would do well to imitate. "Just for example, when

somebody dies at home, in our tradition, a priest has to visit them at least three times because he has to do services on three occasions. He cannot do only two of them for his convenience; he has to be there with the people, praying."

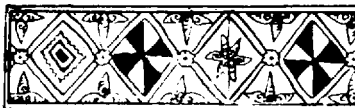
After listening to some 200 speeches in the synod hall, the cardinal said the sorry state of many families in the West appears to be a result of "the erosion of spiritual values."

"When we think money can do everything, when we think modern facilities will bring you all happiness, it is something in vain," he said. "Humanity -- men and women -- we need the superpower that is God himself to guide us, to provide everything for us."

Pope Francis, he said, continually reminds Catholics of the dangers of "self-complacency, the greed of money and power and also the lack of understanding toward the needs of others."



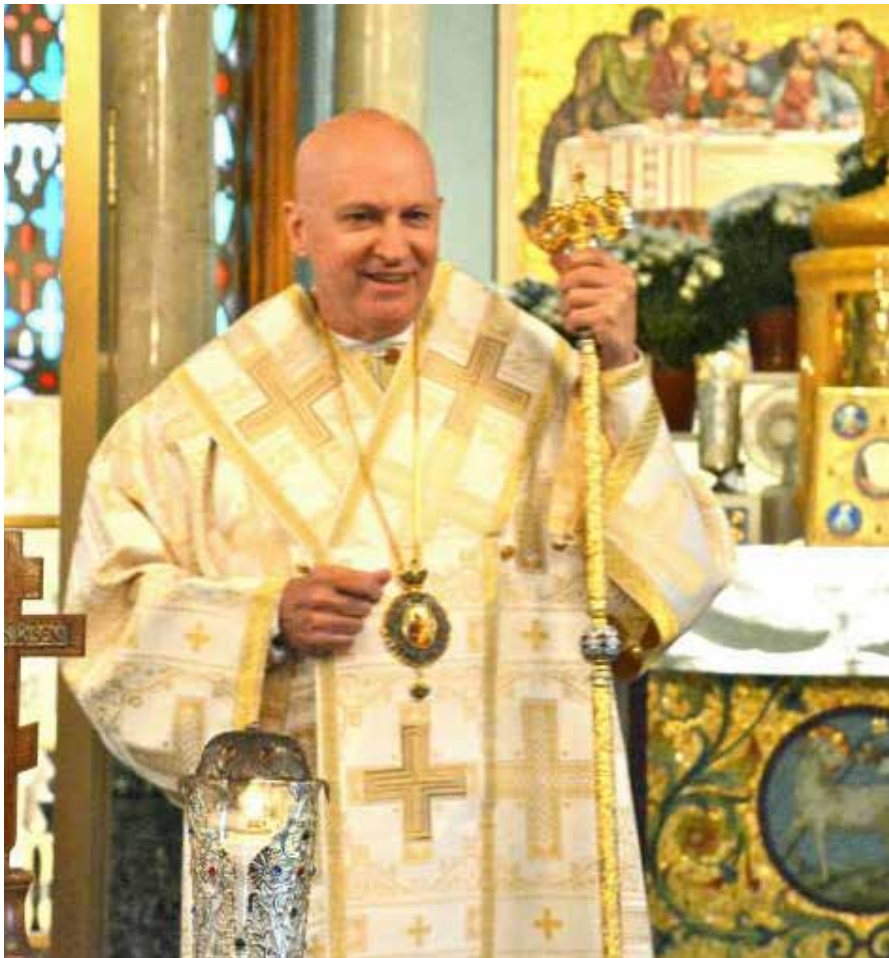




# PEOPLE YOU KNOW AROUND THE EPARCHY

## IN NESQUEHONING...

*Saint Mary Parish Celebrates 105th Anniversary on September 26*



*Bishop Kurt offers inspiring words*

On Saturday, September 19, 2015, Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church celebrated its 105th Anniversary. Divine Liturgy was celebrated by Bishop Kurt Burnette of the Eparchy of Passaic, and concelebrated by the Administrator of Saint Mary Parish, Father Vasyl Chepelskyy. Dinner was held in the church social hall afterwards with many attending. People from Coaldale, Summit Hill, Lansford, Tamaqua, and Bethlehem joined together with the parishioners to celebrate. Entertainment was provided by parishioner Edward Kusko. His accordion playing filled the room with traditional music and all hearts with joy. The day was one filled with fellowship and blessed with love for the Church family.



*Father Vasyl and Bishop Kurt cut the cake*



*Eddie Kusko entertains with the accordion*

## IN SCRANTON AND SAINT PETERSBURG...

*Eparchial Family Days of Recollection*

*By Ann M. Koshute, MTS*

The Eparchy's Family Days of Recollection kicked off with gatherings at Saint Mary of the Assumption parish in Scranton, PA, and Saint Therese parish in Saint Petersburg, FL. Individuals and families from parishes in Pennsylvania and Florida, respectively, travelled from a few minutes up to two hours to spend these days together as the Family of God. Adults heard reflections on the authentic meaning of love, the complementary relationship between men and women, and the common vocation to "fruitfulness" in bearing the love of Christ in the world. Children and Byzanteens were "fruitful" during their sessions, creating Facebook pages and Tweets about God's love, and decorating boxes filled with stones naming their God-given talents. Seventeen year old Alex Covaleski said of the Day in Scranton, "I really enjoyed the activities; they were fun and creative." Adults from both groups expressed gratitude for the opportunity to be with people from other parishes to share the Faith: "If your family needs a spiritual recharge, this is it!" "It was wonderful to re-focus on what Love truly is." "Come be a part of 'God's family' for a day!" The Family Days of Recollection are generously sponsored by Bishop Kurt and the Eparchy of Passaic as part of our Church's celebration of the World Meeting of Families. Father Leonard Martin, Father Robert Evancho and the parish families of Saint Mary in Scranton and Saint Therese in Saint



*Marie Nester, Father Robert Evancho, Father Edward Cimbala, Father Steven Galuschik, Ann Koshute, and Saint Petersburg Recollection participants*



*Marie Nester works with the Children of Saint Petersburg*

Petersburg graciously opened their parishes and offered hospitality for the event. Faith and the Family are alive and thriving in the Eparchy of Passaic!



*Youth of the Scranton area*



*Ann Koshute, Father Martin, Father Cimbala, Marie Nester, and Scranton participants*



## IN SLOATSBURG...

### 61st Annual Holy Dormition Pilgrimage, Saint Mary Villa, September 8

The Sisters Servants of Mary Immaculate (SSMI) express deep gratitude to Almighty God for the blessings of beautiful weather and many graces, as well as to all of the hierarchy, priests, religious and pilgrims who attended the 61st Holy Dormition Pilgrimage on August 8th and 9th, which numbered 3,200 people. The SSMI's also extend heartfelt gratitude to our SSMI Lay Associates, the League of Ukrainian Catholics (LUC); the parishes of Saint Nicholas Ukrainian Catholic Church in Passaic, NJ; Saint Michael Ukrainian Catholic Church in Yonkers, NY; Transfiguration Ukrainian Catholic Church in Shamokin, PA; Saint Nicholas Ukrainian Catholic Church in Great Meadows, NJ, for donating pirohi; the parishioners of Saints Peter and Paul for helping make holubki; for all of the volunteers from near and far; and to the choirs of Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church in Hillsborough, NJ, and Holy Family Ukrainian Catholic Church in Lindenhurst, NY, and all of the beautiful voices who helped in praising our God and the Mother of God.

This year's theme: "Mary: our Model of Perfect Commitment", celebrated Consecrated Life as this year was declared "Year of Consecrated Life" by Pope Francis. In conjunction, the Sisters Servants invited religious communities to set up displays about their respective communities. The following communities took advantage of

this golden opportunity, and we received many positive comments from the pilgrims about the displays: the Missionary Sisters of the Mother of God in Philadelphia, PA, the Catechists of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Sisters of the Order of Saint Basil the Great in Foxchase, PA, Sisters of the Order of Saint Basil the Great in Uniontown, PA, Nuns of Saint Basil the Great in Middletown, NY and the Sisters Servants of Mary Immaculate.

On Saturday, the 61st Holy Dormition Pilgrimage began with the celebration of the Akathist to the Mother of God celebrated by Father Edward Cimbala, pastor of Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church in Hillsborough, NJ, in Saint Mary Chapel. The chapel was full to capacity as the beautiful singing, led by Father Ed's choir, flowed out to the listening ears of pilgrims outside of chapel.

Sister Kathleen Hutsko, Provincial Superior, welcomed the pilgrims before the Saturday 5:00 p.m. Divine Liturgy celebrated at the Grotto by Father Edward Cimbala. In his homily, Father Ed shared, "Mary was a humble servant of the Lord who tenderly and obediently opened her heart to follow God's plan. We see in Mary a model of commitment and a great encouragement to listen and obey the voice of God."

In the evening, clergy, sisters and pilgrims processed with candles to the Grotto to celebrate

the Moleben to the Mother of God. Bishop Kurt Burnette of the Eparchy of Passaic celebrated the Moleben to the Mother of God. In his homily, Bishop Kurt preached on the subject of commitment as he traced it back to the fruits of the Holy Spirit from the 6th chapter of Saint Paul's Epistle to the Galatians. He shows how a basic commitment to the Gospel bears fruit in our particular attitudes and actions.

On Sunday, the 10:30 a.m. Hierarchical Divine Liturgy was celebrated by Archbishop Stefan Soroka, Metropolitan of the Ukrainian Catholic Archeparchy of Philadelphia, Bishop Paul Chomnycky, Eparchy of Stamford, Bishop Emeritus Basil Losten of Stamford and Bishop Bohdan Danylo, Eparchy of Saint Josaphat in Parma. In his homily, Bishop Bohdan shared that the gifts of the pilgrimage experience would be taken home and reaped throughout the year.

Throughout the day, the Sacrament of Reconciliation was celebrated as our dedicated priests sat for hours listening to the heart and soul of the pilgrims. The 61st Pilgrimage officially concluded with the celebration of the Moleben to the Mother of God by Bishop Paul Chomnycky and the blessing of the cars and buses as they departed from the holy mountain of Sloatsburg spiritually renewed to go out and be faithful witnesses of the Gospel, looking forward to the 62nd Holy Dormition Pilgrimage on August 13 and 14, 2016.

## PLAYING FOR THE PONTIFF

### Bayonne native leads musical celebrations in Philadelphia for Pope's visit

by Joseph Passantino, Reprinted with the permission of the Hudson Reporter Newspapers  
Photo courtesy of Catholicphilly.com

When the leader of the world's 1.2 billion Catholics visits the City of Brotherly Love on Sept. 26 and 27, a Bayonne native will be leading two of the musical celebrations held in the Pontiff's honor.

Bayonne born and raised David Kimock, 43, is the liturgical music director for the World Meeting of Families conference that will take place in Philadelphia at the end of this month, just prior to Pope Francis's arrival. Kimock will then also be directing the choir for the Masses that Pope Francis will celebrate at the Cathedral Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul on Saturday, Sept. 26 and the Mass on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway on Sept. 27. That's a pretty high honor for a guy who began his musical training in the Horace Mann School band and who continued his musical pursuits at Bayonne High School, where he participated in the marching, concert, and jazz bands and drama club.

He was also cantor (song leader) at his home parish of Saint John Byzantine Catholic Church on 26th Street and took guitar lessons at Piero's Music on Broadway during his high school years.

"The foundations of my life were built on the Peninsula," he said. But for now his attentions are clearly focused on preparing for the Pope's visit to Philadelphia. The excitement started when Kimock received a call in mid-May from Rev. Dennis Gill, director of the Office for Divine Worship for the Philadelphia Archdiocese. "They said we would like for you to plan and coordinate and conduct the choir for the World Meeting of Families papal Masses, and then at that moment I basically stopped breathing," he said. "You're honored to be asked, and then realize all the responsibility there is in preparing such a historical event." Gill was familiar with Kimock's work at St. Andrew Catholic Church in Newtown, Pa. and the strong musical program they have there.

#### Making history

A lot of details have to be worked out and a lot of pieces have to come together for Kimock's events to be successful. The World Meeting of Families takes place Sept. 22 to 25, just prior to Pope Francis's arrival.

The conference focuses on the role of Catholic families in society and how to strengthen them. "A lot of music has to be prepared for the several Masses that will take place during the three days of the conference," Kimock said. "Each day they begin with a celebration of the Mass."

His assignment for the big, Sept. 27 Mass for the Pope included early work with a core group of 250 people in the papal choir. But his challenge became greater when he added several ethnic choirs to the mix, as well as an all-Catholic high school chorus consisting of students from all over the Philadelphia Archdiocese and the archdiocese's children's choir. The group has swelled to 500, and Kimock is the guiding light for all of them.

He also has to coordinate with the Philadelphia Orchestra, which will be playing at the Mass outside on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway.

Kimock's core group has been rehearsing constantly since July 27, shifting to the Cathedral Basilica in Philadelphia, with the next rehearsal scheduled for Sunday.

#### Highlight of career

Kimock said the hard work and nervousness are mitigated by the confidence that has been placed in him by the church hierarchy.



"It's huge. It's a tremendous honor," he said. "This is absolutely the highlight of my career as a musician."

His previous highest honor was when he was invited by the Vatican two years ago to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Cappella Giulia, the choir responsible for singing all the liturgical music in the Vatican Basilica.

Kimock was born in Bayonne Hospital and lived in the city from 1971 until 1997. He left when he married, moving to Yardley, PA, where he still lives. He has two children. He is the music director and choral conductor at Saint Andrew Catholic Church in Newtown, PA.

#### Musical background

Kimock is a classically trained baritone and plays the guitar, trumpet, French horn, piano, and organ.

He attended Jersey City State College as a music major, and then transferred to the Westminster Choir College in Princeton, where he received his bachelor degree in sacred music in 1995. He then studied at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, where he received a master's degree in choral conducting.

Kimock is the son of John and Evelyn Kimock of Bayonne. He returns to Bayonne from time to time to visit his family.





# WORLD MEETING OF FAMILIES IN PHILADELPHIA

## The Truth is in the Encounter

By Ann M. Koshute, MTS

Like so many people I was glued to my television during Pope Francis' recent visit to the United States. The Holy Father came to attend the World Meeting of Families, held in Philadelphia. The Meeting – initiated by Pope Saint John Paul II in 1994 – takes place every three years and is an opportunity for individuals and families from around the world to come together in prayer and fellowship, renewing their efforts to build up and nurture marriage and family life. In October, the Synod on the Family took place in Rome with input from bishops (including our own Bishop Kurt), cardinals and lay people. The World Meeting and Synod come at a crucial time, since the very meaning of marriage and family life are under social and political attack. The assaults are spiritual too, as Hungarian Greek Catholic Metropolitan Kocsis pointed out in his intervention at the Synod: "We must say with clarity that in our very spoilt world the family...is under attack, under a ferocious and enormous attack. And this attack is of the Devil."

Though things may look bad, we Christians know that bad news can never trump the Gospel – the Good News of Jesus Christ! Cutting away the pomp and the punditry allows us to see that Pope Francis taught us something important about human relationships. Strengthening the family and cultivating a "Culture of Life" and "Civilization of Love" can't be done with programs and formulas. What's needed is our willingness to "encounter" another person. In the encounter we find love, peace, mercy, justice - and ultimately the Kingdom of God.

Pope Francis' every word and movement was scrutinized from the moment he landed in America. Yet amid the speeches, prayers, meetings and

parades, there was one thing that both confused and enthralled the media commentators. Pope Francis often stopped where he was – in his car, the Pope Mobile, or while processing into church – to touch, kiss, and hold someone. Whether a baby, a sick child, or a person with a disability, the Pope stopped for a moment to "be with" them. Like Mary at Cana, the Holy Father is keenly aware of his surroundings, quickly spotting those in need of "the wine" of Jesus' comforting touch. For just a few moments, Francis encountered these individuals where they were – in their joy and pain, their innocence and illness. The Holy Father didn't meet them alone, however; he brought an invitation to encounter Christ.

Blessed Teresa of Calcutta employed this same "method of encounter." She touched and was present to one person at a time. Critics of the sainted nun (yes, she has critics!) believe this approach is a waste of time and resources. Why spend the effort on one when many can be reached? For some – even in the Church – numbers and success are most valued, and the individual is not as great as the potential for many. Yet this attitude runs counter to the Gospel, and with it we miss the truth that each one of us is a child of God, brother and sister in Christ, and icon of the Trinity.

The culture, our (mis)use of technology, and an emphasis on material possessions, power and wealth as measures of our worth as persons, work against the "encounter." Maybe that's why the talking heads covering the Pope's visit were so surprised and captivated each time he stopped to bless or kiss a particular individual. Our "drive-by" society of instant gratification, immediate results, and multi-tasking leaves us empty, exhaust-

ed and suspicious. We crave personal contact and desire to truly "be known" by another. We refresh our emails, check our smartphones for texts, and anxiously look for as many possible "Likes" of our post on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram. We want the encounter, yet we look for (or hide in?) quick and easy "virtual" experiences of each other. Real encounter requires time, patience, and presence. Real encounter means stopping where we are, stepping outside of ourselves, being with another... and letting them "really be" with us.

Neither Pope Francis nor Mother Teresa, nor any saint "invented" this idea of encounter with another. God Himself first encountered us "in the beginning," when He formed the first human persons and breathed His life into them. Jesus revealed the meaning of encounter in its fullest by taking on our humanity, teaching us how to "be with" each other, and with God. Jesus met so many people in His ministry, encountering each one in his/her pain, confusion, distress and sinfulness. He was never impatient with them (only with those who claimed to "know better") but listened to their stories, wept with them, and loved them. The woman at the well, the tax collector, the rich young man, the woman caught in adultery, and on and on; each one of them "known" by Jesus and invited to a new life. "Everyone in the crowd sought to touch him because power came forth from him and healed them all." (Lk 6:19) What would marriages, families, parishes, communities and countries today look like within a "culture of encounter?" How would YOU be transformed by encountering Christ, encountering friends and strangers – and allowing yourself to be touched, to be truly "known?"



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### The Presenters



**Ann M. Koshute, MTS** will deliver the Adult track. Ann is Adjunct Instructor in Theology at d St. Joseph's College of Maine and DeSales University. She obtained her Master of Theological Studies from the Pontifical John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family at the Catholic University of America. In addition to working on marriage preparation and adult faith formation programs, Ann is a retreat leader and writer. She and her husband Keith are parishioners of St. Ann Byzantine Catholic Church, Harrisburg, PA.

**Marie C. Nester, M.Ed** will coordinate and present the pre-K to Teen tracks. Marie wrote the God With Us catechetical texts for Grades 3, 4, 5, and 7. She also contributed meditations for Journey Through The Great Fast and Christ Is Born, published by the Office of Religious Education, Archeparchy of Pittsburgh. Marie is Adjunct Instructor of English at Harrisburg Area Community College. She and her husband Luke are members of St. Ann Byzantine Catholic Church, Harrisburg, PA. They have 3 children and 6 grandchildren.







*Dr. Peter Yasenchak describes the order of the Liturgy to participants touring Saint Michael Church*



*Rich Custer takes questions from a line of inquisitive attendees*



*Dr. Michele Parvensky begins discussion of travel in Slovakia and Ukraine prior to photo review*

## PROGRAM HELD AT SAINT MICHAEL PARISH, PITTSTON, PA IN CELEBRATION OF 100 YEARS

### Presentation by Eastern Pennsylvania Chapter of Carpatho-Rusyn Society attracts audience from Pennsylvania and other states

*Written and photography by Mary Anne Fedor, a lifelong member of St. Michael's Byzantine Catholic Church, Pittston*

The steady morning rain on Saturday, October 3rd, did not stop those wishing to learn about their ancestry from attending a very special program hosted by Saint Michael Byzantine Catholic Church, in Pittston, PA. In fact, quite a few participants made the journey from neighboring states in spite of the weather, including from New Jersey, Maryland, New York, and even Florida. Many came from other parts of Pennsylvania for this program that was held from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the church hall.

Entitled "Celebrating the Present/Understanding the Past," three speakers were featured. They were sponsored by the Eastern PA Chapter of the Carpatho-Rusyn Society: Rich Custer, Dr. Michele Parvensky, and Dr. Peter Yasenchak. All three captivated those in attendance with their expertise of Carpatho-Rusyn history, but they also entertained with their lively presentations.

While most people with an immigrant past connect their historical ethnicity to a specific country of origin, those with Rusyn ancestry have difficulty doing the same. This is because there is no single country in Europe that Rusyns can call their own. Rather than a country, people with Rusyn roots must point to a region that stretches from eastern Slovakia to Western Ukraine and to parts of Poland.

Over the centuries, the boundaries and borders of ruling governments changed, giving rise to further confusion when these immigrants were asked to identify themselves upon arrival in America. Some may have identified themselves as Hungarian, others as Slovak, and others as Polish or Ukrainian -- all countries that occupied the places where Rusyns lived. This region of Europe is often referred to as Transcarpathia, and the people who came to America numbered quite significantly in the eastern United States.

Most settled in Northeastern Pennsylvania, and in sections of New Jersey and Connecticut. The coal industry in our area was one of the reasons many chose to emigrate -- with the goal to work hard to start a new life. The earliest wave arriving in the U.S. settled in the southern coal fields, while later waves of immigrants made the northern coal field their home.

The Rusyn people who came mainly between 1880 and 1920, had traditions and religious prac-

tices different from immigrants already present in the U.S. Because of this, the Rusyn immigrants started their own social groups and built their own churches, known originally as Greek Catholic Churches (now called Byzantine Catholic). However, they were not Greek. To add to the challenges already facing them, acceptance by others -- of their different customs in American society at the turn of the 20th century -- was not always easy to achieve. In some cases, it resulted in alienation and disagreements with established institutions. As a result, many Rusyns found it easier to assimilate into other ethnic or religious groups. The first generations that followed, unless informed about their own family history, would have little to no knowledge of their actual ethnic history.

Today, many people of all ages are researching their genealogy and are now learning about their Rusyn ancestry. There are many resources online and elsewhere. By hosting this program, Saint Michael Parish is helping those with an interest to explore and learn about the families who settled in Greater Pittston and their own family history.

The presentations on October 3rd contained a wealth of information. Dr. Michele Parvensky, author/researcher, traveled extensively throughout Slovakia and Ukraine in search of all historic wooden churches throughout the area. The churches are crafted from logs and often without nails, and the interiors are decorated in traditional regional styles, very humble in appearance but rich in antiquity. One unique practice is that if one church was no longer needed in a village, the entire church could be disassembled and moved to a different village where it was needed. However most of the churches now are considered historic and are protected. Dr. Parvensky's slide lecture featured contemporary rural Slovakia, with farming methods in use today that have hardly changed from the past. Her hundreds of photos of the churches were also on display.

Rich Custer, one of the speakers from Washington, DC, is an author/historian researching Rusyn history in Pennsylvania for a future book, decades in the making. His review of the villages in the Carpatho-Rus region and listing of the surnames of immigrant families to Saint Michael Parish was impressive. He pointed to villages on a map and recited the family names of parishioners who originated from that village. He even

linked the stained glass windows in Saint Michael Church to the villages of immigrants who donated them, as the inscription on each window memorializes that information.

Finally, Dr. Peter Yasenchak described details of life in his immigrant family beginning with their journey to the ships that brought them to America to adjusting to life in the new country. His visual descriptions virtually mirrored what most Rusyn immigrants experienced. Using humor and a story-telling style, Dr. Yasenchak proved that history could be both informative and entertaining as he had his audience laughing frequently. He also gave an overview of the architecture, art and music in a Byzantine style church during the tour portion of the program.

Overall, everyone in attendance left pleased that they had gained some new insight. And Saint Michael's team of volunteers combined their talents in every way possible to ensure a successful event: from pre-event set-up to the food team's homemade baked goods and delicious lunch. As one attendee stated: "Your folks outdid themselves on this one! Your church is just beautiful, and I hope it lasts another hundred years and more. I truly enjoyed the program and learned some new things today."

For more information and photos of Saint Michael Parish, please visit their website at: <http://stmichaelsbyzantine.com>.

Information about Carpatho-Rusyn history can be found at: <http://www.carpathorusynsociety.org> and also: <http://rusynsofpa.blogspot.com>



*Participants search for their ancestral villages of origin*





Sisters of the  
500  
Uniontown

GLORY TO JESUS CHRIST!

Dear Friends,

Every Pilgrimage in honor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help has touched stories, and little “miracles.” This year’s

Throughout the weekend we were moved by the many stories of our journey to be here from near and far. Some of our pilgrims of times they have made the journey – 50 years, 60 years, generational and younger families came with babies and children participated in the Children’s Procession. The procession was so inspiring with a ribbon of light.

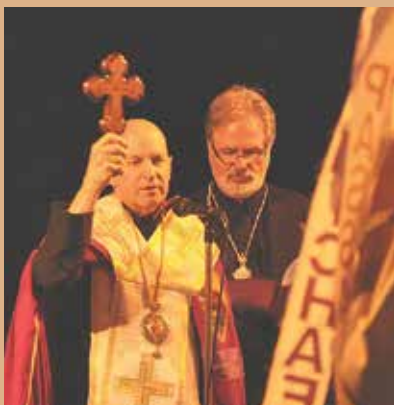
We are so grateful to all of you, our dear pilgrims, for sharing your stories with us, and for helping us to remember the journey. In our broadcast, there are also countless faith-filled and inspiring stories of God’s plan for them each and every day.

May Our Lady of Perpetual Help and her Divine Motherhood give you the gifts you need as you continue your faith journey. Our prayers always accompany you.

With our gratitude and love,

*Sister Ruth Plante*

Sister Ruth Plante,  
and the Sisters of the Holy Family





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number of faithful pilgrims who made the  
r older pilgrims proudly told us of the number  
60 years, 70 years and more! Multi-  
ies, toddlers, children and teens. Almost 400  
on Sunday afternoon. The candlelight  
winding around the pathways.  
s, for being here, for sharing your priceless  
at for all the tragedy and evil that is so often  
generous people who strive to say "yes" to  
Son reward you with the graces and spiritual  
throughout the coming year. Be assured that  
and prayers,  
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t. Basil





# EASTERN EUROPEAN FOOD FESTIVAL

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Gifts, Religious Gifts, and Icons are available • The church will be open for visitation and tours

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## SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

Father Jack Custer, S.T.D.

### THANKSGIVING OLD TESTAMENT STYLE: DEUTERONOMY 26

The Puritan colonists of New England, who rejected all the holy days on the Church’s calendar, did keep two special days. Days of Fasting were proclaimed by their leaders in response to calamities, and Days of Thanksgiving were ordered in response to special blessings from God. Both of these observances have their roots in the Old Testament, and our national holiday of Thanksgiving developed directly out of this biblical custom. Beyond the turkey, the football games and the shopping frenzy that have become the hallmark of this day, the original meaning and purpose of Thanksgiving can be found in the fifth book of the Old Testament, in the 26th chapter of Deuteronomy.

Speaking through Moses to the Israelites on the brink of entering the Promised Land, the Lord God reviews the whole experience of the Exodus

and exhorts His people, after forty years of rebellion and hardheartedness in the wilderness, to accept His covenant to be His people, living holy lives on the land He would give them. In chapter 26, Moses looks forward to the day when the Israelites will possess the land, cultivate it, and bring forth abundant produce. Some of this produce is commanded to be set aside in sacrifices of two distinct kinds.

The first fruits of the various crops are offered directly to God. This is an act of thanksgiving but also an act of faith: by giving away the first of my produce (rather than eating it myself), I express my trust in God to provide more for me and for my family. Secondly, God commands a tithe—ten percent—of the entire crop to be shared with the priests (who depended on offerings to eat), the stranger, the orphan and the widow (Deuteronomy 26:13).

The head of the house, while making this offering, is instructed to recite a prayer that looks back to the times when Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were strangers wandering in the land of Israel and when the Israelites were slaves in Egypt. The prayer acknowledges how God made Abraham’s descendants prosper, and how God led His people out of Egypt to “this land, a land flowing with milk and honey.” The prayer begins: “My father was a wandering Aramean” and concludes “and now, behold, I have brought the first fruits of the land, which you, O Lord, have given me” (Deuteronomy 26:5-10).

Our Church continues the custom of offering baskets of first fruits in the Temple (Deuteronomy 26:1-4) on the feast of the Transfiguration (August 6) which coincides with the beginning of the summer fruit harvest. This custom, symbolic in other ways, does not really impact our faith or our finances the way the biblical thanksgiving sacrifice envisioned. The biblical Thanks-

giving sacrifice includes three important features that we would do well to rediscover.

The first is the custom of reserving the first and the best for God. We need only look back two generations in our own families to see how people set aside the first day of the week—Sunday—for God, and celebrated it with their best clothes and the best meal their wages allowed. In the cluttered and fast-paced lives we have created or permitted, how often does God get the leftovers and an excuse rather than the first, the best and a prayer of thanksgiving?

The second is tithing. Our magnificent old church buildings are the result of our ancestors’ determination to show gratitude to God for the blessings America offered them. The wages of laborers with large families built the Byzantine Catholic Church in the United States. Prosperity seems to be shrinking it. Tithing—giving back to God a designated portion of the resources He has given us—allows us to express our faith in real terms and leave God room to work wonders in our lives.

The last lesson to be learned from the Biblical Thanksgiving sacrifice is in the prayer of offering. As our families gather on Thanksgiving, how wonderful it would be to hear our elders, who may have survived immigration, the Depression and several wars along with more personal challenges, to say out loud how God was with them through it all. How wonderful it would be to hear people in the prime of their lives give witness to how God has helped them in their marriages and their careers. People who pray about their lives will have those stories to tell. People who take the risk of letting the Lord be Lord of their time and their resources will have wonders to recount. All of us should have something to return to the Lord for all He has given us. That’s what the Bible teaches about Thanksgiving. **ECL**







# UNDERSTANDING ICONS

Father Joseph Bertha, Ph.D.

## THREE ICONS OF CHRIST

### Countenancing God in the Refulgence of Christ's Glory

Installment 2 of 12

Exactly where can we view God's mercy in the icon? Again we rely on Saint Paul for a clear explanation as to where this occurs. In 2 Corinthians 4:6 we read:

"For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

He is the Glory of God shining in the face (countenance) of Christ"

#### *You can count on the countenance*

The word for face and countenance is the same in Greek: *prosopon* (προσώπων). It is usually translated according to the context and intent of the Scriptural text. When it is used here in 2 Corinthians 4:6, Saint Paul clearly writes that Jesus refulges the Glory of God on His countenance. Father Paul Florensky, a physicist and martyr of the Gulag, clearly distinguishes both words in his benchmark work entitled *Iconostasis*. He bases his delineation on two words in Old Slavonic *Litso* meaning "face" and denoting the superfi-

cial, frequently hiding or masking of our true self that we show to the world on our face. In contradistinction, he defines *Lik* or *sijanije* denoting countenance as the appearance of the radiance of God likeness which refulgently shines through the face.

English, as well as most modern languages, distinguish between these two terms: face and countenance. Undoubtedly, Saint Paul intends in 2 Corinthians to describe the countenance of Godhead radiating on Christ's face.

The word "face" in English denotes the skin or surface of a subject, and not the inner soul. It is much akin to the multiple silk screens of Andy Warhol which replicate on a thin slice of paper, the mere superficial, the fifteen minutes of fame of the portrayed, and do not show, but can disguise the inner soul of the person.

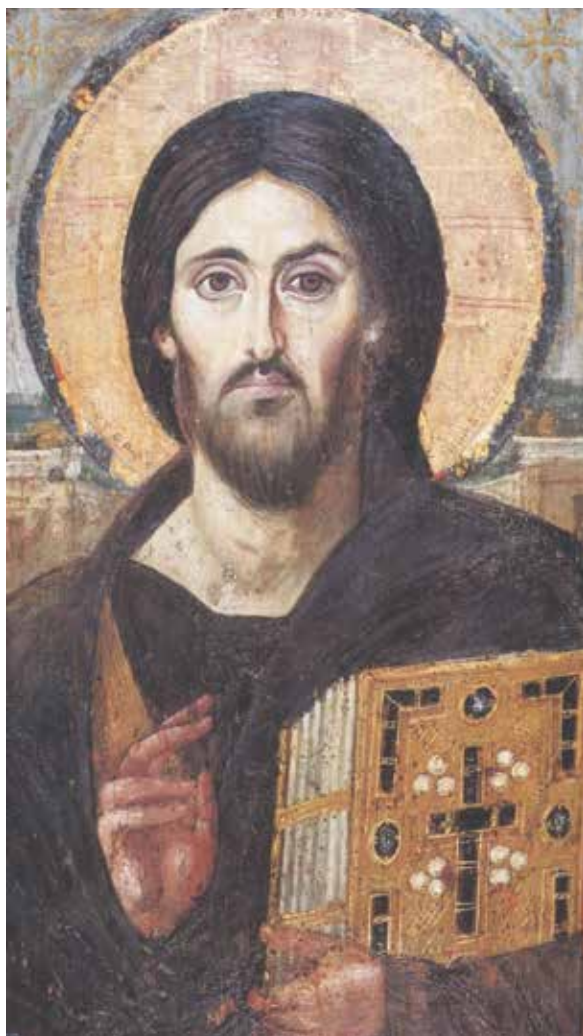
This is the reason why iconographers need to lead a spiritual life akin to a monk/nun in a monastery/convent in order to envision, study, pray and portray these awesome characteristics in icons. This is also the cause for uniformity and conformity and not virtuosity or individuality in icons. Yet, by following all of these rules and respecting the tradition through the centuries, certain qualities and characteristics emerge which indirectly reference the epoch and even the country of origin of the icons.

Therefore, we can view four of the five senses of Godhood in the portrayal of the countenance of Christ in the icon. Sight, smell, taste, hearing, and fifth, touch, all display the mercy of God radiating on the countenance of Jesus Christ.

#### *Methods of depiction of the Father's mercy in icons*

Even though icons are separated by centuries they each illustrate the mercy of God in various ways:

- 1) by showing the countenance of God shining through the depicted face;
- 2) through the depiction of the five senses, most prominently the eyes, sight;
- 3) by the network of unending lines and folds in his garments;
- 4) by using the colors of the vestments of the Jewish High Priest (blue, red, white);
- 5) by depicting Our Lord working the seven corporal and seven spiritual works of mercy;
- 6) by each of the Feast day icons of Our Lord, notably His Transfiguration celebrated on 6 August;
- 7) particular attention to the representation of Our Lord's Crucifixion in icons;
- 8) the musical eight modes of music which serve to portray through notation and words the icons of His Resurrection from the dead. **ECL**



6th Century Icon from Saint Catherine's, Sinai, Egypt



13th Century Icon from Hagia Sophia, Istanbul, Turkey



15th Century Icon from Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow, Russia

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# CATECHETICAL REFLECTIONS

Father Robert F. Slesinski, Ph.D.



## OMG: A SHOUT IN THE STREET?

*The Wonder of Knowledge: Installment 8 of 9*

In the very opening line of his treatise *Metaphysica*, Aristotle makes an elegant statement: “All men by nature desire to know” (980), only to tie this observation in with the facet of wonder, stating that “for it is owing to their wonder that men both now begin and at first began to philosophize” (982b12). With these comments, Aristotle merely appropriates to himself the prior wisdom of his co-national Plato.

Indeed, it is in the course of his probing dialogue on the nature of knowledge *Theaetetus* that we find Plato’s dialogist Socrates declaring that the “sense of wonder is the mark of the philosopher” (155d), often alternately stated as “philosophy begins in wonder.” And so in this fashion, Plato embarks upon his inquiry “what knowledge is” (146). The participants in this conversation are the already mentioned Socrates, Theodorus, an elderly mathematician, and Theaetetus himself, a young lad and eager student. Theodorus, for his part, knowing how crafty Socrates truly is, immediately demurs, stating that he is not adept in abstract discussions of the sort that Socrates relishes. Theaetetus, on the other hand, eagerly takes up the gauntlet, but, not surprisingly, he immediately finds himself in trouble. In a first effort, he merely points to various objects of knowledge like a cobbler’s knowledge of shoemaking and a carpenter’s knowledge of furniture-making, but not to knowledge in itself, the very issue at stake.

Even if it may seem so at first glance, Socrates is no picayune pedant; to the contrary, he is loathsome to the idea. He merely fashions himself as a “midwife” (149a), as one who truly wants to educate (Lat., e-ducere, to lead or draw out),

and who concludes his dialogue *Theaetetus* on the note of philosophy itself being merely a “midwife’s art” (210c) that serves to draw forth insightful knowledge.

Theaetetus, for his part, is not one to be readily deterred. He hazards another attempt at definition. Noting how someone who knows perceives what he knows to be true, it would seem therefore that knowledge is nothing but perception (151e). As plausible as this definition is, it is equally fraught with difficulty. If “everything is in the eye of the beholder,” as they say, then are we not doomed to relativism (“what appears true to me is truth for me just as your perceptions belong to you and accordingly carry truth for you”)? However linked first appearances and perceptions may be to knowledge, they ultimately, to the mind of Socrates, cannot ground knowledge in and of itself. Knowledge, in other words, is not reducible to perceptions. It may well arise from a perception of reality, but it cannot be identified with perception as such; it lies beyond perception in a realm of itself.

At this juncture, a pause in the discussion is made, enabling Socrates to show his playful side. Remarking how philosophers are often criticized for “having their heads in the clouds,” he relates the scorn of the Thracian maidservant who reproaches Thales for failing to look down at his feet while looking up to the heavens to study the stars, thus precipitating his tumbling down a well (174a). Socrates seems wont to agree; philosophers, nursed in freedom and leisure, lack the wiles and wherewithal of the practical men of the world.

But Theaetetus is not one to throw in the towel. He now ventures another possible definition of knowledge. Specifically grasping how knowledge lies beyond perception, as it truly is an affair of the mind, Theaetetus, pointing to how knowledge is a fruit of judgments of the human person, now defines knowledge as “true judgment” or “true opinion/belief” (187b). But as Socrates wryly observes (201c), juries may well rightly judge by the hearsay evidence of an eyewitness, but their true belief in this matter is not a personal knowledge of the facts. Theaetetus thereupon amends his definition, remarking that knowledge as true opinion must be grounded, that is, it is an accountable belief, one arising from a proper vetting of reality (201d). Of course, Socrates remains nonplussed. The vicious circle has come to the fore. Even with the vetting of knowledge one still has to justify how one can distinguish knowable things from the unknowable. By adding complexity to the equation does not solve the base question, just what is knowledge?

Theaetetus definitely seems to understand Socrates’ objection. Expressing his own perplexity, he straightforwardly asks Socrates (203b): “But how can one state the elements of an element?” The response of Socrates to the question articulates the philosophical intuition at stake. No accounting of primary data can be given without begging the question. Alas, knowledge as such is a primary datum of experience; it cannot be reduced to something else. It lies beyond definition. But how does this insight impact on our understanding of the human knower? Our discussion thus continues. **ECL**





## SCHOOL OF PRAYER

Father G. Scott Boghossian

### THE PRAYER OF GRATITUDE

Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good, for His mercy endures forever! - Psalm 106:1

The Holy Scriptures often urge us to give thanks to God. All throughout the inspired text, we are exhorted to pray the prayer of thanksgiving: “Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you” (1 Thess. 5:18), and “[Give] thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Eph. 5:20). Saint Paul insists that prayer and supplication be accompanied by thanksgiving. “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:6,7).

The Fathers of the Church teach that the prayer of gratitude and thanks is essential. Saint Ambrose writes “no duty is more urgent than that of returning thanks.” Saint John of the Ladder writes, “Before all else, let us list sincere thanksgiving first on the scroll of our prayer.” Saint Peter of Damascus says, “he who has received a gift from God, and is ungrateful for it, is already on the way to losing it.” Saint John Chrysostom reminds us that the Eucharist is the greatest prayer of thanksgiving: “the dread Mysteries, full of such great salvation, which are celebrated at every Liturgy, are also called a Thanksgiving [*Eucharistia*] because they are the remembrance of many benefits, and they signify the culmination of God’s Providence towards us, and in every way cause us to be thankful to Him.”

Contemporary saints urge us to frequently give thanks to God. Saint Josemaría Escrivá writes, “Make it a habit to raise your heart to God, in acts

of thanksgiving, many times a day. Because He gives you this and that . . . Because someone has despised you . . . Because you don’t have what you need, or because you do have it.” Saint Therese of Lisieux taught, “It is the spirit of gratitude which draws down upon us the overflow of God’s grace for no sooner have we thanked Him for one blessing than He hastens to send us ten additional favors in return. Then, when we show our gratitude for these new gifts, He multiplies His benedictions to such a degree that there seems to be a constant stream of divine grace ever coming our way.”

Even scientific research in the field of psychology reveals that gratitude and thanksgiving are impressively beneficial. Research suggests that gratitude improves health for those suffering from physical illness. In addition, gratitude increases positive emotions and minimizes depression.

We can develop this spirit of gratitude. God wants us to give thanks “in all circumstances” (1 Thess. 4:18). As you go through your day, look for things for which to give thanks. Make a mental note of every blessing, and say, “Thank you, Lord” or “Thanks be to God” when you notice it.

Not only are we to thank God in every circumstance, but we also are called to thank God FOR everything (Eph. 5:20). Before we can do this, we recall that our Heavenly Father is in control and that nothing comes to us in life unless He wills it, or unless He wills to allow it. Why does He will, or why does He choose to allow, tragedies, trials, heartaches, difficulties, irritations, frustrations, and inconveniences in our lives? For our salvation, for our sanctification, and for our highest good (James 1:2, Romans 8:28). It will take faith, but let’s thank God for all the trials and hardships He sends our way, knowing that “God causes all

things to work together for good” (Rm. 8:28).

Another tip, often practiced by people in the 12 Step Recovery movement, is to make a daily gratitude list. Buy a notebook and make your list every day. Write down, briefly, and in list form, all the things for which you are genuinely grateful. Then take your list to prayer, and give thanks to the Heavenly Father for all the things you’ve written down.

If we embrace the spirit of gratitude and thanksgiving endorsed by the scriptures, the Fathers, the saints, and even modern science, we will begin to live out our relationship with the Lord in a new, more joyful and more enthusiastic way. People will see something different in us, and might even ask us about it. That’s our opportunity to introduce them to the Lord Jesus who suffered, died, and rose again for our salvation. After all, it is for Jesus, and His Cross, that we sinners are the most grateful! **ECL**



Icon of the Holy Family

## SEASONAL REFLECTIONS

Monsignor John. T. Sekellick, JCL



### THE REFORMED MARRIAGE LAWS

On Tuesday, September 8, 2015, Pope Francis issued two documents under his own initiative (*motu proprio*) revising the canonical process for the declaration of nullity of a marriage. An annulment is a declaration by a Tribunal of the Catholic Church that after careful investigation, factors that are critical to validity are uncovered that prevent a marital relationship from actually becoming a sacramental marriage. An annulment is concerned mainly with the personal and spiritual aspects of marriage. It does not erase the civil contract, nor does it render any children illegitimate. It is a statement that after thorough investigation, adequate proof beyond a reasonable doubt has been provided for a Tribunal to decide that a particular marriage, as the Church understands marriage, was not valid.

One of the Holy Father’s letters, known by its

Latin title *Mitis Iudex Dominus Iesus* (“The Lord Jesus, Gentle Judge”) reforms the Code of Canon Law governing the Latin Church, while the other *Mitis et misericors Iesus* (Gentle and merciful Jesus) reforms the Code of Canon Law for the Eastern Churches. The revised norms become effective December 8, 2015, the feast of the Maternity of the Holy Anna and the beginning of the extraordinary Year of Mercy.

From the very beginning of his letters, the Holy Father makes it clear that the single most important principle in the reformed process is the supreme law of the Church – the salvation of souls. By revising the annulment process, Pope Francis hopes to encourage those who may be in an invalid marriage to repair their relationship with God and the Church. The basic theological principle regarding marriage favors its validity. The



annulment process investigates the possibility of invalidity which, if proven, allows both parties a second Catholic marriage.

There are five basic changes in the nullity process: (1) new rules for a Tribunal's competence; (2) new requirements for tribunal personnel; (3) the elimination of the requirement for a second conforming affirmative decision; (4) a shorter and more streamlined process, judged personally by the eparchial bishop; (5) a change in the approach to recovering the expenses of the process.

Under the revised law, there will be three ways that a Tribunal can be competent, and none of them requires any extra formalities: (1) if the marriage took place in that eparchy; (2) if either party lives in that eparchy; (3) if for whatever reason the majority of the relevant evidence is located in that eparchy.

Marriage cases have to be tried, as a rule before three judges two of whom can be competent lay people together with a priest-judge. If necessary because of shortage of personnel, this require-

ment can be dispensed so that the case can be decided by a single priest-judge. According to the revised law, if no one appeals an affirmative decision within fifteen days, it takes effect.

The shorter process is carefully designed only for those rare cases when it can be employed without injustice. Three strict qualifications have to be met. (1) Both spouses have to petition for it together, or if not, then the other party must at least consent to it. (2) The nullity of marriage must be obvious or manifest. (3) All the facts that make the marriage manifestly null have to be readily available. When the requirements of this process have been completed, the whole case is presented to the bishop for judgment. If based on all the evidence presented, he is certain beyond a reasonable doubt that the marriage is invalid, he can issue a Sentence declaring the nullity of the marriage. If he is not morally certain, the Case is admitted to the regular process, starting from the beginning. This process may be completed in a significantly shorter period provided that all requirements are met in a timely manner.

Some of the specific conditions when a bishop can issue a declaration of nullity after an abbreviated process include: when it is clear one or both parties lacked the faith to give full and proper consent to a Catholic marriage; when a woman had an abortion to prevent procreation; when a partner remains in an extramarital relationship at the time of the wedding or immediately afterward; when one partner hides knowledge of infertility, a serious contagious disease, children from a previous union or a history of incarceration; when physical violence was used to extort consent for the marriage; and when there is a defect of the use of reason (Article 14, Section 1).

For further information on the reformed marriage laws, inquiries can be directed in writing to the Matrimonial Tribunal of the Eparchy of Passaic, 445 Lackawanna Avenue, Woodland Park, NJ 07424. **BCL**

#### THE BYZANTINE CATHOLIC EPARCHY OF PASSAIC subscribes to the

##### *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*

adopted by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. The Eparchy, within all its parishes, institutions and programs, is committed to assuring a safe environment in ministry for its children and young people that conforms to Charter requirements.

For further information regarding the Eparchial Safe Environment Program please contact:  
 Father David J. Baratelli, Ed.S., M.Div. • *Safe Environment Program Coordinator* • 973.890.7777  
 Dr. Maureen Daddona, Ph.D. • *Eparchial Victim Advocate* • 516.457.5684



## FAITH AND COMMUNITY ISSUES

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

### A BIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE ON SUICIDE

#### *The Chemistry behind the act*

Neuro-Science in the last decade has discovered within the structure of the brain a virtual chemical laboratory affecting the mood and personality in its stability. According to the research of Mann and Currier (2007) and Chen et al. (2005) as described by Comer (2011), the amount of the chemical neurotransmitter serotonin in the bloodstream has a direct effect upon suicide. According to Comer, it was the studies of Marie Asberg and her associates back in 1976 that gave light to the serotonin hypothesis. In their study of 68 patients who exhibited symptoms of depression, it was found that 20 of them registered markedly low levels of serotonin activity in their systems. Further research uncovered the fact that a 40% average of these low serotonin patients attempted to commit suicide. This was compared with patients who had higher levels of serotonin who averaged 15% in the area of suicide attempts. Serotonin . . . what is it? Actually serotonin is a chemical that is responsible for mood stabilizing in the body. According to Medical News Today:

Serotonin (5-hydroxytryptamine, 5-HT) is a chemical found in the human body. It carries signals along and between nerves - a neurotransmitter. It is mainly found in the brain, bowels and blood platelets.

It is thought to be especially active in constricting smooth muscles, transmitting impulses be-

tween nerve cells, regulating cyclic body processes and contributing to wellbeing and happiness.<sup>1</sup>

Serotonin is regarded by some researchers as a chemical that is responsible for maintaining mood balance, and that a deficit of serotonin leads to depression.

"An association has been made between depression and serotonin, although scientists are unsure whether decreased levels of serotonin contribute to depression or depression causes a decrease in serotonin levels.

Although it is possible to measure the level of serotonin in the bloodstream, via a serum serotonin level test, it is currently not possible to measure serotonin levels within the brain. Researchers do not know whether serotonin levels in the bloodstream reflect the serotonin levels in the brain" (cited from <http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/232248.php>, 2015).

For researchers, according to Comer (2011) the serotonin levels on the low side pointed to a high possibility of suicidal acts. Other more recent studies revealed attempters of suicide with low serotonin levels are 10 times more likely to repeat an act of suicide than another subject registering a higher level of serotonin in the same study (Roy, 1992, as cited by Comer 2011, p.243). According to Comer the studies of Mann and Currier (2007) as well as the work of Stanley

et al. (2000, 1986, 1982) draw a similar conclusion about the correlation between the low levels of serotonin and recidivism in suicide. While there may appear to be at first take a correlation between depression and acts of suicide, evidence has been found which shows that an individual may well have very low levels of serotonin without any history of depression (Mann & Currier, 2007 as cited by Comer, 2011). This lends credibility to the observation that serotonin's role in suicide attempts is a separate issue from depression.

#### *Serotonin, Impulsivity and Suicide*

What is the relationship between serotonin levels and suicidal tendencies? What research indicates is a correlation exists with aggressive and impulsive behavior and lowered serotonin levels in blood. The studies of Oquendo et al. (2006, 2004) and Stanley et al. (2000) according to Comer (2011) appear to confirm the suspicion that low serotonin levels contribute to feelings of aggression and violence (cited from Mann & Currier, 2007 ; New et al. 2004, 2002 by Comer, 2011). In the context of clinical depression, there is a evidence that low serotonin levels may increase aggressive tendencies causing particular vulnerability to suicidal thoughts and actions (Comer, 2011). These aggressive feelings and tendencies often reach a level where the individual becomes a danger to themselves or to others.



### Age and Suicide—A Link or not?

According to Comer (2011), the likelihood of suicide tends to increase proportionally with age. This does not deny the reality that suicides occur at any age level. Statistically, Comer presents the findings of CDC (2008); Cohen (2008); and NAHIC (2006) which state:

Currently, 1 of every 100,000 children in the United States (age 10 to 14) kills himself or herself each year, compared to 7.3 of every 100,000 teenagers, 12.1 of every 100,000 young adults, 16.6 of every 100,000 middle-aged adults and 19 out of every 100,000 persons over age 65 (Comer 2011, p. 244).

Three groups are studied by researchers of

self-destructive behavior, these include children, adolescents, and the elderly (Comer, 2011). It is found that each of these groups experiences problems that are unique to their particular peer grouping.

### Children

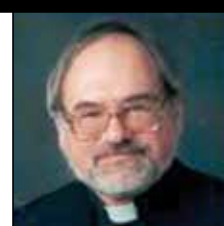
Suicide is found to be an infrequent occurrence among children, yet even so, the studies of Dervic, Brent, and Oquendo (2008) reveal that the trend is on the increase over the last 20 to 30 years (cited by Comer 2011). Comer cites the work of Arias and his colleagues (2003) in stating that greater than 6% of deaths among children of the 10 to 14 year age bracket is suicide related; boys outnumbering girls as much as 5 to 1 ratio and that 1 out of every 100 children attempts

some form of self-harm and many thousands are hospitalized due to deliberate acts of self-harm, “stabbing, cutting, burning, overdosing, jumping from high places, or shooting themselves” (Fortune and Hawton, 2007; Cytryn and McKnew, 1996 as cited by Comer 2011).

In the next installment, we will discuss hat kinds of behavior patterns are apparent in children who attempt suicide; what kind of experiences do children have that lead to a suicidal attempt; and are such attempts based on a need to re-join a loved one who has passed on, or is there a clear understanding of death, a clear desire to die and an introduction into the adolescent’s world and suicide. **ECL**

## THE BYZANTINE LITURGY

By Archpriest David Petras, SEOD



### JESUS IS LORD AND GOD

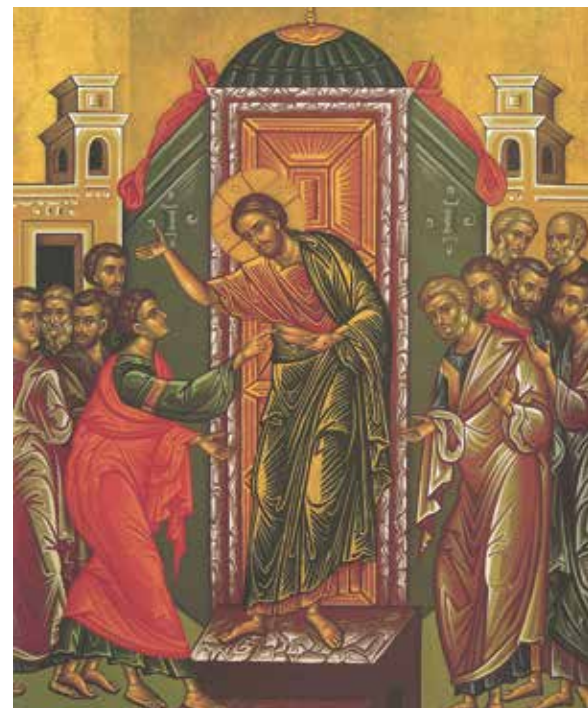
When we discuss the existence of a transcendent God, whom we cannot see, logical arguments are often used. As we have pointed out, this does not lead to an experience of God, who alone can disclose Himself to us. The center of the Christian faith is that the man Jesus, son of Mary, born in Bethlehem more than two thousand years ago, is in fact “one in essence with the Father,” “light from light, true God from true God,” born of the Father before all ages.” He became a human being and so incarnated Himself into human history. That God would reveal Himself through human flesh and blood is not provable with mathematical or logical arguments, but from our historical experience that, indeed, God has spoken to us through His only Son. This is what the Letter to the Hebrews tells us, “In times past, God spoke in partial and various ways to our ancestors through the prophets; in these last days, He spoke to us through a son, whom He made heir of all things and through whom He created the universe, who is the refulgence of His glory, the very imprint of His being, and who sustains all things by His mighty word” (Hebrews 1:1-2). That Jesus is God, we know from the witness of those who knew Him, heard Him, saw Him and touched Him (1 John 1:1-3).

Because the truth about Jesus Christ (“Christ” is not His name, but it means “the anointed one,” “the Messiah”) is attested to by witnesses, those who want to reject Christ usually attempt to discredit the witnesses. Today, arguments that Jesus did not even exist are very rare. In fact, there is no human personage of that time whose existence is more certain, as Gary Habermas pointed out, “Recent indications are that the New Testament is supported by more than 5,500 copies and partial copies in Greek and other languages, while most ancient classical Greek and Roman texts have fewer than 10 each.” Atheists and agnostics try to discredit this evidence on the ground that the writers were partisan to Jesus, that they were believers and therefore not objective, and so exaggerated His claims and miracles. On the other hand, if they saw and experienced what they wrote about, it is no wonder that they became believers. They often point out that the accounts of Jesus were written more than twenty years after they happened, but again, this objection is

meaningless, since we do not have simultaneous accounts of anyone in antiquity, for there were no social media then as we have now. Twenty years was well within the human memory, subject to eye-witness corroboration, and transmitted with exacting accuracy. The Jews and Muslims believe in one God, the same as do Christians, but their objections are ideological, that the transcendent God could not have become a human being, and that Jesus’ witness that He was God are either erroneous or falsely reported. Yet Jesus clearly claimed to be God, for which He was accused of blasphemy: “Before Abraham came to be, I am, (the sacred Name of God), John 8:58)” “I and the Father are one,” (John 10:30) “no one knows the Son except the Father, nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him” (Matthew 11:27). C. S. Lewis observed, “A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic—on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg—or else He would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice” (*Mere Christianity*, Book II, ch. 3). Though there are those who would like to discredit Jesus, it is obvious He was not demented.

An important question about our experience of Jesus is the story of His miracles. For those seeking an argument for Jesus, His miracles are pointed out as a sign that He is God. For non-believers, the miracles are a sign that the Gospels are not true, because “miracles don’t happen.” However, this is based on a simple ideological presumption, and who, indeed, can state with certainty that miracles cannot happen. After all, the laws of nature are only human principles based on observation. They come from the presumption that there is no God, but we have seen that can be challenged. The opposite problem is whether miracles are proof that Jesus is God. It does not seem that He worked miracles simply to prove this point. After all, Jesus Himself said, “An evil and unfaithful generation seeks a sign, but no sign will be given it except the sign of Jonah the prophet. Just as Jonah was in the belly of the whale three days and three nights, so will the Son of Man be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights” (Matthew 12:39-40). The

resurrection is the sign of our Lord’s identity, the other miracles were not to prove His divinity, but to reveal that God is the giver of life. However, we do have the story in Mark (2:1-12), where Jesus forgives the sins of a paralyzed man. When the Pharisees grumble that only God can forgive sins, He restored the paralytic man as a sign of His power to forgive sins.



Icon of Thomas Sunday

We do not deny the reality of Jesus’ miracles, but something more may be said. We do not need miracles to see through to the divinity of Jesus; there is internal evidence. The sublimity of His teaching could only come from God. Only God could call us to a way of life that is so far above human power and ability so that we may, in Jesus, “come to share in the divine nature” (2 Peter 1:4). The Gospel of Jesus could only be God speaking to us, as those who heard Him easily recognized, “all who heard Him were astounded at his understanding and his answers” (Luke 2:47) and “all spoke highly of Him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth” (Luke 4:22) and “...never before has anyone spoken like this one” (John 7:46). We believe in our Lord Jesus Christ because from his very words and his life we know that He could only be God, the Word and Son of God, who became a human being in a manner beyond our understanding. **ECL**





# SPIRITUAL REFLECTIONS

Deacon Lewis Rabayda

## AVOIDING THE DELUSION OF “LITTLE EVILS”

Everyday we encounter a lot of different experiences that constantly ask us a question, do you love God, and do you follow Jesus in the way that He has shown us? We encounter these questions through events, people, spoken and read communication, and even through our own thoughts. It makes no difference whether we live alone, in a busy nursing home, or whether we live in a large family and go to school or work; we are still bombarded with these small everyday decisions. Everyday at every moment we constantly encounter a fork in the road at which point we can decide to travel in either direction. These moments may not seem to be so dramatic as seeing an angel inside one path, and a ghoulish demon at the foot of the other, but none-the-less, these seemingly small decisions we make everyday show us where our true devotion lies.

These small decisions have such a great power over our lives simply because they don't seem dramatic, they don't appear as life changing or earth shattering. And this is why they can be so effective for good or for evil. The delusion is that we can think of these moments as inconsequential, when in reality, if we give in to small temptations, then we are being made ready to give in to much larger temptations. This spiral effect can deceive us into committing greater and greater sin until we no longer have a conscience ordered

towards good.

These moments ask us how much we are devoted to God by how we have assimilated the greatest commandments; “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself” (Luke 10:27). It is obvious that God knows and understands the human condition because He does not give us just one way to love Him, but He knows that if we indeed want to show Him that we love Him, then we will have to employ our whole person, everything that we are made of: our heart, our soul, our strength, and our mind. And it is by proper use of all four of these personal qualities that we can resist these small temptations, these little evils, throughout our daily life.

These four qualities each have their own attributes and sources. The heart is where our passion lies,

whether ordered towards yearning for God or disordered to sin. It is our heart that influences us in these small moments as to what is important to us in a subliminal way. Our soul is the second aspect of what makes up our person because we are a body and soul together; two aspects of one unit. Our soul is the part of us that rightly belongs to God, and we can only give back to God what He has given us. It is our human soul that has been given a divine spark by God which separates us from other creatures and it is with our soul that we find completion—

but is it complete with an abundance of God's grace, or with lesser things and ideas. Our strength may refer to both our physical strength and also our ability to be spiritually strong and to stand our ground against all sorts of temptations. Our mind is where we process our thoughts and can actively discern whether an action is appropriate or not. It is in our minds that we can choose to resist these small temptations throughout the day.

But these four aspects of the person effect our relationships with ourself, with God, and ultimately with our neighbor. This is also why it doesn't matter our state in life or how many people we live with. We must strive to follow Jesus' commandments in our personal lives, because our personal life is what effects our public life. There is no action we commit in private that does not affect our relationship with God and ultimately our relationship with our brothers and sisters.

So it does not matter how small a decision is that we make, or how small a temptation is that we can skirt aside as unimportant, because Jesus commanded us to give everything to God. We are to love God with our whole heart, soul, strength, and mind; and that if we can love God in this way, then we will be loving our neighbor, and we will be living our whole lives serving the Holy Trinity. **ECL**



Icon of The Holy Trinity

## UPCOMING EVENTS FOR NOVEMBER

### Eparchial and Parish Events

#### Eastern Catholic Life

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|-------|--|-------|--|
| 1     | 100th anniversary of Saint Michael Parish, Pittston, PA<br><i>3 p.m. Hierarchical Divine Liturgy</i>   | 21    | Entrance of the Virgin Theotokos into the Temple<br><i>Solemn Holy Day</i>             |
| 8     | 125th anniversary of Saint Michael Cathedral, Passaic, NJ<br><i>10 a.m. Hierarchical Divine Liturgy, followed by a reception at The Venetian, Garfield, NJ</i> | 21    | Florida Catechist Recognition<br><i>11 a.m. Saint Nicholas Church, Orlando, FL</i>     |
| 8     | Our Church, Our Family, Our Mission: Called to Love Presentation<br><i>Following 11 a.m. Divine Liturgy, Saint Mary Church, Hillsborough, NJ</i>               | 26-27 | Thanksgiving Holiday<br><i>Chancery closed * Happy Thanksgiving!</i>                   |
| 14    | Wedding Jubilarians' Celebration<br><i>Epiphany of Our Lord Church, Annandale, VA</i>  | 29    | Anniversary Celebration of Saints Cyril and Methodius Parish<br><i>Fort Pierce, FL</i> |
| 15-19 | USCCB Meeting<br><i>Bishop Kurt in attendance.</i>   |       |  |