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BISHOP LACH ACCEPTS PARMA APPOINTMENT AS ‘WILL OF GOD’

By Laura Ieraci; republished with permission from Horizons

PARMA, Ohio — Bishop Milan Lach, SJ, will be enthroned as the fifth bishop of the Eparchy of Parma during a Divine Liturgy at the Cathedral of Saint John the Baptist June 30. He succeeds Bishop John Kudrick, whose resignation was accepted by the Vatican May 7, 2016.

Bishop Lach's appointment as eparch was announced June 1. Up until then, he had served as apostolic administrator, an appointment he received June 24, 2017.

Archbishop Christophe Pierre, apostolic nuncio to the United States, will preside at the enthronement liturgy. Archbishop William C. Skurla of Pittsburgh will be the main celebrant.

Bishop Milan Lach, SJ, said he has received his appointment as the fifth eparch of Parma as “the will of God.”

“We ask in the *Our Father* that the will of God be done,” Bishop Lach told Horizons. “I believe that this (appointment) is the will of God and I accept it, to do my duties as bishop and to shepherd my flock with the help of our priests and deacons.”

Last June, Pope Francis had appointed Bishop Lach, then auxiliary bishop of the Archeparchy of Presov, Slovakia, as the apostolic administrator *sede vacante* of Parma. His appointment came after Archbishop Skurla had already served as the administrator of Parma for more than a year.

Bishop Lach said the new appointment “does not change anything for the faithful.” The spiritual care and guidance he offered prior to his appointment will continue.

From a canonical point of view, however, the appointment grants full powers of episcopal governance, as canon law places limitations on an administrator regarding



Bishop Milan Lach, SJ, celebrates Divine Liturgy for Pentecost at the Church of Saint Anthony the Abbot in Rome, two weeks before being named the fifth bishop of Parma. (Photo: Horizons/Pavel Vavilin)

certain ecclesial matters, including parish closures and mergers, the alienation of property and the reorganization of diocesan structures.

Byzantine Catholic faithful, both in the United States and in Slovakia, took to social media to express their joy and congratulations to the 44-year-old bishop upon

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BEING TEEN AND BYZANTINE

Interview by Raul Botha, photo and article used with the kind permission of Unirea Canton, the official publication of the Romanian Catholic Diocese of Canton. This article originally appeared in the spring 2018 issue of Unirea Canton magazine, available at www.unirea.org.



Sânziana Tamiian is the eldest daughter of Father Calin Tamiian and Sarah Tamiian. She is currently a first-year student of Clinical Psychology at Franciscan University of Steubenville. In her free time, she loves to read, travel, knit, and meeting new people. She is so excited to be helping and serving the Romanian Greek Catholic Church in America.

Q: Sânziana, can you tell me about your faith and your faith journey?

A: I am a priest's daughter. Being born into that role has a big influence in who I am and what I believe. I would say that my faith journey started from the moment I

was baptized into the Romanian Catholic Church.

I view my faith as a love affair. I view all that I do as a way to show how I love God and how I love the traditions that he has given us. I demonstrate that through the fact that I am a cantor at our church; I lead catechism classes with our youth; I try every day to say the Jesus Prayer, which is a very important part of my life. Practicing that has definitely directed me and helped my faith grow. What has helped me at this point now, and how I am growing in my faith, is being able to read more of the Church fathers. I really use these beautiful resources in order to really understand what it means to be a Byzantine Catholic and how I can live that through every moment of my entire life.

Q: What does it mean to be a Byzantine Catholic? What does it feel, smell, taste like?

A: To be a Byzantine Catholic is to be in love with all aspects of who Christ is, from what our faith is as Christians. For me what it smells like (to being Byzantine) is just the smell of our past, of the antiquities of being a Byzantine Catholic. The minute you walk into a Byzantine Church you know exactly what it is through the smell of the incense, through the smell of the old foods that we have, and to hear the laughter of our children.

To be Byzantine is to have community. To be Byzantine is to know everyone in your church and to love everyone and to see everyone as your brother and sister in Christ. To be Byzantine is to be persecuted. To know that overseas and here we are struggling to survive, but yet, we do. To be Byzantine is difficult. To be Byzantine is to be alone. But there is such strength that comes from that. The fact that we have survived when we were persecuted by our own brethren and yet here we are, we are standing for something that would be otherwise lost. We represent who Christ was and where he came from, and that is what it means to be a Byzantine for me. It is the constant identity of the past, to realize that the blood of countless martyrs is on our shoulders. And so, every time I go to Divine Liturgy, that is what I think about when I look at our icons, our gold vestments, our decorations—this feeling that you are walking into paradise.

Q: How do you relate to friends and others who are not Byzantine, and how do you let them know about your faith?

A: First and foremost, I always start from a position of patience, of love, and take the approach of not being afraid or trying to hide who I am. Being Byzantine Catholic is what dictates and what drives my every motive. The way I represent that to my lovely brethren, to my Roman Catholic friends, is that I learned what it means to be Byzantine. I learned our tradition so that I could

answer their questions. I'm not afraid to answer their questions. So, yes it takes some work on my own. For example, I ask my father questions, to study on my own. When I go to these gatherings, since I do go to a Roman Catholic University, people do ask me what it is like to be Byzantine and what does that mean. So, I just start from a position of honesty, and a position of truth, and a position of love. I want to share with them the totality and beauty of what it means to be Catholic, which means universal. Yes, there have been some difficult interactions. The fact that people don't understand, or it gets them out of their comfort zone, or the fact that I will never give up on my fellow Roman Catholic friends and I will never say no in answering their questions—that's where patience comes in. But also, ultimately, I don't have to answer to anyone for who I am. I also ask people to come to a Byzantine Divine Liturgy at my parish that is nearby in Weirton (WV). Or I will loan people some of my books, such as *The Pilgrim*. Or I will sit down, and I will show others the difference between our chants to theirs. Or I will sit down and use the internet to show them what it means to have an icon screen.

Most of the time people are dumbfounded; they get excited and are so happy to see that the Catholic Church is not just this one, mainstream, “this is what it is.” I discuss that we actually represent what it

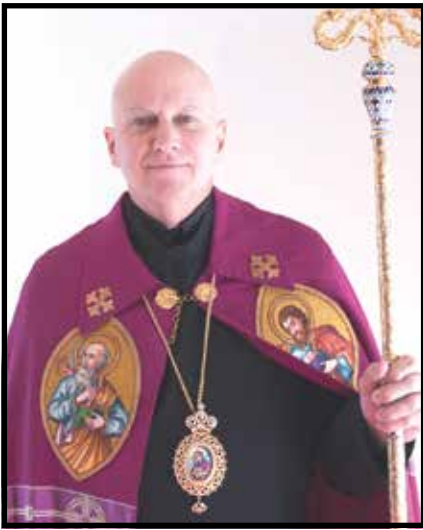
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I LIFT UP MY EYES...

Pastoral Reflections of Bishop Kurt



PRAYER: A CONVERSATION WITH A GOOD FRIEND

When I was a seminarian in Pittsburgh, one of our teachers was a Roman-rite pastor, and he invited the seminarians to sing vespers at his Roman-rite parish. He promoted the event with his parishioners, and quite a crowd turned out to pray with us. At the end of the service, one of the women said to me, “I always said, ‘the Byzantines pray more than we do!’” When I was living in Rome, someone was going to Slovakia for Christmas. A Slovak warned him, be prepared that the only thing you will do is eat and go to church. When I went to Ukraine for Christmas, I can say the same thing: the only thing we did for two weeks was eat and go to church. It does seem like prayer is a big part of the life of our church, at least public prayer is. I also believe from talking to people, that private prayer is a big part of life for people in our church. People often tell me that they pray for me.

What is prayer? Are there different kinds of prayer? How should we pray? There are more books written on these subjects than you can read in a lifetime. The answer to the first question is that prayer is talking to God. There are as many different ways to talk to God, as there are ways to communicate with other people, or for that matter, with animals. When we talk to other people, we can ask questions for information, we can ask questions for favors, we can ask questions as challenges. When we talk to our pets, sometimes we ask questions that we don’t expect them to answer, and sometimes we say silly affectionate things to them that we would never say to another human being, at least not in public. Pretty much any of these conversations are good ways to converse with God too.

Over the years I have heard people say that there are certain kinds of prayers we should never say. Some people say you should never ask for anything for yourself; you should only ask for things for others. I can’t agree with that. In the prayers that God has given us in the scriptures, many of them ask for particular things for ourselves. Some people say you should never pray for something bad to happen to someone else. But again, there are prayers in the Bible in which we ask for God to hurt someone else. Asking God to hurt someone else seems like the opposite of the Christian faith. On the other hand, we all feel that way sometimes, so when you take your request to God, you are only being honest. It doesn’t do any good to lie to God. Taking your feelings to God, like a child having a tantrum, is better than taking out the tantrum on the person you are angry at. There is no point in hiding it from God; He already knows how I feel and what I think. The point is that, when we take it to God, we can leave it with God. I would not be so bold as to give you this advice except that there are many Psalms in the Bible that do exactly that. They call them Psalms of execration or cursing. Remember, when you take it to God you can leave it with God, and not act on it yourself. I don’t think there is a wrong way to pray. God is just happy that you

talked to Him at all: He doesn’t expect you to talk the right way. I think our prayers are like the crayon drawings that children make for their parents. Even if your mother is an artist or an art critic, she still loves your crayon drawings and puts them on her refrigerator.

What are some of the things that we can pray for? The things that we might pray for depend on the times and who we are. Last year around Christmas, it seemed that many people in different parishes told me, “Bishop, I’m so afraid.” A few people said, “I’m afraid to leave my home.” I’m not sure why so many people said those things at the same time, but I decided to print some prayers for protection for the parishes. It made sense to pray to the Mother of God and to Saint Michael, so I searched our liturgies for protection prayers, and I found them in the hymns we sing on October 1 and on November 8. Then I needed an icon to put on the card, and I chose a magnificent icon of the Mother of God, that also included angels. It must be one of the many valuable icons that Bishop Michael Dudick purchased in his time here. It is called the “Unburnt Bush.” The unburnt bush, of course, is the bush that Moses saw on Mount Sinai. Remember that Moses was fascinated to see a bush that was on fire but was not consumed. When he went closer to look at it, the voice of God called out to him from the bush, and his special relationship with God began. As Christians we see

The presentation of the prayer cards to the clergy was scheduled for our last Presbyteral Days. Father Michael Hayduk found us an Akathist Hymn to the Unburnt Bush. The Akathist has an interesting story. Do you remember only a few months ago the wildfires in Northern California? Fires swept unexpectedly through suburban neighborhoods, and the fires went so fast that many well-informed people were trapped, and many barely escaped with only the clothes on their backs. An Orthodox bishop in that area translated this old Akathist from Church Slavonic for the people of northern California to ask for protection from the fires. We printed the Akathist for our Presbyteral Days and sang it one evening. Father Jack Custer cantored the Akathist beautifully. Now here is the astonishing part of the event. At the last minute, I asked Father Joseph Bertha to give an explanation of the icon. This particular one has Mary and the infant Jesus in the center, surrounded by eight angels and four prophets. Father Bertha stood up and told us, this particular icon is a “protection” icon. Our people kept this icon in their wooden homes in the old country for protection from fires—remember our tradition calls it the “unburnt bush,” not the “burning bush.” He went on to say that the eight angels provide protection from the different things we pray about in our liturgies: protection from flood, fire, civil war, plague, etc. Each angel is holding some appropriate symbol. The Akathist that we sang did pray for pro-

erately put fear into our lives to get us to pray? I don’t know, but I have heard that boys take their girlfriends to scary movies so that they will hug them. If the only way that God can get a hug out of us is to scare us, then who knows? Perhaps if we gave God more hugs, He wouldn’t have to take us to scary movies.

I tried putting “prayer” into Google to find out what people are searching for. The only phrase that came up was “prayers for strength.” It seems that many people around the world are praying for “strength.” Many people are discouraged or lacking in hope, and they believe that they need strength to carry on with what they have to do.

Searching the Scriptures, there are any number of lists that can give us a spiritual program. For example, Saint Peter tells us to “supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.” If you pray for each one of those things you would have found a path to very advanced holiness.

Should we use prayer books? There are many prayer books, and many of them are excellent and appropriate for our own tradition. However, the prayer book that I recommend is the one you already have inside your Bible. Almost half way through your Bible you will find a book called “Psalms.” This book is 150 prayers written for you by God Himself. Why would we need any other prayer book? Almost every situation you might find yourself in — whether joyous or sorrowful, whether you are astonished by beauty or by betrayal — there is already a prayer in the Psalms for you.

Many people love to say the Rosary. Did you know that the Rosary has 150 “Hail Marys” because the Book of Psalms has 150 psalms? In the Middle Ages, the monks prayed the Psalms but most of the common people were unable to read, so they began the practice of saying 150 Hail Marys instead of the Psalms. Nowadays almost everyone knows how to read, so why don’t they say the Psalms? In my first parish, I encouraged my people to at least try out the Psalms, to just say one in the morning, and then go on to the next one the next morning. A few weeks later a woman came to me and said, “Father, I tried out what you said. I say one Psalm each morning. It’s like a miracle! Each day, that psalm was exactly what I needed for that day!” If you read a psalm every morning, you will find deep wisdom, deep passion, blessings and curses, drama and excitement, and also rest and tranquility. If you don’t say the Psalms, there is an unopened treasure chest sitting in your house waiting for you.

Finally, though, after all these prayers that are written down for us to read, whether alone or with others, another kind of prayer that is important is the kind we make up ourselves. I don’t mean like writing our own poems. I mean when we tell God in our own words what we think and what we feel and what we desire. The only rule is never to lie. God already knows everything about us, so there is no use in putting on an act. Saint Teresa of Avila is considered one of the great teachers of prayer. The Pope declared her one of the first women to



Icon of the Unburnt Bush

the unburnt bush as a prefiguring of Christ who contained the full fire of divinity in our flesh, without the flesh being destroyed. We also see it as a prefiguring of the Mary because she held God in her womb, even sharing His blood with Him, and she was not burnt nor destroyed. So, there is a particular icon of the Mother of God called the “Unburnt Bush.” The icon often has four prophets in the corners prophesying about the miraculous birth of the Son of God from the Virgin.

tection from all sorts of terrors, poetically linked to the scriptures and the Mother of God. Why do I call that astonishing? When I chose the icon, I had no idea it was a protection icon! When Father Bertha began to speak...I was speechless. I hope that all of you have received at least one of these prayer cards from your pastor. If you have not, ask him for one, or write to the Chancery.

So, one of the things we can ask for in prayer is protection. Would God delib-

receive the title "Doctor of the Church." She describes prayer as a conversation between two good friends, or in another place she says, "mental prayer is nothing more than an intimate sharing between good friends." Saint Teresa encourages you to spread your wings and soar to great heights in prayer. As she put it, "some people try to get you to walk around like chickens with their feet tied, when you have the power to soar like an eagle." Talking to God from your own heart is a power that every one of us has. We have that power no matter what our position, or education, or intelligence. We have that power even if we can't speak well with other people. It is a power that no one can every take away from us. You may not have immediate access to powerful

people on earth, and maybe even some unimportant people don't return your phone call right away, but you have instant access to the all-powerful Creator at all times and in all places. Why talk to anyone else?

To pray from your heart, you don't need the right words, and you don't need to hear an answer with your ears. An interviewer once asked (Saint) Mother Teresa of Calcutta, "What do you say to God when you pray?" She answered him, "I don't say anything at all. I just listen." So he asked her, "Well what does God say, when you are listening?" She answered, "Oh He just listens, too."

+Kurt Burnette

Bishop Lach Accepts Parma Appointment...

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hearing about the appointment.

Bishop Lach was born in Kezmarok, Slovakia, in 1973. In 1992, he was admitted to the Greek Catholic seminary in Presov and, in 1995, entered the novitiate of the Society of Jesus in Trnava, Slovakia. He continued his studies at Trnava University and also studied at the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome, where he obtained a master's degree and a doctorate. In 2009, he began working at the Center of Spirituality East-West of Michal Lacko in Kosice, Slovakia.

He was ordained a deacon of the Society of Jesus Nov. 11, 2000, and was ordained a priest July 1, 2001. He was appointed auxiliary bishop of Presov and titular bishop of Ostracine April 19, 2013. He was ordained as auxiliary bishop of Presov and titular bishop of Ostracine, June 1, 2013.

Tickets are limited, so those unable to attend may watch the enthronement live on social media. For up-to-date information on the live stream, go to www.parma.org.

2018 ALTAR SERVER CONGRESS

AUGUST 4—8 2018
AGES 6-17

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Come and experience a wonderful fun filled Event with fellow altar servers from across the Eparchy of Passaic. Have fun while learning more about your important role as an Altar Server! This Event is underwritten by the Eparchy
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FROM THE OFFICE OF THE BISHOP CLERGY APPOINTMENTS

EFFECTIVE JUNE 11, 2018

Deacon James Smith – relieved as Administrator of Epiphany of Our Lord church, Roswell, Georgia.

Father Lewis Rabayda – relieved as Parochial Vicar of Saint Gregory of Nyssa Church in Beltsville, Maryland, and is appointed Parochial Administrator of Epiphany of Our Lord Church in Roswell, Georgia.

Father Sergij Deiak – appointed Parochial Vicar of Saint Gregory of Nyssa Church, Beltsville, Maryland.

Father Edward Cimbala – relieved as Pastor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church, Levittown, Pennsylvania, and appointed Pastor of Saint Mary Church, New York, New York. Also appointed Parochial Administrator of Holy Cross Church, New York, New York.

Father Vasyl Sokolovych – appointed Parochial Vicar of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church, Levittown, Pennsylvania.

Father Frank Hanincik – relieved as Pastor of Saint Michael the Archangel, Allentown, Pennsylvania, and as Parochial Administrator of Saints Peter and Paul Church in Palmerton, Pennsylvania. He is appointed Pastor of Saints Cyril and Methodius Church in Fort Pierce, Florida.

Father Peter Hosak – appointed Parochial Administrator of Saint Michael the Archangel Church, Allentown, Pennsylvania and as Parochial Administrator of Saints Peter and Paul Church, Palmerton, Pennsylvania.

Father Iurii Vishchak – appointed Parochial Vicar of Saint Michael the Archangel Church, Allentown, Pennsylvania and Parochial Vicar of Saints Peter and Paul Church in Palmerton, Pennsylvania.

Father Francis Rella – relieved as Parochial Administrator of Saint Joseph Church, New Brunswick, New Jersey, and as Parochial Administrator of Saints Peter and Paul Church, Somerset, New Jersey. He is appointed Pastor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church, Toms River, New Jersey.

Father Mykhaylo Kravchuk – relieved as Parochial Administrator of Saints Cyril and Methodius Church in Fort Pierce, Florida. He is assigned as Pastor of Saints Peter and Paul Church, Somerset, New Jersey and as Parochial Administrator of Saint Joseph Church, New Brunswick, New Jersey.

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Being Teen and Byzantine

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means to be human—we are all different, but we are all unified in what means to be human.

Q: How can a teenager or young adult fit in the Byzantine Church if they did not have a strong upbringing in the tradition? What would you tell them?

A: What I would tell them is that first and foremost you must be open, to be comfortable while being uncomfortable. At the same time there are so many resources out there. Gone are the days when we could not communicate with people easily across the country. For example, as a young adult I have my own personal phone, which is a little computer in my hand, and on that I have countless resources. For example, using Wikipedia, I can say, “What is Byzantine Catholic?” We have so many Byzantine churches across the area—Romanian and others. Although we are small, and although we do not have a lot of “shout out,” it’s not that hard to find us if you just have an inquisitive nature. So, I would suggest to someone who does not have the privilege of a priest as a father is to say to them, “Don’t be afraid to jump on the bus that somebody has already offered to you.”

I feel like what really needs to be done is that the people who do have my privilege, and the other Byzantine children who were born into this tradition, need to take the initiative and actually let people know that this exists. Let them know when a Divine Liturgy is being celebrated nearby and invite people. That is what I feel really needs to be done—encourage this desire for truth and not just lie back on what you know and what is comfortable.

Q: Do you get a chance to interact with other Byzantine Catholic youth?

A: When I was in Romania I did interact with some Byzantine youth. [In the US] I mostly interact with my siblings, but here on campus there is also a Byzantine club. I’m also part of a couple Byzantine Catholic youth Facebook groups such as Searcher for the Lost Byzantine group and Byzantine singles. And those are just easy ways that we can talk about what it’s like to be Byzantine nowadays—to share articles. For example, here on campus we have a book club and a little prayer time that we have on Sundays where we are reading *The Pilgrim*. Then, at my parish in Weirton, there’s a couple of youth as well that serve on the altar. Those are the places that I interact with other Byzantine youth the most.

Q: Do you see any opportunities that are currently not explored at the Eparchial level regarding your fellow youth?

A: First and foremost, what is really important is the fact that we need people to know about our traditions, because the older generation is getting older. Who is going to be sacristan, who is going to make the *sarmale* (Romanian for “cabbage rolls”), who is going to make the flower arrangements, or who is making the bread for the church? We want our traditions. The youth do not want our traditions to change. The youth are attracted to what our tradition is. But the problem is that they need something to do. So, if I was in a position of change I would actually teach my people how to make the *prescura*. In our mission back home, my sister makes the *prescura*, and we learned how to do it. I would have a choir of the youth and teach them how to sing. Also, today the Catholic youth are very involved in the pro-life movement. I believe that we should have a pro-life group that is very active, because that creates the community. That creates what it means to be Catholic. Catholic is not like the Prote-

stant who just will go to a Sunday service and they’re done. Being Catholic means how do you live every breath of your entire life as a Catholic. These will all promote the youth to get involved.

I think that it is very important for us that we are Romanians, so what does it mean to be Romanian Catholic? Do the youth know how to make *sarmale* for the Church fundraiser? Those are the questions and the changes that I would make because I know from myself, that is one of the reasons why I am so in love with my tradition’s faith. It is the fact that I was so active in my own parish and the fact that I helped my father or my family with every activity that we did.

Q: What are the Romanian Byzantine Catholic elements that attract you personally and that you think others may find attractive?

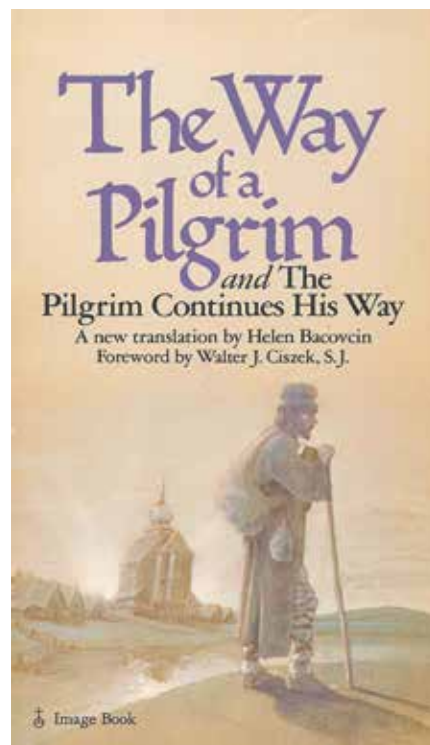
A: The joy! When you walk into a Byzantine Church community you just feel this overwhelming sense of joy. The tradition. The minute I walk into our church I always cry, I always tear up, because I’ve never felt so close to God. My entire body is just enamored with God. All my senses are tantalized—my smell, my sight, my touch, my everything. That is what it means to be a Byzantine—that you know where you are as soon as you walk into the church. It’s also the community. It’s the fact that after the Liturgy everyone goes down for coffee and doughnuts, and there are children and elderly and everyone is talking to one another—no one is allowed to leave until they have some food. It’s the fasting and the feasting. We actually try to practice what we preach. I would definitely say the services themselves—the fact that there is so much beauty in our services, even just the wording. I just love to read the Divine Liturgy. If you just open the book and listen to the words, they will speak to your soul. It gives me such a sense of refreshment because as a young person nowadays we are constantly bogged down, with pressure. We are constantly having to do well with material things, to do well with education, trying to get married and have children—all good things. But it reminds me of the Gospel of the men who had all those different excuses, but the wedding feast was the most important thing. So, what really attracts me the most, and why I have chosen to remain Byzantine Catholic, and why I would die for this Church, is because I love it so much.

Q: So, from your very first breath you were Byzantine, but also grew up in a Byzantine way. Yet, there are people who may have been born and baptized Byzantine but for some reason they are not practicing Byzantines, hence do not possess this experiential knowledge that you do. How would you try to encourage people who have not had this powerful experience?

A: For my brethren who were baptized Byzantine but for some reason or another do not understand what is happening all the way, first and foremost I would have patience on them. But I would also invite them and have open conversations about what it means to be Byzantine for you? Many of our youth do not understand what it’s like to be Byzantine in the sense of the fasting, the feasting, or our Saints stories. So, the first thing I would do is educate them on our past and explain what makes us kind of cool, what makes us different. Then I would give them a job in the church, a reason to make them feel needed and active, and part of that community. So, then it’s not just “Oh, I’m going because grandma wants me to go.” No, I’m going because this is who I am. I would suggest that a conference of some kind would be helpful where we can bring all our youth together.

I’m going to the Franciscan University in Steubenville and we have the Steubenville

youth conferences which can change people’s lives. From my experience of watching youth come and go, what really turns people off is this sense that “Oh, we’re just coming in on Sunday.” This is not what it is. This is our life. So, when I’ve seen people get active, tasked with a job, educated, and learn what it’s like to be Byzantine Catholic, then you see where the love comes in. Just think about human relationships and how you become best friends with someone. You become best friends when you realize that “oh, wow” this person is a living and breathing person. This person is someone who has loves and interests. The Byzantine Church, like the Roman Catholic Church, is not just people that go there, say a couple of words and oh, yeah, we’re done. It’s a living, breathing part of the Church of Christ. I think that is something that is so beautiful, and anyone who fully understands that will fall in love. They will want to be active and live their faith.



Q: Another aspect of this is that maybe people only see the visible, and don’t see God in all that. Where do you find God in your day to day life?

A: Something that Saint John Paul II said is really close to my heart. He said that we have to train our eyes to see the invisible before we see the visible. I think that is very beautiful and I think that is definitely what being Byzantine means. So, for me, I see God when I walk to my classes in the morning; I see a tree and some moss growing on a tree; I see just the way the sky is, the way the tree is positioned—it’s awe striking and beautiful. For me, God is there. I also see God in every single person I meet. I may not know their names, and I may not ever meet them again, but I see God in them. **Anything with beauty, anything with truth, is where I see God.** When I read Shakespeare and the words speak to my soul, I feel God’s presence. That is how I never feel alone or never forget that He is there. But that took practice and that took prayer. What really led me to that was just putting away my phone, putting away all the busyness of the world, spending time outside two minutes a day and really appreciating everything.

Also, saying the Jesus prayer, trying to practice and saying it constantly, that really helped me—and that’s how I see God every day. And I’m still working and practicing on this, while hoping and praying that I get stronger in it, because I think it is something very, very important.

The world nowadays is not created for that kind of personal prayer. **The world is constantly flashing distractions.** They may not all be bad, but you do have to sit back a second and say, ok, what is the most important thing right now. And I know I may be speaking from a different perspec-

tive, but youth nowadays can see what has happened in the past and there is this feeling of wanting peace—that is what young people want today. I feel truthfully, **the only way to find peace is to appreciate the small things and see that God is in the small things, because God is everywhere.**

Q: You mentioned youth and their phones. Can we find God in technology? Can we find God in the “digital continent” as Pope Benedict XVI had said? Is there an opportunity for us to be missionary disciples in the online world?

A: Definitely. I would say that the internet has been a great tool for me in showing my friends and people who have questions what it means to be a Byzantine. Now I can just Google and I find music, photos, videos and lots of information about being Byzantine. What I have noticed is that people love their social media. Facebook is kind of going out, but Facebook is definitely a tool. People now love Instagram, which is a great opportunity to show that, for instance, today we’re making *prescura* (Romanian for *prospora*—the leavened bread for the Eucharist), or this is our icon screen. My parish in Weirton is now broadcasting a Facebook livestream of their Divine Liturgy which people watch. I would also think that every church needs an actual website, with the homilies posted, the readings of that Sunday, or music to listen to. But I also think that podcasts are great, it could be a youth podcast. One of my favorite apps on my phone is *Pray As You Go*, which is a Jesuit mission and it’s the readings of the day, then there is a reflection. I listen to it when I work out, or if I’m going to class, or if I just want some quiet meditation. It’s just 12 minutes long, and so it’s not that big of a deal.

I would also say that we should continue to use the tools that we have and in that way we can let people know [about our church]. People are ready to go, but they need to have it easy in the beginning. So, there is definitely God on the internet and it can be used as a tool for our mission on this earth as Byzantines.

Q: How do you, who’s been born and raised here in the U.S., interact with Romanian Byzantine Catholics that immigrated here to the U.S.? How do you handle that culturally different understanding of what it means to be Byzantine Catholic?

A: A lot of the lovely immigrants that come here do get upset. For example, when they realize that the music is not the same exact music that would be in their village back home. Or the fact that the priests here are not like the priests back home. That is the biggest difficulty for me and helping this generation realize that something they loved so much is not exactly the same here. But, we come back to the question—what’s more important? For me, it’s more important to be Byzantine, to be Catholic. But the way I handle it is simply finding similarities and learning from these people, because I do not want to lose my cultural identity. So, it is very helpful when we have *sarmale* (cabbage rolls) night, or we make *mămăliga* (polenta), or for Easter we sing old Romanian hymns, or celebrating other old traditions such as greeting each other with *Hristos a Înviat! Christ is Risen!* We need to find the similarities that we do have, and learn from these immigrants who are coming in, so that I can understand and get the feel of what it would be like if I had lived in Romania.

Q: In our Church there is also another group that, although not born or baptized in our Church, they find something attracts them. Can you name what those elements may be?

A: Yes. Some of these may be the fact that we have not changed the Liturgy and our

services. It is the fact that we go to Liturgy and it's the same Divine Liturgy that was celebrated a thousand years ago. They love the beauty, the music and the tradition of our Byzantine Church. They also love the fact that they can speak to a priest one on one, and not have to go through all the hoops and the loops. They feel like their spiritual health matters, and there's a consequence. They're not drowning from a feeling of just being a number that might happen in larger Roman Catholic parishes. They also love the fact that they can go to the Divine Liturgy and people will know them by name. They love the fact that they can bring their children who will be interested in what's going on, and will have the freedom to be children in that environment. I like to call them our "Roman refugees" (smiling), it's the term I coined for these lovely people.

Q: Is there a message you would like to share to people of all ages who may be completely disconnected from our Church either for unfortunate reasons or they did not benefit of your upbringing and nurturing of your faith? Any message of hope to those who may not even realize that they belong to this Church and went astray?

A: First off, know that whenever you come to a Byzantine church you will be loved, and you will be greeted with open arms. You will be cared for, that people will genuinely want to care for you and show that God is bursting for you, and that God loves you. Second of all, what you can experience at a Byzantine church is wonderful. If you just go inside when everything's quiet and smell the incense, you can feel God's presence. When you look and see the priest transforming the bread and wine into the

body and blood of Jesus Christ, and you see what's going on and hear the music from the choir, you'll realize why you are there. You will realize that being Byzantine is the only place where you can find that experience, where you can have all your senses feel why they were created. Third of all, **don't let the material things of the world get in the way — things that are passing, things that may seem really important right now but ultimately at the end, fade.**

Because being Byzantine Catholic, we constantly look both at the Resurrection and the Crucifixion, during Lent we sing *Alleluia*, and during the Easter season we still remember that Christ died. So, our whole entire life is one of joy and sadness at the same time because we are constantly reminded that we are mortal. Therefore, don't let the material things of today get

in the way of what's really important. Just remember you are not alone on your journey—there are countless others that are there for you, want to help you, and who are working on the same goals themselves.

For the youth of today, I just want to say that we have the most energy, the most time and the most passion than we will ever have for the rest of our lives. So, we need to use that to actually do something meaningful on this Earth and to continue what the martyrs have started and to not let our own pride, our own distractions get in the way of that goal—why we were baptized, why we were put on this Earth—which is ultimately to love and glorify Jesus Christ.

Interview by Raul Botha

IS GOD CALLING YOU TO BE A DEACON?

—new class forming June, 2019—

Deacons represent a great and visible sign of the working of the Holy Spirit through a life of service in the Church.

If you or others perceive that God is calling you to serve the Church as a deacon and you would like to further explore the possibility of this vocation, please contact:

Father Nicholas Daddona
516-457-5617
ndaddona@eparchyofpassaic.com



Sisters Servants of Mary Immaculate

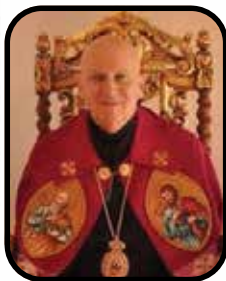
64th Holy Dormition Pilgrimage

August 11-12, 2018

His Beatitude Sviatoslav presiding

MARY, OUR MODEL OF PRAYER

"Do Whatever He Tells You..."



The Sisters Servants joyfully announce that along with His Beatitude Sviatoslav Shevchuk, Head of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, His Eminence Most Reverend William C. Skurla, Metropolitan Archbishop of Pittsburgh and Most Reverend Kurt Burnette, Bishop of the Eparchy of Passaic, will also preside at this year's pilgrimage. Archbishop William will be the main celebrant and homilist at the 5:00 pm Pontifical Divine Liturgy on Saturday, August 11th, and Bishop Kurt will be the celebrant and homilist for the 8:00 pm. Moleben to the Mother of God on Saturday night.

PARISH BANNERS - We ask that parishes bring their banners and have a representative carry them in the procession to the Pontifical Divine Liturgies on Saturday and Sunday.

PRESENTATION: V. Rev. John Custer, Rector of the Cathedral of St Michael the Archangel, Passaic NJ and Syncellus for New Jersey will speak on the topic "Mary, Mother of the Word of God" on Saturday, August 11th.

HOTEL RESERVATIONS - Sr. Michele has acquired the following great rate, and you must book through her for this rate: srmicheley75@aol.com, 845-753-2555 **HOTEL:** Fairfield Inn & Suites

ADDRESS: 225 Ramapo Valley Rd. Mahwah, NJ 07430

PRICE: \$115.00 per night (all inclusive room with breakfast)
King / Queen / 2 Doubles room size



PEOPLE YOU KNOW

IN LANSFORD...

On Sunday, May 20th, the students of Saint John the Baptist Church in Lansford, PA, celebrated the end of their ECF school year. For the last class, the students, their families, and members of the parish joined for a fellowship brunch. The gathering honored the second grade students who received First Penance the week before. As a gift from the parish, all of the students and instructors received customized t-shirts with the message "Our faith can move mountains." The surprise was enjoyed by all. Father Vasyi Chepelsky is the Administrator of Saint John the Baptist Parish.



IN MIAMI...

Deacon Michael Opalka of Saint Basil Byzantine Catholic Church in Miami, FL, was asked to speak at the Archdiocese of Miami weekend Pre-Cana retreat program "Camino". The archdiocese requires couples seeking to receive the sacrament of marriage to attend a 2 day *Camino* retreat. Deacon Michael spoke to more than 50 couples on the sacraments of Confession and Holy Eucharist and provided a personal testimony regarding his 33 year marriage to his wife, Suzanne. Father Michael Kane is the Administrator of Saint Basil Parish.



IN MINERSVILLE...

Priest's Mother, Veronica Verbosh Sekellick, Celebrates her 100th birthday July 14, 2018

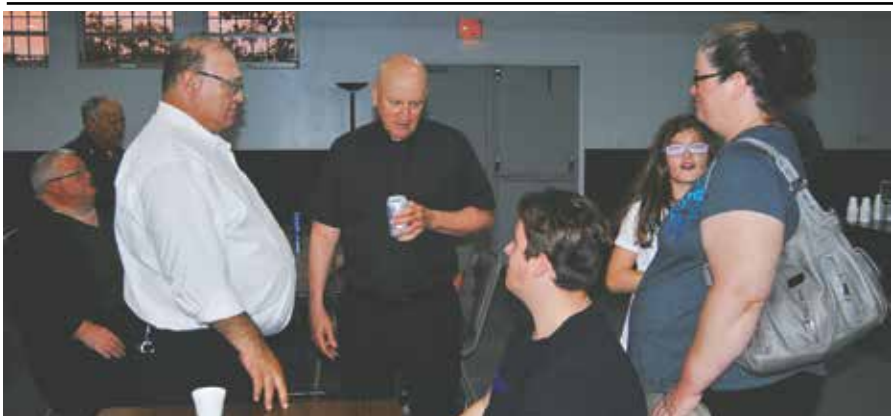


Mom, today we are celebrating you on your 100th birthday remembering all the lives you touched and the memories you made over the years. A most loving and blessed birthday wish goes out to you from your extended family and children: John and Irene Gombola; Bret and Therese Bennett; grandchildren, RJ and Valerie Bennett.

Veronica is the mother of the late Reverend Monsignor John T. Sekellick prior pastor of the Holy Ghost Byzantine Catholic Church, Jessup, PA. She is the eldest member of Saints Peter and Paul Byzantine Catholic Church, 107 South 4th Street Minersville, PA. Divine Liturgy in honor of Veronica Sekellick will be offered Saturday July 14, 2018 at Saints

Peter and Paul, by celebrant Father Gregory Noga, Pastor.

Happy Birthday, Mom! We are thankful to have you as our mother: daughters, Irene and Therese. God Bless. Mnohaja l'ita!



Bishop Kurt meeting with members of the Juhasz family and Richard Arcoleo

IN NEW PORT RICHEY...

Bishop Kurt Visits New Port Richey

On May 29, 2018, Bishop Kurt made a pastoral visit to Saint. Anne Parish and celebrated the Divine Liturgy for the parishioners. Refreshments and a "meet and greet" with Bishop Kurt followed in the church hall. Father Olexiy Nebesnyk is Administrator of Saint Anne Parish.—by Anne Marie Prokopiak



"Save Your people, O God, and bless Your inheritance!"



Pattie Wellman and Mary Macht welcoming Bishop Kurt

AROUND THE EPARCHY



IN BELTSVILLE...

Parish Welcomes New Priest and Says Farewell to Outgoing Priest

On June 10th Father Lewis Rabayda, Parochial Vicar of Saint Gregory of Nyssa in Beltsville, Maryland said farewell to the first parish he was assigned to serve. The new Parochial Vicar, Father Sergij Deiak arrived in the United States the evening before, and concelebrated the Divine Liturgy after only being in the US for 14 hours! Father Sergij, his wife, Pan'i Luba; son, Mykhaylo; and daughter, Sophia, were welcomed by all at a reception. It was a bittersweet moment for all involved; there were many emotional good-byes, and many excited welcoming handshakes. Father Conan Timoney remains the Parochial Administrator.



Peter Wingerter (altar server), Father Sergij, Father Lewis, and Deacon William Szweczyk



Anna Wroblewski (the parish's oldest parishioner) greets Father Sergij Deiak

IN MYRTLE BEACH...

New Icon and Visiting Priest

Father Vitaliy Pukhayev, Pastor of Saint George Byzantine Catholic Church, Linden, NJ, visited Blessed Basil Hopko Byzantine Catholic Mission in Conway (Myrtle Beach), SC, on Sunday, June 24, and blessed an icon of Blessed Basil Hopko. The icon was donated to the Mission by Father Joseph Bertha, pastor of Saint John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church in Trumbull, CT.

The parish is blessed to receive this beautiful icon and it will be one of the four major icons placed behind the altar in the church. Father Conan Timoney is Administrator of Blessed Basil Hopko Mission.

(Below) Father Martin Vavrak was the celebrant for two Sundays at the Blessed Basil Hopko Byzantine Mission in Conway (Myrtle Beach), SC.



Father Martin Vavrak and congregation



Father Vitaliy Pukhayev blesses the icon of Blessed Basil Hopko

COMPREHENSIVE SINGING PROGRAM

BY THE METROPOLITAN CANTOR INSTITUTE

Over the past two years, the Metropolitan Cantor Institute has been experimenting with ways to provide cantor education throughout the United States. Based on our experiences, we are inaugurating a comprehensive program beginning in 2018, aimed at ensuring that every parish in the Byzantine Catholic Church has a cantor who can lead the liturgical singing of the parish well, to the glory of God, and in support of the prayer of the faithful.

The new program consists of online classes using the Internet combined with local mentoring where available, and an optional week-long summer program in

Pittsburgh. All classes are taught each year (some twice per year), allowing students to complete the work at their own pace. New students can enter the program in January or July, and complete the entire program in as little as two years.

Two classes are free, open to the public, and can be taken at any time: Introduction to Liturgy and Introduction to the Typikon. Students can register for further courses by submitting a registration form and the course tuition (usually \$75.00 for each eight week course, with discounts available). Course tuition allows us to engage trained voice teachers who are also cantors to review

student work and provide feedback.

We recommend that ALL cantors consider taking the initial class, Introduction to Church Singing, which starts in July. This class covers the essentials of vocal production, the basics of music theory for cantors, and the fundamentals of reading music, and also provides an essential introduction to rhythm and duch (spirit) of our plain chant.

Details and registration:
<http://mci.archpitt.org/classes>

FATHER CONAN TIMONEY CELEBRATES 50 YEARS OF ORDINATION

Myrtle Beach, South Carolina

On June, 3rd Bishop Kurt made his first visit to Blessed Basil Hopko Mission in Conway (Myrtle Beach), SC, on the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the ordination of our administrator, Father Conan Timoney. Father Conan Howard Timoney joined the Byzantine Catholic

Community of the Blessed Basil Hopko Mission in Myrtle Beach for a Divine Liturgy with Bishop Kurt Burnette to celebrate his 50th Anniversary of priestly ordination. On the previous evening, a dinner reception was celebrated at the Myrtle Beach Golf and Yacht Club. Father Conan was

ordained on May 31, 1968, by Bishop Quentin Olwell, CP, Bishop of Marbel, Korondal Cotabato, Philippines.

Concelebrating at the Divine Liturgy with Bishop Kurt were Father Conan and Deacon Anthony Kotlar. Over 50 people

were in attendance. Following the Liturgy, a coffee and cake reception to welcome Bishop Kurt and to honor Father Conan on his golden jubilee of priestly ordination. The parishioners of Blessed Basil Hopko Mission have been blessed by Father Conan's priestly ministry.



MONSIGNOR GEORGE DOBES CELEBRATES 50 YEARS A PRIEST

Annandale, VA

Fifty years is a long time. And when 37 of them have been spent as a "member of the family" at one Byzantine Catholic parish, that's cause for celebrating the half-century mark together.

And so that's what the parishioners at Epiphany of Our Lord parish in Annandale, VA, did! Monsignor George Dobes, JCL, was ordained a Roman Catholic priest in 1968 by the Archbishop of Chicago, John Cardinal Cody, and three years later began

active service as a Navy Chaplain, where he served 24 years.

Following retirement from naval service, he pursued a degree in canon law at the Catholic University of America, but it was while assigned to the Navy Chief of Chaplains Office in 1980, without a chapel congregation, that he first associated himself with Epiphany. This was his introduction to the Divine Liturgy and the Ruthenian Catholic Church in October, 1980. He then received his bi-ritual indult, requested by Cardinal Cody, with the concurrence of Bishop Michael Dudick, in February 1981.

For the next 37 years, Father Dobes assisted on a weekly basis and participated in baptisms, weddings, funerals, Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts, and parish social functions. He even returned on federal holiday weekends when he was assigned to the

Naval Chaplain School in Newport, RI.

Epiphany Parish is not the only Byzantine Catholic Church with which Monsignor Dobes is familiar. With the illness of Father Michael Shear in 2006, Monsignor frequently assisted at Saint Ann Byzantine Catholic Church in Harrisburg, PA, for more than a year. With the death of Father Michael, Monsignor Dobes was assigned to Saint Ann Church as "priest in residence," tasked with caring for the pastoral and sacramental duties of a parish priest.

In addition to currently assisting at Epiphany Parish, Monsignor continues his work with the Tribunal of the Archdiocese of Washington: a busy man for a retired priest!

May God Grant Him Many Years!



Bishop John Michael Botean of the Romanian Catholic Eparchy of Canton, Monsignor George Dobes, Bishop Kurt Burnette, and Father John Basarab, Pastor of Epiphany of Our Lord





DIVINE LITURGY TO BE HELD AT SAINT ANN BASILICA, SCRANTON: MONDAY, JULY 23, 2018

A Byzantine Divine Liturgy will be celebrated during the annual novena to Saint Ann on Monday, July 23, at 4:30 PM, at the Basilica of the National Shrine of Saint Ann, Scranton, PA.

This annual novena draws thousands of faithful pilgrims from July 17 through July 26, the feast day of Saint Ann on the Latin calendar. Bishop Kurt will be the main celebrant at this year's Liturgy, with area priests and deacons as concelebrants, and area altar servers and choir members assisting. The Liturgy will be in the upper main church. All are invited to attend in witness to the beauty and expression of our Eastern Catholic traditions at this blessed and historic site. Everyone attending will receive the traditional blessing with a relic of Saint Ann following the Liturgy.

Pope Saint John Paul II elevated Saint Ann Monastery Church and National Shrine to the rank of Minor Basilica on October 27, 1997. The novena has a long history dating back to the early 1900's when the monastery was founded by the Passionist order and the Roman Catholic diocese of Scranton. Novena week is observed with multiple daily Latin rite Masses and novena

prayer services with inspirational preaching. This year's Passionist preachers are Father Don Ware, CP, and Father Michael Rowe, CP.

Over four decades, every bishop of the Eparchy of Passaic since Bishop Michael J. Dudick, has visited the monastery and celebrated Liturgy at the Basilica. Through the vision of Bishop Dudick, the Byzantine Liturgy during novena week became an established tradition at the Shrine. The entire Passionist community, staff, and parish family at the Monastery have continued to be gracious hosts and friends. It is a gift and blessing to be united as Catholics in worship to God and with reverence to Saint Ann.

Opportunities for Sacrament of Reconciliation are available before and after the regular daily novena services. It is recommended to arrive very early for parking; or to have time for a visit around the Shrine; or prayer time in the lower church before the icon of Saint Ann and the Holy Theotokos, an icon presented by the Eparchy of Passaic. A food stand is located at the lower end of the Shrine grounds, courtesy of Saint Ann's Parish volunteers.

Saint Nicholas Pilgrimage August 5, 2018

11th Sunday after Pentecost
Prefestive of the Feast of the Transfiguration of Christ



Carpathian Village / Saint Nicholas Shrine
802 Snow Hill Road
Cresco, PA 18326

- 11:00 AM Welcome and Blessing of Pilgrims Begins (Picnic Pavilion)**
- 11:15 AM Devotion to Saint Nicholas (Shrine Altar) w/Panachida for Deceased Clergy and Pilgrims**
- 11:30 AM Food Service Begins (Picnic Pavilion & Upper Tent)**
- 12:30 PM Confessions Begin (Shrine Gazebo)**
- 12:45 PM Healing Service with Anointing (Shrine Altar)**
- 1:00 PM Children's Program (Lower Tent)**
- 2:50 PM Procession from Lower Tent to Shrine Altar**
- 3:00 PM Hierarchical Divine Liturgy with Ordinations to Minor Orders (Shrine Altar)**
- Anointing with Oil of Saint Nicholas from Bari, Italy**
- Blessing and Distribution of Fruit**

Golf Club Car Service available for those with difficulty walking.
Restroom Facilities for those with physical disabilities also available.
Let's pray that God blesses us with great weather and a beautiful day, through the intercession of the Most Holy Theotokos and Our Holy Father Nicholas, of course!

The BIBLE Take and Read

*Whether you are
a Bible "novice"
or read every
day ...*



*For I know well
the plans I have in
mind for you,
plans for your
welfare and not
for woe, so as to
give you a future
of hope.*

Jeremiah 29:11

Saturday June 30
10am-3pm
Holy Dormition Friary, Sybertsville, PA

Cost for this one-day Retreat: \$25 includes lunch
overnight stays available at additional cost

The Bible sometimes presents God's anger and judgment—such images are often disturbing, but challenge us to see God's fidelity, compassion, and mercy. Brother John Barker, OFM, of Catholic Theological Union in Chicago will explore some of these images to help us to deepen our understanding of the Bible and its great story of God's enduring commitment and love.

"If you believe what you like in the Gospel, and reject what you don't like, it is not the Gospel you believe, but yourself." — St. Augustine of Hippo

Holy Dormition Friary
712 Hwy 93, Sugarloaf, PA 18249 // mail: PO Box 270, Sybertsville, PA 18251
register by phone or email: 570-788-1212 // holydormition@gmail.com
byzfranciscan.org

**Fr. Bryan Eyman of St. Athanasius Church
and Deacon Tim Kennedy**
invite you on a pilgrimage to the

HOLY LAND

11 Days

October 4-14, 2018

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Select International Tours at

800-842-4842 jane@select-intl.com

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ASK A PRIEST A QUESTION

Father Vasyl Chepelsky



IS IT A MORTAL SIN NOT TO ATTEND THE DIVINE LITURGY ON SUNDAY? IS TRAVELING A GOOD EXCUSE?

Dear Father,

Is it a mortal sin to miss Liturgy on Sundays? Can travelling excuse one from attending Mass?

It is our obligation as Catholics to attend Divine Liturgy on Sundays and major Feast Days. This is reflected in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*: “On Sundays and other holy days of obligation the faithful are bound to participate in the Mass. The precept of participating in the Mass is satisfied by assistance at a Mass which is celebrated anywhere in a Catholic rite either on the holy day or on the evening of the preceding day” (cf. CCC, 2180).

Furthermore, the *Catechism* declares: “On Sundays and other holy days of obligation, the faithful are to refrain from engaging in work or activities that hinder the worship owed to God, the joy proper to the Lord’s Day, the performance of the works of mercy” (cf. CCC, 2185).

We should make every effort to attend Divine Liturgy on Sundays/ Holy Days of Obligation. Since a “grave cause” is needed to excuse one from this obligation it would be a serious or mortal sin to willfully skip Divine Liturgy on Sunday or a Holy Day of Obligation, as the Church has always taught (cf. CCC, 2181).

There are a few legitimate reasons when the faithful could be excused from participation in Eucharist on Sundays/ Holy Days of Obligation, which include: illness or disability; serving as the sole caregiver for someone in need of constant attention; the absence of a priest (cf. CCC, 2180-2188); or a natural disaster like a flood or a blizzard, sufficient to put one’s safety at risk.

Reasons such as the necessity to work to support one’s family, child care, neces-

sary travel, etc., would excuse a person on particular occasions. Even if a person is required to work on Sunday, the day should nevertheless be lived as the day of our deliverance, which lets us share in this “festal gathering,” this “assembly of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven (cf. CCC, 2188).

If through no fault of our own, we discover that we are unable to attend the Liturgy, due to a valid and good reason, then we haven’t deliberately violated this precept of the Church. In these circumstances we still need to engage in private prayer for an appropriate amount of time personally or in a family (cf. CCC, 2183).

We always need to make the best effort possible to avoid the situations which result in our inability to attend Divine Liturgy. The following link could be very helpful to locate the nearest Catholic Church and the time of services, when we travel: <https://masstimes.org>

When travelling on Sundays/ Holy Days of Obligation, some of the important questions to be asked are: is the traveling work related and unavoidable or for vacations? Could it be postponed/ scheduled differently? What is the frequency of missing Divine Liturgy due to travels? Are there any other surrounding circumstances which may impact the moral responsibility of one who is not being able to attend Divine Liturgy? When we travel for vacations, we are not excused from attending the Divine Liturgy on Sundays/ Holy Days of Obligation.

Every time one finds himself/ herself in doubt about his/her situation – it is prudent to consult his/her parish priest, spiritual director or confessor, who will help them to evaluate the situation and cir-

cumstances, offer further guidance, and, if necessary, give dispensation, which usually could be given on individual case by case basis. Those who have continuing reasons to be excused should also consult their pastor.

Sunday is traditionally consecrated by Christian piety to good works and humble service of the sick, the infirm, and the elderly. Christians will also sanctify Sunday by devoting time and care to their families and relatives, often difficult to do on other days of the week (cf. CCC, 2186).

We always need to keep in mind that our attendance of Divine Liturgy should be within the context of us living our faith, doing deeds of mercy; it should be an encounter with the living God, and not merely a fulfillment of obligation. Pope Francis challenged all of us in our understanding of our Sunday/ Holy Day obligation, when he spoke to young residents of Guidonia, a village near Rome, in 2017, where he said: “If I say I am Catholic and go to Mass, but then don’t speak with my parents, help my grandparents or the poor, go and see those who are sick, this does not prove my faith, there’s no point...” This means that we should attend the Divine Liturgy not only to fulfill the obligation, but first and foremost – because we desire to meet the Lord in the holy temple and have a dialogue with our loving God, we want to continue to build our personal relationships with Him and to receive Him into our hearts in the Holy Sacrament of Eucharist. Every time we come out of the church after the service, we should be changed. And if we are not, we need to start asking ourselves about the reasons and work on our spiritual progress and growing closer to God every day.

I would like to kindly thank you for asking these questions and to encourage all the readers of the ECL to use this opportunity to ask the questions you have. **ECL**



LIFE, LOVE, AND THE HUMAN PERSON

By Ann M. Koshute, MTS

GIVE IT A REST

Many people reading this remember a time when Sundays began with Divine Liturgy, followed by either a family breakfast at home or a trek to Baba’s house for Sunday dinner. The table was laden with food, and conversations flew in multiple directions. Kids played, *Dzedos* napped, and no one was worried much about the week ahead; at least not for most of the day. Even as I was growing up, this routine began to change, and our options for spending a not-so-lazy Sunday multiplied. With the advent of the shopping mall, more people spent their time buying what they needed, and what they became convinced they *wanted*. Eventually, malls, grocery stores, and other businesses added hours on Sunday. With the convenience of Sunday shopping came the necessity for people to work those

hours, and more people than ever before had to be available to work anytime during the week – including Sundays. Of course, there have always been professions that require work on Sundays and holidays: law enforcement, health care workers, fire fighters, etc. Without the sacrifice of their time and willingness to be inconvenienced, our safety, health and security would be jeopardized. Of course, there are also people who must work Sundays because it’s required of them, and they need to meet those requirements in order to care for themselves and their families. Still, the fact remains that Sunday has become just another day for many of us – even if we faithfully attend Liturgy.

On the seventh day God completed the work He had been doing; He rested on the seventh

day from all the work He had undertaken. God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it He rested from all the work He had done in creation (Genesis 2: 2-3). These words in the Creation story may strike us as a bit odd – or we might gloss over them entirely. Was God *really* tired after creating the world? The answer of course is “no,” but the writer of Genesis calling our attention to the activity of *work* (in this case, creating the world and all things in it), surveying what has been accomplished, should make us take notice. It is no mere literary device, an important message for us. God is the Almighty One, and He doesn’t need to rest; *we* do. Not only that, we must make of it a *holy rest*. It goes without saying that Sunday (the day we have designated for rest) must first and foremost be a day to worship the

Lord. Actually, we should worship, praise and thank Him *every day*, but on this day, we must do as the Cherubic Hymn exhorts us and “set aside all earthly cares” – even if it’s only for an hour or two. On Sunday we are even more intentional in our praise of God, sacrificing a couple hours of sleep to make it to church, and making an effort to avoid distractions and thoughts of what we have to do later in the day or in the upcoming week. When we really think about it, God asks so little of us in comparison to all He has given us. Yet two hours (though it’s usually much less) of our time and attention to Him is often felt by us as a burden, something to get through; or like punching the time clock to receive “credit” for time served. Some weeks we have a lot on our minds, or we’re especially tired or not feel-

ing well, and God understands our short attention spans – or our impatience. If we're finding ourselves feeling this way every week, or viewing the Liturgy as the obligation we have to fulfill, it's time to reflect honestly about our relationship with God. The Liturgy shouldn't be a chore, but an act of love; and opportunity to spend time with Someone special to us, Who loves us deeply. Like a parent or grandparent (or anyone we love), God wants to be with us, not because He needs us, but because He loves us. Every day should be an opportunity to love Him with all our hearts. Sunday should be a day for us to allow Him to love us with the gift of *holy rest*.

Our lives are so fast-paced, and time is a precious commodity. There are never enough hours in a day, or days in the week, for everything we want or need to do. Time drags when we're engaged in activities we dread, and flies by when we are enjoying ourselves, or when we're on a tight deadline. As a result, we often utilize every moment of every day to accomplish all we can – including on Sunday. I'm just as guilty as anyone of squeezing in a few errands after Liturgy, but one Sunday in particular,

I found myself making more stops, doing things I could easily have done on Saturday, or left to Monday. The fact is I, perhaps like some of you, take Sunday for granted, use it as a "bonus day," and rationalize it by the fact that I "did my duty" and went to Liturgy. Don't misunderstand: God won't smite us because we stopped to pick up some eggs and bread or decided to buy that new couch because the sale ends today and the furniture store is on the way home. But the more we *do* on Sundays, the less we can let ourselves just *be*: be with Him, be with loved ones and friends, and be at peace with our own thoughts.

Holiness is the perfection of charity – that is, *love*. To *be holy*, then, is to love, and God (who is Love) both teaches us how to love and gives us the grace to grow in love. He invites us to take one day each week away from work and worry and enjoy some *holy rest*. God knocks on the door of our hearts in the Eucharist, asking to rest there within us. He invites us to spend the day taking a break from our struggle to *accomplish*, and simply rest in Him. **ECL**



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SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

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

A PILGRIMAGE PRAYERBOOK: THE PSALMS OF ASCENT

For Byzantine Catholics, summer-time is pilgrimage time. Pilgrimage isn't some quaint Old Country custom or something your baba did because she couldn't afford a "real" vacation. It's something basic to how God wants us to encounter Him and it runs through the Bible as an insistent theme.

In the Old Testament, God commanded the Israelites to make pilgrimage and gather in Jerusalem for three annual feasts: Passover, Pentecost, and the harvest feast of Booths (Deuteronomy 16:16). Jesus Himself made these pilgrimages (Luke 2:41-50). Notice that God's commandment to make pilgrimage has two aspects: God's people should gather together and they make Him the goal of their journey.

The Book of Psalms includes what was probably the songbook for these pilgrimages. Psalms 120-134 all share the same title: "Song of Ascent" and, all together, they trace the pilgrims' journey from wherever they may be living all the way to Jerusalem and up the hill to the very heart of the Temple.

Psalms 120 and 121 describe the pilgrim feeling alone and threatened, living among

unbelievers in a foreign land. He or she longs for peace, and peace will be found at the end of the journey to the Temple (Psalm 131). The emphasis on peace in these Psalms ultimately points to Christ, the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9,6), who "is our peace" (Ephesians 2,14), having reconciled us with God.

Psalms 122 describes an individual's excitement as the journey begins and a group comes together as fellow pilgrims. Instead of the "lying lips" and "deceitful tongues" (Psalm 120:2) of their exile, the pilgrims now share words of prayer and blessing. Their prayer as they travel is for peace: for their loved ones and for the Holy City itself.

In Psalm 123, the pilgrims express a conscious choice: to serve the Lord and be set free from the "contempt of the proud." The turning point for the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:17) comes when he realizes his quest to be his own master has alienated him from a father who loves him and enslaved him to a new master who will let him starve. That slave driver is sin.

Pilgrimages are typically family events where old stories are shared. Some of the remaining Psalms of Ascent review mo-

ments in Israel's shared history: specifically, the Exodus (Psalm 124), the Babylonian captivity (Psalm 129) and the return of the exiles to Jerusalem (Psalm 126). The pilgrims recognize, at least in retrospect, how the Lord has been with them even in their darkest moments. Can you tell your family's story with that insight?

Psalms 127 and 128 celebrate the family itself as the fundamental building block of God's plan for humanity. Psalm 128, the entrance hymn in the Byzantine rite of Matrimony, describes every blessing a new family could desire. It also teaches that such blessing comes only through "fear of the Lord." The Liturgy helps us to understand this term correctly by expanding it into "faith, reverence and the fear of God." It emerges out of the realization that I depend on God for existence and will be called to account by Him for how I spend my life. The Theotokos offered the same advice at the wedding in Cana: "Do whatever He tells you" (John 2:5).

Psalm 127, credited to Solomon, plays on three senses of the word "house." The Temple, the monarchy and the individual family are only firm if their foundation is

God. Only God could authorize the Temple (1 Chronicles 17,4-12) and choose the house of David to rule (2 Samuel 7). Only God can create life; He chooses human parents to be co-creators Him. Each of these institutions is an earthly image of God: the Temple as God's earthly throne, the king as the reflection of God's Lordship and human parents as images of God's life-giving Fatherhood.

Psalm 127 likewise dismisses any illusion that we can ultimately rely on ourselves alone to survive and prosper. Beyond all our natural (God-given!) human capabilities, there lies the mystery of God's providence, which demands our loving trust. This psalm is not an argument for laziness or fatalism or despair, but it does provide an antidote to much that is neurotic and controlling about so many contemporary lifestyles.

We'll continue our exploration of the Psalms of Ascent next month. **ECL**



UNDERSTANDING ICONS

Father Joseph Bertha, Ph.D.

A SPECTACULAR LOCATION FOR A BYZANTINE ICON

The Annunciation in the Triumphal arch at Saint Luke's Mission of Mercy, Buffalo, New York



The Triumphal Arch at Saint Luke's Mission of Mercy, Buffalo, New York

Saint Luke's Mission of Mercy, a basilica-type church over one hundred years old, is located on the east side of Buffalo, New York. One of the outstanding highlights of the interior painting is Jan Henryk de Rosen's Annunciation on the

triumphal arch completed in 1955. After he completed the Buffalo ensemble, De Rosen was commissioned to design the mosaics at the National Basilica of the Immaculate Conception in Washington DC., most notably the "Christ in Majesty," in the north

apse of the sanctuary.

De Rosen, a Polish-born artist, arrived in exile into the United States from 1939 and remained here until his death in 1982. He painted extensively around the United States, the Catholic Basilica in Saint Louis, and many other churches around the country. He was imbued with Byzantine iconography, which many of his works manifest.

The Liturgical celebration of the Feast

The subject matter for Buffalo's Saint Luke's, the Annunciation, (Evangelization in the original Greek, meaning Good News) is the pivotal feast of the entire Christian liturgical year. This event, precisely described in Luke's gospel (1:26-38), elaborates through four moments the unfolding of the Announcement of the Good News of the Birth of the long awaited Messiah. In the Byzantine Church, the Annunciation is an immovable feast day. Even if this feast coincides with Great and Holy Friday, because of its significance, that is, the moment of the Incarnation of the Son of God, it is joyously and elaborately celebrated on this date.

The Scripture account of the Annunciation

When the Luke Scripture account found in chapter 1:26-38 is examined, four distinct periods can be discerned in this event. First, archangel's greeting: Hail Mary, full of grace; secondly, the angel proclaims: Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God, and behold you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. Thirdly, the Virgin says to the angel, "How can this be since I do not know man?" Fourthly, the angel continues with the actual Good News: The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the

Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. The fourth aspect is the acceptance of the Virgin Mary: Behold I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.

The Location of the Annunciation within church architecture

The triumphal arch, an architectural structure found at the eastern end of a basilica-type church, consists of an enormous arch stretching across the upper part of the sanctuary of the church, supported on either side by pillars which reach to the ground. Immediately below, a concave bulge leaves an empty space directly above the altar table.

This architectural feature delineates—portrays in physical dimensions—the spiritual reality of the moment of the Annunciation, that the Virgin conceives in her womb the Son of the living God. How is this accomplished? The concave shape of the apse dome replicates the shape of the Holy Mother's womb and bears the Son of God. Since it is represented directly above the main altar it, signifies doubly the action of the Incarnation of the Son of God every time the Liturgy is celebrated on the altar below. Saint Luke's Annunciation is one of the rare instances of the remarkable correspondence between architecture and iconography.

Architecture visualizes the bones, sinews, and the musculature of the human body, and in the case of the church, the Body of Christ. Interiorly, the iconography on the walls depicts the skin. When both architecture and iconography are choreographed in conjunction, the church structure becomes a literal incarnation or en-flesh-ment which depicts in mortar, paints and color the Incarnation of the Son of God in the flesh of the Virgin Mary.

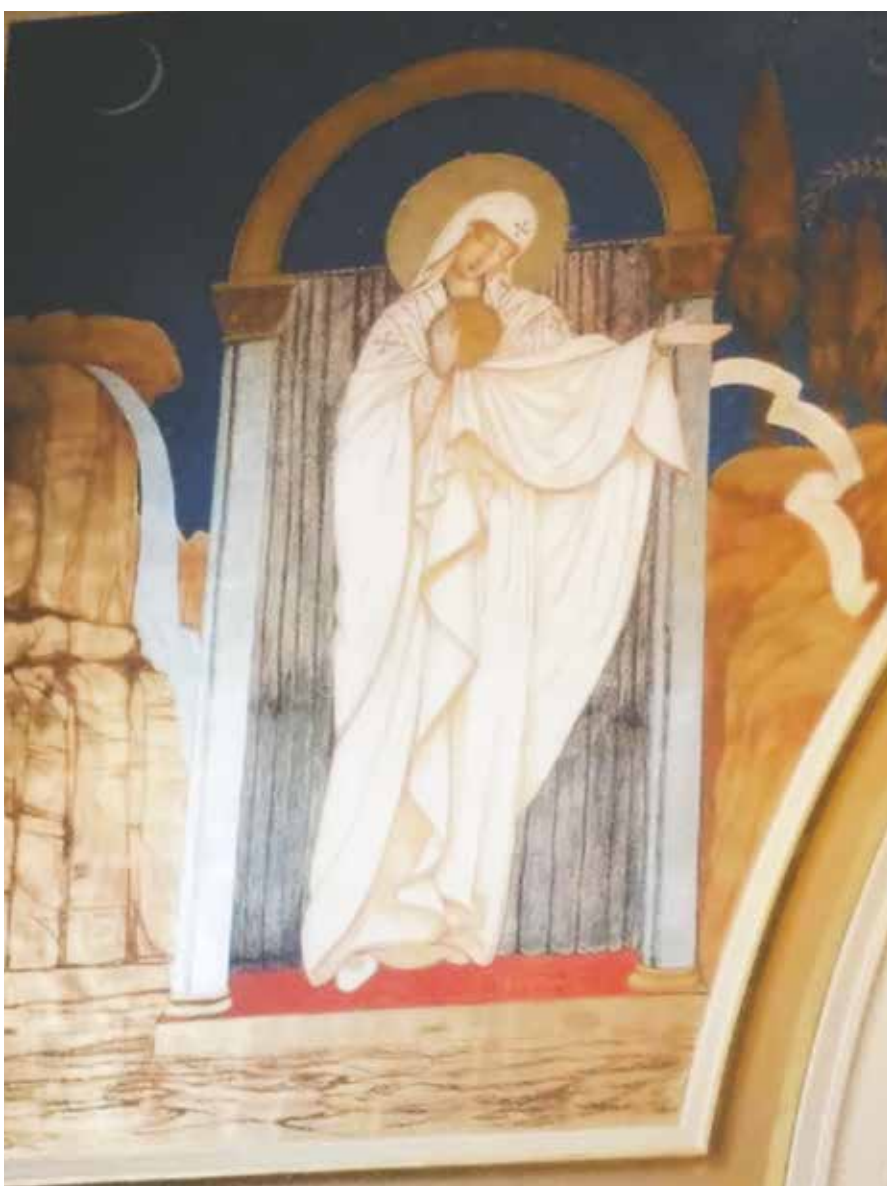
History of the Triumphal Arch

In the pre-Christian era the Triumphal arch was erected in order to pay tribute to the Caesar as a decorated entrance gate as he returned from battles in victory with booty, treasures and received the acclaim of his citizens.

As Christians began to use the basilica architecture as their churches, they incorporated the triumphal arch into the eastern end of the building. One of the most notable and ancient survivals of this feature can be found in the triumphal arch of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome, dating from the 5th century. It is the earliest surviving basilica church dedicated to the Holy Mother of God, where the Annunciation is depicted just above the sanctuary. Centuries later in 1143, the Annunciation scene is shown in the triumphal arch in the Norman Palatine Chapel in Palermo dating from 1143.

The Saint Luke's Triumphal Arch Annunciation

The scene encompasses the upper eastern end of Saint Luke's sanctuary. On the left is the Virgin Mary and to the right the Archangel Gabriel. The whole scene is a dark moonlit desert landscape. De Rosen has painted the sky as the dawning of a new day. From behind Archangel Gabriel, the



Detail of the Theotokos

ever so subtle gradations from dark night being pierced by teals, indicate the first light piercing the dark and shows the dawn of salvation. The silvery quarter moon above the Virgin signals the transition between the Jewish rendering of feasts by the lunar cycle, to the refulgent sun shining of the light of salvation in the Messiah, the Son of God, Jesus, the Light of the World.

The figure of the Virgin, pre-figurations of the Virgin, And Birth of the Messiah

The Virgin, dressed in both white *maphorion* (veil) and *chiton* (tunic), stands before a closed gate. The closed gate is one of the Old Testament prophecies of the Virgin Birth found in Ezekiel 44:2: "And he said to me, This gate shall remain shut; it shall not be opened, and no one shall enter by it, for the Lord, the God of Israel, has entered by it; therefore it shall remain shut."

She holds a round piece of cloth, Gideon's fleece, another Old Testament prefiguring found in Judges 6:37: "Behold, I am laying a fleece of wool on the threshing floor, if there is dew on the fleece alone, and it is dry on all the ground, then I shall know that you will deliver Israel by my hand, as you have said."



Detail of the Archangel Gabriel

From the mountain rocks behind the Virgin, water gushes from the barren rock, a reference to Moses striking the rock in the desert at Massah, Exodus 17:6: "Behold I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb, and you shall strike the rock, and water shall come out of it, that the people may drink."

These three references in the Hebrew scriptures provide many of the details portrayed by De Rosen in the Annunciation scene.

A banner waving in the wind is inscribed with the text from Luke 1:38: "Behold the Handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to your word."

The Figure of the Archangel Gabriel

The Archangel is dressed as a Byzantine warrior with the 'x' criss-cross of an orar over his chest. He displays one wing outstretched as if just arriving on the face of the earth. The banner streaming from his left hand is inscribed with the angelic salutation found in Luke 1:26: "Hail Mary full of Grace the Lord is with you!"

The Conch of the Apse

God the Father overshadows the sun in the concave shape immediately above the altar. God the Father is shown with a triangle halo inscribed with the Greek *agios* (Holy) three times in honor of the Holy Trinity. He is surrounded by cherubim; His garments billow with the movement of the wind, the Holy Spirit, as He raises His right hand in blessing/greeting extended to the Holy Virgin. His whole figure is shown overshadowing the Holy of Holies with His flowing white robes.

This sophisticated interplay depicts the dawn of a New Day of Salvation as the Redeemer, Jesus Christ, is conceived in the



Detail of the Apsidal Icon

womb of the Virgin. There is perhaps no other church interior where the display of theological, scriptural, iconographic, spiritual, and liturgical coalesce and integrate into such an ensemble of beauty and integrity as the Annunciation scene by Jan Henryk De Rosen. **ECL**



SCHOOL OF PRAYER

Father G. Scott Boghossian

DELIVER US FROM THE EVIL ONE

In seventh petition of the Our Father, we pray "deliver us from evil." In this petition, we are asking our Heavenly Father for protection from the Satan and his demons. The original Greek word for "evil" that we find in the Our Father is *ponerou*, which some scholars translate as "the evil one." The Catechism of the Catholic Church states, "in this petition, evil is not an abstraction, but refers to a person, Satan, the Evil one, the angel who opposes God (CCC 2851). Saint Basil the Great, Saint John Chrysostom, and Saint Augustine understood the seventh petition of the Our Father as a prayer requesting deliverance from the devil, the evil one.

The Gospels, the historical biographies of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, conclusively demonstrate the reality of the devil and demons. In the three synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke), Jesus cast out evil spirits (performed exorcisms) on at least seven different occasions. The Gospel

of John doesn't recount any specific exorcisms, but presents the entire life, death, and resurrection of Jesus as one supreme and cosmic exorcism (Jn. 12:31, 1 Jn. 3:8).

Saint Peter warns us, "be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour" (1 Pt. 5:8). Saint Paul tells us that we are in a pitched battle against the devil: "We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil" (Eph. 6:12).

The great monastic fathers of the fourth and fifth centuries experienced and testified to the reality of the devil and the evil spirits. The great saints of all ages knew intimately the brutal conflict of spiritual warfare. We all can relate stories of how the devil has attacked us. Discouragement, anxiety, despair, hopelessness, irrational

fears, depression, enslavement to bad habits and grave sins, indicate the reality of the spiritual battle in which we find ourselves.

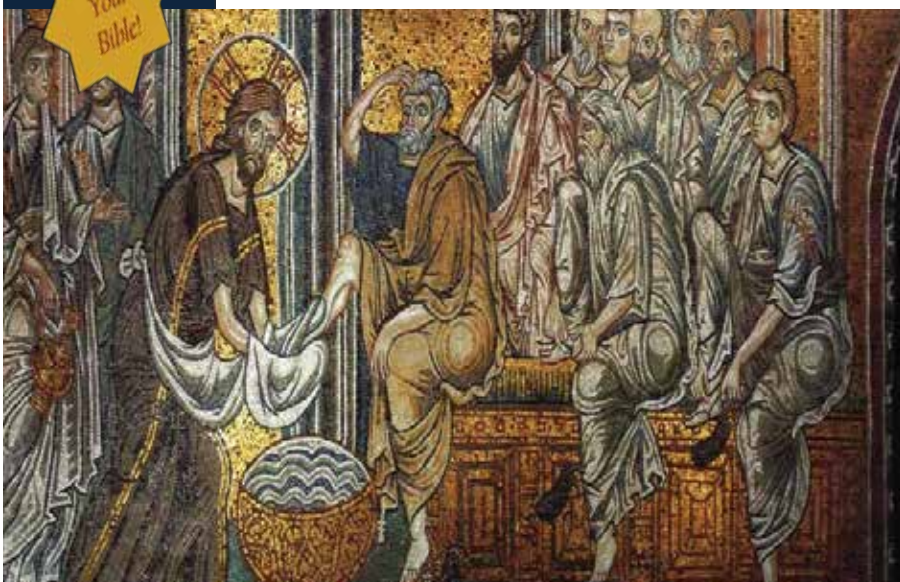
Bishop Sheen wrote, "Very few people believe in the devil these days, which suits the devil very well. He is always helping to circulate the news of his own death. The essence of God is existence, and He defines Himself as: 'I am Who am.' The essence of the devil is the lie, and he defines himself as: 'I am who am not.' Satan has very little trouble with those who do not believe in him; they are already on his side."

This seventh petition of the Our Father teaches us that our primary defense against the devil is prayer. Saint James tells us, "Submit yourselves to God, resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7). Satan, a powerful fallen angel, cannot be defeated by human ingenuity. He is a spirit being of vast intelligence, who never sleeps, with thousands of years of experience in de-

stroying marriages, families, churches, and souls. In prayer, we humbly appeal to God, the One infinitely more powerful than the devil, to come to our aid. The seventh petition of the Our Father is our guarantee that He will hear and answer.

Let us strive to live a life of prayer, and be found "praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication" (Eph. 6:18). Prayer creates around us an invisible wall of protection that repulses the constant attacks of our spiritual foes. Enough of television, foolish novels, worldly music, the casino, hours lost on Facebook or browsing the internet, and wasting precious time. The devil is real. The battle is raging. Prayer is the weapon. Pray "deliver us from evil," with attention, faith, and devotion and "the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet" (Rom. 16:20). **ECL**

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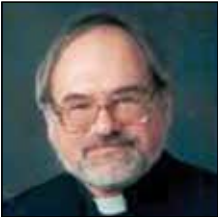
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THE BYZANTINE LITURGY

By Archpriest David Petras, SEOD

THE CALL TO HOLINESS

In the last week of May this year, I was privileged to participate in the North American Orthodox-Catholic Theological Consultation held in Contoocook, New Hampshire. In the first session, we discussed Pope Francis’ recent apostolic exhortation, *Gaudete et Exsultate* (“Rejoice and Be Glad”). An apostolic exhortation is different from an encyclical. An encyclical explains some dogmatic theme or point, but an exhortation is, very basically, a sermon. In this exhortation, Pope Francis helps us to see how to be a Christian in a world in which there is little faith, a world that can be very strange and confusing.

The challenge to holiness is difficult. One of the problems comes from our own ideas of what makes us holy. We think of saints as sad people, as Pope Francis ob-

served, people who are “timid, morose, acerbic or melancholy, or who put on a dreary face.” We don’t want to be holy, because we think that does not bring us happiness. In fact, we insult others by saying that they are judgmental, “holier than thou,” that you can’t be holy and happy. This is a problem we have, for when we judge others, we judge ourselves.

This is not holiness. In my lifetime, I have had the privilege of meeting people – saints and blessed – that the Church has recognized officially as holy. The characteristic of all of them is their humility, not humility as self-abasement, but as a realistic awareness of the grace of Christ making us holy. In fact, we cannot and do not do it ourselves. Holy people are simply those who are open to the presence of Christ in

us, and in whom the grace and love of God shines forth in joy and love.

One summer, I taught at the John XXIII Institute in the Bronx, NY, together with Father Walter Cizek, who is a recognized Servant of God, a candidate for canonization as a saint. He suffered for Christ in prison in Russia, and wrote a book about his life, *With God in Russia*. I had heard that he was a holy man, so I asked him to hear my confession. As he spoke to me, I could feel the love of Jesus pouring out through him. He was so open to God that divine grace flowed through him. I could feel that God loved me, and after the confession on my way back to my room, I simply sat on the stairs and began to cry.

The saints are a model for us. Saint Paul, a great saint, wrote, “Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ” (1 Corinthians 11:1). Most of us will not be famous and heroic saints held up as models for the people of God, but we all have to let God work in our souls; we’ve got to set aside our own pride and ideology to let God’s living Word into our hearts. In His last talk with His disciples, Jesus told them, “I am the way, I am the truth, I am the life” (John 14:6). If we want truth, if we want life, we must follow the way of the Lord, for He Himself is the way, the true path to holiness, which is *wholeness*. He alone can make us be the people we were created to be, only in this way will we find fulfillment and joy. **ECL**

SPIRITUAL REFLECTIONS

Father Lewis Rabayda



OWNING OUR SPIRITUAL STATE

When we follow a good rule of prayer in our personal lives, and when we participate in the public services of the Church, we end up chanting a lot of Psalms. This is in part because there are so many of them—150 in all—but also because they encapsulate the totality of the moral teachings of God. The Psalms are categorized as Wisdom Literature because of their instructive nature. But it takes a discerning person to listen to what the Psalms have to say to us, and to contemplate on that wisdom, and then hopefully that person can apply that wisdom to their everyday lives.

All around us we see the bad fruit of people who lack an understanding of wisdom, and worse yet, who lack the ability to contemplate and discern civility, much less how to apply the economy of God to their lives. And when we encounter this void in our society and culture, we recognize the chaos that it produces. We may not exactly know the source of this chaos but we can definitely recognize the great shift in our cultural fabric.

This shift is happening because of movement. There is no lack of action from the individual, and the individual believes they are acting for the benefit of all. But what is the real motivating force behind their action? Is it the Will of God? Is it the whim of

their own personal desires? Do these actors have a properly formed conscience? Do these actors and shifters take the necessary time in prayer to allow the Word of God and the Will of God to wash over them and to heal them? Is there true wisdom in their actions, or is it just emotional disturbance? It seems that many people who participate in this shift and help in creating this chaos have failed to discern the true power of their own responsibility.

“Through Your anger all my body is sick: through my sin, there is no health in my limbs. My guilt towers higher than my head; it is a weight too heavy to bear. My wounds are foul and festering, the result of my own folly” (Psalm 37[38]: 3-5).

We pray this Psalm at Matins, at the beginning of the day, because it reminds us that we are ultimately responsible for the state of our lives and that we should be careful of how we conduct ourselves throughout the day. We cannot blame others, we cannot even blame the laws of God for the emotional and spiritual pain we encounter in our lives; because, as the Psalm says, “through **MY** sin...**MY** guilt...**MY OWN** folly.” Our wound are not “foul and festering” because of the folly of others, they are not “foul” because of the laws of God we *feel* are unjust—as we say in the Litany for the deceased, God’s “justice is eternal jus-

tice, and [His] word is truth.” No. Many of our wounds are self-made and we allow to fester. But through the grace of God and through our proper discernment of His truth, we can curb the festering of those wounds and allow Christ to heal them.

Those who wish to make a difference in the world for the better will not do so by passivity. Rather, there is much action needed on the part of every individual, especially the individual who embarks on the path of discerning God’s Will.

When we take the time to discern the Word of God and to discern how our actions and motivations influence the quality of our lives, we can see that there is no one else to blame for our current state. When we contemplate the Psalms, when we ascent to the wisdom of God that is contained in them, and when we check that against our own lives, we will begin to see that our spiritual state is the result of “**MY OWN** folly,” and not the folly of the other.

Yes, others are prone to folly, all mankind is prone to the fall of Adam and Eve and the state of chaos that the first sin has allowed. But we each have the power and responsibility to make choices for our own lives, and to reject the bad influence of others. The individual would do much better to discern the wisdom of God, and to allow

God’s healing grace to effect their lives in an uplifting way. In another Psalm of Matins we pray, “**It is He who forgives all your guilt, Who heals every one of your ills**” (Psalm 102 [103]:3). We create our own state of sin—not the others around us, but it is God who forgives and heals us, when we come to Him in sorrow for our sins. **ECL**



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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, celebrated Liturgy at the end of October and

is 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. The website <https://carolinabyzantine.com/> will be coming soon – please check that out for news, upcoming gatherings, and service times.

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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.

Some highlights of the tour include visits to Heidelberg, the oldest university town in Germany; Lucerne, with its beautiful 14th

and 15th century covered bridges; Innsbruck and Salzburg (The Sound of Music City), two picture postcard cities situated in the Austrian Alps; Munich, the capital of Bavaria; and Rothenburg, Germany’s best preserved medieval town.

The price of our tour includes roundtrip airfare, government taxes and airline fuel surcharges, first class select hotels, most meals, the services of a professional tour director, and sightseeing in a deluxe motor-coach.

Father Ed Cimbala and Father James Spera look forward to having you join them

on this trip of a lifetime. It promises to be a wonderful experience for all with time to enjoy the fellowship of old friends and new.

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 Fr. Ed Cimbala at 908-872-2928 or by email – Fredcimbala@gmail.com.



SEASONAL REFLECTIONS

Father Ronald Hatton



“TAKE HEED LEST YOU FORGET THE LORD...”

“Take heed lest you forget the Lord your God, by not keeping His commandments and His ordinances and His statutes, which I command you this day: lest, when you have eaten and are full, and have built goodly houses and live in them, and when your herds and flocks multiply, and your silver and gold is multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied, then your heart be lifted up, and you forget the Lord your God, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, Who led you through the great and terrible wilderness, with its fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where there was no water, Who brought you water out of the flinty rock, Who fed you in the wilderness with manna which your fathers did not know, that He might humble you and test you, to do you good in the end. Beware lest you say in your heart, ‘My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.’ You shall remember the Lord your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth; that He may confirm His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as at this day” (Deut. 8:11-19).

I love our liturgical year, in all its richness; how it guides us in all the things of God. We have been led through so much so far this year in the things of the salvation of God given to us: we have witnessed His incarnation at the Feast of the Nativity; we have been brought successfully through the Red Sea of the Great Fast; we have wept at His betrayal, arrest, at the foot of His cross, and as He was laid in His tomb. We have also risen early on the first day of the week and gone out with the Myrrh-bearers and found the huge stone rolled away, and heard the words of the angel, “Why do you seek the living among the dead?” We have

seen our Lord risen from the dead; placed our fingers in the nail-prints and our hand in His side and believed. We have watched as He ascended to His Father and our Father. And we have received the heavenly Spirit.

Now, though, we may feel spiritually exhausted, and just want to “get on” to other things in our lives. All the “heavy stuff” is behind us, and it is the traditional time of year for vacations, cook-outs, and just enjoying the warmth of summer. And yet, we have to remember that, as our Lord’s earthly ministry has ended, our ministry as Church has begun. At His ascension, our Lord told us, “It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has fixed by His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:6-8). We are so wont to set aside all spiritual cares, to paraphrase the words of the Cherubic Hymn, but the Church reminds us at this season that we are to be about our Father’s business, and to now put into action all that the Lord has taught us over these past months. We have received our Lord’s teachings and are now to put them into practice. It is not enough to have dutifully attended all the services and done all the prostrations and sung all the praises: we must now follow through on our promises to God: “Make vows to the Lord your God, and fulfill them” (Psalm 75 [76]: 11) we sing in the Sunday Prokeimennon for Tone 8. At our Baptism, our sponsors made vows in our name, or we made those vows ourselves: “Have you united yourself to Christ?” “Yes, I have united myself to Christ.” “Then worship Him.” During this season, we have been given the

time to worship Him, and to do all things in His name and to His glory. As much as we want to leave all this aside for the summer, we are obliged to continue along the path on which we started out; we are still to take up our cross daily and follow Christ. “But Jesus answered them, ‘My Father is working still, and I am working’” (John 5:17). God does not cease His work during this season, and we, in concert with Jesus, are

not to cease doing good, being there for one another, and gathering together in our local parish (or the nearest parish to where we are vacationing) at least every Sunday to worship Him and sing His praises. “Take heed lest you forget the Lord your God, by not keeping His commandments and His ordinances and His statutes, which I command you this day.” **ECL**

SLAVIC AMERICAN

Festival

SUNDAY, JULY 15, 2018 • NOON TO 9 PM

ST. ANN BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH

5408 Locust Lane, Harrisburg • (717) 652-1415 • StAnnByz.org

The Divine Liturgy (Mass) will be celebrated at 10 AM

RAFFLES! \$2,500 in Cash Prizes

Public Invited!

- Family Friendly
- Ethnic Foods (take-out available)
- East European Gift Shop
- Basket Raffle
- Bingo

ENTERTAINMENT

Polka Whoooo 1 - 4:30 pm

Polka Quads 5 - 9 pm

KIDS GAMES 1 - 7 pm

FREE PARKING & ADMISSION

For a comfortable seat, bring your own chair • NO Carry-on foods, drinks or personal picnic tables

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. • Victim's Assistance Coordinator • 516.623.6456



SEMINARIAN REFLECTIONS

Seminarian Paul Varchola West

MY FORMER LIFE

Recently it has come to mind that there is something most of you probably do not know about me: prior to attending seminary, I had an entirely different life. This is actually the case for many of us who have been called to attend seminary. One may spend a good portion of one's life trying to make it doing what they want to do and not necessarily what God wants from their life. This idea of a complete change in one's life is not a foreign one as even Saint Paul speaks of his "former life in Judaism" prior to becoming a champion of early Christianity (Gal 1:13). For those of us who are coined as a "second career vocation," we are in rather good company! Granted, my former life was not in Judaism, but rather, it was spent in music theory. I bring this up because this past May I was blessed to have an experience where my previous studies in music collided with my current studies in theology and philosophy with quite wonderful results.

I have two degrees in music. I hold a Bachelor's degree in Music Theory from Montclair State University (NJ) and a Master of Fine Arts in Music Composition from the California Institute of the Arts (Los Angeles). I spent my entire academic career researching Ancient Greek forms of music as well as how non-Western cultures tune their instruments and how they create music. The long and short of it is that the way we think of music today, limiting ourselves to those notes found only on the keys of a piano, is a relatively recent phenomenon that seems to coincide with the Industrial Revolution. Prior to this modern innovation, music would sound different from one village to another even so much so that different church organs were tuned to dif-

ferent scales! This is no longer the case, at least in our mainstream culture. My studies led me to become an expert in the 20th Century American composer Harry Partch, who, inspired by Ancient Greek philosophers, music theorists and artists, decided the Western world needed to return to its roots. He re-envisioned how to compose music, even building (with his own hands) 21 extremely specialized instruments to perform his music. My studies have been so in-depth that I hold a specialized certificate in his music that only two or three people in the country possess. Needless to say, I painted myself into a corner and for a long time expanding on this research became extremely frustrating. I needed a break!

When I decided to discern attending seminary, I thought I would be getting a much-needed respite from thinking about music – boy, was I wrong! As I began to take my introductory philosophy courses in my first year, I realized something. All the works we were reading were making complete sense to me. How could this be? While I have heard of names such as Plato and Aristotle, I never read any of their works. I was a musician, how on earth was I all of a sudden completely understanding classical philosophy? Then it hit me: all my studies of Ancient Greek music, and specifically the work of Harry Partch, talked about all these classical philosophic concepts, just in different terms. I was overjoyed to be ahead of the curve, and my mother was relieved to know that my years of training in music were not for naught! What started out as me thinking I would have to work a little less to get an A turned out to completely change the way I viewed all of my previous studies, and furthermore, would



Icon of Saint Romanos the Melodist

end up revitalizing my academic pursuits in music theory and my studies at Saints Cyril and Methodius Seminary.

In December of last year, I received a phone call from a very good friend who is a professor at the University of Washington in Seattle. He told me he was putting on a music festival centered around Harry Partch and that he would like me to be one of the guest speakers. I was overwhelmed to receive such an honor; however, this meant I would have to write a paper and what on earth was I going to write about? I needed to rethink everything I knew about Harry Partch and Ancient Greek music theory and look at it from the new angle I was afforded by my greater understanding of classical philosophy. Immediately, I knew I was on to something as my old frustrations with music melted away and I was able to expand on a topic that I knew all too

well. Ultimately, my paper concluded that in order for modern scholarship to understand Harry Partch, the scholarly community needs to think of him in terms of his Ancient Greek philosophical counterparts, not his music theory contemporaries of the 20th Century. Then, in May of this year, I was blessed to travel to the University of Washington to present this paper to a sizable crowd. The paper was very well received by both the academic community and enthusiasts alike. Publication of this paper is forthcoming! I still cannot believe how my current studies have revived my old studies and have actually caused me to begin to embark into uncharted scholarly research. Additionally, I am thrilled to see what further connections I can make as my current studies continue. To say I feel blessed does not cut it. I never thought something like this would be happening, but after all, this plan was not my doing.

This can also apply to one's spiritual life. We cannot place ourselves into the boxes in which we think we belong. Just because we are struggling does not mean we will struggle forever. Even though a path may seem long, unconventional, or downright foolish, we must always keep faith that events are unfolding on God's time, not ours. In times of uncertainty we must not forget to pray and place our trust in God that, although we may have no clue what is happening to us, the truth of the matter is He does. Placing our trust in God can lessen the burdens on our hearts and we may be pleasantly surprised with the results!

When traveling to the south this summer please visit our churches

All Saints 10291 Bayshore Road North Fort Myers, FL 33917 1-239-599-4023	Epiphany of Our Lord 2030 Old Alabama Road Roswell, GA 30076 1-770-993-0973	Holy Dormition 17 Bucksin Lane Ormond Beach, FL 32174 1-386-677-8704	Our Lady of the Sign 7311 Lyons Road Coconut Creek, FL 33073 1-954-429-0056	Saint Therese 4265 13th Avenue North Saint Petersburg, FL 33713 1-727-323-4022
Saint Anne 7120 Massachusetts Ave. New Port Richey, FL 34653 1-727-849-1190	Saint Basil the Great 1475 N.E. 199th Street Miami, FL 33179-5162 1-305-651-0991	Saints Cyril and Methodius 1002 Bahama Avenue Fort Pierce, FL 34982 1-772-595-1021	Saint Nicholas of Myra 5135 Sand Lake Road Orlando, FL 32819 1-407-351-0133	

UPCOMING EPARCHIAL AND PARISH EVENTS

Eastern Catholic Life

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JULY

- 4 Independence Day
Civic holiday Chancery closed*
- 5-8 Byzantine Youth Rally
Saint Vincent College, Latrobe, PA
- 20 Holy Great Prophet Elias
Simple Holyday
- 23 Divine Liturgy at Basilica of the National Shrine of Saint Ann
*4:30 PM Hierarchical Divine Liturgy * Bishop Kurt will be the main celebrant*

AUGUST

- 4-8 Altar Server Camp
Carpathian Village, Canadensis, PA
- 5 Annual Saint Nicholas Pilgrimage
Carpathian Village, Canadensis, PA
- 11-12 Annual Holy Dormition Pilgrimage
Sloatsburg, NY

SEPTEMBER

- 1-2 Annual Pilgrimage in Honor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help
Uniontown, PA