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MARCH FOR LIFE 2019

Woman who once assisted with abortions to address March for Life Jan. 18

By Dennis Sadowski, Washington DC: article and photos from Catholic News Service



Abby Johnson, who early in her career assisted in carrying out abortions, will be among the speakers during the 2019 March for Life rally Jan. 18 on the National Mall in Washington.

Johnson, a one-time Planned Parenthood clinic director, is the founder of And Then There Were None, a ministry that assists abortion clinic workers who have left their position.

"Unique From Day One: Pro-Life Is Pro-Science" is the theme of the 2019 march, Jeanne Mancini, March for Life president, said during a media briefing Dec. 5 in Washington.

Mancini said this year's events will focus on the scientific discoveries that have led to new understanding about life in the womb.

"Science and technology are on the side of life in large because they show the humanity of the child at a very young age," Mancini told Catholic News Service after the briefing.

"We can hear and see a baby's heartbeat now at six

weeks. There are blood tests to know a baby's gender at seven weeks. Now that's changed enormously over the course of the last few years," she said.

The annual march for Life events mark the Supreme Court's 1973 decision in Roe v. Wade and its companion case, Doe v. Bolton, that legalized abortion.

The 2019 march follows encouraging news for the pro-life movement that abortions overall as well as the country's abortion rate continued to decline in 2015, according to data compiled by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.



CDC determined that the abortion rate in 2015 -- the last year for which statistics are available -- is at 11.8 abortions per 1,000 women ages 15-44. The rate has dropped eight of the past nine years since 2006's rate of 15.9; the rate of 15.6 held steady in 2008.

The overall number of abortions also continued to slide. The 2015 number of reported abortions was 638,169, about one-fourth less than the 852,385 reported in 2006. It is down 2 percent from 2014's figure of 652,639.

The number of legal abortions in the United States peaked in the 1980s before beginning a slow but steady decline, interrupted only by the slight rise in, or holding steady of, numbers in the late 2000s.

Two days of events open with the annual March for Life conference and expo Jan. 17. A panel discussion during the conference will include Dr. Grazie Christie, a policy adviser for the Catholic Association; Dr. David Prentice, vice president and research director of the Charlotte Lozier Institute; Rick Smith, founder of Hope Story, a nonprofit organization that helps families with a Down Syn-



Abby Johnson speaks on the National Mall

drome child; and Christine Accurso, executive director of Pro Women's Healthcare Centers.

In addition, popular commentator Ben Shapiro planned to bring his podcast to the march for live recording at 10 a.m. (EST) Jan. 18.

The main event, the March for Life Rally, is set for noon at 12th Street NW on the National Mall between Madison Drive and Jefferson Drive. Afterward,

participants will gather for the official march on Constitution Avenue between 12th and 14th streets and make their way to the U.S. Supreme Court.

The annual Rose Dinner closes the observance the evening after the march.

Details of events are online at <http://marchforlife.org/mfl-2019/rally-march-info/>.

2019 Vigil For Life Events, Washington, DC

Thursday, January 17, 2019

Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, Washington, DC

5:30 - 7:30 PM Opening Mass - Great Upper Church

Principal Celebrant & Homilist: Most Reverend Joseph F. Naumann, Archbishop of Kansas City, KS and Chairman-elect, USCCB Committee on Pro-Life Activities

8:00 - 9:00 PM National Rosary for Life - Crypt Church (lower level)

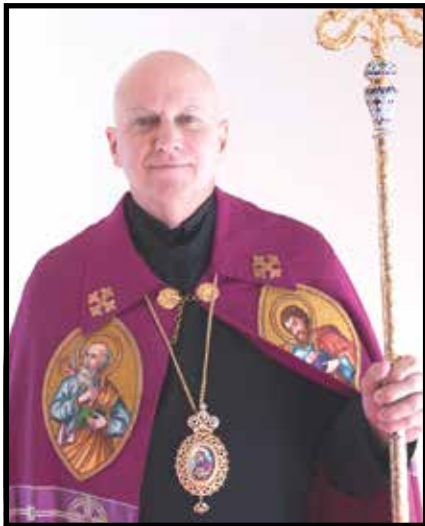
9:30 - 10:30 PM Small Compline (Byzantine Rite) - Crypt Church Celebrant: Bishop Kurt Burnette, Homilist: TBD

Thursday evening schedule subject to change according to the Shrine organizers.

Friday, January 18, 2019

Epiphany of Our Lord, Annandale, VA

10:00 AM Divine Liturgy - Celebrant: Bishop Kurt Burnette, Very Rev. John G. Basarab



I LIFT UP MY EYES...

Pastoral Reflections of Bishop Kurt



KEPT SECURELY IN LOVE, IN WOE AS IN WEAL

In the center of Los Angeles, California, is a plaza. In the plaza is the oldest church in Los Angeles, called Our Lady Queen of the Angels, *Nuestra Señora Reina de los Ángeles*. Indeed, the original name of the city was *El Pueblo de Nuestra Señora Reina de los Ángeles del Río Porciúncula*, a thoroughly Franciscan name! The church is usually called *La Placita* by Hispanics in southern California, and is still considered their mother church, a popular place for baptisms. When I moved to California in 1989, *La Placita* was a place where Hispanics took their infants for baptism with no questions asked, and no classes for the godparents. This arrangement irritated the pastors of the other churches so much that the Archbishop of Los Angeles finally ordered the priest there to stop baptizing infants unless they came with a letter from their own

If you might wonder how this little plaza, *La Placita*, survived in the midst of the skyscrapers of Los Angeles and the enormous economic pressure of the greatest real estate development in history, the answer lies back in the Middle Ages, seven hundred years before the United States took *Alta California* away from Mexico. One of the most terrifying phrases in European history is “the Black Death,” a memory of one of the most severe plagues in human history. In our Divine Liturgy, and other prayers, we pray for protection from plague, an infectious disease that sweeps through a society. Probably the most recent severe plague was the great influenza outbreak of exactly 100 years ago. Although people are commemorating the end of the Great War 100 years ago, there isn’t much talk of the “Spanish Flu,” a plague that killed far more

ian, killing 40% of the population of Constantinople, and 25 million to 50 million people worldwide, perhaps 13% to 26% of the world population, and perhaps half of Europe’s population. (That is probably why we pray for protection from plague at every Divine Liturgy today.) It is believed to have revived in the 1300’s in Mongolia, but Europe was spared for a while because of disruption in the Silk Road. It is believed that a Mongol siege on an Italian outpost on the Crimean Peninsula brought the plague to Europeans, and then it arrived in Italy in January of 1348. From 1348 to 1351, it swept through almost every part of Europe, killing so many people so swiftly that it caused major social upheaval. Some people reacted with the attitude that we should party today because we might be dead tomorrow. Other people blamed outsiders and, especially, Jews. Some of the worst massacres of Jews in the Middle Ages took place as the terror of the Black Death spread. At least 510 Jewish communities were annihilated. In Strasbourg, 2,000 Jews were burned alive on February 14, 1349, the “Saint Valentine’s Day Massacre.” Pope Clement tried twice to stop the massacres of the Jews with two papal bulls, on July 6, 1348 and September 26, 1348. The Holy Father said that anyone who blamed the Jews had been “seduced by that liar the devil,” and he encouraged the clergy to protect the Jews.

In addition to the Black Death, Europe was in constant warfare in the 1300’s. As a professor of medieval history said once, death was always over the next hill. In Norfolk County, England, six years before the arrival of the plague, a girl was born who would bring the light of the Gospel into the darkness. Growing up in this world of sudden death and hopelessness was a remarkable woman who came to be called Julian of Norwich. At the age of 30, she contracted a severe illness, and after three days was believed to be dying. On May 8, 1373, the priest administered all the final sacraments to her in the presence of her family, and she prepared for death. She began to go blind, but a priest was holding a crucifix at the foot of her bed, and as she gazed on it, she reports that it began to bleed. She then had a series of sixteen visions that she calls “shewings.” By May 13, she was recovered, and she wrote down her visions immediately in a book called, “Revelations of Divine Love in Sixteen Shewings.” This text, together with a much longer expansion written a few decades later, is the oldest book that we know of written in English by a woman.

After these life changing events, Julian became an “ anchoress.” An “ anchorite ” is an early form of religious life. It resembles the life of a hermit, because the anchorite lives alone, rather than in a community. However, the anchorite lives in a single sealed cell, usually attached to a church or even the cathedral. Food and water are handed through a small window, and the anchorite never leaves the cell. Anchorites take a vow of stability, and the rite of consecration resembles the funeral rite. Canonically, they are attached to the local bishop who consecrates them, and is their only authority. Placed in a cell next to the cathedral or other church, these remarkable people were available through the window for prayer and for spiritual counsel with anyone in need.

The writings of Julian of Norwich are remarkable for their moving visions of the

passion of Christ, and for their profound theological interpretation of the visions. For example, the first of the visions was of the placing of the crown of thorns on Jesus, or as she calls it, “the precious crowning with thorns.” She says that by the placement in the Divine flesh of this woven device “therewith is comprehended and specified the Trinity and Incarnation, and unite betwixt God and man soule, with many faire shewings of endless wisdom and teaching of love.” She adds that all the other shewings and theological elaborations are grounded in this first one. What a deep theology! Most of us see the Crown of Thorns as a painful part of Christ’s suffering and perhaps a renunciation of the worldly pride associated with crowning, but Julian in her visions sees the perichoresis of the Trinity in the woven intertwined “garland,” and the Incarnation as the thorns pierce the flesh of Jesus the perfect Man, and she sees our own union with God. Before the visions, she felt all of her body dying, and as she went blind, a light started to come from the crucifix. She says everything besides the crucifix seemed to her ugly, and the darkness behind it was the demons or “fiends.” After the visions, all of her pain vanished, and she felt all of her flesh miraculously healed. From then on, she only desired to live in order to love God and to suffer with Christ. In another vision she saw the Virgin, as she says barely “waxen” (grown) above a child, at the message of the arrival of the Angel Gabriel. The overarching theme of her writings is quite simply love, the love of God. I counted the word “love” appearing well over 500 times in her “Shewings.”

Julian of Norwich is remembered as the great Evangelist and Apostle of Love in this dark century of plague, the concomitant massacres, and unending war. Indeed, the first sentence of this lengthy work says, “This is a Revelation of love that Jesus Christ, our endless bliss, made in sixteen Shewings or Revelations particular.” The third book begins, “And for the great endless love that God has to all mankind, He makes no separation in love betwix the blessed soul of Christ and the least soul that shall be saved.” The book ends with, “And you to whom this book shall come, thank halely and heartily our Savior Christ Jesus that He made these shewings and revelations for you, and to you, of His endless love, mercy, and goodness, for your and our safe guide and conduct to everlasting bliss; the which Jesus might grant us. Amen.” Julian of Norwich is popularly considered a saint, but was never recognized officially by the Catholic Church. Some people believe that the reason she was not canonized is that she wrote so monolithically of the love of God and of God’s unquenchable desire for universal salvation, that she didn’t believe in hell for anyone. She wrote, “For I saw no wrath except on man’s side, and He forgives that in us.” What a remarkable woman, to write so single-mindedly and pure-heartedly of God’s love in the midst of the sufferings of the fourteenth century. What a blessing it would be to have a woman like her writing in our own time! It’s true that popular writers nowadays write endlessly of love, but it is usually a cheap love, a love that costs nothing. The goal of contemporary psychology or philosophy is to eliminate pain and sacrifice and to aggrandize the self. Even for many Christian preachers, the message is one of cheap love, of the elimination of sacrifice and pain, and of the aggrandizement of the self at the ex-



Our Lady Queen of Angels, “La Placita”, 1924

pastor. One evening, when I drove up to my rectory, two women were lying in wait for me: an elderly woman from Mexico who spoke no English, and a middle-aged Mexican-American woman who was bilingual. She explained that the woman from Mexico needed urgently to have her grandchild baptized at *La Placita*, but the harsh Latin rite pastor refused to give her a letter unless the godparents first took some classes on the basics of the Christian religion. The translator had the air of a confident laywoman who knew how to manage clergy. I thought that perhaps God had sent them to our parish as an act of mercy, and decided to give them a letter after asking a few questions. I pretended not to understand Spanish and told the translator I would write a letter if she answered a question. I said, “Ask her who is Jesus Christ?” She translated the question into Spanish, and the old woman thought very hard, and then said (in Spanish), “Jesus Christ is the son of Jesus.” At this point, the atmosphere changed. You

people in a shorter period of time. Fifty to a hundred million people died in this outbreak worldwide, 3 to 5% of the world’s population, predominantly young adults. I became aware of this plague in high school when a woman in her eighties told me her memories. She said she remembered her uncle’s funeral, and her mother warned her, “Don’t talk to Bob, because Bob was with Tom,” and a week later, Bob was dead, too. I wondered why we learned all about World War I in history class, and the memory of the Spanish Flu was erased. Perhaps it is because we imagine we control wars, and we don’t like to think about things we don’t control.

Six hundred years before the Spanish Flu, the population of the Earth was a fraction of what it was in 1918, and yet the Black Death killed more people. Experts estimate that the number was between 75 million to 200 million people worldwide. Actually, the plague had already ravaged Europe in the time of the emperor Justin-

pense of others. For Julian of Norwich, love was the most expensive thing in the world. True love was inseparable from the suffering of the Son of God in his human nature, his flesh, mind, and soul. The love that she shared with the stream of ordinary people who came to her window for prayers and wisdom and consolation, that boundless love sprung from uniting herself to the passion of her dear Lord Jesus.

In our Liturgy, we often pray that God will protect us from plague and other catastrophes. You might think that the bubonic plague is lost in the centuries since the middle ages, and perhaps all of us who survived are now immune. As a matter of fact, it is very much present today, even in the United States. While hiking in California, I occasionally saw signs from the public health department warning us that it was recently found in the wilderness in rodents, and we should be especially vigilant if our pets picked up fleas in the area. In World War II, the Japanese used plague as a biological weapon, first doing experiments on live humans, then dropping bombs full of fleas causing outbreaks.

The plague arrived in the United States on ships from China docking in San Francisco harbor in 1899. At first the plague was confined to Chinatown, but in 1907, partly because of the great earthquake of 1906, it spread outside of Chinatown to the rest of the population. For a while it looked as though San Francisco would be ravaged as in medieval Europe. In 1894, a Japanese scientist isolated the bacterium that causes plague, and then researchers were finally able to show that fleas and rodents were the primary vector of the disease. At first these explanations were rejected, but by 1908 they were widely accepted, and by 1909, San Francisco eradicated plague in the city by controlling the rat population.

Unfortunately, the bacterium was by now present in wild animals and slowly spread throughout California and other western states, which brings us back to *La Placita*, the little church in the little plaza in the middle of Los Angeles. In late September of 1924, 51-year-old Jesús Lujan

found a dead rat under his house and threw it away. Within a few days, he was suffering from a severe fever and a painful lump in his groin. Soon after, his 15-year-old daughter, Francisca, came down with a severe fever and respiratory problems. The physician misdiagnosed her as having lobar pneumonia, and her father as having venereal disease because of enlarged lymph nodes. Experts now believe that Jesús had bubonic plague, and his daughter had pneumonic plague which spreads easily from person to person. On October 26, 37-year-old Guadalupe Samarano was admitted to County Hospital with what appeared to be lobar pneumonia. He died that day. One week earlier, he had attended the funeral of his wife, Luciana. Within two weeks, twelve of the mourners from her funeral were dead. On October 29, six members of the family were admitted to the County Hospital and were misdiagnosed with meningitis. That same day, Francisca Lujan died in that hospital.

Some medical professionals believed it was a recurrence of the Spanish Flu, still fresh in everyone’s mind. But the first physician involved did not believe all the symptoms matched, and after his insistence, the first autopsy confirmed that the deadly plague bacillus was back among us. Once the truth was known, the officials acted quickly, and the area was quarantined and a program of rodent extermination was implemented, including burning some structures. A serum to treat plague had been developed after the San Francisco outbreak, but it arrived in Los Angeles too late to help. The outbreak was fully contained by the middle of November.

The people who were trapped in the quarantine area were not told the reason. For the people who were taken to the hospital, the officials burned down some of their homes. When some of them returned from the hospital, their homes were destroyed, and they received no compensation because it was a public safety measure.

Just as in the past, God raised up a great saint in the midst of these trials. The parish priest at the little church Our Lady

Queen of the Angels, Father Medardo Brualla, was the one who first contacted a physician and asked for help when Jesús Lujan, patient zero, became ill. Father Brualla visited the family because it was unusual for Mr. Lujan to miss Sunday Mass. The physician often worked with the priest because he was bilingual. Father Brualla is not mentioned in most accounts of the outbreak available, unless he is listed as one of the victims. It was remarkably difficult to find accurate information about Father Brualla for this article. Most secular sources do not mention his role, except to say that Mexicans were better than the Chinese at getting help because of the role of the Sacraments. The most thoroughly researched book was written in the form of a novel to make it more readable, so it was difficult to winnow out the facts from that form of writing. The author of that book talks about the many difficulties in recognizing the plague and coordinating treatment because of the political infighting and the racism, but he considers the priest and his physician friend as the true heroes who stopped the plague with only 30 deaths. In fact, it was Father Brualla’s devotion and persistence that brought the medical establishment into the situation immediately, perhaps saving thousands or even tens of thousands of lives. He ministered to many of the people in the neighborhood both at their homes and at the hospital. He performed the first funerals with bravery and disregard for his own peril. He then contracted the plague himself, and was one of its victims, laying down his life for his sheep. He is interred at the San Gabriel Mission, east of Los Angeles.

There was a media blackout in Los Angeles to try to save the reputation of the ambitious metropolis, but other media in the United States reported the outbreak. After word came out that the area around *La Placita* was “plague city,” there was no growth for many years, and that is why the area is still a plaza with an old church in the midst of the real estate craze of the City of Angels.

In every age, especially during crises, God raises up spiritual heroes to remind

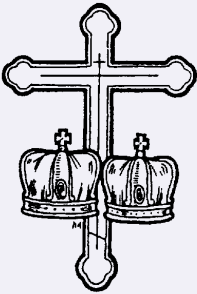


Father Medardo Brualla

us that He has not abandoned us, and this world is not our permanent home and we are not its masters. Our purpose in life is not to acquire valuable property, only to leave it someone else when we die, nor is it to be comfortable all the time, or spend our energy for mortal pleasures. As Our Lord says, “Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it lives alone, but if it dies, it brings forth much fruit.” And at the Last Supper he said, “Greater love than this has no man than to lay down his life for his friend.” About these things Saint Peter says, “In this you rejoice, although now for a little while you may have to suffer through various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold that is perishable even though tested by fire, may prove to be for praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Although you have not seen Him, you love Him.”

+Kurt Brunette

SAVE THE DATE



Crowned in Love

A Byzantine Pre-Cana Program

Sponsored by the Syncellate for the State of New Jersey

Saturday, March 2, 2019. 9am to 4pm.

Saint Michael Chapel, 415 Lackawanna Avenue, Woodland Park, NJ.

The facility is entirely handicapped-accessible.

You bring the gifts that Jesus Christ will transform to make your relationship a sacrament where He Himself is present. Discover how the “ordinary” ways you share your life as a couple and a family can participate in this mystery. A hot luncheon will be served. There will be time for individual counseling and the Sacrament of Repentance. Couples planning to marry before spring 2020 are urged to attend.

For more information, contact your pastor or call Father Jack Custer at 973-777-2553.

Presenters



Deacon Thomas Shubeck, PhD, a father of three with Caroline, his wife of 25 years, serves at Saint Thomas the Apostle Parish in Rahway, NJ, and at Seton Hall University. Much of his 30 years as a licensed psychologist has been spent providing therapy services to married couples and families.



Ann Koshute, MTS, earned a Master’s degree at the Pontifical John Paul II Institute for Marriage and Family at the Catholic University of America. She speaks and writes on marriage and family issues, has served in the Family Life ministries of several dioceses, and teaches theology at Saint Joseph’s College of Maine. She and her husband, Keith, have been married for 7 years.



Michael and Lisann Castagno have been married for 24 years and have three daughters. They have been involved in marriage preparation and youth ministry in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia for many years, speaking especially about the beauty of God’s design for marriage, by proclaiming the good news of Natural Family Planning.



Father Jack Custer has prepared over 100 couples for marriage in his 35 years of priesthood. He holds degrees in Scripture and Theology and currently serves as Rector of St Michael’s Cathedral.

SATURDAY, MARCH 2
9AM – 4PM



PEOPLE YOU KNOW

IN BALTIMORE... IN HILLSBOROUGH...

Parish ECF Students Perform Christmas Play *ECF students perform "Bethlehem Carolers" Play*

Patronage Byzantine Catholic Church in Baltimore had a Saint Nicholas celebration on Sunday, December 2, 2018, where the students in the Eastern Christian Formation (ECF) Program put on a play for parish members. Father Conan Timoney is pastor of Patronage Parish.



On Sunday, December 9, Saint Mary Parish in Hillsborough, NJ, where Father James Badeaux is pastor, had its annual Saint Nicholas Celebration. Following the meal, children from the ECF Program performed the traditional "Bethlehem Carolers" play, delighting everyone in attendance. After the play, those present enjoyed a visit from Saint Nicholas, who brought gifts for the children and posed for photos with the children and their families. Father James is assisted by Deacon Alex Kubik and Deacon Nick Sotack..



IN DUNELLEN...

Saints Nicholas Celebration

On Sunday, December 9, Saint Nicholas Parish in Dunellen, NJ, celebrated its patronal feast with its annual Saint Nicholas Party. The parish's Saint Nicholas Social Club hosted children and adults in the parish hall, where a delicious meal was enjoyed by all. The afternoon was topped off by a visit from Saint Nicholas, who presented gifts too all of the children present. Father James Badeaux is the Administrator of Saint Nicholas Parish.



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AROUND THE EPARCHY

IN ROSWELL...

Wedding Jubilee and Saint Nicholas Celebration

Epiphany of Our Lord parish celebrated their Wedding Jubilarians on Sunday, December 2nd. Those couples in the parish who were celebrating wedding anniversaries of 5 year intervals in the calendar year 2018 received a certificate from the Eparchy and a blessing from Father Lewis Rabayda, parish administrator.



The parish celebrated their annual Saint Nicholas potluck luncheon on Sunday, December 9. There is always a large crowd for the festive event and this year about 90 people were in attendance. Saint Nicholas even visited to greet the children and give them bags of candy.



NEW ICONS FOR DANBURY PARISH

On November 26, iconographer Gligor Stefanov, of Windsor, Ontario, visited Saint Nicholas Parish in Danbury, CT, to install the final two icons to be restored after the 2013 fire. The parish had commissioned him to write an icon of Christ, Pantocrator, for the main dome of the church, and Our Lady of the Sign in the apse of the church. Because of a delay of the shipment of the icons due to US Customs, Gligor was unable to begin the installation of the icons immediately, but prepared the dome and the apse in the interim by giving both areas a coat of darker, warmer blue paint. The installation of the icons was completed the following Tuesday, necessitating the parishioners having to celebrate the Sunday Divine Liturgy in the Bingo hall, and having to celebrate their patronal feast by sitting around the area where the scaffolding remained on December 6. But the wait was well worth it, and the parishioners were overcome by emotion the following Sunday, when they could see both icons in all their glory.

The icon of Our Lady of the Sign depicts the Theotokos during the Annunciation at the moment of saying, "May it be done to me according to your word" (Luke 1:38). The image of the Christ child represents Him at the moment of His conception in the womb of the Virgin. He is depicted not as a fetus, but rather vested in divine robes, and often holding a scroll, symbolic of his role as teacher. Sometimes his robes are gold or white, symbolizing divine glory; sometimes they are blue and red, symbolizing the two natures of Christ. His face is depicted as that of an old man, indicating the Christian teaching that He was at one and the same time both a fully human infant and fully the eternal God, one of the Trinity. His right hand is raised in blessing.

The term *Virgin of the Sign* or *Our Lady of the Sign* is a reference to the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14: "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." Such an image is often placed in the apse of the sanctuary of the church, above the Holy Table.

As with most icons of Mary, the letters MP ΘΥ (short for *Μήτηρ Θεοῦ*, "Mother of God") are usually placed on the upper left and right of the head of the Virgin Mary.

This type of icon is also sometimes called the *Platytera* (Greek: *Πλατυτέρα*, literally *wider or more spacious*); poetically, by containing the Creator of the Universe in her womb, Mary has become *Platytera ton ouranon*: "More spacious than the heavens." The *Platytera* is traditionally depicted on the half-dome that stands above the altar. It is visible high above the iconostasis, and facing down the length of the nave of the church. This particular depiction is usually on a dark blue background, often adorned by golden stars.

The most common translation of *Pantocrator* is "Almighty" or "All-powerful." In this understanding, *Pantokrator* is a compound word formed from the Greek words *pas* (*pantos*), i.e., "all" and *kratos*, i.e., "strength," "might," or "power." This is often understood in terms of potential power, i.e., ability to do anything, omnipotence. Another, more literal translation is "Ruler of All" or, less literally, "Sustainer of the World." In this understanding, *Pantokrator* is a compound word formed from the Greek for "all" and the verb meaning "to accomplish something" or "to sustain something" (*kratein*). This translation speaks more to God's actual

power, i.e., God does everything (as opposed to God can do everything).

Father Ronald Hatton is pastor of Saint Nicholas Parish, with the assistance of Deacon Stephen Russo.



Our Lady of the Sign in the apse of the church



Iconographer Gligor Stefanov (right) and Deacon Steve Russo (left) stand under the dome installing the icon of the Pantocrator



Christ the Pantocrator



SAINTS PETER AND PAUL BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH CELEBRATES 100 YEARS

Bethlehem, PA

Saints Peter and Paul Byzantine Catholic Church celebrated its 100th anniversary with a Hierarchial Divine Liturgy on Sunday, July 1, 2018. Bishop Kurt was the main celebrant and was joined by former pastors of the parish, who served as concelebrants.

Former pastors, Father William Gore, Father Robert Slesinski, and current pastor, Father Peter Hosak, were present. Bishop Kurt preached an inspiring and spiritually uplifting homily during the Liturgy.

The celebration began with the traditional welcoming presentation of bread and salt that was offered to Bishop Kurt by the children of the parish. The splendor of the Hierarchial Divine Liturgy was enhanced with the melodious singing from the parish choir and faithful. The parish choir director, Kurt Elsner, and parish cantors led the singing.

A catered banquet immediately followed the Liturgy in the parish hall. The elegantly decorated church hall rivaled that of any top-rated catering facility, having been lovingly decorated by the 100th anniversary committee.

During the banquet, Edward Berezny, parish representative, welcomed all guests to the banquet. Father Edward Higgins, Protopresbyter and Master of Ceremonies, offered the invocation. The Right Reverend Mitred Archpriest James Hayer, Protosyn-cellus, served as the emcee for the duration of the banquet. Kurt Elsner, parish choir director, offered the festive toast. Thereafter, the children of the parish led Bishop Kurt to cut the two ornately decorated anniversary cakes that portrayed replicas of the original parish that sat on Edward Street and the current parish that now sits on Johnston Drive.

The congregation and guests enjoyed a vast array of hors d'oeuvres, entrees, homemade desserts, and assorted fountain beverages. The dinner was truly a labor of love.

Former pastor, Father William Gore, provided personal and inspiring remarks during his pastorate following the death of long-time pastor, Monsignor Paul Firczak. Father Peter Hosak shared reflections on the past, present, and future of the parish. Father Robert Slesinski concluded the

banquet program with remarks and the final benediction.

Overall, the day was a joyous and festive spiritual celebration for a parish and its faithful with their Chief Shepherd, Bishop Kurt, their current pastor, Father Hosak, and former pastors of the parish, as they celebrated 100 years of life.



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:

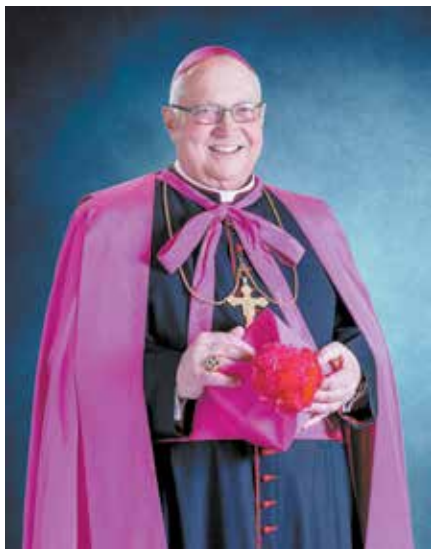
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BISHOP MORLINO DIES; INCREASING VOCATIONS WAS A TOP PRIORITY

Nov. 27, Article from Catholic News Service, Photo courtesy, Diocese of Madison

Editor's Note: Bishop Robert Morlino, when he was a member of the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits), and before he was ordained a bishop, served from 1978-1981 at Patronage of the Mother of God Byzantine Catholic Church in Baltimore, MD, celebrating the Divine Liturgy on a regular basis, as well as a number of baptisms. Father John Shea, SJ, served as administrator of the parish during that time and was assisted by then-Father Morlino and Father Ron Murphy, SJ. This article was written before his funeral, so any services mentioned have already been celebrated. We are grateful for his service to our eparchy. May his memory be eternal!



Bishop Robert C. Morlino

MADISON, Wis. -- Bishop Robert C. Morlino, the fourth bishop of Madison, died Nov. 24 at Saint Mary's Hospital in Madison. He was 71.

The bishop was undergoing planned medical tests when he suffered what doctors described as "a cardiac event" at the hospital and he never recovered.

On Nov. 26, the diocesan College of Consultors unanimously elected Msgr. James Bartylla, vicar general, to be administrator of the diocese until a successor to Bishop Morlino is appointed.

Funeral arrangements include a prayer vigil and time for visitation Dec. 3 at the O'Donnell Chapel at Holy Name Heights in Madison. The vigil and visitation will be 1 p.m. to 7 p.m., followed by vespers. Bishop Paul J. Swain of Sioux Falls, SD, will preside. Bishop Swain was ordained a priest for the Madison Diocese.

The funeral Mass for Bishop Morlino will be celebrated Dec. 4 at Saint Maria Goretti Church in Madison, followed by interment at Resurrection Cemetery. The main celebrant of the Mass will be

Milwaukee Archbishop Jerome E. Listeck with Msgr. Bartylla as homilist. There will be visitation from 9 a.m. until the 11 a.m. funeral Mass.

In a statement about the bishop's death, the diocese said that "all objective indicators point to the fact that Bishop Morlino accomplished what he set out to do in the diocese" after his Aug. 1, 2003, installation.

Among his "three expressed priorities" was increasing "the number and quality of the men ordained to the diocesan priesthood," it said. "Fostering greater priestly vocations" resulted in his ordination of 40 men to the priesthood during his tenure. Another 24 are currently in formation.

Bishop Morlino also aimed "to instill a greater sense of reverence throughout the entire diocese, especially through our worship of God, celebrated in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass," the diocese said, "and to challenge Catholic institutions in the diocese to live out their professed faith in Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, through their ministry in the secular community."

He succeeded in "bringing a greater sense of reverent worship to the entire diocese, and he made significant inroads toward encouraging the Catholic institutions in his care to live out their mission with greater fidelity, during his 15-plus years as bishop of Madison," the diocese said. "We pray this continues."

Born Dec. 31, 1946, in Scranton, PA, Robert Charles Morlino was an only child. His father, Charles, died while he was in high school; his mother, Albertina, died in 1980. He was raised in Lackawanna County, PA, graduating from the Jesuit-run Scranton Preparatory High School.

He entered the seminary for the Maryland province of the Society of Jesus and was ordained to the priesthood for

that province June 1, 1974. His education included a bachelor's degree in philosophy from Fordham University, a master's degree in philosophy from the University of Notre Dame, and a master of divinity degree from the Weston School of Theology in Cambridge, MA.

He also had a doctorate in moral theology from the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, with a specialization in fundamental moral theology and bioethics.

Father Morlino taught philosophy at Loyola College in Baltimore, Saint Joseph University in Philadelphia, Boston College, and the University of Notre Dame and Saint Mary's College in Indiana. He also served as an instructor in continuing education for priests, religious and laity and as director of parish renewal programs

In 1981, Father Morlino became a priest of the Diocese of Kalamazoo, MI, and served there as vicar for spiritual development, executive assistant and theological consultant to the bishop, as moderator of the curia and as the promoter of justice in the diocesan tribunal. He was administrator of a number of parishes, and later rector of Saint Augustine Cathedral in Kalamazoo.

Father Morlino was scheduled to begin a full-time faculty appointment as professor of theology at Sacred Heart Major Seminary in Detroit when, on July 6, 1999, Saint John Paul II appointed him the ninth bishop of Helena, MT. Bishop Morlino was named fourth bishop of Madison May 23, 2003, and installed about three months later.

On the national level, Bishop Morlino is a past chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on the Diaconate and its Ad Hoc Committee on Health Care Issues and the Church.

He also served on the Bishops and Presidents Subcommittee of the USCCB's Committee on Education, which focuses on the Catholic identity of institutions of higher education. Bishop Morlino also was a past chairman of the board of directors of the Philadelphia-based National Catholic Bioethics Center, which conducts research, consultation, publishing and education to promote human dignity in health care and the life sciences.

Bishop Morlino also was chairman of the board of visitors for the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation. This board was a federal advisory committee created by congress to maintain independent review, observation

and recommendation regarding operations of the institute, located at Fort Benning, near Columbus, GA.

Run by the U.S. Department of Defense, the institute is an education and training facility for civilian, military and law enforcement personnel from Western Hemisphere countries. For his service to the United States and his promotion of human rights education, the bishop was honored by the Department of the Army in 2009.

In 2006, the national Alliance for Marriage joined with the Congress of Racial Equality to present Bishop Morlino with their Lifetime Achievement Award, for his promotion of the fundamental rights of freedom of speech and freedom of religion.

In 2008, for his work in defense of the dignity of the human person, Bishop Morlino was awarded Human Life International's Cardinal von Galen Award, named after the famous German bishop who worked actively against the Nazis. That same year, he also received the Saint Edmund's Medal of Honor, awarded to Catholics "who have used their God-given talents in promoting the common good."

In 2015, he was the recipient of Relevant Radio's Christ Brings Hope Award and earlier this year, he received the Saint Thomas Aquinas College Medallion.

Reaction to Bishop Morlino's death included a statement from Judie Brown, president of American Life League. She called him courageous and "one of the most heroic bishops of our time," noting he took a stand against the morning-after abortion pill, when "his brother bishops in Wisconsin," according to Brown, "embraced" neutrality on the issue. She also praised his ongoing support of the encyclical "Humanae Vitae."

"This shepherd defended truth with immense confidence in God and his truth," Brown added. Archbishop Bernard A. Hebda of Saint Paul and Minneapolis in a Nov. 25 statement called Bishop Morlino a "selfless shepherd."

"As a seminarian and young priest, I was inspired by his love of Christ and his church," he said. "An ardent promoter of vocations, he had a real gift for communicating the truths of our faith to young hearts. I will miss him as a friend and colleague. May he now rest in the loving embrace of the God he served so well."

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LIFE, LOVE, AND THE HUMAN PERSON

By Ann M. Koshute, MTS

SEALED AND DELIVERED

The liturgical life of our Church can sometimes feel a bit like feast or famine, with some periods flush with activity, and others quite ordinary. If we think about it, this actually mirrors the rhythm of our lives, reflecting its bursts of activity and times of quiet routine. This is as it should be. We should *breathe* with the Church, *walk* with Her, *pray* and *rest* with Her in everything we do. The seasons – the feasts, the fasts and the *just being* – should be incorporated into our thoughts, the way we carry out our work, and in our relationships. For us Christians – especially for Byzantine Catholics – the Liturgy is our *life*, not for its ritual or regimentation, but for how it teaches us when to speak and when to be quiet; when to engage and when to be still. The Liturgy teaches us who we are, why we're here, and how God wants to work in us, and inform our relationships in the world outside our temple walls. Most of all, the Liturgy provides the context in which we receive the greatest of gifts, undeserved but offered freely: a personal encounter with the one, true, living God.

The months of November through April (or May, depending on the date of Pascha) are liturgical periods of “feasting,” in that there's a lot going on in these months (though some of it requires our *fasting*). The Philip's Fast, which seems so far away as we sit here in the New Year, prepared us for the Nativity of our Lord – and included some important feast days in between. After Christmas, we celebrate the Circumcision of our Lord, His Baptism, and a few weeks later His Encounter with Simeon and Anna. Like our lives, it all seems to happen quickly, but the Liturgy guides us through it, if we pay attention. Just as we can get bored with our routine, and pay less attention to even the people we

love, we may take the Liturgy for granted and allow the feast days and times of preparation to become stale for us. It's a danger in our personal relationships and in our relationship with God, and it's something to guard against. There's no quick fix for it, but as with our relationships with a spouse, child, or friend, it requires our willingness to *die to self* for the good of another. And so, we die to self for God, who died in the flesh for us, as we enter that liturgical rhythm, letting it infuse us with its wisdom, creating the space for Him to enter into our lives, and for us to enter into His divine life.

As the wise (and fictional) Ferris Bueler said during a day off, “Life moves pretty fast. If you don't stop and look around once in a while, you could miss it.” In the midst of a swirl of activity we often don't stop to consider what's happening to us, or around us. Instead of moving with the rhythm we get carried away by the waves. Consider the Kontakion for the Feast of Theophany, which is brief and may not make much of an impact on us if we just let it flow past us without entering into its liturgical rhythm: “*You have revealed Yourself* to the world today; and Your light, O Lord, *has set a seal on us*. We recognize You and exclaim to You: You have come to reveal Yourself, O Unapproachable Light.” When you chant (or just listen) to these words, what impact does it have on you? Did you even recognize these words at all, or realize they're part of the Liturgy for the feast? If not, you're not alone. Don't feel guilty. Feel motivated to let these (and as many words as possible) from the Liturgy inhabit your mind, your spirit, and your way of living. To help with that, let's take a closer look at each of the emphasized words in the hymn, and reflect on what they mean for us in real, concrete terms.

You have revealed Yourself. What a powerful and life-changing declaration! Almighty God, the Creator and Sustainer of life, Who owes us nothing, revealed Himself at Christ's baptism, and continues doing so today. This revealing doesn't mean suddenly He stepped out from behind a curtain so that we could see Him. Much more than *showing* Himself to us, God invites us to *know* Him, to enter into a relationship with Him, to become one of His family. Understanding the magnitude of Almighty God freely choosing intimacy over detachment (as is the case with deities in other world religions), helps us more fully appreciate and accept His generous self-offering, and look for ways to make ourselves an offering to Him. Aside from the praise and adoration rightly due to Him, God desires our abandonment to His care, to love and be loved by Him. The greatest self-offering we can make to Him is the love we show others. If we truly believe God has revealed Himself to us – that he is God *with* us and God *one of us* in Jesus Christ – how we live and how we love will be radically changed for the better.

Do you realize what it means that the Lord *has set his seal on us*? As I type these words I click on the thesaurus and a lot of synonyms for “seal” show up: stamp, hallmark, impression, guarantee, assurance. Each one of these conveys the significance of God's Incarnation for our salvation as well as our incorporation into God's family. The seal with which we are imprinted is not like one we put on an envelope to keep it closed. The *seal* of God (which we receive in Baptism and Chrismation, and is renewed in every sacramental encounter with Him) is His image in us, and our assurance of His mercy and tender care for us. To be sealed by and with God is to be under His protection, to be guaranteed His

companionship in our suffering. The hallmark of this belonging to the Lord is seen in how we invite others to know Him – *to be sealed by Him* – in the routine encounters and mundane activities of life.

If God has graciously offered us salvation, and done so by becoming one of us so that He could redeem our humanity and seal it with His divine life, how can we not *recognize* and *exclaim* this truth to the world? This is something the Divine Liturgy teaches us every time we celebrate it, and yet we tend to keep all the praise inside for that hour or so, and leave it where we think it belongs. This is a mistake, and also a product of allowing the Liturgy to become routine rather than life-giving. God is with us, He has made us His own, and He wants us to introduce as many people to Him as we can by exclaiming Him in word and action.

January marks the beginning of a new year, a fresh start. Perhaps a good resolution for us is to enter more deeply and intentionally into a liturgical rhythm, adopting it as a roadmap for how we live, work and love. Let's not let life move so fast that we don't stop to recognize God's seal upon us, who have been delivered from sin and called to live in ways that reveal Him to the world. **ECL**

SPIRITUAL REFLECTIONS

Father Lewis Rabayda



OPENING OURSELVES TO GOD FOR REST

This month marks the third anniversary of my ordination to the priesthood of Jesus Christ. In that time, I have had the pleasure of serving at three different parishes and witnessing confessions at a few more. One challenge of the spiritual life that I have personally encountered and that many other people encounter is: how to truly open oneself up to God.

We naturally have the tendency to calculate and control most aspects of our lives. Regardless of our age, we have certain goals, whether known or unknown to us, that drive our daily decisions. The older we get we realize that no one else is going to contribute to our personal goals, and often times others are found to be obstacles in the way of our personal success. This callous realization and normal human experience make us suspect when we realize that we need God's help and assistance in our lives.

Why would someone else help me? How could God take care of all of these troubles, especially since I have not been able to take care of them myself? What does it truly mean to let go of my control over this situation? These questions show how difficult it is for us to truly let the reigns go. It is one thing to have the intellectual knowledge of God and His Word, but to practice this knowledge and really give in to the Will of God is very difficult.

Many of us have troubling situations and overwhelming crosses to bear. We think that there is no way out and that our burden and the burden of those around us is too immense to be alleviated. But Jesus Christ tells us, “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest (Mat. 11:28). Come to Christ. How do we fully open up to Jesus Christ in order for Him to give us the rest that we so desperately need, the rest that we cannot achieve for ourselves or for those we love?

Prayer is the most direct way in which we communicate with God. We do need spend good quality time in prayer to nourish our relationship with God. But many people have difficulty doing this. It is not just the act of praying itself, but it is the total surrender of our person. In order to open up to God, we need to be honest with ourselves, we need to look deep inside to all of the dark nooks and crannies and search for things hidden there that are preventing us from perfectly basking in the presence of God. When we recognize these hidden issues, past sins, reluctancies, lack of trust, fears, and unfulfilled hopes, we tend to hide ourselves from God like Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. We think that we can hide, we think that God does not see these aspects of us and we want to avoid God because of them. However, uncovering these hidden obstacles to our intimacy with God is the necessary step we need to take in order to allow God to take control.

When we become honest with ourselves, when we have been able to look inside and take an objective stock of what makes up our person, then we will be able to be honest with God. We can then say to Him, this is who we are, this is what we have had to deal with, these are our fears, our troubles, our limitations—and here they are Lord, they are here for You to shine Your light on them, to heal them, and to take the burden of them away from us, and give us rest. Total surrender of who we are will lead us to total trust in the healing power of Jesus Christ. And we will find rest. **ECL**



Carpatho-Rusyn Society's New Branches

The Carpatho-Rusyn Society has developed branches in Georgia (near Atlanta), Western NC (Asheville), Eastern NC (Charlotte), and mini-branches in the cities of Gainesville, Lakeland, Leesburg, Boca Raton and Nokomis in the state of Florida. Meetings are held two to three times a year to learn, share, and perpetuate the Carpatho-Rusyn culture. For more information visit the website at c-rs.org or contact Bonnie at bb@c-rs.org.

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A Byzantine Catholic community is forming at Saint Philip Neri Church, 292 Munn Rd., Fort Mill, SC. Please join us as we grow our community and celebrate the Byzantine Divine Liturgy. Father Steven Galuschik of All Saints Byzantine Catholic Church in North Fort Myers, FL along with bi-ritual Deacon Ron Volek are now offering weekly Divine Liturgy in the area. This community will serve the northern part of South Carolina as well as Charlotte, NC. Please share this information with your friends and family – especially those who have moved “down South.” We will be celebrating the Byzantine Divine Liturgy on Saturdays at 4 PM. If you would like to participate in any way, or have questions please contact Ron Somich at 440.477.6389 or ron.somich@gmail.com. Please check the website for news, upcoming gatherings, and service times at <https://carolinabyzantine.com/>

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SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

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

THE WATERS SAW AND FLED

People in Old Testament times certainly appreciated water as long as it was the rainfall that filled the seasonal streams and made life possible in the hot dry climate of the Holy Land. Generally, the Bible doesn't much care for oceans or even lakes. These large bodies of water were mistrusted as dangerous, chaotic places, the haunt of huge and dangerous creatures (Psalm 104:26; Job 41:1-4; Isaiah 27:1). Biblical sea voyages are rarely pleasant (Psalm 107:23-30), not even for professional fishermen like the Apostles (Matthew 8:23-27). When King Solomon built the first Israelite navy, he outsourced it to his Phoenician friend, King Hiram (1 Kings 9:26-27).

Ancient myths that everyone knew imagined that our world was the result of some sort of primordial battle out of which a creator-god emerged victorious. The Bible occasionally speaks this language. “Nothing” is a tough concept, and so the book of Genesis (1:1-3) uses the image of a turbulent, chaotic, lifeless abyss to evoke the nothingness out of which the Lord God created our beautiful and orderly universe. A few of the Psalms dramatize that mythic battle as a way of praising the one and only God (Psalm 29:10; 74:12-17; 93:2-4).

Chaotic and lifeless waters also symbolize the power of death in the language of the Old Testament. In trouble on dry land King David prayed desperately: “the waves of Death surrounded me, the floods of godlessness terrified me; the cords (or pains) of the Abyss surrounded me, the breakers of Death came against me” (2 Samuel 22:5-6; Psalm 18:4-5). Water was linked with sin and death most clearly in the time of Noah, when God undid what He had done in creation: “the fountains of the Great Deep were broken up and the windows of heaven were opened.” As Genesis 7:11 describes it, the floodwaters that drowned sin came from both above and below the earth. God let sin's consequences unfold: the original chaos came rushing back in.

Once we see the connection between water and creation, a familiar story

suddenly makes more sense. One of the most dramatic moments of the Exodus was the passing of the Israelites through the Red Sea (Exodus 14). Just as He did at creation, the Lord imposed limits on the waters, temporarily, so that the Hebrew refugees could pass over without so much as wet feet. Then, just as He did in the days of Noah, the Lord removed those restraints on the waters and Pharaoh's pursuing armies were drowned. As Psalm 114 describes it, “The sea saw and fled... at the presence of the Lord.” The miracle was repeated forty years later, when the Israelites, led by Joshua, finally entered the Promised Land. This time, the waters of the Jordan River pulled back before the Ark of the Covenant which led the procession.

In the Red Sea and the Jordan River, the Lord was creating a new people for Himself. Saint Paul recognized this: “All passed through the sea, all were baptized into Moses” (1 Corinthians 10:2) but Saint Paul also points ahead to the fulfillment of God's plan at our Baptism into Christ (Galatians 3:27). Baptism for us is a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17) but also a personal flood in which a sinful self is drowned and a new life in Christ rises up (Romans 6).

You will hear all these biblical images mentioned in the Great Sanctification of Water on the feast of the Theophany. You also hear them in the blessing of the water whenever a new Christian is baptized. Re-creation, the life-and-death struggle against sin, the inheritance of a promised Kingdom—all these are made possible by Christ's Baptism in the Jordan and made real in the Baptism of every new Christian into Christ. **ECL**

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Father Edward G. Cimbala, D.Min.—Pastor

Beginning Sunday, December 16, 2018, at 8:00 AM, and every Sunday thereafter, Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church, 246 East 15th Street, New York, NY, will offer the Divine Liturgy celebrated in Church Slavonic with the homily preached ponašemu. The celebrant and homilist will be Father Gregory Lozinskyy, parochial vicar of Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church in Jersey City, NJ. This Divine Liturgy is being established as an outreach for people from Eastern Europe with the blessing of Bishop Kurt Burnette, Eparch of Passaic, NJ, at the request of Bishop Milan Šašik, Eparch of Mukachevo, Ukraine. Saint Mary Parish is located on the corner of East 15th Street and Second Avenue and is easily accessible by subway. The 14th Street-Union Square Subway stop is less than a ten-minute walk. Everyone is invited. For more information, please contact Father Gregory Lozinskyy at 201-333-2975.



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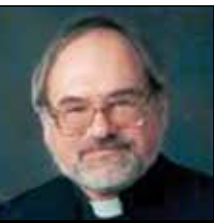
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THE BYZANTINE LITURGY

By Archpriest David Petras, SEOD

How We Know God

Human reason is only able to take us so far in our knowledge of God. The Church teaches that by reason, we can know that there is a God, based on St. Paul's Letter to the Romans, "For what can be known about God is evident to them, because God made it evident to them. Ever since the creation of the world, his invisible attributes of eternal power and divinity have been able to be understood and perceived in what he has made. (Romans 1:19-20) We can also reason that since there is consciousness and free will in creation, the Creator himself must be conscious and free. That is why atheistic materialism has to hold that consciousness is an illusion. However, from reason alone we can only come to a rather abstract God. The Syrian theologian known as Dionysius said that we cannot know God's as he is, "apart from what the sacred scriptures have divinely revealed." (*The Divine Names* 1.1) Therefore, we know that there is a God, but we know who God is because He has revealed Himself to us.

This brings us to the question: "how do we know God," that is, how do we know His divine revelation? First and most obvious is the record of God's dealing with us as recorded in the Bible. The Epistle 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." (Hebrews 1:1-2)

Our Lord is the fulfillment of all revelation, no one can add to his gospel. At the same time, it is not completely encased in a written book, but it is always being proclaimed in the dynamic life of the Church. Our Lord promised, "I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you always, the Spirit of truth. ... (John 14:16-17) when He comes, the Spirit of truth, He will guide you to all truth." (John 16:13) The Catechism of the Catholic Church explains, "This living transmission, accomplished in the Holy Spirit, is called Tradition, since it is distinct from Sacred Scripture, though closely connected to it. Through Tradition, "the Church, in her doctrine, life and worship, perpetuates and transmits to every generation all that she herself is, all that she believes. The sayings of the holy Fathers are a witness to the life-giving presence of this Tradition, showing how its riches are poured out in the practice and life of the Church, in her belief and her prayer." (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, § 78)

We are encouraged to read the Bible frequently and the Sacred Scripture is read in the church as an important part of most liturgical services. The Catechism of the Catholic Church says, "For Holy Mother Church, relying on the faith of the apostolic

age, accepts as sacred and canonical the books of the Old and the New Testaments, whole and entire, with all their parts, on the grounds that, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, they have God as their author, and have been handed on as such to the Church herself. (§ 105)" Scripture is read in Church because it is God's revelation, His word resounding in the community that makes up the Church, the Body of Christ. It is important, then, that God's revelation is proclaimed in our Liturgy, when the Church gathers for prayer. This is the living presence of Christ, for "where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matthew 18:20)

Our Liturgy, in turn, was called by Prosper of Aquitaine our "*lex credendi*," the law of faith, or of our believing. The components of the Liturgy are the reading of Scripture, petition to God, hymns, and prayer. In festive Matins, the Gospel is proclaimed, and in festive Vespers, the Old Testament. In the Divine Liturgy both the epistles and gospels are proclaimed. In the litanies of the Liturgy, we implore God for our needs, for "if two of you agree on earth about anything for which they are to pray, it shall be granted to them by my heavenly Father." (Matthew 18:19) In the Liturgy by the chanting of our hymns, many of which are taken from the Psalms, we give glory to God, who has "brought all things

from nonexistence into being" (Prayer of the Trisagion, from Wisdom 1:14) and is the Giver of every good and perfect gift (Ambon Prayer, James 1:17). Most importantly, we offer prayer to God. Our prayers are our human words, in which we speak to God as a community, expressing our faith and asking for his visitation. The priest pronounces the prayers and we seal them with our "Amen," which means "so be it."

Of all the prayers of the Liturgy, the most important is the Anaphora. We often point to the Creed as our profession of faith in the Liturgy, but the Anaphora is just as important in proclaiming what we know of God through revelation. Our knowledge then becomes our prayer, "For you are God ineffable, inconceivable, invisible, incomprehensible, ever existing, yet ever the same, You, and Your only-begotten Son, and Your Holy Spirit. You brought us out of nonexistence into being, and again raised us up when we had fallen, and left nothing undone until You brought us to heaven and gave us Your kingdom to come." (Anaphora of St. John Chrysostom) God is eternal and beyond our power of expression; He is our Creator and Redeemer. In the Liturgy, this becomes more than intellectual knowledge, it becomes our prayer and our life of faith. **ECL**



The Passion Play of Oberammergau

11 DAYS

AUGUST 31 – SEPTEMBER 10, 2020

Hosted by:

FATHER EDWARD CIMBALA AND FATHER JAMES SPERA

\$4099 PER PERSON FROM NEWARK

An opportunity that arises once every ten years is an opportunity not to be missed. A theatrical tradition since 1634, the world-famous Oberammergau Passion Play is a much-anticipated reenactment of the crucifixion of Christ – from His entry into Jerusalem to the Resurrection – performed only once a decade in the quaint Bavarian village of Oberammergau. The town vowed that if God were to spare them from the effects of the bubonic plague ravaging the region, they would perform a play every ten years depicting the life and death of Jesus. The play, involves over 2,000 performers, musicians, and stage technicians, all of whom are residents of the village.

In addition to experiencing the magnificent Passion Play our tour will take us to one of the most beautiful parts of the world: Switzerland, Austria, and Germany.

Whether visiting medieval towns, driving through the breathtaking Alps or simply relaxing at a sidewalk café, we will experience the unique atmosphere of this region and its people.

While August, 2020, may seem a long way away, NOW is the time to make plans and reserve your place on the tour as space is limited. Don't miss out on this opportunity to experience the history and culture in one of the most scenic areas of Europe!

For more information or to request a brochure, please contact Father Ed Cimbala at 908-872-2928 or by email – Fredcimbala@gmail.com.



SEASONAL REFLECTIONS

Father Ronald Hatton



OUR CELEBRATION IS NOT OVER

Christmas is past, and the world has moved on to other things, but not so the Church. We have a definite timeline that continues, for the most part, for 40 days after the Feast of the Nativity, and this month contains very important feasts.

No sooner than we celebrate the Nativity of our Lord, while the rest of the world (those who follow the Gregorian Calendar) celebrates the coming of the new year, the Church celebrates the feast of the Circumcision of our Lord, eight days after His birth. Circumcision is an important ritual in Judaism, as it makes the male child a child of the Covenant between God and Abraham: “And God said to Abraham, ‘As for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. This is My covenant, which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised. You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you. He that is eight days old among you shall be circumcised; every male throughout your generations, whether born in your house, or bought with your money from any foreigner who is not of your offspring.... So shall My covenant be in your flesh an everlasting covenant. Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant’” (Genesis 17:9–14). On the eighth day, the child was also formally named: “And at the end of eight days, when He was circumcised, He was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb” (Luke 2:21). We see this also with the birth of John the Baptist: “And on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child; and they would have named him Zechariah after his father, but his mother said, ‘Not so; he shall be called John.’ And

they said to her, ‘None of your kindred is called by this name.’ And they made signs to his father, inquiring what he would have him called. And he asked for a writing tablet, and wrote, ‘His name is John’” (Luke 1:59-63). Both these names have great significance for us, as “John” (Gr. *Ioannes*, from the Heb. *Yochanan*) means “YHWH is Gracious,” and “Jesus” (Greek *Iesous*, Aramaic, *Yeshu’a*, from the Heb. *Yehoshu’a*; Anglicized as, “Joshua”) means “YHWH is Salvation.” So, just as Joshua in the books of Exodus and Joshua is identified with the successor to Moses who brought the Israelites into the Promised Land, showing the fulfillment of God’s promise and His grace to His people, so, too, *our* Joshua, Jesus, is the fulfillment of God’s promise to be our Salvation.

January 1 is also the feast day of Saint Basil the Great (one of the Three Holy Hierarchs celebrated on January 30), Archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia (in present-day Turkey), and is traditionally the author of our Divine Liturgy of St. Basil

the Great, which we celebrate on this day as well as Sundays of the Great Fast and other major holy days.

In His love for the human race, the Savior condescended and willed to be wrapped in swaddling clothes. Eight days old according to His mother and eternal according to His Father, He did not look down upon the circumcision of the flesh. Therefore, O believers, let us cry out to Him: You are our God; have mercy on us! (Vespers for the Feast).

The great feast, of course, is the Theophany of our Lord on January 6. The origin of the Feast goes back to Apostolic times, and it is mentioned in The Apostolic Constitutions (Book V:13). From the second century, we have the testimony of Saint Clement of Alexandria concerning the celebration of the Baptism of the Lord, and the night vigil before this Feast. The name itself refers to a manifestation of God. In the Western tradition, this day is devoted to the Visit of the Magi, and thus His manifestation to the Gentiles. In the East, it is devoted to Jesus’ manifestation as the Son of

God at His Baptism in the Jordan by John the Baptist and, further, the manifestation of the Holy Trinity (cf. Matthew 3: 13-17, Mark 1: 9-11, and Luke 3:21, 22). Thus, it is an important day for us both as an affirmation of the dogma of the Trinity and as the day when we traditionally celebrate the Great Sanctification of Water, in some parishes not only with the Blessing of Water in the parish on the eve of the Feast, but also with the blessing of a nearby body of water, usually a river, on the day of the Feast.

The True Light has appeared to bestow enlightenment upon all. The all-pure Christ is baptized with us; He sanctifies the water and it becomes a cleansing for our souls. All that which appears outward and visible is earthly, and that which is understood by the mind is greater than the heavens. Salvation is bestowed through washing, and the Spirit is received through water. By descending into the water, we ascend to God. How wonderful are Your works, O Lord; glory to You! (Matins for the Feast). **ECL**

St Ann Byzantine Catholic Church

5408 Locust Lane, Harrisburg, PA

Parish Education Calendar 2018 - 2019

Join the St. Ann Parish family for these upcoming spiritual formation events

- Parish Lenten Reflection given by Fr. John Zeyak: Date TBA.
- Pysanky Workshop: Sunday March 24, 2019. Registration Required.
- “Being the Hands, Feet, and Heart of Jesus.” Sr. Ruth Plante, Provincial, Sisters of St. Basil, Uniontown. Parish Formation Day Retreat: Sunday, May 19, 2019, following Divine Liturgy.

All programs take place at St. Ann Byzantine Catholic Church, 5408 Locust Lane, Harrisburg, PA 17109. For more details on events, location, or speakers, please contact the parish office at 717-652-1415.



SCHOOL OF PRAYER

Father G. Scott Boghossian

SPIRITUAL READING

Successful people are readers. Bill Gates, former Microsoft CEO, and second richest man in America claims to read about fifty non-fiction books a year, roughly one a week. Warren Buffet, the third richest man in America, was reading between six hundred and one thousand pages a day when he began his investing career, and now dedicates eighty percent of his day to reading. When he was asked about the key to success, Buffet said, “Read five hundred pages every day.” Elon Musk, the fourth wealthiest man in America, read through the whole Encyclopedia Britannica when he was nine years old, and as a young adult read about ten hours a day. From these examples, it is pretty clear that whatever your goal might be, reading will help you to get there.

We don’t want to get rich (1 Tim. 6:9). We want to become saints! Nevertheless, there is something we can learn from these rich, successful and famous men. We can learn the importance of reading. They acquired earthly wealth by earthly reading. We can become spiritually rich by spiritual reading.

The real purpose of spiritual reading is to foster the spirit of prayer. Spiritual reading is in itself a way of praying, of holding a conversation with God. Saint Ambrose writes, “we speak to Him when we pray; we hear Him when we read...” “Spiritual reading and prayer purify the intellect,” says Saint Thalassios the Libyan. “Only God knows the good that can come about by reading one good Catholic book,” says Saint John Bosco. According to Saint Philip Neri, “reading the lives of the Saints is a great means to preserve piety.”

Of all the books that can help us grow closer to God, Holy Scripture takes first place. Where else can we more vividly see and experience the person of Our Lord Jesus Christ than in the pages of the Holy Gospels? Let us mull over His teachings, His miracles, and especially His sufferings, His death, and His resurrection. We can familiarly speak to Him about whatever our reading brings to mind. The Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles will also nourish our conversation with God. The book of Psalms is God’s Spirit inspired prayer book.

After Scripture, the great classics of spirituality will help us to know, love, and serve God. Have you read the sayings of the Desert Fathers? What about the Apostolic Fathers, such as Saint Ignatius of Antioch, or Polycarp, who lived in the first and second centuries and who knew the original Apostles of Christ? Inexpensive paperback editions of the Church Fathers, like Saint Basil, Saint John Chrysostom, Saint Athanasius (*The Life of Saint Anthony*), and Saint Augustine are readily available. Spiritual classics like *The Imitation of Christ* by Thomas A Kempis and Lorenzo Scupoli’s *Spiritual Combat* are known and appreciated both in the eastern and western Church. And shouldn’t every Byzantine Catholic have read the anonymous Russian classic, *The Way of the Pilgrim*? *The Lives of the Saints* confer instruction and inspiration as well.

How to profit from spiritual reading? First, begin with a prayer, asking God to speak to you through what you are about to read. You might notice some particular passage that “lights up” or “stands off the page” and seems to apply to you or be particularly helpful. Perhaps that passage is God speak-

ing to you. Stop, and talk to God about it! Next, read slowly. In spiritual reading, we are not trying to burn through the book as quickly as possible. A book that you have already read once might be the best option. That way you are not anxious to see what’s on the next page. You already know what the book says, but now you are seeking to absorb, mull over, remember and discuss with God what you read. Finally, put what you read into practice. “Be doers of the Word and not hearers only” (Js. 1:22). Look for opportunities to apply what you are reading to your own life. Also, you may find something that may be worth sharing with others in spiritual conversation.

Jesus said, “the sons of this world are shrewder in dealing with their generation than the sons of light” (Lk. 16:8). In other words, sometimes worldly people can teach us religious folk a thing or two. In this case, Bill Gates, Warren Buffet, and Elon Musk remind us of the power of reading. Their reading helped them to store up earthly treasures. May our reading enable us to acquire God’s heavenly Kingdom. **ECL**



SEMINARIAN REFLECTIONS

Reader Timothy Fariss

THE ART OF TELLING THE PERFECT STORY

The key to a good story is a plot twist according to movie director M. Night Shyamalan. Other directors thrive on making a villain everyone loves to hate. George Lucas and JK Rowling built franchises not on a single story but on alternate worlds/universes that are not bound by a single protagonist to root for. There are many ways to tell a story but who is the audience? Looney Tunes and other cartoons were able to produce movies and shows that were goofy and visually simple enough for children with enough adult jokes or deeper meanings to give adults a chuckle or two. Audience preferences determine how the story tellers approach a good story.

During hospital chaplaincy training this summer, we were taught how to present our own life stories in a classroom setting while receiving the life stories of our patients. As the summer went on, it became apparent that the art of listening to the message of the story is a skill I needed to develop. I found myself focused on the wrong parts of the story. Being a student chaplain on an oncology and a cardiac floor, some of my patients, not all, were going through a really tough time. Even when treatments went well, they were mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually exhausting. As chaplain interns we were taught that story telling is an important aspect of treatment, recovery, and at its worst, acceptance.

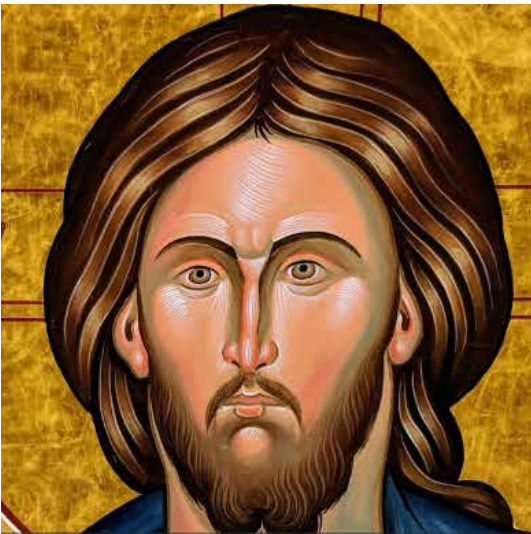
As a young kid, if my parents saw me not paying attention, they would ask me to repeat back the story of what I was responsible to do or what not to do. For the patients, they were under constant watch always being told what was going on. But does it sink in when they are told to expect the worst? Sometimes a patient is adamant that they will prove the doctor wrong until they repeat the diagnosis out loud. Sometimes the perfect story never leaves the lips of the story teller. Sometimes stating the truth is too hard to bear. I found some patients starting to talk about their treatment only to shuffle to the daily news.

We were taught to be patient, not to be afraid of the silence, to listen to what we could ask to invite the patient into telling their story. The story we wanted to hear was about family, about health, about death, and about the things that mattered to them. Sometimes, thinking back, I realized I missed the heart of the story. Other times I was the captive audience, hearing the words both said and not said. In one visitation, I was able to ask a question that left a patient sharing a half-hour family vacation to me and his kids, filled with the mayhem and mishaps that left the room in tears laughing. Later, in class we had recollected that the patient was deathly ill and that story was a specific memory that the patient wanted his kids to remember, that they were able to laugh in the hard times. He didn't have to demand his kids to remember it, but because of this visit this story will live on. This story started to sound sad, but it was actually a very joy filled moment I was able to share with his

family. I will probably remember his family vacation as if it were one of my own.

This time of year, we are given a very particular and joyful story. Did you miss it? Do you think you know it by heart? Why do we listen to it every year? I was told once that if a teacher says something twice, it will be on the test. I will not test you on it but the Nativity of Christ is being put to the test by our culture and sometimes even by our own inattentiveness (mine included). Many of our churches have the feast days of Jesus Christ as a focal point: to tell the story of how God became man, so that we might become God, as Saint Athanasius said. This story of the Nativity is not the first chapter, but the second, a distant 9

months from the Annunciation. It is also not the first book but the second, where the prophecies that declared the Messiah would be born of Davidic Kingship, and a shoot from the stump of Jesse. Behold, One came, that was greater than John the Baptizer and He baptized with fire and the Holy Spirit. He was presented at the Temple according to Jewish custom and revealed His glory to His disciples in His Transfiguration. Christmas has come and gone but in a few short months we will be closing the Gospel story with a tragic ending and a plot twist. The perfect story of God's love is being told at every liturgy, a few short paragraphs at a time to a gathering of all of humanity and all the choirs of the angels and saints, with the hopes that with ears we may hear so that we might have eternal life. **ECL**



THE EPARCHY OF PASSAIC & THEOSIS IN ACTION PRESENT

2019

BYZANTINE CATHOLIC YOUNG ADULT CONVOCATION

Called. Transfigured. Sent.

AUGUST 1-4, 2019

ST. MARY'S BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH

NEW YORK CITY

"If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."
-Mat 16:24

**TOGETHER WE ARE:
CALLED TO
DISCIPLESHIP.
TRANSFIGURED
THROUGH A NEW LIFE
IN CHRIST.
SENT TO PROCLAIM
THE GOSPEL TO THE
WORLD.**

Hosted by the Eparchy of Passaic and Theosis in Action, the convocation is open to young adults between the ages of 18-35 from all Eparchies in the Byzantine Catholic Metropolia.

This event will coincide with the feast of the Transfiguration, and will challenge participants to recognize their own call to discipleship.

Information about registration, events, and lodging options will be announced in early 2019. Stay tuned and save the date!

CONNECT WITH US!

For more information please contact us via email and stay tuned on our website and Facebook page.

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theosisinaction.org
facebook.com/theosisinaction

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UPCOMING EPARCHIAL AND PARISH EVENTS

JANUARY, 2019

- 1 Our Holy Father Basil the Great & Circumcision of Our Lord
*Chancery closed * Happy New Year!*
- 6 Holy Theophany of Our Lord
*Holy Day of Obligation * Great Blessing of Water*
- 17-18 Vigil for Life
*Washington, DC * see schedule on Page 1*
- 30 Three Holy Hierarchs
Simple Holy Day

FEBRUARY, 2019

- 2 Encounter of Our Lord with Simeon and Anna
Solemn Holy Day
- 3 Sunday of Zacchaeus
Pre-Lenten Sunday
- 10 Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee
Pre-Lenten Sunday
- 17 Sunday of the Prodigal Son
Pre-Lenten Sunday
- 23 First All Souls' Saturday
- 24 Sunday of Meatfare
Sunday of the Last Judgment