



EASTERN CATHOLIC LIFE

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FEAST OF THE PROTECTION OF THE VIRGIN THEOTOKOS OCTOBER 1

Excerpted from The Liturgical Year of the Byzantine Slavonic Rite by Father Basil Shereghy

The Feast of the Patronage of the Most Holy Mother of God commemorates the constant help that our heavenly Mother gives to those who ask her help and protection. The feast came into being because of the following event: during the reign of Constantine VII *Porphyrogenitus*, 913-959, the Saracens were trying to take Constantinople and had begun the decisive battle.

The terror-stricken people gather in various churches of the city [of Constantinople] to pray. In the Blachernae Church near Constantinople, during the night services when the faithful implored the Mother of God for help, Saint Andrew, the Fool for Christ's sake, and his disciple. Saint Epiphanius, saw the Mother of God appear in a cloud and pray with outstretched hands together with the people. Then, at the close of her prayers, she removed her beautiful veil (omophorion) from her head and held it over the faithful as a sign of her unfailing protection. The next day, the city was freed from danger.

According to another source, this miraculous appearance of the Mother of God took place during the reign of Emperor Leo the

Wise in 903 AD, when a dreadful epidemic afflicted Constantinople, killing great numbers of people. The faithful prayed in their churches, imploring God to be merciful, and called

Whichever account we accept as being true, the theological content of each demonstrates the undeniable fact that "never was it known that anyone who fled to Mary's

The feast was first introduced in the Church of Constantinople and from there spread among the Greeks and Slavs. The Slavic people embraced the feast in the twelfth century.

In both the troparion and kontakion, there is a brief description of the event on which the feast is based: "Protected by your coming, O Mother of God, faithful people solemnly

by asking your Son, Christ our God, to save our souls" (troparion). "Today, the Virgin is present in the Church and with the armies of saint invisibly prayers to God for us; the angels worship with the archangels and the apostles rejoice with the prophets, because in our behalf, the Mother of God prays to the eternal God." (kontakion)

The history of the feast is repeatedly described in various hymns and chants. Let us take, for example, one from the *litija* of the feast: "Let us, the assembled faithful, honor on this day the immaculate Queen of all, the Virgin most pure and the Mother of Christ our God, for she always entreatingly extends her hands to her Son. The admirable Andrew saw her in the church as she was protecting the faithful with her venerable veil. To her, let us sincerely sing: "Rejoice, patroness, protectress, and salvation of our souls."

It is well to notice that on the next day, October 2, the Church honors Saint Andrew, the Fool for Christ's sake, who was deigned worthy to see the Mother of God during her apparition at Blachernae.



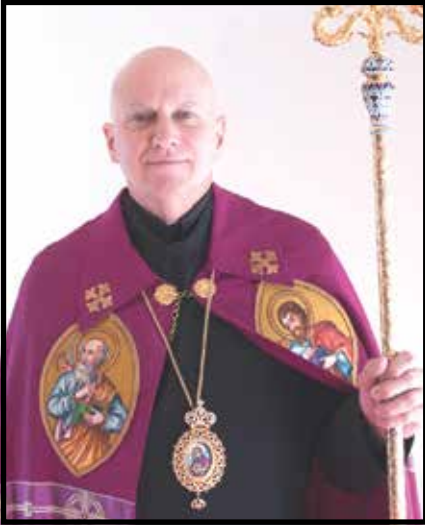
Icon of the Protection of the Theotokos

on the help of the Mother of God. It was at this time that she appeared holding her veil over the people. From that hour, the plague ceased in the city.

protection, implored her help or sought her intercession was left unaided." (Saint Bernard)

After the fall of Constantinople, the Greeks discontinued its celebration, but it has been kept among the Slavs until the present day.

celebrate today and gazing upon your immaculate image, they humbly say, 'Watch over us with your noble protection, and deliver us from all evil



I LIFT UP MY EYES...

Pastoral Reflections of Bishop Kurt



SO SHALL HE STARTLE MANY NATIONS

When the Prophet Isaiah describes the death of Jesus Christ in astonishing detail, he concludes “So shall He startle many nations; kings shall shut their mouths because of Him.” At the time of Christ, the Chosen People who knew God’s laws were living on a globe covered with pagans who did not know God’s law. Killing and slavery and worse were as accepted by them as house mortgages are accepted by us. Self-aggrandizement was encouraged and humility was scorned. Whenever I read the passage from Isaiah, “so shall He startle many nations; kings shall shut their mouths because of Him,” I think of the many pagan nations that abandoned their ancient pagan religions when they heard about Jesus Christ. If you told a pagan king that he would soon turn from his god of strength, his god of war, his god thunder, and accept a new God who allowed Himself to be executed as common criminal humiliated on a public highway, who allowed Himself to be led like a sheep and opened not His mouth, who Himself foretold that He would be mocked beaten and spat on, that pagan king would have laughed at you. And yet in an astonishing short period of time, when these pagan nations learned about Jesus Christ, they abandoned the gods of their ancestors to accept the God of the Jews and the Son of God who offered Himself for their sins. As Isaiah says, “Who has believed what we have heard? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?”

When Pelagia wrote to Bishop Nonnus seeking the cleansing water of baptism she said, “I have heard of this God of yours who lowered the heavens and came down to earth, not to save the righteous but sinners. His humility was such that He ate with tax collectors, and although the cherubim dare not gaze upon Him, He lived among sinners and spoke to harlots.” When Pelagia heard about the God who died on the cross for her sins, she abandoned all of her wealth and success and beauty and fame and ran after the righteous God with all her might. Indeed, when Bishop Nonnus meets with her, he tells her that the canons forbid the baptism of a harlot unless there is surety that she will not relapse. So, she throws herself on the ground and proclaims, “If you do not baptize me immediately, you will be responsible for all my sins.” The pagan gods promised all of the things that Pelagia had earned with worldly cleverness: wealth, health, fame, success, and yet she abandoned both those things and her gods for Jesus: humble, gentle, and forgiving.

During his lifetime, Jesus worked many signs and wonders to show who He is. I consider it an even greater miracle that alacrity with which pagans left behind their elaborate and even beautiful religions for the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is popular nowadays for the enemies of the Gospel to say that people were forced to become Christian in the Roman Empire, but if you read the histories for yourself you will see the opposite. For example, a major force in the Empire was the Greeks. No one ever successfully forced a Greek to believe something. Even after their conquest, the Greeks were famous as both learned intellectuals and as gainsayers, that is, they loved to argue. We can read in ancient sources that they were just as argumentative in the Roman Empire as they are today in the bars and coffee shops of Greece. In the Roman Empire they were quite proud of their intellectual independence and their tradition of personal freedom. In addition, the Greeks were spread out on thousands of islands, just as they are today, each with its ancient temples and unique religious beliefs and customs. How is it humanly possible that they all abandoned their gods and 2000 years later are still fiercely Orthodox in the Christian faith? Saint Paul tells us, when he preached to the Greeks in their philosophy, he failed, but when he preached Christ crucified, he succeeded. The Greeks abandoned their beloved goddess of wisdom, and their beautiful sun god, and the Romans abandoned their beloved god of war, when they learned about the God of peace and gentleness who only asks for repentance—a change of heart.

I recently spent some time studying Egyptian religion, mainly because I try to study all the cultures that appear in the Bible and might help me to understand the Bible. The strangest thing about Egyptian religion is how stable it was. It was accepted by the people of Egypt with almost no change for thousands of years. The only significant change occurred when, at some point, its promises became available to all the people and not just the pharaoh and his family. But the doctrines simply didn’t change. Yet when the Good News of Jesus Christ reached Egypt, the ancient religion vanished even faster than the Greek religion.

As mentioned above, it is popular nowadays to believe that Christianity was forced on people, but moving farther north, it is even more clear how false that story is. The Celts and Germans had their own religions, different from the Greeks and Romans and Egyptians. If you look at flags of countries, you will see that every Scandinavian country is simply a cross. Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Denmark all have a cross for a flag. The Roman emperor had no power up there whatsoever! Certainly, the most rugged and individualistic of all

the Scandinavians were the Icelanders. They claim to have the oldest parliament today, the Althing founded in 830 AD, because they were never ruled by a king even in ancient times. If you take a tour today of Iceland, you will see their famous waterfalls. Their word for falls is “foss,” and there is one called Gotha-foss, or the Waterfall of the Gods. The reason it is called that is that after the Icelanders heard about Christianity and were on the fence, one of the chiefs called all the other chiefs together and at that waterfall. He said to the others, “If we are going to accept his new God, we must get rid of our old ones.” He then threw his idols into the waterfall. If any of the other Vikings were expecting a divine reaction, they were disappointed. Eventually, all of the other chiefs brought their idols to the same waterfall and disposed of them. [If I might say on a tangent, there are many of us a thousand years later who should ask ourselves the same question. Are we ready to give up our idols and throw them into the waterfall?]

Speaking of Iceland, there is an Icelandic poem that has been recently popularized on the internet. It was written eight hundred and eleven years ago in the year of our Lord 1208 by a powerful chieftain facing death. Called “Heyr himna Smithur,” it begins by addressing God as the heavenly smith. I recently met a young man named Smith and told him I really appreciated his last name because of this hymn. After I told him about the hymn, he beamed and said he always thought of his name as common, but now he sees it in a noble light as one of the titles of God. The Heavenly Smith, of course, means that God is the heavenly craftsman who made the world and made us too. The poet is facing death and says, “I call on you because you made me. I am your servant and you are my Lord.” One of my favorite parts is when he addresses God as “mild one.” As I said at the beginning of my column, if you told the Icelanders a few centuries earlier that they would abandon their gods of war for a “mild one,” they would have been incredulous. Just as Isaiah said about Jesus on the cross, “So shall He startle many nations; kings shall shut their mouths because of Him.” The poem has many other beautiful parts, asking God as the “King of Suns” to drive out every sorrow from the “fortress of the heart.” Finally, he asks the “Son of the Virgin” to give him noble motives in his heart.

I’m so grateful to God for putting me in our Church where we have the greatest collection, I think, of beautiful hymns that explain in sublime poetry the truths of the great Christian faith. At this season of the cross, our hymns present so many things for us to think about in such lovely and profound imagery. Our hymns call the cross the tree of life, planted at the place of the skull in the middle of the earth. Just

as the fruit of the tree in the Garden of Eden brought death, so the new tree of life bears the fruit of eternal life Jesus. When Jacob, the father of the twelve tribes, blessed the sons of Joseph, he crossed his arms, thwarting Joseph’s plan for the blessing, and the cross of Christ thwarts all of the plans of the evil one and contradicts all of our own plans and ambitions. All who sign themselves with the cross are protected from peril. The angels gather around the cross in awe as the source of peace. The source of peace!

If you are blessed to live in a parish where the priest has vespers and matins, then you heard certain Old Testament readings for the cross at Vespers. One of those readings describes how Moses sat on a hill watching a battle and when he prayed with his arms in the form of a cross, the battle went well. When he grew tired and lowered his arms, the battle went badly. So, the young men held his arms up, just as the wood of the cross held up the arms of Jesus, and the Israelites won their battle. So too, the cross protects us in our battle with evil and Jesus has already won victory in that battle for us. In another reading, the Chosen People are stymied in their travels by a bitter supply of water. God instructs Moses to toss a certain wood into the water, and the water becomes sweet. In the same way, the cross of Jesus makes our bitter lives sweet. For Christians, suffering has purpose. The Cross makes bitterness sweet, sorrow joyful, and suffering noble. Sometimes, our sins are described as a debt that must be paid, as though we mortgaged our souls when we chose false gods. Another of our hymns describes the Cross as a giant pen—God dipped the pen in the blood of Christ and cancelled our note.

In the English language we are blessed to possess very great poems about the Cross, one that might even be older than many of the hymns in our Byzantine Liturgy. Some of it was already inscribed on a stone cross called the Ruthwell Cross in the 600’s. In 1822, the complete poem was discovered in manuscript in the northern Italian city of Vercelli. It is one of the greatest poems in the English language, if not the world. The compact story is so powerful, and the rich metaphors are so intricate and so dense that the unknown poet must surely be an ancestor of Shakespeare. The poem is the earliest known “dream poem” in the English language and is called “The Dream of the Rood.” “Rood” is an old word for the cross, and we still see the word in English cathedrals where they have a divider like our iconostasis called the “rood screen.” The Ruthwell Cross may date from the 600’s and predates any manuscripts with English written down. It was smashed into pieces in 1642 by Presbyterian iconoclasts and the pieces were left lying on the ground in the church yard. It was reassembled

in 1823 and is now preserved in a church in Ruthwell.

As mentioned earlier in the article, one of the great miracles of Jesus is the willingness of the pagans to abandon their gods that promised power and success and to turn to the God who died on the cross for their debts. When the Anglo-Saxons invaded England, a monk writing at the time referred to them as the “most cruel and evil race on the face of the earth.” They had taken land from its previous owners in Saxony some centuries earlier, and now they took most of the Britain after being invited to fight the Vikings. They were by no means Christian when they invaded, but when they learned about the one true God who created all things, they turned away from their old gods by their own free choice. Certainly, no government had the power to force them to convert.

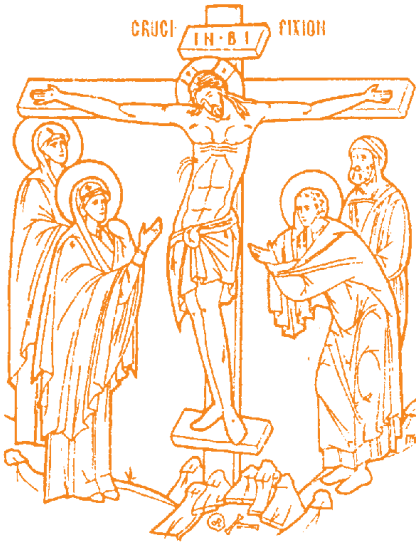
The Dream of the Rood is told in three parts. The poet begins with “What I wished to say...,” that he had a dream or vision in the middle of the night, as he says, when people who talk are now silent. In this first part, he tells us that a vision of the Cross came

in the most ancient churches in Rome, the “Croce Gemmata.” It’s impossible to translate *croce gemmata* into English because it is a pun in Latin and in Italian. It means both “gemmed cross” and “budded cross.” The *Croce Gemmata* is portrayed as a cross that is encrusted with gems, but has little leaves or buds coming off of the corners. It’s not difficult to understand the message, the cross was both the instrument of death and of public humiliation for the Romans. They crucified slaves and foreigners, but not other Romans. Crucifixion on a public highway was both physically painful and also shameful and humiliating. The powers of the state intended to send a message to the uncooperative and unsubmitive. When Our Lord was crucified, the Cross became something of great value like gems, but also it became the source of life, the new tree of life. It seems that the Anglo-Saxon poet was familiar with this image because in the first part of the image he sees the Cross as covered with gold and also jewels. The placement and number of the jewels seem to have significance, in particular five jewels that might represent the five wounds of Christ. In addition, the sleeping poet

splattered with sins and wounded with guilts. As he gazes entranced at the gold and jeweled cross, he begins to see underneath these treasures, bloodstains that remain from the struggle with wretchedness that occurred on that cross long ago. He is drenched with sorrow at the sight. It seems to alternate between the lovely jeweled treasure and the bloodstained wood.

As he lies in awful contemplation of the vision before his eyes, he becomes aware that the Cross is speaking. And so begins the second part of the poem. The Cross tells the story from its point of view. It was in the forest with the other trees when it saw enemies come into the forest and carry it away. They made the trees into gallows for criminals, and it saw many criminals hung on wooden crosses. Then the Cross says that it saw its Lord and Maker rushing toward it as if to climb on it. The criminals are hung up against their will, but Christ hastens to do His good work with great zeal. If you recall the kind of people the ancient Anglo-Saxons were, you can see that Jesus is portrayed as an eager warrior who rushes into battle, sacrificing His life willingly if necessary, to win the battle. The Cross, whom the poet affectionately calls “the best wood,” finds itself as the battle companion of Jesus, like a faithful retainer who stands beside his Lord in mortal combat and holds him up when he is wounded. The Cross says, “I trembled when the warrior embraced me.” What an inspired poem! In one short sentence, he describes the willingness of Jesus to endure the death struggle for love of us, and also describes the passionate love of the creature for its Creator. The wood that thought it was to be used for a vulgar purpose finds itself in love with its master and creator and a partner in His great cosmic work. The wood says, “I was raised up a cross. I lifted up the King of the World. I dared not bend or falter.” One can easily imagine an unimportant squire who finds himself assisting in the final combat of the King himself. How earnestly he does his duty, despite lack of experience or preparation. He stays strong for his master until through the last struggle. The tree describes the wounds of Christ, itself pierced with the same nails, and it thinks it must not do anything to make the wounds worse. It becomes enmeshed in the final passion of salvation. The tree goes on to describe those coming from all over to the cross, presumably a vision outside of time. As Isaiah said, “So shall He startle many nations.” Finally, the cross says that it bent down so that these people could relieve the savior of His painful struggle. “I saw the God of Sabaoth stretched out.” Darkness enveloped all the land and creation wept at the sight of the corpse. They lifted Almighty

God from His torment. He rested for a while, weary from His fight. This is only a glimpse of this poem, which I encourage you to read for yourselves. Then



the tree is buried in the earth, and is recovered, it says, by the Lord’s “thanes,” that is, Saint Helena and company. The Lord honored it above all other wood, just as He honored the Virgin above all other women. The Cross concludes its narrative by saying that He rose from the dead, ascended, and will return on Doomsday to judge the earth.

In the third part of the poem, the Cross has finished speaking, and the dreamer returns to his own thoughts. In the description of the Doomsday, the Lord asks each if he is willing to die as He did, and each will be fearful and not know what to say. But then we find that we can find our way to the Kingdom by the wood of the Cross on which Christ died. The dreamer commits his life to turn more to the Cross of Christ, and less towards the attractions of this world—to look for the tree of victory more often than men. He also meditates on his friends who have already died and are now in the kingdom of glory before him. He hopes for the day when the cross he saw in the sky will fetch him for joy and bliss after his world of sorrows. Far away from the centers of civilization and literature, this Anglo-Saxon poet captures the heart of the Christian message in his own warrior culture and creates a masterpiece to enthrall and inspire today fourteen centuries later.

Isaiah prophesied twenty-seven centuries ago, “Behold my servant shall prosper, he shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high. As many were astonished at him—his appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of the sons of men—so shall he startle many nations; kings shall shut their mouths because of him; for that which has not been told them they shall see, and that which they have not heard they shall understand.”

+Kurt Brunette



Icon of the Elevation of the Cross

to him in the night, which he calls the “greatest tree” and it is in the sky. In early Christian art, there is an image that was very popular and can still be seen

sees every angel of heaven keep guard. He calls this such a glorious sight in the sky of a world yet to come. Contrasting with this brilliant sight, he sees himself

When traveling to the South, 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 Buckskin 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	



PEOPLE YOU KNOW

IN FREELAND...

On August 10, 2019, more than 80 parishioners of Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church in Freeland, PA, surprised their pastor, Father Scott Boghossian, with a party to celebrate his 50th birthday.



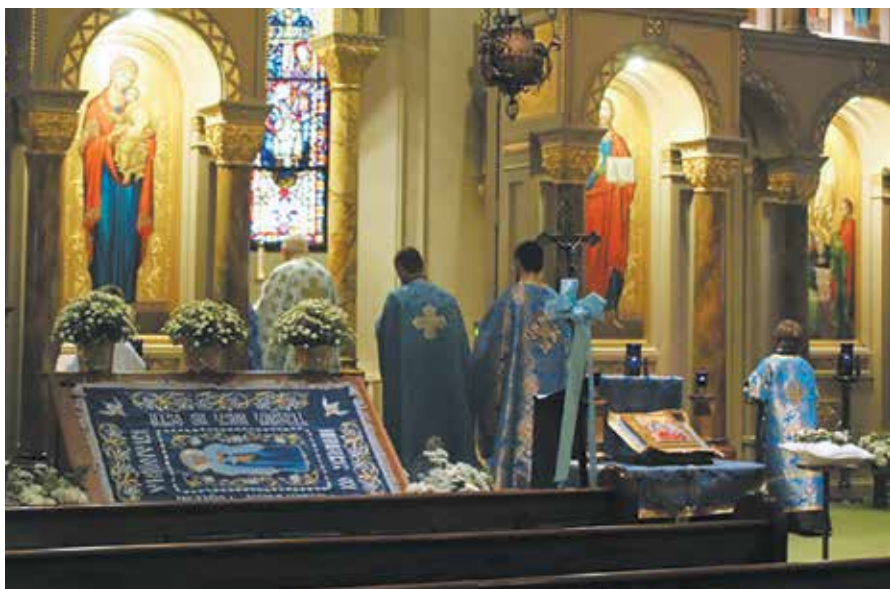
IN JERSEY CITY...

Saint Mary Parish Celebrates the Dormition of the Theotokos

On August 18, 2019, Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church of Jersey City, NJ, celebrated the Divine Liturgy for their patronal feast, the Dormition of the Virgin Theotokos. Concelebrating with Father Gregory Lozinsky were Father Jack Custer, Rector of Saint Michael Cathedral and Syncellus of the New Jersey Syncellate; Father John Zeyack, retired priest of the eparchy; and Father Mykhaylo Kravchuk, of Saints Peter and Paul Parish in Somers-

set, NJ, and Saint Joseph Parish in New Brunswick, NJ. Responses were sung by a choral group under the direction of Allen Biehl.

Before the Divine Liturgy began, a burial shroud of the Mother of God and a new set of blue vestments were blessed. After the Divine Liturgy, parishioners gathered outside for the crowning of our Blessed Mother. A reception followed in the church hall.



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AROUND THE EPARCHY



IN NEW PORT RICHEY...

The parish family of Saint Anne Byzantine Catholic Church in New Port Richey, FL, celebrated their patronal feast of the Dormition of Saint Anne on Sunday, July 28. Before the Divine Liturgy, Father Oleksiy blessed new sticharia for eight altar servers, sponsored by the Knights of Columbus Father Felix Ullrich Council #5869, which is affiliated with Saint Anne Parish. During the Liturgy, Father Oleksiy administered the Holy Mystery of Chrismation to some young parishioners – seven boys and three girls. Saint Anne Parish is blessed to have faithful families that set a good example to their children. After the celebration of the Liturgy everyone enjoyed delicious dinner prepared by our parishioners in the hall. The administrator of Saint Anne Parish is Father Oleksiy Nebesnyk.



SPECIAL GUEST AT INTEREPARCHIAL LITURGICAL COMMISSION MEETING

Sister Vassa Larin kindly attended a meeting with the Intereparchial Liturgical Commission in Phoenix, AZ, on September 11. She holds a doctorate in liturgy from the Pontifical Oriental Institute and is a student of the late Father Robert Taft, SJ. She fielded questions from the members and shared her vision of the future of our churches of the Constantinopolitan rites. In particular, she urged us to see the Church as a home for sinners, not an exclusive club. From left to right, Sister Vassa, Bishop Kurt, Father Michael Hayduk, Deacon Jeff Mierzejewski, Father Robert Pipta, Father Elias Rafaj, Father Hrihory Lozinskyy, Father Edward Higgins, and Father David Petras.



+DEACON MICHAEL TISMA FALLS ASLEEP IN THE LORD

By Carol Evanco



Deacon Michael Paul Tisma, age 69 of Duluth, GA, fell asleep in the Lord on September 13, 2019, as he was preparing to travel to his annual retreat. Visitation was held in Epiphany Byzantine Catholic Church, Roswell, GA, on Sunday, September 15, followed by the Parastas. The Office of Christian Burial with Divine Liturgy was celebrated on Monday, September 16, by Bishop Kurt, Father Lewis M. Rabayda, Administrator of Epiphany of Our Lord; Father Stephen Galuschik,

Administrator of All Saints in North Fort Myers, FL; Deacon James Smith, and Subdeacon John Reed, both of Epiphany of Our Lord, Roswell. Interment took place at Arlington Memorial Park, Sandy Springs, GA, with Father Rabayda and Father Galuschik celebrating.

Deacon Michael was born in Uniontown, PA, and later attended high school and college in Cleveland, OH, before moving to Atlanta with his family. Michael traces his desire to serve God's people back to the days when his "baba" would take him as a youngster to help her work at Mount Saint Macrina; he also remembers the many priests and sisters who educated, encouraged, and inspired him throughout his life to answer God's calling to a religious vocation. After graduating from college, his 45-year business career included positions as financial controller for major hotels in GA, NC, and FL; general manager and finance director for an international tour operator; and worldwide marketing, event planning, and European tour operations. He was an active member of his parish for 35 years where he served as cantor and choir director, adult education instructor, altar

server, minister to the sick, and deacon.

Throughout these many years, Michael continued to experience a restless heart. He felt there was something missing in his life. He answered God's call and entered the Deacon Formation Program in 2011. It was on the Third Sunday after Pentecost in 2016, with the imposition of Bishop Kurt's hands, that he committed himself completely to God's service.

When asked to reflect on his ordination, Deacon Michael recounted the deep emotion which came over him as Bishop Kurt placed his omophorion on his head: "As I knelt at the Holy Table at which our Lord was present, Bishop Kurt prayed. At that moment I felt deeply connected with my Bishop and the entire Church as this incredible surge, which could only have been the Holy Spirit, came over me. I became overwhelmed with tears and realized in my heart what our Lord was telling me all these years. In order to be His deacon, I must courageously follow and choose the same path as Jesus Christ and submit myself completely to Him so that He can transform me into the person He wants me to become in or-

der to fulfill the purpose which He has in mind. That restless heart which I experienced my entire life finally found peace."

Deacon Michael was ordained to the Diaconate at Epiphany of Our Lord on June 5, 2016. He served the parish passionately after his ordination and was instrumental in re-energizing Byzantine Catholic traditions at the parish. He served his church well as a deacon both liturgically and administratively, as he was also the parish administrative assistant and accountant.

Deacon Michael had a strong devotion to the Byzantine Catholic faith and Church shown most in his deep love for the Holy Eucharist, Our Lord Jesus Christ, and His Most Blessed Mother. All the clergy and parishioners of Epiphany of Our Lord will greatly miss Deacon Michael, and we pray for his blessed repose, and that his memory may be eternal! He is survived by his brother, Steven Jon Tisma of Braselton, GA; niece, Kari Tisma of Wartrace, TN; nephew, Jon Tisma of Destin, FL. He was preceded in death by his parents, Michael and Rose Tisma.



2019 TRIENNIAL NATIONAL COLLECTION

For the Archdiocese for the Military Services

By Mary Lavin
Article and images appear courtesy of the Archdiocese for the Military Services

The next National Collection for the AMS, approved by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops to be taken every three years, is scheduled for the weekend of 9-10 November 2019. The 2019 Triennial National Collection is a critically important opportunity to increase awareness about the AMS, the faithful it serves, and to seek financial support for the same.

You know that the AMS is a separate U.S. diocese while many Catholics do not. The AMS continues to work diligently to make known that its mission is global and that it is responsible for the pastoral care of Catholic men and women – and their families – who hail from all U.S. dioceses while they serve, have served, or prepare to serve our Country. Whether on a military instal-

lation, in a Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, or on the campus of one of the five U.S. Military Academies, these men, women, and children are members of your own diocese or parish who would not otherwise have the opportunity to receive the sacraments, counsel from a priest, evangelization and catechesis, participate in young adult ministry programs, or simply receive a copy of a sacramental record.

Funds received from the first two National Collections for the AMS in 2013 and 2016 made possible several new and important initiatives, including the widespread certification of catechists at military installations around the world. They also ensured that the AMS could continue to underwrite the AMS Co-

Sponsored Seminarian Program, the only vocations program in the U.S. that provides priests who will serve in their home diocese before and after their service as a Military Chaplain. AMS co-sponsored priests will likely serve more years in their home diocese than they will on active-duty. Finally, the funds received enabled initial steps to be taken towards the building of an endowment with the goal of one day creating a self-sustaining source of funding.

Ninety-five percent of all gifts received by the AMS are from individuals; no funding is received from the Government or the Military. After 18 years of war, with no end in sight, constant transition and increasing uncertainty for Catholic military families, please help the spread awareness about

the 2019 Triennial National Collection so that the AMS is not only able to continue its mission but is able to further its reach and impact.

Unlike a territorial diocese, it is forbidden that a percentage of the collections taken up in chapels on military installations be automatically given to the AMS; however, AMS faithful will also have the opportunity to participate by making individual gifts.

SAINT JOHN
THE BAPTIST
BYZANTINE
CATHOLIC
CHURCH

**Fifth Anniversary of the
Beatification of Blessed
Miriam Teresa
Demjanovich**

**Saturday October 5th,
3:00pm**

Please join us for the celebration a Pontifical Divine Liturgy at St. John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church, Bayonne, NJ commemorating this special event. The Most Rev. Kurt Burnette, Bishop of the Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Passaic will be main celebrant and homilist. Light refreshments to follow. RSVP by September 30

15 E. 26th Street
Bayonne NJ, 07002
201 339 1840
stjohnsbayonne@aol.com

Visiting New York City?

Come Worship With Us!

Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church
Father Edward G. Cimbala, D.Min.—Pastor

246 East 15th Street, Manhattan, New York
212-677-0516

Sunday Divine Liturgy
10:00 AM
6:00 PM



SAINT MARY'S

Byzantine Catholic Church

YOUNG ADULT LITURGY AND SOCIAL

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God With Us

✠ ONLINE ✠

GOD WITH US ONLINE is an outreach project of the Eparchial Directors of Religious Education (ECED) and the Eastern Catholic Associates (ECA) and is dedicated to the catechetical renewal of Eastern Catholics in the United States in accord with the Church's call for a new evangelization.



THE FACE OF GOD

An Introduction to Byzantine Faith & Spirituality

Rev. Deacon Daniel Dozier

Wednesdays, September 11 and 18 @ 8:00 - 9:30 p.m. ET

"Christianity is not an abstract doctrine divorced from reality and from history. Nor is it some momentary, flickering light which shines for a brief while and then is gone. Christianity is a continual celebration of life and love between God and man lived out in concrete history." - Archbishop Joseph Raya



MAKING DISCIPLES

The Art of Bringing Others to Christ

Rev. Alexander Wroblicky

Wednesdays, October 9, 16 and 23 @ 8:00 - 9:00 p.m. ET

Many faithful Catholics are inspired by the Church's call to a new evangelization, yet don't know where to begin, because evangelization is more of an art than a science. In this 3-part series, Fr. Alex will guide us to create room in our communities for people to grow into a mature and life-giving faith.



UNLOCKING THE MYSTERY

An Introduction to Eastern Christian Bible Study

Joshua Mangels

Wednesdays, November 6 and 13 @ 8:00 - 9:00 p.m. ET

"We have learned the plan of our salvation from no one else other than from those through whom the gospel has come down to us. For they did at one time proclaim the gospel in public. And, at a later period, by the will of God, they handed the gospel down to us in the Scriptures-to be the 'ground and pillar of our faith.'" - St. Irenaeus the Godbearer



THE GIFT OF GOD

Preparing for the Feast of the Nativity

Rev. David Anderson

Wednesday, December 16 @ 8:00 - 9:00 p.m. ET

As the Great Feast of the Nativity of the Lord draws closer, using the prayers of the Church in this holy season as our guide, we will ponder God's gift of Himself to us, and consider how we can respond by making a gift of ourselves to Him.



BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST

The Mystery of Initiation & Identity of the People of God

Rev. Sebastian Carnazzo, PhD

Wednesdays Jan 8, 15 and 22 @ 8:00 - 9:00 p.m. ET

The celebration of baptism, chrismation and Eucharist together is not simply a practicality. These mysteries are closely connected and must be understood in light of each other. Using Scripture, Fr. Sebastian will show us how these mysteries are not just a symbol, but truly make us the People of God.

2019 ONLINE EDUCATIONAL OFFERINGS

All courses are offered as live webinars, free of charge. Register at EasternCatholic.org/Events.

NEW BYZANTINE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY FORMING IN GREATER CHARLOTTE, NC, AREA

A Byzantine Catholic community is forming at Saint Philip Neri Church, 292 Munn Rd., Fort Mill, SC. Please join us as we grow our community and celebrate the Byzantine Divine Liturgy. Father Steven Galuschik of All Saints Byzantine Catholic Church in North Fort Myers, FL, along with bi-ritual Deacon Ron Volek are now offering weekly Divine Liturgy in the area. This community will serve the northern part of South Carolina as well as Charlotte, NC. Please share this information with your friends and family – especially those who have moved “down South.” We will be celebrating the Byzantine Divine Liturgy on Saturdays at 4:00 PM. If you would like to participate in anyway, or have questions please contact Ron Somich at 440.477.6389 or ron.somich@gmail.com. Please check the website for news, upcoming gatherings, and service times at https://carolinabyzantine.com/

October: 5, 12, 19, 26

Carpatho-Rusyn Society's New Branches

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



LIFE, LOVE, AND THE HUMAN PERSON

By Ann M. Koshute, MTS

WHAT DO YOU WANT?

What are you looking for? (John 1:38)

What do you want me to do for you?
(Luke 18:41)

Jesus posed the first of these questions to two of the disciples who heard Him preaching and began following Him. The second, posed also in Matthew's and Mark's Gospels, was directed to a man desiring to be healed of blindness. In both instances Jesus asks what might seem like obvious questions, considering the circumstances, but He does so to prompt thoughtful consideration on the part of the questioners. There is an immediate need or something that compels them to draw near to Jesus, but He wants them to go deeper than that. Jesus is asking these men to consider bigger questions than what they want in a teacher, or whether He can restore sight to the blind. Jesus is speaking to the depths of their hearts and asking if they want to enter into a relationship and a way of living that will change their lives beyond their expectations. We might read the subtext in Jesus' questioning as, "Do you want to live a new life, and will you let Me live it in you?"

I thought about these questions from Jesus during the service of the Holy Mystery of Anointing when I was on pilgrimage in Uniontown, PA, over the Labor Day weekend. A lot of people had gathered there to pray for God's healing, with a diversity of illness, pain, or spiritual suffering. Some had obvious physical difficulties or illness; others carried suffering or sickness not readily seen. It's probably not a good idea to "rank" the Holy Mysteries, but I'd have to say that Holy Anointing is one that I particularly love, in part due to the fact that it is so rarely experienced. For Eastern Christians, this sacramental mystery is not to be given just anytime, without thoughtful consideration. It is not a gift we may receive as frequently as the Eucharist or confession. At the same time, it is a gift given perhaps more "liberally" and under more circumstances than are allowed in the Western Church. The Mystery of Anointing is not reserved only for one's deathbed, or before surgery, for example. Our Tradition calls for the Mystery to be celebrated during Great and Holy Week, in recognition that each one of us is in need of being healed: physically, emotionally and spiritually. This is the reason Jesus became man and died for us: that we would be healed from the rift created by sin (with all of the negative effects we experience in body and spirit) and given the grace to live a converted life that will lead us to our ultimate destiny with Him. There are also other times during which the Church, for particular pastoral reasons, will celebrate the Mystery for the good of all the faithful.

As I waited and prayed in one of the long lines for my turn to be anointed, I couldn't help but observe two children who'd approached the Mystery, and their actions after receiving it. The first, a little girl, was anointed and then stepped aside to return to her seat. She paused for perhaps ten seconds to very carefully pull down one frilly sock and rub some of the oil onto the top of her tiny foot. When she was finished, she continued back to her place. Right behind her came a little boy, perhaps her brother or a cousin. He, too, stopped for a few moments and pulled up his pant leg, careful not to rub off any of the precious oil from his palm. He then very deliberately rubbed some of the oil onto the shin of one leg, where I could see a noticeable scrape that looked like it was maybe a week old. His mission accomplished, the boy ran back to

his seat. When it came to my turn to be anointed, I prayed that I might receive the Holy Spirit and God's healing mercy as those children had, with total trust, and the confidence that He will heal me precisely where I need it most.

The children applying the holy oil to the places where they hurt offers a good example for us, and it relates to those questions from Jesus about what we're looking for, and what we want from Him. It's a deeply *spiritual* example that should move us beyond our physical ailments to the spiritual weaknesses and sickness we experience throughout our struggles in this life as followers of Jesus. The children knew their wounds and where they needed God's healing. Applying the oil from their hands to those places was an act of trust and a way of cooperating with God. In the Holy Mystery they met Jesus, yielded

to His healing touch and then did what was necessary to "activate" the healing. Of course, when Jesus meets us in any of the Mysteries, it is He who bestows grace, forgives sins, and transforms our lives. But these Mysteries are not simply actions "done to us," but in which we fully participate. If the Mystery unites us in marriage, then we must spend our lives working to live up to the covenant God created between us and our spouse. If God washes away our sins in Confession, then we must resolve to avoid sinful patterns and actions and live a new kind of life. The same goes for all of the Holy Mysteries. Each one is an encounter with Christ who effects a transformation and opportunity for healing in us. But in each case Jesus is asking us those same two important questions about why we seek Him and what He can do for us.



The Seasons of Infertility

A RETREAT FOR WOMEN

Presented by: The Springs in the Desert Ministry Team

Saturday, December 7, 2019
8:30am-5:30pm

Infertility affects every woman and marriage differently. While each of our stories is unique to us, there is a shared experience of loss, isolation, self-doubt, testing of faith, and pain in our marriages.
But God transforms our grief and loss into a fruitful expression of His love when we shoulder each other's burdens. Join us for a day of talks, personal prayer/reflection and community as we walk together through the seasons of infertility.

Please look for more details at <https://springsinthedesert.org/the-seasons-of-infertility>






Springs in the Desert is a Catholic ministry devoted to helping women and couples struggling with infertility to process and move beyond their grief to find the fruitfulness God has planned for their marriage. We hope our Springs in the Desert community can provide refreshment for your soul as you find others who share in your same suffering. Instead of suffering the additional pain of isolation, please know there is a place where others can identify with your struggle, providing solace and solidarity. You are not alone. You are not meant to bear this Cross on your own. Learn more at www.springsinthedesert.org

Mother Boniface Spirituality Center welcomes groups and individuals of all faiths to our spacious and fully equipped facility and grounds located in Northeast Philadelphia. We offer a variety of retreats, speakers and programming in addition to hosting groups for retreats, meetings, and times of renewal. Learn more at WWW.MSBT.ORG/MBSC





"Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert." - Isaiah 43:18-19



3501 Solly Avenue
Philadelphia, Pa. 19136
267-350-1831
267-350-1830
mbcretreat@msbt.org
WWW.MSBT.ORG/MBSC

Registration: Seasons of Infertility—December 7, 2019

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

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Please return registration with \$30.00 registration fee to Mother Boniface Spirituality Center. Checks payable to MSBT. If you have any questions, please contact us at MBCRetreat@msbt.org or 267-350-1831.

Every one of us is on a spiritual pilgrimage, and we know well to what temptations we are most vulnerable. Jesus is asking us today to look into our hearts and honestly reflect on those ar-

eas where we most need to be healed and fortified against further spiritual illness. Like those children who applied the holy oil to the places that were hurting, we must ask God to heal the

spiritual wounds and difficulties we carry and resolve to cooperate with His outpouring of grace. At this moment, Jesus is asking each one of us, “What are you looking for? What do you want

me to do for you?” What will be *your* answer? **ECL**



SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

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

EVERYDAY DEMONS

Entirely by coincidence, we often hear the most dramatic account of Jesus driving out demons right around Hallowe’en (Luke 8:26-39; 23rd Sunday after Pentecost). Saint Luke’s description of what Jesus encountered when he stepped ashore in Gadara has little in common with Hollywood’s typical depiction of evil spirits. The symptoms of the presence of evil among the Gadarenes are to be found in very ordinary things.

As described in the Gospel, the possessed man wanted desperately to be alone. If people restrained him to keep him at home, he would even break chains and run off into the wilderness. This is nothing like the way Jesus or John the Baptist or our great monastic

saints sought the wilderness for prayer and penance. This possessed man wants to flee all human contact. So, as soon as he catches sight of Jesus, he tries to drive Him away, arguing that they have nothing to do with each other.

The solitary world the demoniac creates for himself is focused on the ugly and the impure. He rejects clothing and a normal home with other people. Instead, he prowls naked and disheveled among the corrupt bodies of the dead.

Finally, we are told that this man suffers not just from one demon but from a whole “legion” (which, in Roman military terms, meant five thousand men)! Cut off from any positive influence, sur-

rounded by filth and death, it comes as no surprise that his demons multiplied.

When Jesus drives these demons out, the change in the man’s behavior is immediate and amazing. The townsfolk find him clothed, in his right mind, and sitting at Jesus’ feet. His first, new, healthy relationship is with the Lord. If he is clothed, it must be because Jesus Himself has clothed him, removing his shame and restoring his dignity, just as He did for each of us at our Baptism. The empty space in this man’s life left by the departure of thousands of demons is filled with the Lord.

By the end of the Gospel account, this former loner wants to follow Jesus along with the other disciples. Instead,

Jesus gives him a more difficult task. Like that other loner, the Samaritan woman (John 4:28-30), this former demoniac is challenged by Jesus to reach out and share the Good News with others in his own home town.

The demoniac is not the only person in Gadara who has fallen under the spell of evil, however. The reaction of the townsfolk to Jesus’ powerful act of healing and liberation is to ask Him to leave. Saint Matthew’s account of this same miracle shows us how these people think. When the swineherds rush back to town to tell the others what has happened, it’s all about the drowning of the pigs; the salvation of their relative and neighbor is mentioned as an afterthought (Matthew 9:33). It’s clear what matters to Gadarenes: property, prosperity, and pigs, much more than a person restored to his original dignity.

Demonic possession is one thing; sin, even habitual sin, is another. But there is only one power of Evil, although its minions are legion. The Gadarene demoniac would warn us against succumbing to that power of evil in our own lives in the most ordinary ways.

Are we tempted to push other people away? To avoid healthy relationships? To be alone with our “demon” (whether that’s bitter memories, compulsive worrying, or addictions to drink, drugs, pornography, shopping, entertainment, gambling, gaming, or digital devices)? Are we tempted to turn away even from God by refusing to join the Church at worship and to pray regularly at home?

In our thoughts, our conversations and our entertainment, are we tempted to focus on the ugly, the violent or the impure? Isn’t this exactly what “celebrating” Hallowe’en means for many adults? But isn’t even judgmental gossip about other people’s sins a sneaky way of getting to focus on these things?

Have you noticed that one bad habit will often lead to another? That one indulgence in sin invites the next? That bad companionship drags us down slowly? There are many ways for one demon to become a legion.

Finally, and most dangerous because it is the most “normal” of all: how often do you find yourself tempted to value material things over people? An honest evaluation of what we fight over, what we hold grudges about, and what motivates our political and social attitudes may surprise us.

These familiar faces of evil are at our doors every day—not just on Hallowe’en. The Gadarene demoniac warns us that these everyday demons may be cluttering up a place in our lives that Jesus wants to clear out and fill with His life and His love for us. **ECL**

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Maryann Sivak.....President of the National C-RS Society will open
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John Righetti.....One people, 6 churches. How did that happen?
Tom Peters.....The Perils of Pelagia and Petro
Kathryn PetersFive Rusyn artists
DisplaysGenealogy (Tom Peters)

** Friday October 11th FREE documentary “The Resurrection of a Nation”
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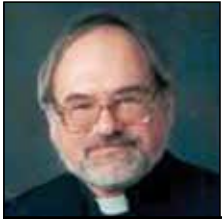
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Registration by check mail to : Sharon Jarrow. • 599 Fehr Rd. •Nazareth,PA. •18064
(\$45 payable to EASTERN PA CHAPTER CARPATHO-RUSYN SOCIETY)
Registration online : go to Carpatho-Rusyn Society website, go to event page ,click on registration

CONTACT : Sharon Jarrow: 610-759-2628 Or shangp@rcn.com



THE BYZANTINE LITURGY

By Archpriest David Petras, SEOD

THE ANAPHORA: THE WORDS OF INSTITUTION

The anaphora has a very clear structure. God is addressed, and this is followed by a narration of His works. In the anaphora of Saint John Chrysostom, these are creation, redemption, liturgy, and the Lord's supper. What stands out is that the climax of the narration of God's saving deeds is the institution of the eucharist by the words, "This is My body," "This is My blood." The Byzantine Liturgy follows the Matthew-Mark tradition, "This is My blood," while the Roman Anaphora follows the Luke-Paul tradition, "This is the cup of My blood." These words of our Lord have a special status in the liturgy. In the Byzantine Liturgy, the faithful respond, "Amen," "So be what the Lord has said" when these words were said by the priest. "Amen" usually belonged at the end of a prayer. In the Western tradition, these words are called the "consecration," and Roman Catholic theologians have explained the words of Jesus as the words which effect the substantial change in the bread and wine into his very Body and Blood.

All Christian liturgies, except one, contain the words of the institution, and give them a prominent role. The reason for this should be obvious: the liturgy was commemorating, remembering, and calling to mind the Lord's supper, the breaking of bread in which we recognize Jesus. We proclaim, therefore, the first meal at which this "remembrance" was done, connecting it to the presence of Christ. The one eucharistic prayer that does not have these words is the East Syrian Anaphora of Addai and Mara, which

is very ancient. In 2001, the Catholic Church recognized this anaphora as valid, for the reality of the Lord's Supper is still proclaimed. The words are not "magic," and the priest himself does not perform the miracle of changing bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ, but it is our Lord Himself who enacted this mystery of faith at the mystical supper in the upper room. When we now say the words, we remember the power of God's grace and His divine salvation in giving us His Body and Blood as food and drink, and it is, therefore, through God's power that this becomes real in our liturgical thanksgiving today.

If we analyze the words of institution themselves, they are a part of the enumerations of God's benefits toward us through the prayer addressed to the Father. They are a mystical and liturgical, but not a dramatic re-enactment of the Last Supper. They do not only convey the dogmatic truth of the presence of the Body and Blood of the risen Christ, but also reveal the action by which these gifts save us. They are "broken for you," "poured out for you and for many," and they also proclaim one of the ways in which they are saving: "for the forgiveness of sins." All forgiveness and reconciliation really flow from the eucharistic sacrifice, precisely because in partaking of this mystery we are truly united both physically and spiritually with the Son of God, our Redeemer.

Saint John Chrysostom explained the meaning of this mystery. He preached, "It is not man that converts the holy

gifts into the Body and Blood of Christ, but Christ Himself, who gave Himself to be crucified. The priest, who utters these words, is only an image of Christ, but the power and grace are from God. He says: 'This is My body.' These words change the sacrificial elements. Just as the words: 'Increase and multiply and fill the earth' (Gen 1:28) although spoken once, give our nature the permanent power of procreation, so also these words once pronounced, are effective on all the altars from that time until now and will be to His second coming." (*First Homily on the Betrayal of Judas*, 6) Chrysostom is not talking about the moment when the gifts change, nor, indeed, is he even talking about the words that the priest says. He is speaking about the words that Christ said, and which echo or reverberate throughout time to effect the change in a manner similar to creation. According to Chrysostom, the priest "stands in the place of Christ," when he says these words, for the presbyter obviously does not mean that the bread is *his* body, but the Body of Christ. The important thing is that Chrysostom is not referring to the words of the priest actually pronounced in the Liturgy, but to the words said by Christ at the Mystical Supper.

In Byzantine theology, the priest is a passive instrument of God. This is why all sacramental formulas are passive (e.g., "The servant of God is baptized..."). In Chrysostom's time, the question of the exact moment when the gifts changed had not been asked. What was important was the reality of the mystery of faith. For the Fathers,

therefore, when the eucharistic prayer had been said, the bread and wine had become the real Body and Blood of Christ.

The Divine Liturgy is the reality of the Gospel of Saint John. Here Jesus teaches us, "I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I Jesus said to them, "Amen, amen, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you do not have life within you. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day. For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink." (John 6:51-55) We pray before Holy Communion, "I also believe and profess that this, which I am about to receive, is truly Your most precious body and Your life-giving blood, which, I pray, make me worthy to receive for the remission of all my sins and for life everlasting." The Eucharist, therefore, is not only real food for our bodies but also for our souls, which is why frequent reception of this holy mystery is so important.

ECL

SPIRITUAL REFLECTIONS

Father Lewis Rabayda



GOOD FATHERS GIVE HEALING GIFTS

We each have different experiences of fathers in our lives. Some of us have had the blessing of being loved and cared for by our earthly fathers. Others may not have had the comfort of their biological father, but have other encouraging father figures in their lives. Some still, may not have experienced either of these situations and have had to rely on God the Father, alone. But regardless of our experience, physical or spiritual, there come times in our lives when we need the love of a father to affirm us, to build us up, and to give us healing gifts.

We become broken down by the many trials and temptations that come our way as we attempt to live transfigured lives in Christ. These evil elements gnaw at us and try to destroy the im-

age of God within us. And sometimes these attacks are too powerful, and our own prayers and abilities to withstand and heal from them, are not sufficient. It is then, when we seek healing from someone who is able to give it, we seek healing and wholeness from the many fathers in our lives.

But sometimes when we approach our earthly fathers for these blessings, sometimes when we need them most to give us direction, we find that these fathers have failed their obligations and are not able to supply what is needed. When we encounter this neglect, we should not be overwhelmed with grief or disappointment, but we can accept a greater responsibility in our own lives. Each of us at one point or another, in relation to one person or another, finds

ourselves in both father and son roles. And after we have experienced the failure of a father, it should inspire each one of us to not fail those who look to us as fathers because, too often, neglect and abuse can be handed down from father to son, and so on. But if we are able to recognize this destructive behavior being exemplified to us, then, with the grace of God, we will be able to stop its spread, and in turn sow the unconditional love of the best father we know, God the Father.

When teaching us God's desire for our happiness, Jesus taught us that when we are in need, we should ask *God* to fulfill our needs. "What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; or if he asks for an egg will give him a scorpion?" (Lk

11:11-12). If we ask God the Father for any good thing necessary for our salvation and eternal life, He *will* oblige us, He will not, instead, distance us from His holiness. So, in order to break the cycle of poor fathers, each one of us can follow the example of the Apostles, of Jesus, and of God the Father: to give good, healing, gifts to those who ask of us. And by our example of discipleship, we strengthen and affirm others in holiness and direct them to the ultimate Father, the One, True, God. **ECL**

SEASONAL REFLECTIONS

Father Ronald Hatton



SEEKING THE PROTECTION OF THE THEOTOKOS

With all the attention in the Catholic Church surrounding the Marian Apparition of Fatima during the month of October, the Eastern Christian feast of the Protection or Patronage of the Theotokos, is an important feast for us which we celebrate on the first of October. The day celebrates the appearance of the Mother of God at the Church of Panagia (All-holy One) of Blachernae, in modern-day Istanbul, and was a place of pilgrimage in Constantinople during the time of the Roman Empire. The apparition of the Theotokos which is commemorated this month took place in the tenth century. Tradition says that, during a time of siege of Constantinople, Saint Andrew (of Constantinople) with his disciple Saint Epiphanius, and a group of people, saw the Mother of God, Saint John the Baptist, and several other saints and angels during a vigil in the Church of Blachernae, nearby the city gates. The Blachernae Palace church was where several of her relics were kept. The relics were her robe, veil, and part of her belt that had been transferred from Palestine during the fifth century.

In her apparition, the Theotokos approached the center of the church, knelt down and remained in prayer for a long time. Her face was drowned in tears. Then she took her veil off and spread it over the people as a sign of protection.

During the time, the people in the city were threatened by a barbarian invasion. After the appearance of the Mother of God, the danger was averted, and the city was spared from bloodshed and suffering. Because Saint Andrew was a Slav, the celebration of this appearance is more fervently celebrated in the Slavic Churches than in the Greek Churches with a 12th century Russian chronicle describing the establishment of this day as a feast day in the Russian Church.

Many of our parishes are dedicated to the feast of the Protection of the Theotokos. Our Festal Menaion (the book containing the texts used for Vespers and Matins of our feast days) provides for a Great Vespers with Litija as well as a Matins for the feast, though, unfortunately, we seldom see these celebrated in our parishes. Associated with these services are very beautiful hymns to our blessed Mother, which we should not allow to fall out of use in our worship.

“Heaven and earth are sanctified. The Church is radiant and all the people are rejoicing. Behold, the Mother of God, together with the angelic hosts, the Forerunner, and the Theologian [the Holy Apostle and Evangelist John], with the prophets and the apostles has invisibly entered. She prays to Christ in behalf of all Christians that He may

have mercy on our city and all people who glorify the feast of her Protection.”

“All the leaders of the heavenly armies form a spiritual choir of and rejoice with all of us when they see the Lady and Queen of All praised by the faithful. The spirits of the just also rejoice as they witness the vision of the Queen praying with outstretched arms. She asks for peace in the world, power and strength for our Church, and salvation of our souls.” –At Psalm 140 for the Vespers of the Feast.

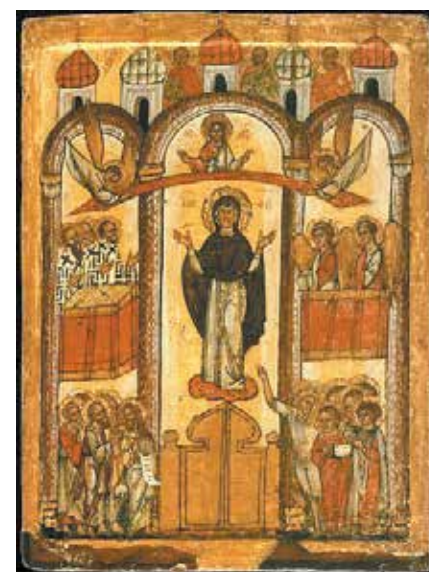
During this month, whether in the Roman or Byzantine Catholic Church, we should especially devote our prayer to asking our Blessed Mother for her protection, as we face the uncertainties of life, the attacks of demons, illness, or external crisis in our daily lives. She intercedes always for us, as a good mother should, but we should never take that intercession for granted, but offer praises to her and venerate her as the Mother of God and the Saint of Perfect Submission to the will of God. I will offer here a couple more hymns which we can use as special prayer during this month:

“Let us assemble today, O faithful, and praise the immaculate Queen of all, the most-pure Virgin, the Mother of Christ our God; for she always mercifully extends her hands to her Son. In

amazement, Andrew saw her in a cloud, protecting the faithful with her mantle. Let us fervently sing to her: Rejoice, O protection, defense, and salvation of our souls.” –Litija for the Vespers

“O most holy Lady, Virgin Mother of God, extend you holy mantle over us; guide and protect our rulers and all your people from every evil. As the holy Andrew saw you in a vision while praying, so today, O holy Lady, show us your loving protection.” –Hymn of Light at the Matins of the Feast

As we sing in our Divine Liturgy, “Through the prayers of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us!” **ECL**



SCHOOL OF PRAYER

Father G. Scott Boghossian

RISE EARLY TO PRAY

Saints, Olympic athletes, wealthy entrepreneurs, and successful people in every field get up early to begin their day. Motivational speaker Brian Tracy calls the first hour of the day the “Golden Hour.” He says that the thoughts that fill our mind in the first hour of the day strongly impact how the rest of the day will progress. Hal Elrod authored the best-selling book, *The Miracle Morning: The Not-So-Obvious Secret Guaranteed to Transform your Life – (Before 8 AM)*. Can you guess what the secret is? Get up early!

The Evangelist Mark tells us that Our Lord Jesus got up early: “Rising very early before dawn, He left and went off to a deserted place, where He prayed” (Mk. 1:35). Be like Jesus; get up early to pray! The Woman of Proverbs 31, a type and foreshadowing of our Lady and of all holy women, “gets up early before daylight to prepare food for her family and for her servants” (Prov. 31:15). Saints and ascetics of ages past rose early to pray and seek God.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus tells us to “seek first the kingdom of God” (Mt. 5:24). Yes, this means put God first in order of priority. But let’s also understand “seek first” as an instruction to connect with God in prayer as the first thing we do every day.

If we get up early and spend time in prayer and spiritual reading, we are proving to ourselves that we are serious about spiritual things. Some people spend time in prayer daily but put it off until the end of the day. By the afternoon or evening, they are tired, distracted, and out of sorts. After a long day at work, they want to eat and relax. Then, if they pray at all, they rush “just to get it done” and pray and read without much attention or devotion. Not good.

Busy mothers, who hardly ever have a quiet moment to themselves, will tell you to pray first and to pray early. Once everyone else is up, forget about it! After the sun rises, every kind of distraction and interruption wreaks havoc on our plans. Get into prayer and reading

before things get busy. Even if we have scheduled a time to pray later in the day, emergencies and unexpected events can intrude and foil our plans.

Prayer is the great means of grace. In prayer, we find the strength to obey God. Temptations will come, and if we haven’t done some serious prayer and reading in the morning, we will crash and burn. An irritating person will provoke us to lose our patience; a frustrating inconvenience will tempt us to curse or complain. But if we pray first, we will have grace for the day to come, and escape the snares that the devil has placed in our path.

Getting up early to pray forces us to deny ourselves and mortify our flesh. If we want to get to heaven, we can’t let the body always have its way. “The flesh fights against the spirit, and the spirit fights against the flesh” (Gal. 5:17). Saint Paul said, “I treat my body harshly and make it my slave, lest by any means, after having preached to others, I myself should be disqualified” (1 Cor. 9:27). If Saint Paul needed to practice self-de-

nial and mortification, how much more do we? Our Lord said, “if anyone wants to be my disciple, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow me” (Lk. 9:23). Get up as soon as the alarm goes off in the morning and pray.

Rising early to pray demonstrates our spiritual enthusiasm. Some people get up very early on “Black Friday” to get to all the stores for the best deals. Others do the same to stand in line for tickets to a show, football game, or the latest iPhone. If only we were as enthusiastic about spiritual things! Let’s be as enthusiastic about our Savior and Lord as the world is about material things by getting up early every day to be with Him.

Maybe you’ve been putting off your prayers till the end of the day, and find that you don’t pray well, and sometimes don’t pray at all. Make a change. Set the alarm. Experience the power of rising early to pray.

“Awake, O sleeper, and rise from the dead, and Christ will give you light” (Eph. 5:14). **ECL**

BYZANTINE CATHOLIC SEMINARY TO HOST “COME AND SEE” RETREAT OF DISCOVERY



The Byzantine Catholic Seminary of Saints Cyril and Methodius is pleased to host the “Come and See” Weekend of Discovery from Friday, November 1 to Sunday, November 3, 2019.

Invited to this retreat are men, ages 18 to 35, single or married, who may be considering a vocation to the priesthood in the Byzantine Catholic Church. The atmosphere will be prayerful, positive, and fraternal.

A past retreatant noted about his experience that the weekend was helpful for his “seeing both the difficulties and joys of seminary and ordained life.” It was also noted that “watching the seminarians look out for one another and serve parish communities was a great witness to the Gospel.”

“Come and See” is a retreat weekend that takes place at the Byzantine Catholic Seminary in Pittsburgh, PA. The retreat includes sharing liturgical services and meals with the seminary community and an introduction to the Seminary formation program. It will also include a tour of the seminary, gatherings with the seminarians, and witness talks.

There is no tuition for this “Come and See” Retreat of Discovery. The retreat, meals, and lodging are free. The application deadline is October 9, 2019. For more information and to apply, please see the seminary’s website www.bcs.org.

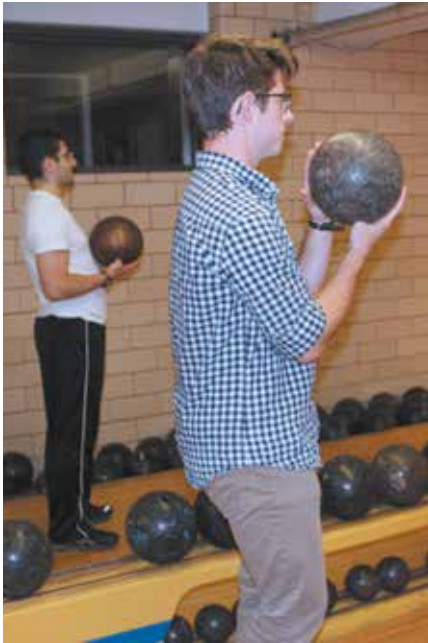
The Byzantine Catholic Seminary is a community of mentors, teachers, and students forming leaders for the Church in an environment of Christian

unity, integrity, and missionary spirit with a commitment to ecumenism.

Founded in 1950, the Byzantine Catholic Seminary is a free-standing, English-speaking theological seminary, welcoming all those seeking the knowledge possessed by the Eastern ecclesial traditions.

The seminary is authorized to grant graduate degrees by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and accredited by the Commission on Accrediting of the Association of Theological Schools. The seminary operates as a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization incorporated in Pennsylvania and is governed by a Board of Directors under the leadership of the Metropolitan Archbishop of Pittsburgh.

If you would like more information about this topic, please call the



seminary office at 412-321-8383 or email at office@bcs.edu.



When traveling to the Mid-Atlantic, please visit our churches

Maryland Patronage of the Mother of God 1265 Linden Avenue Baltimore, MD 21227 Phone 410-247-4936 Web www.patronagechurch.org Sunday Divine Liturgy 9:15 am	Patronage at Hagerstown meeting at: St. Ann Catholic Church 1525 Oak Hill Avenue Hagerstown, MD 21742 Saturday Vigil Liturgy 6:45PM 2 per month Call Baltimore for schedule	Epiphany Mission 9301 Warfield Road Gaithersburg, MD Web www.eolmission.org Sunday Divine Liturgy at 10:00AM	Ascension of our Lord 114 Palace Lane Williamsburg, VA 23185 Phone 757-585-2878 (rectory) Web www.ascensionva.org Sunday Divine Liturgy 11:00 am	Phone 919-239-4877 Web www.sscyrilmethodius.org Sunday Divine Liturgy 10:00 am
Patronage at Abingdon meeting at: Stone Chapel at Saint Francis de Sales Church 1450 Abingdon Road Abingdon, MD 21009 Sunday Divine Liturgy 5:30PM	Saint Gregory of Nyssa 12420 Old Gunpowder Road Spur Beltsville, MD 20705 Phone 301-953-9323 Web www.stgregoryofnyssa.net Sunday Divine Liturgies Church Slavonic 8:00 am Sunday Matins 9:30 am English Liturgy 10:30 am	Virginia Epiphany of our Lord 3410 Woodburn Road Annandale, VA 22003 Phone: 703-573-3986 Web www.eolbcc.org Sunday Divine Liturgies 8:00 am & 10:30 am	Our Lady of Perpetual Help 216 Parliament Drive Virginia Beach, VA 23462 Phone 757-456-0809 Web www.olphvb.org Sunday Divine Liturgy 8:00 am	District of Columbia Byzantine Ruthenian Chapel Basilica of the National Shrine 400 Michigan Avenue, NE Washington, DC 20017 Phone 202-526-8300 Web www.nationalshrine.org No regularly scheduled Sunday Liturgy. To reserve a date and time, priests must call the Liturgy Office and submit a current letter from their eparchy's Safe Environment Office.
			North Carolina Saints Cyril and Methodius 2510 Piney Plains Road Cary, NC 27518	

UPCOMING EPARCHIAL AND PARISH EVENTS

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- OCTOBER, 2019**

1 Protection of the Theotokos
Solemn Holy Day

14 Columbus Day
*Civic Holiday*Chancery closed*

NOVEMBER, 2019

8 Holy Archangel Michael and All Holy Bodiless Powers of Heaven
Solemn Holy Day Chancery closed*

11-14 USCCB General Assembly
Baltimore, MD Bishop Kurt in attendance*

14 Beginning of the Christmas Fast
Begins at sundown

21 Entrance of the Virgin Theotokos into the Temple
Solemn Holiday
- 28-29 Thanksgiving Holiday
*Civic Holiday*Chancery closed*

DECEMBER, 2019

6 Our Holy Father Nicholas of Myra
*Solemn Holy Day*Chancery closed*

8 Maternity of the Holy Anna
Solemn Holy Day

24 Vigil Eve of Christmas

25 The Nativity of Our Lord
Holy Day of Obligation

26 Synaxis of the Virgin Theotokos

27 Holy Protomartyr Stephen

24-27 Christmas Holiday
Chancery closed

31-January 1 New Year's Holiday
*Chancery closed *Happy New Year*