



EASTERN CATHOLIC LIFE

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For the first time in 600 years

The Pope Resigns

Saying he no longer has the strength to exercise ministry over the universal church, Pope Benedict XVI announced on February 11th that he would be resign the papacy on February 28, 2013, after an eight-year pontificate.

"After having repeatedly examined my conscience before God, I have come to the certainty that my strengths, due to an advanced age, are no longer suited to an adequate exercise of the Petrine ministry," the Pope told cardinals gathered for an ordinary public consistory to approve the canonization of new saints. Pope Benedict, who was elected in April 2005, was the first Pope to resign in more than 600 years.

He told the cardinals, "In today's world, subject to so many rapid changes and shaken by questions of deep relevance for the life of faith, in order to govern the barque of Saint Peter and proclaim the Gospel, both strength of mind and body are necessary, strength which in the last few months, has deteriorated in me to the extent that I have had to recognize my incapacity to adequately fulfill the ministry entrusted to me."

Jesuit Father Lombardi, Vatican spokesman, told journalists even though the announcement had caught almost everybody by surprise, it was not a snap decision, but rather one that "had matured over the past few months." The Pope made his announcement in Latin from a pre-written text during a morning ordinary public consistory where a large number of cardinals were present. When he delivered his announcement, the Pope seemed very "composed, concentrated" and read "in a solemn manner" in keeping with the importance of what he was saying, Father Lombardi said.

Fulfilling the canonical requirement, Pope Benedict solemnly declared to the cardinals, "Well aware of the seriousness of this act, with full freedom I declare that I renounce the ministry of Bishop of Rome, Successor of Saint Peter, entrusted to me by the cardinals on 19 April 2005, in such a way, that as from 28 February 2013, at 20:00 hours, the See of Rome, the See of Saint Peter, will be vacant and a conclave to elect the new supreme pontiff will have to be convoked by those whose competence it is."

Father Lombardi said that after the Pope steps down, he will move to the papal villa in Castel Gandolfo outside of Rome. He will stay there until the renovation is completed of a cloister, set up by Blessed John Paul II, which is located inside the Vatican Gardens, he said. The Pope will then live in the cloister, called the Mater Ecclesia monastery, and dedicate his time to prayer and reflection, the Vatican spokesman said. It is likely that the Pope will keep writing, he added, since the Pope has mentioned many times that he has wanted to spend more time dedicated to study and prayer.

The Pope, who is past the age allowed a cardinal to vote for a new pope, will obviously not be part of the conclave that will convene to elect his successor, he added. He is not likely to play any role in the "interregnum" or time between popes because "there is no role for a predecessor pope" during this period, the priest said. The Jesuit priest said a "sede vacante" usually lasts less than a month, and that it was more than likely a new Pope would be elected in time to lead the full schedule of Holy Week and Easter liturgies.

Father Lombardi said being a pope today is "much more fast-moving, more demanding" than it was in the past with an almost nonstop full schedule of public and private events and liturgical celebrations. When asked whether the Pope had any medical illnesses or bouts of depression that may have prompted his resignation, Father Lombardi said the pope

was "absolutely not" depressed and possessed a remarkable "spiritual serenity" and composure despite the many difficult moments he has had to face as pope. The Vatican spokesman also said he was not aware of any medical illness that would have caused the pope to step down, rather it was due to a "normal" deterioration of physical and mental strength that comes with old age.

The Pope has increasingly had trouble walking in the past year, often using a cane and always being assisted getting up and down steps. However, the Vatican has never released medical information that would make it appear the Pope suffers from anything other than joint pain connected to his age.

The option of a pope to resign is explicitly written into the Code of Canon Law. It says a pope may step down, but stipulates that the decision must be made freely and "duly manifested." No one needs to formally accept a pope's resignation for it to be valid. The last pope to resign was Pope Gregory XII in 1415. Pope Benedict had long said it would be

appropriate for a pope to resign for the good of the church if the pontiff felt he were unable to physically bear the burden of the papacy.

Before ending his remarks during the consistory, Pope Benedict told the cardinals: "I thank you most sincerely for all the love and work with which you have supported me in my ministry and I ask pardon for all my defects. And now, let us entrust the holy church to the care of our supreme pastor, our Lord Jesus Christ, and implore his holy Mother Mary, so that she may assist the cardinal fathers with her maternal solicitude, in electing a new supreme pontiff."

The Pope said, "I wish to also devotedly serve the holy church of God in the future through a life dedicated to prayer." (CNS)



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What Happens when a Pope Resigns?

A Unique Moment of Transition

VATICAN CITY – While the surprise resignation of Pope Benedict XVI is a first for the church in centuries, it also leads to a complicated period of transition that ends in the election of a new Pope.

Regulated by ancient traditions and recent rules, the period between popes – known by the Latin term “interregnum” – began exactly at 8 PM, Rome time, on February 28, a date and time Pope Benedict stipulated in a declaration he made February 11 for when the See of Rome and the See of Saint Peter will be vacant.

Normally the interregnum begins with a Pope’s death and is followed by a period of mourning. This time, the Pope will resign from his ministry and spend a short period of prayer and reflection at the papal summer villa in Castel Gandolfo, south of Rome, before moving to a monastery at the Vatican.

The rules governing the interregnum are matters of church law, not dogma. The apostolic constitution “Universi Dominici Gregis” confirms that as long as the Holy See is vacant, the Universal Church is governed by the College of Cardinals, which cannot, however, make decisions normally reserved to the Pope. Such matters must be postponed until the new Pope is elected.

Until there is a Pope, the Roman Curia – the Vatican’s network of administrative offices – loses most of its cardinal supervisors and cannot handle any new business.

The College of Cardinals is to deal solely with “ordinary business and matters which cannot be postponed.” At present, there are 209 cardinals, and all of them are asked to meet in Rome to help administer the transition period.

The College of Cardinals does this through two structures: a general congregation, in which all the cardinals are to meet daily; and a particular four-member congregation, consisting of the chamberlain of the Holy Roman Church, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, and a rotating team of three cardinal assistants.

Only those cardinals under age 80 will be eligible to vote in the coming conclave. Cardinals who are age 80 or over by the time the conclave starts are excluded from the closed-door proceedings. There were 117 cardinal-electors when the “sede vacante” began on February 28th; by March 5, that number will be 116.

As chamberlain, Cardinal Bertone is to administer the goods and temporal rights of the Holy See until the election of a new Pope.

Meanwhile, the dean of the College of Cardinals, Cardinal Angelo Sodano, is charged with making preparations for a conclave to elect a new Pope, and the cardinals must set the time for the conclave to start.

The word conclave comes from Latin, meaning literally “with key,” and reflects the previous tradition of locking the cardinals in an area where they would spend day and

night until the new Pope’s election.

On the day set for entry into the conclave, the cardinal-electors assemble in Saint Peter’s Basilica to attend morning Mass. In the afternoon, they walk in procession to the Sistine Chapel, located just to the north of Saint Peter’s. The voting may begin that afternoon with one ballot; on following days, normally two ballots are held in the morning and two in the afternoon.

A Pope is elected when he obtains a two-thirds majority. This reflects a change Pope Benedict established in 2007 that effectively undid a more flexible procedure introduced by Blessed John Paul. According to the new rule, the two-thirds-majority rule cannot be set aside even when cardinal-electors are at an impasse. If the cardinals are deadlocked after 13 days, the cardinals pause for a day of prayer, reflection and dialogue, then move to runoff ballots between the two leading candidates. A papal election will continue to require a majority of two-thirds of the voting cardinals.

All voting is secret, in writing, on paper ballots, which are deposited in a receptacle by each elector, then counted. Ballots are taken to any cardinals residing at the Domus Sanctae Marthae but who are too sick to come to the Sistine Chapel.

After each morning and afternoon round of voting, the ballots are burned. By tradition but not by rule, they are burned with special chemicals to produce the black



smoke signifying an inconclusive vote, or white smoke if a new Pope was elected. Due to confusion in the past as people in Saint Peter’s Square tried to determine what color smoke was coming out of the Sistine Chapel smokestack, the basilica’s bell is also rung to confirm a successful election.

Once a new Pope has been elected, he is asked if he accepts the office – he is encouraged but not bound to do so by the current rules – and is asked to choose a name. Traditionally, the senior member of the cardinal deacons – currently Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, 69 – announces the successful election results from the central balcony of Saint Peter’s Basilica. After the new Pope has donned papal robes, he proceeds to the balcony, where he greets the public and offers his first blessing.

At a time designated by the Pope, usually a few days later, he officially opens his ministry with an investiture Mass at Saint Peter’s. The new Pope is no longer crowned with a papal tiara, but receives a pallium, or stole, in recognition of his authority. (CNS)



RESIGNATION STATEMENT OF POPE BENEDICT XVI

Dear Brothers, I have convoked you to this Consistory, not only for the three canonizations, but also to communicate to you a decision of great importance for the life of the Church. After having repeatedly examined my conscience before God, I have come to the certainty that my strengths, due to an advanced age, are no longer suited to an adequate exercise of the Petrine ministry. I am well aware that this ministry, due to its essential spiritual nature, must be carried out not only with words and deeds, but no less with prayer and suffering. However, in today’s world, subject to so many rapid changes and shaken by questions of deep relevance for the life of faith, in order to govern the barque of Saint Peter and proclaim the Gospel, both strength of mind and body are necessary, strength which in the last few months, has deteriorated in me to the extent that I have had to recognize my incapacity to adequately fulfill the ministry entrusted to me. For this reason, and well aware of the seriousness of this act, with full freedom I declare that I renounce the ministry of Bishop of Rome, Successor

of Saint Peter, entrusted to me by the Cardinals on 19 April 2005, in such a way, that as from 28 February 2013, at 20:00 hours, the See of Rome, the See of Saint Peter, will be vacant and a Conclave to elect the new Supreme Pontiff will have to be convoked by those whose competence it is.

Dear Brothers, I thank you most sincerely for all the love and work with which you have supported me in my ministry and I ask pardon for all my defects. And now, let us entrust the Holy Church to the care of Our Supreme Pastor, Our Lord Jesus Christ, and implore his holy Mother Mary, so that she may assist the Cardinal Fathers with her maternal solicitude, in electing a new Supreme Pontiff. With regard to myself, I wish to also devotedly serve the Holy Church of God in the future through a life dedicated to prayer.

Benedictus PP XVI

From the Vatican, 10 February 2013



FROM THE OFFICE OF THE EPARCHIAL ADMINISTRATOR



The Resignation of Pope Benedict XVI

My prayers, and the collective prayers of the Eparchy of Passaic, are with His Holiness, Pope Benedict XVI, upon the occasion of the announcement of his resignation as Supreme Pontiff, effective February 28, 2013.

Having assumed this awesome responsibility on April 19, 2005 as the 265th Successor to the Apostle Peter, Pope Benedict XVI has worked tirelessly for the greater glory of God and the welfare of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.



We wish His Holiness peace and God's blessings all the days of his life.

May the Holy Spirit guide those who are entrusted with the prayerful selection of a new Supreme Pontiff later this month at the conclave in Rome.

Sincerely in Christ,

Very Reverend
Edward G. Cimbala, D.Min.
Eparchial Administrator

Cantor Reposes in the Lord

Eternal Memory: +Cantor Daniel Holodick

SMITHTOWN, NY – +Daniel Holodick, cantor emeritus at Resurrection Byzantine Catholic Church, Smithtown NY, entered into eternal life on October 21, 2012. He was 80 years of age.

Born in Swoyersville, PA, the son of John and Mary (nee Palinchak) Holodick, the young Daniel served at the altar of Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church in Swoyersville and began singing under the director of Cantor John Dzurisin at an early age. He saw action as a Marine during the Korean War and, after stints as a coal miner, carpenter, real estate agent and employee of Pennsylvania Power and Light, he moved with his family to Long Island in 1970. His long career as an air traffic controller

kept him close to his lifelong enthusiasm for flying, which he also pursued as an amateur pilot.

+Cantor Holodick was instrumental in the foundational years of Resurrection Byzantine Catholic Church. He particularly loved crafting in wood. In addition to his work on the rectory, school and at the parish bazaars, he built the church's iconostas and baldacchino and decorated them in faux marble and gold leaf. His hand is also evident in stained glass creations around the parish plant and in the stained glass Byzantine crosses he regularly made and gave as gifts to parishioners.

Holodick was an active member of the parish choir under the direc-

tion of Cantor Charles Markus and assumed the role of Cantor upon Markus' death in 1996. He served the parish faithfully until his retirement in 2012. His patience and quiet humor in the face of increasingly serious illness expressed his faith in God's love and his hope in the resurrection.

+Cantor Daniel Holodick is survived by his wife of 56 years, Rita (nee Andrasko). Predeceased by his son, Daniel, he leaves two daughters, Denise (Mingoia) and Lisa (Solaterio), and six grandchildren.

Parastas and funeral services were celebrated at Resurrection Church by Father Jack Custer with responses led by Cantor Joseph



Durko on October 24th and 25th. Parishioners, family and friends paid tribute to +Cantor Daniel's legacy with their spirited singing of the funeral services in English and Slavonic and with the mercy meal offered by the parishioners for the funeral guests. May God grant His servant +Daniel blessed repose and eternal memory.



NEW BRUNSWICK, NJ – +Father Robert Kemeter, Pastor of Saint Peter and Paul Byzantine Catholic Church in Somerset, NJ fell asleep in the Lord at Robert Wood Johnson Hospital in New Brunswick, NJ on Thursday, February 7, 2013.

The Office of Christian Burial for a Priest was celebrated at Saints Peter and Paul Byzantine Catholic Church in Som-

erset, NJ on Friday, February 15, 2013 by the Very Reverend Edward G. Cimbala, D.Min., Administrator of the Eparchy of Passaic.

A complete obituary will appear in the next issue of the *Eastern Catholic Life*. Grant, O Lord, to Your departed Priest-Servant, Robert, blessed repose and eternal memory! *Vičnaja jemu pamjat!*

Called to Eternal Repose:

+Father Robert Kemeter

PEOPLE YOU KNOW

AROUND THE EPARCHY



SAINT ANN CHURCH, HARRISBURG

A VISIT FROM ST. NICHOLAS

On Sunday, December 2nd, the Saint Ann Church family in Harrisburg, PA received a visit from Saint Nicholas, who shared stories about his life. Then Saint Nicholas gave gifts of fruit and candy to the children and the adults who greeted him.

That Sunday, after the 9 AM Divine Liturgy, the parish family enjoyed a delicious breakfast served by members of the ECF organization. Then the children and adults sang "O Kto Kto" as they waited for Saint Nicholas. Saint Ann Church is served by Father Michael Popson.



St. Nicholas visits Father Vasyl, Mariia, and Baby Viktoria.

The parish families of Saint John Byzantine Catholic Church, of Lansford, PA and Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church of Nesquehoning, PA were busily preparing for the Christmas season with a variety of activities. First, Saint John Parish held an open-house on Sunday, November 25, 2012. The day included an informative tour of our beautiful church; a display of icons by a local iconographer; brochures detailing our church history, traditions and customs; and, of course, food and refreshments. The open-house event was followed by a meeting of the Youth Group of both parishes.

SAINT JOHN CHURCH, LANSFORD - SAINT MARY CHURCH, NESQUEHONING

HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES AND OPEN HOUSE

Next, on December 8, 2012, Saint Mary Church held their annual Saint Nicholas Festival complete with delicious homemade ethnic foods, theme baskets, bake sale, and of course a visit from Saint Nicholas. The next day, a Christmas party for the parish family of Saint John Church was enjoyed at the Viennese Villa, in Coaldale, PA. The highlight of both days was the singing of traditional carols and an appearance of Saint Nicholas himself, who distributed gifts to the children and gold coins of chocolate to everyone.

The celebrations concluded with a Christmas open-house on December 16, 2012 at Saint John Church which was jointly hosted by the Lansford Historical Society and Panther Valley Library. Holiday refreshments and homemade treats were served. Visitors enjoyed the spectacular architecture inside and out, the beautiful Christmas decorations along with the rich tradition and heritage.

Saint John Church and Saint Mary Church are served by Father Vasyl Chepelsky.



Open House at Saint John Church.



All enjoyed a delicious dinner at the Viennese Villa.

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Preparing for Marriage in 2013?

Pre Cana Classes will be held on Sundays, April 14th and April 21st, from 2 to 5 PM at Saints Peter and Paul Byzantine Catholic Church, Route 93 in Beaver Meadows, PA 18216.

Participants are asked to arrive at least 15 minutes early on April 14th in order to fill out a registration form.

Cost is \$40 per couple for the two weeks. Couples planning to attend should inform their pastor.

Pastors are asked to let Father James Demko know by Easter how many couples from their parish will be attending.

Lenten Activities at the Franciscan Friary, Sybertsville, PA *All Invited to Participate!*

Parables: Our Call to Discipleship Lenten Day of Recollection Saturday, March 16, 2013 Led by Father Laurian Janicki, OFM



Saint Francis and the Leper

The Byzantine Franciscans welcome you to a Lenten Day of Recollection on Saturday March 16, 9:30 AM-4:30 PM.

Parables: Our Call to Discipleship led by Father Laurian Janicki, OFM. The Great Fast is a time to stop and reflect on what Jesus asks of us. On Saturday March 16th, we will reflect on how Jesus calls us to live through His Gospel parables, stories that help us question and reflect on our life.

We discover more about our call to discipleship through reflection on the parables of Jesus. Open to all interested in knowing more about the Gospel parables and our call to follow Christ.

There will be time for quiet prayer with communal preparation for private Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession). Registration opens at 9 AM with continental breakfast; presentation begins at 9:30am; closing prayer

in the Chapel ends at 4:30 PM. You are welcome to stay for the Divine Liturgy (vigil for Sunday) at 5 PM.

Cost: \$20 includes continental breakfast and luncheon. Please register in advance with Father Jerome at holydormition@gmail.com or at 570-788-1212 ext 402. Send payment to Holy Dormition Friary – Lenten Retreat, PO Box 270, Sybertsville PA 18251.



Father Laurian is the Guardian of Holy Dormition Friary, former pastor, teacher, and college president, and he gives retreats in North America and in the Philippines, where he served eighteen years in the missions.



Saint Michael Icon Retreat March 7-10, 2013

Iconographer Peter Pearson returns to Holy Dormition Friary to teach the icon of Saint Michael the Archangel. Participants will complete an icon of Saint Michael with group and individualized instruction. No experience necessary. Thursday and Friday 6:30-9:30 PM, Saturday all day (lunch included), Sunday afternoon.

Cost: \$200 plus optional room & board includes all materials. For more information: holydormition@gmail.com or call 570-788-1212 ext 402.

Holy Dormition Friary, 712 State Highway 93 – PO Box 270 – Sybertsville, PA 18251
570-788-1212 website: <http://hdbfm.com>
email: holydormition@gmail.com



What's Cooking for Pascha?

By Georgia Zeedick

Slavic people everywhere will be taking baskets loaded with holiday foods to church for the traditional Paschal blessing which is a *must* prior to eating those exquisite foods.

Neatly arranged in the baskets will be *sunka* (ham), *slanina* (bacon), *chrin* (beets with horseradish), salt, *pascha*, *kolbassi*, *brudka* (*sirets*), butter, *pysanki* (ornately decorated eggs for decoration), colored eggs for eating, and *kolachi*. Some people may add candy and a bottle of wine (or other items of Lenten sacrifice) to their baskets.

After the foods are placed in the basket, an embroidered cloth cover is placed over them and a blessed candle is fastened upright near the basket handle.

For the first-timers who have never put together a Paschal basket, let alone prepared foods for it, the whole process can be mystifying. Every cook has his or her favorite way of preparing these foods and of measuring the ingredients for them, and asking for recipes can result in confusion.

To take some of the mystery out of the preparation of the traditional foods, here are a few recipes gleaned from my own experience and a few Slavic cookbooks.

Hrudka (Sirets)

1 doz. eggs
1 or 2 tsp. vanilla
1 qt. milk
½ cup sugar

Combine all ingredients in a white enameled pan. Cook over medium to low heat, stirring constantly, until mixture curdles. Pour mixture into a colander that is lined with several thicknesses of cheesecloth. Once mixture is drained, pick it up, cheesecloth and all, and shape into a ball by twisting the top part of the cheesecloth. Tightly tie open end with string, placing string very close to top of ball. Caution: This will be hot. Hang over sink until cool. Remove cheesecloth when cool; wrap and refrigerate. (The whey from the *brudka* can be saved and used when making *pascha*. To conserve the whey, place the colander over a large pot before pouring mixture into cheesecloth.)

Pascha

3 cups scalded milk, or enough scalded milk added to whey from *hrudka* to make 3 cups
½ tsp. salt
6 beaten eggs
½ cup lukewarm water
½ cup sugar
1 cup melted butter
½ large cake yeast or equivalent

portion of dry yeast.
12 to 14 cups flour.

In a large bowl, combine milk, sugar, with butter and cool to lukewarm. Save 2 tablespoons of the eggs and add the rest of the eggs to the milk mixture. In a separate bowl, crumble yeast in water and let stand for 10 minutes. Add to above mixture. Add flour, about 2 cups at a time, until the dough can be handled.

Knead on floured board for 15 minutes. Place dough in greased bowl, grease top and let rise in a warm place for about 1½ hours.

Punch down, and let rise a second time for about 45 minutes.



Photo by Bob Bruce.

After second rising, shape into four balls and place into greased pans. Small, 1½ quart enameled saucepans can be used for baking. Let rise. Brush tops with 2 tablespoons eggs to which some milk has been added. To achieve that glazed appearance on the loaves, brush tops several times prior to removing them from the oven. Bake at 325 degrees for about 1 hour.

Note: Before placing dough in pans, about 1 cup of the dough can be saved and shaped into designs (plaits, crosses, etc.) and placed on top of the unbaked *paschy*. These fancy shapes can be prevented from scorching in the oven by placing aluminum foil on top of the *pascha* during baking.

Hrin (Beets with Horseradish)

8 cans whole beets, drained
3 bottles horseradish (Do not use creamed horseradish.)

Grind beets, using fine grinder attachment. The juice can be saved for soup. Add horseradish to beets; mix well, refrigerate. An empty

horseradish jar (washed, label removed and dipped in boiling water to sterilize it) can be filled with the mixture and placed in the Easter basket. The jar's cap can be disguised with aluminum foil, thus hiding any advertisement.

Kolachi (Nut and poppyseed)

8 egg yolks
8 cups flour
½ lb. butter
1 cake yeast
1 cup sugar
2 cups scalded milk
4 tbs. shortening

Combine sugar and nuts. Beat eggs and add to mixture, add honey and milk. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly. Bring to boil, remove from stove; let cool. Roll out dough to ½-inch thick; brush with butter; place filling on dough and roll up. Bake.

Poppyseed Filling

1 lb. ground poppyseed
½ cup honey
½ cup sugar
2 Tsp. butter, melted
½ cup milk

Combine sugar with poppyseed. Add melted butter. Then add honey and milk. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly until blended. Cool and spread over dough that has been rolled out to ½-inch thickness and brushed with butter. Roll up and bake.

Ham

The ham is decorated and baked according to your favorite recipe. How large a ham you buy and use depends on how many people you are serving. For a 20-pound ham: Cut it in half, decorate the halves, bake them and place one of them in the basket.

Kolbasi

Again, the amount of kolbasi purchased depends on how many eager eaters you are serving.

Place the kolbasi in a pan, cover with water and boil for about 45 minutes. Some cooks, after the kolbasi is boiled, place a few into a baking pan and sprinkle them with about 2 tablespoons of brown sugar and honey. This is then popped into the oven for about 15 minutes at 350 degrees. Cool before refrigerating.

Butter

If you prefer not to use already prepared butter for the Easter feasting, the butter can be made by whipping heavy cream. Use either one pint or one-half pint heavy whipping cream. Place in bowl and mix with hand beater until butter forms. Place sample of butter in a small fancy bowl and decorate for use in Easter basket.

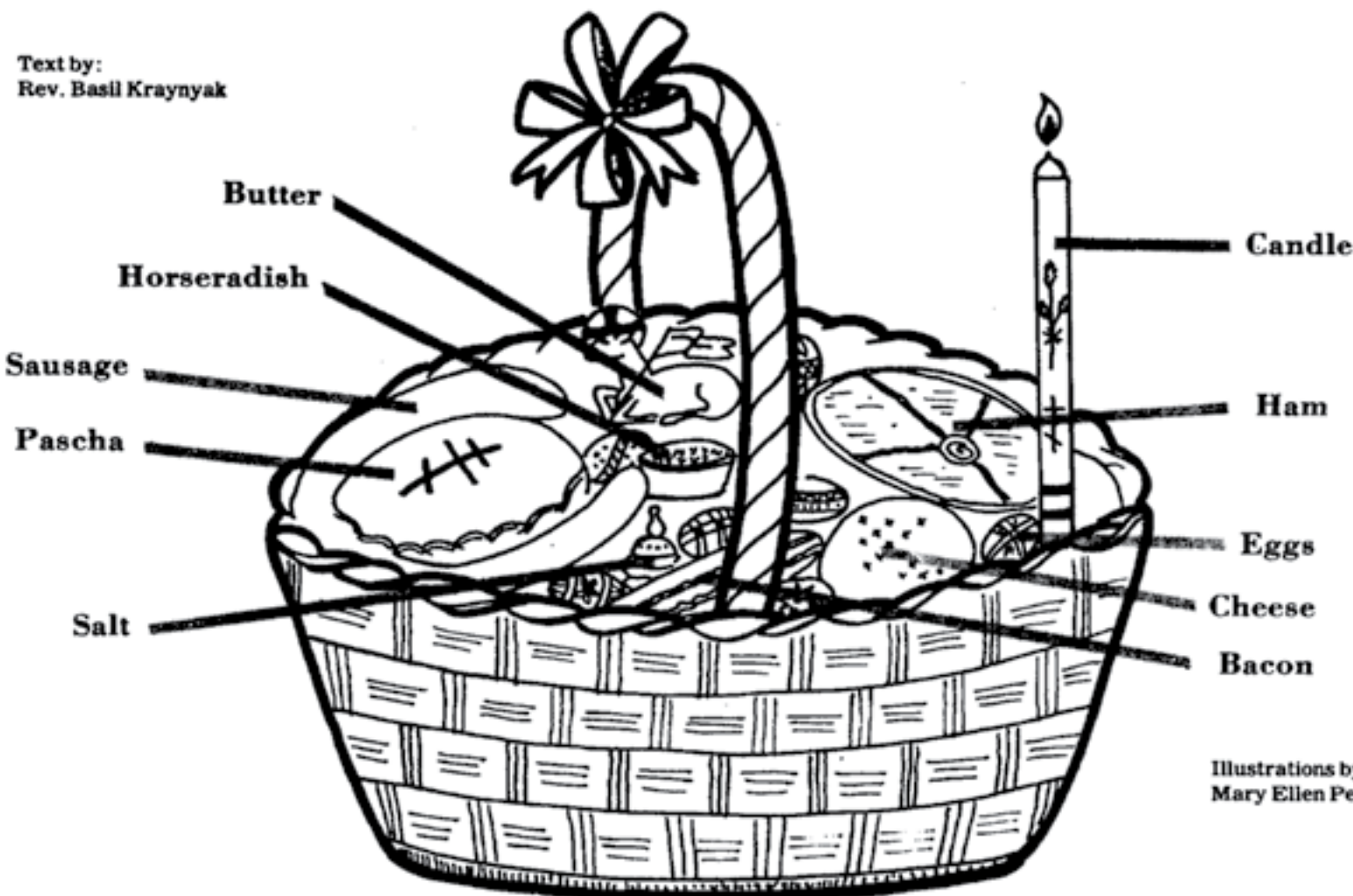
Nut Filling

1 lb. ground walnuts
1 cup canned milk
½ cup sugar
2 eggs
½ cup honey (optional)

(The above is a revised version of an article that originally appeared in the April 10, 1979, edition of the Homestead, PA, Daily Messenger.)

How to Put Together a Traditional Easter Basket

Text by:
Rev. Basil Kraynyak



Illustrations by:
Mary Ellen Petro



PASCHA - The Easter Bread (pron. pá-ska.) A sweet, yeast bread rich in eggs, butter, etc. Symbolic of Christ Himself who is our True Bread. Usually a round loaf baked with a golden crust decorated with a symbol indicative of Christ. Sometimes a cross (+) of dough is placed on top encircled by a plait giving it a crowned effect or Greek abbreviations for the name of Christ. The letters XB indicate the Slavonic for Christ is Risen.

CHEESE (Slav. Hrudka or Sirets pron. hrood-ka or sí-rets) A custard-type cheese shaped into a ball having a rather bland but sweet taste indicative of the moderation that Christians should have in all things. Also, creamed cheese is placed in a small dish and both are decorated with symbols (see Pascha) out of cloves or pepper balls.



HAM (Slav. Šunka - pron. shoon-ka.) The flesh meat popular with the Slavs as the main dish because of its richness and symbolic of the great joy and abundance of Easter. Some may prefer Lamb or Veal. This is usually well roasted or cooked as well as other meats so that the festivity of the day will not be burdened with preparation and all may enjoy the Feast.



BUTTER (Slav. Maslo pron. má-slo) This favorite dairy product is shaped into a figure of a Lamb or small cross and decorated as the cheese. This reminds us of the goodness of Christ that we should have toward all things.



SAUSAGE (SLAV. Kolbasi - pron. kol-buś-1) A spicy, garlicky sausage of pork products, indicative of God's favor and generosity.

BACON (Slav. Slanina pron. sla-ní-na) A piece of uncooked bacon cured with spices. Symbolic of the overabundance of God's mercy to us.



EGGS (Slav. Pisanki pron. pí-sún-ki) Hard-boiled eggs brightly decorated with symbols and markings made with beeswax. Indicative of new life and resurrection.



SALT (Slav. Sol' pron. sol') A condiment necessary for flavor reminding the Christian of his duty to others.



HORSERADISH (Slav. Chrin pron. khrin) Horseradish mixed with grated red beets. Symbolic of the Passion of Christ still in our minds but sweetened with some sugar because of the Resurrection. A bitter-sweet red colored mixture reminds us of the sufferings of Christ.

These articles are placed in a wicker basket and a ribbon or bow is tied to the handle. A decorated candle is placed in the basket and is lit at the time of blessing. A linen cover usually embroidered with a picture of the Risen Christ or symbol with the words "Christ is Risen" is placed over the food when brought to the Church.

In some places a large Easter Bread (Pascha) is made and brought separately in a large linen cloth. If the origin of the people was from a wine growing area, a sweet wine may be brought.



A JOURNEY FROM HOLY WEEK



Passion Week or Great Week

The Liturgical theme of Passion Week is the suffering and death of our Lord Jesus Christ. The services therefore reflect the terrible tragedy of Calvary. During the first three days, the Church invites us to pray in the words of the troparion: "Behold, the Bridegroom comes at midnight and blessed is the servant whom He shall find awake." Then, step by step, she leads us to every place which our Lord blessed by His presence at the end of His earthly life.

The triumphant entrance of our Lord to Jerusalem provoked the anger of the Jewish leaders to a point where they decided to put Him to death. This is why the liturgy on the evening of Palm Sunday asks us to hasten "from palm and branches to the fulfillment of the August and saving passion of Christ."

On Holy Thursday, three events are recalled in the liturgy: the institution of the Eucharist, the washing of the feet of the disciples, and the betrayal of Judas. Throughout the liturgy the following idea is repeated over and over again, as expressed in the troparion: "Receive me today, O Son of God, as a partaker of Your Mystical Supper, for I will not reveal the Mystery to Your enemies nor give You a kiss as did Judas, but like the repentant thief I will confess to You: Remember me, O Lord, in Your kingdom." "Let no one, O believers, fail to join in the Lord's Supper, let no one whatsoever approach the table, like Judas, with deceit."

The wickedness of Judas is expressed very realistically. Judas is called "law-breaker," "son of vipers," and the "murderer" who sets up for himself



the gallows of wealth and loses both temporal and divine life.

During the Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great, the bishop blesses the chrism and the antimensia. Then, before the dismissal, he washes the feet of twelve persons, usually clerics or persons with minor orders, symbolizing Christ's washing the feet of the twelve apostles. The particular ceremony is a very old one and is already mentioned by Saint Augustine (430 AD).

Good Friday

In the morning the Matins (Office of the Sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ) is performed. The characteristic feature of this service is the reading of twelve Gospel passages selected from the four evangelists. These twelve readings describe in detail the passion of our Lord, beginning at the Mystical Supper where He conducted the holy and touching discourse with His apostles prior to His departure for Gethsemane. The entire service has its aim on stirring up in the hearts of the faithful sympathy and love for Jesus, who willingly laid down His life to reconcile man with His heavenly Father and, thus, to obtain eternal salvation for us all.

The day of our Lord's passion is universally regarded as a day of mourning and sadness. There is scarcely any other point on which such perfect agreement exists in all lands and in all periods of Christian history. In the Middle Ages, however, a discussion arose over the question as to why the days of saints' deaths were kept as feastdays, but Good Friday as a day of mourning. The answer is obvious. Christ, unlike the saints, attained a yet higher degree of glory through His resurrection. He died not for His own sake, but for our sake.

On Good Friday, the Church strives to express her mourning over the passion and death of Jesus in every possible way. She even goes so far as to forbid the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts. Because Matins have already been celebrated, the Daily Hours are altered. They are somewhat expanded with sticheras, and readings from the Old and New Testaments. They are called "Royal Hours" because usually the emperor (or king) attended them. During these, the Church asks us to read once again the history of Christ's sufferings and death as described by the four evangelists. During the Royal Hours, the psalms, readings and hymns refer to the passion of Christ.

In the evening, Solemn Vespers are performed. At the end of Vespers, the priest, vested in full priestly vestments, makes a procession around the church carrying the *plashchanitsa* and places it in the tomb made ready to receive it. The *plashchanitsa* is a winding sheet with a picture of Christ's body lying dead in the tomb. In English it may be called the "Holy Shroud." During the procession the people sing the following troparion: "The noble Joseph, having taken from the cross Your most pure body, wrapped it with pure linen and anointed it with fragrant scents, placed it in a new tomb."

As mentioned already, there is no Divine Liturgy on Good Friday. If, however, the feast of the Annunciation should fall on the same day, then the Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom is celebrated before the service just described.

Holy Saturday

Holy Saturday is dedicated to the memory of Our Savior's entombment and to His descent into Hades to save the souls of the just and to open for them the gates of Heaven. This, too, is a day of mourning. It is numbered among the fast days, although originally in the East, no Saturday was kept as a fast. But the sadness of the day is already lightened by the approaching Resurrection. This anticipation of Christ's victory is already evident in the Liturgy.

On Holy Saturday the Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great is celebrated together with Vespers. Instead of the trisagion (since formerly on this occasion the catechumens used to be baptized) another hymn based on Galatians 3:27 is substituted: "All you who have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. Alleluia."

The priest begins Vespers and the Divine Liturgy in dark vestments, but before the Gospel he changes into white vestments because in the Gospel of the day, Christ's resurrection is already mentioned. During the Divine Liturgy, instead of the Cherubic Hymn another hymn is sung: "Let all mortal flesh keep silence."

Having suffered
the passion for us
Jesus Christ, Son of God,
have mercy on us!

The Resurrection Period

For a long time, by many prayers, liturgical services and ceremonies, the Church has been preparing us for the glorious day of Christ's Resurrection, Pascha. Hoping that during Lent everybody had an opportunity to be cleansed from his personal sins, the Church now celebrates externally and with beautifully joyous ceremonies the final triumph and life-giving Resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. After the long ages of darkness brought about by the Fall, after the seemingly endless expectation of the prophets, after the thirty hidden years and the three years of public life, after the frightful passion which had seemed to be the end of all hope, after the three days in the depth of the tomb, behold: Christ is risen! The time of weeping is over; now is the time for joy. Christ's resurrection is the greatest miracle. It is the most divine and the least human, for it took place when the Man-Christ was in the grave. We now know that Christ is God and we rejoice.

Resurrection

The festivities of Pascha begin with the Resurrection Matins. There is a procession around the church during which the people chant the troparion:

WEEK TO THE RESURRECTION

ion: "Your Resurrection, O Christ our Savior, the angels praise in Heaven. Grant us on earth with pure heart to glorify You." Wherever it is not possible to have a procession outside of the church, it is held inside. This procession symbolizes the myrrh-bearing women who "very early in the morning, the first day of the week" came to the tomb to anoint the body of the Lord.

Following the procession, Resurrection Matins begin. Preceded by candle bearers and by bearers of the processional cross, church banners, an icon of the resurrection and the Gospel book, the priest goes to the main church doors and from outside, after incensing the closed doors, he intones: "Glory be to the holy, consubstantial and indivisible Trinity always, now and ever, and forever and ever." After the people answer with "Amen," the priest sings the glorious Paschal troparion: "Christ is risen from the dead, by death He conquered death, and to those in the graves, He granted life. After the celebrant finishes, the whole congregation bursts into a joyous, jubilant singing of the same troparion twice. But all this is only the beginning of the jubilation. The priest sings to the Risen Christ, "Let God arise and let His enemies be scattered, and let those who hate Him flee from before His face." The congrega-

tion is a type of liturgical poetry, especially interesting because of its specific form and content. Similar hymns appeared in the East already around the middle of the seventh century. It replaced the kontakion, a type of liturgical poetry composed of 24 short odes or strophes with the purpose of conveying to the people a certain religious message.

The Canon of the Resurrection, as any other canon, is composed of nine odes, with the exception of the second one, each containing three or four troparia, the first of which is called an "irmos." The first troparion or "irmos" contains the chief theme of the ode and serves as a model for other troparia of that particular ode. The Canon of the Resurrection is a hymn of victory, both an expression and a description of the joy and fruits of Christ's victory as crowned by His glorious Resurrection. As the Jewish Passover was celebrated to commemorate the exodus of the Jews from Egyptian captivity, so also the Christian Pascha is an exodus "from death to life and from the earth to heaven." A certain victorious atmosphere pervades the entire canon. Perhaps the third troparion of the first ode expresses this mood best: "Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth exult. Let, moreover, the whole universe, both visible and invisible, celebrate; for Christ is risen, joy eternal."

The prototype of the ninth ode is the song of the Mother of God, "My soul magnifies the Lord" and recalls the Angelic Salutation: "The angel exclaimed to her, full of grace: Rejoice, O pure Virgin! And again I say: rejoice! Your Son is risen from the grave on the third day and has raised the dead. O People, rejoice!" The angel brings the joy of the Resurrection to Mary also, and this joy is indeed a double one: Her Son is risen and by His resurrection has saved others. The words of the ninth ode are a response to words of the Mother of God, in which she expresses her humility in the yard of Zachary's house: "He has regarded the lowliness of His handmaid; for, behold, henceforth all generations shall call me blessed; because He who is mighty has done great things for me." (Luke 1 :48)

The Canon of the Resurrection ends with the hymns of Lauds, which exhort us "to sing hymns to Your (Christ's) saving passion and glorify Your Resurrection." Christ must be glorified on this day for "He has endured crucifixion, overthrown death and risen from the dead." Today, "we praise Your divine condescension and sing hymns to You, O Christ! In order to save the world, You were born of a virgin without leaving the Father. You suffered as man and willingly endured crucifixion, and You rose from the tomb. O Lord, glory to You."

The Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom has a slight deviation from its ordinary celebration. Immediately after the initial invocation, the celebrant sings the Paschal troparion in order to emphasize the joy and solemn happiness brought by the glorious Resurrection of Christ. The Gospel, taken from John 1:1-17, is divided into twelve verses. After reading each verse, the celebrant pauses and all the bells are rung. The Gospel is read in various languages, signifying that the redemptive work of Christ applies to



all peoples, to the whole world. During the Eucharistic commemorations, instead of the usual hymn in honor of the Mother of God, "It is truly proper to glorify you ..." the Angelic Salutation from the Resurrection Service with the irmos of the ninth ode is sung: "Shine, shine, O new Jerusalem..." After the Communion, all hymns are replaced by the Paschal troparion.

A special feature of Pascha is the blessing of the Paschal food. Cleansed in body and soul, it is only right that our food also should be blessed so that we may in every way enjoy our pasch - great, solemn and sanctified - the feast of Christ's glorious and victorious Resurrection.

During Vespers, instead of the usual introductory prayers and Psalm 103, we repeat many times the Paschal troparion because the Resurrection of Christ is the crowning point of all the prophecies of the Old Testament. During the procession around the altar the priest carries the Gospel book and after the prokimenon reads the section which describes the apparition of the Risen Christ on the evening of the first Paschal Sunday and the doubting of Saint Thomas the Apostle. At the end of Vespers, the Paschal sticheras are sung while the people kiss the cross.

Pascha is celebrated publicly as a solemn feast for three days. Liturgically, it is observed for the whole week, called "Bright Week", and its post-festive period lasts until the Ascension, that is, for 39 days.

(From: *The Liturgical Year of the Byzantine Rite* by Rev. Basil Shereghy, 1968, Seminary Press. Imprimatur: Most Reverend Stephen Koscisko, DD)

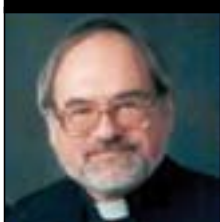


,
of God,



tion replies spontaneously: "Christ is risen from the dead - *Christos Voskrese!*" "As smoke vanishes so let them vanish, as wax melts before a fire," the priest continues. Again a thundering *Christ is risen!* closes the priest's intonation. "So let the wicked perish at the presence of God and let the righteous ones rejoice," proclaims the celebrant. Another *Christ is risen!* Then, "This is the day which the Lord has made, let us be glad and rejoice in it." Another *Christ is risen!* In conclusion the celebrant again sings, *Christ is risen!* As he reaches the words, "and to those in the graves He granted life," he strikes the doors with the cross. They are then opened and he enters, followed by the entire congregation. The priest in front of the closed doors represents the angel announcing the joyful news of the resurrection. The people represent the myrrh-bearing women. The striking of the doors with the cross and their opening symbolize the fact that Christ by His death on the cross opened for us the gates of Heaven.

The priest then comes to the altar and, after singing the Great Litany, begins the Paschal Canon, the Canon of the Resurrection. This Canon, composed by Saint John Damascene (675-748 AD) is a series of hymns written according to certain rules, hence its name "canon (rule)." It



THE BYZANTINE LITURGY

By Archpriest David Petras, SEOD

Understanding Holy Communion

When we are about to approach Holy Communion, we pray, "Accept me today as a partaker of Your Mystical Supper, O Son of God, for I will not reveal Your mystery to Your enemies, nor will I give You a kiss as did Judas." This prayer tells us that Holy Communion is truly a meal, though we receive only a small portion of bread and wine, not a meal in the ordinary daily sense of the word, but a "mystical supper." It does not fill the stomach, but the soul with the presence of God. This meal is given only to the faithful. It is not given to those who are not yet baptized, nor to those who have betrayed their baptismal commitment to Jesus by a grievous and deliberate disregard for the commandments. Holy Communion is the mystery that would be betrayed.

To understand what Communion is, we must understand what a mystery is. A mystery is a truth that is not fully understood. We may understand that the mystery of Holy Communion is the presence of God. We may understand that bread and wine become truly the Body and Blood of our Lord, but we do not understand how this comes about. Saint John Chrysostom spoke of mystery in terms of sight. He spoke about the mystery of baptism. He said that the unbeliever sees only a washing with ordinary water, but the believer sees with eyes of faith that the Holy Spirit is cleansing the soul and bringing it to life in the Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Spirit. Likewise in Communion, we see only a small particle of bread dipped in wine, and we taste only the bread and wine, but we know with eyes of

faith that we are truly partaking of the actual Body and Blood of our Lord. Early Christians emphasized the reality of the Eucharist so much that some pagans, hearing their faith, accused them of cannibalism. Of course, this is not true, for Communion is a "mystical supper," we do not partake of the dead body of Christ, but His risen and glorified Body, which has been transformed into glory and which gives life to all who eat of it.

The center of our faith is that the Eucharist is in truth and in reality the physical and glorified risen Body and Blood of Christ. This requires accepting it as a mystery of faith. The temptation always exists, because our bodily senses only see a small particle of bread and a few drops of wine, to take it only at face value. It then becomes like a token reward for making the effort to attend the Liturgy, and the rite of Communion becomes only a memorial of what really happened at the Last Supper. The hymns, readings from Scripture and the preaching become the important ways in which our life is enriched, Holy Communion is just part of the ritual.

However, it is through Holy Communion that we become "partakers of the divine nature." (2 Peter 1:4) Communion is our union with God. It forgives our sins and begins eternal life in us. Saint Cyril of Jerusalem, therefore, taught the newly baptized, "The bread and the wine of the Eucharist before the holy invocation of the adorable Trinity were simple bread and wine, but the invocation having been made, the bread becomes the body of Christ and the

wine the blood of Christ." (Catechetical Lectures 19.7)

Knowing God transforms our lives. It is not possible to touch God without being changed. This is the reason why Communion has to be real. Our relationship with God is not merely intellectual or symbolic, it must affect every part of our being, including our body. Therefore, God became a human being to be present to us and to dwell among us. This is the insight that Saint John the Theologian had in his gospel, "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us ... to those who did accept him He gave power to become children of God, to those who believe in His name." (John 1:14.12)

It was Saint John who also witnessed to the reality of our Communion, "unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you do not have life within you." (John 6:53) Communion is God receiving us into His life, which begins now and will be completely fulfilled only in the life to come. Because Communion is not simply an intellectual union, even infants who are baptized can receive. God life truly changes us into a new kind of person.

Holy Communion does not only change us in our relationship with God, but it transforms our relationships with one another. If our lives are made new within ourselves, it is also renewed within the community, for God is one, and to live in God means to live in unity. Therefore, Jesus prays, "Holy Father, keep them in Your name that You have given Me, so that they may be one just as we are." (John 17:11) Holy Communion does not only bring us



into union with God, but it creates the Church as one body in Christ. It could not do this if it were a merely symbolic ritual. The Christian gospel is clearly a call to the unity of all. Saint Paul was also aware of this, for he wrote, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free person, there is not male and female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." (Galatians 3:28) Because Communion is real, it brings us into a new unity with one another, which is the completion of the human destiny. It is also why Christian marriage was sealed by the reception of Holy Communion.

The community gathered for the Eucharist, therefore, must receive Communion together, there is no system of division or gradation. Too often we have forgotten this truth. In the prayer of the Anaphora, by the power of the Holy Spirit, the bread and wine we offer becomes the Body and Blood of Christ, and we conclude, echoing the prayer of Jesus at the last Supper, "grant that with one voice and one heart we may glorify and praise Your most honored and magnificent name." Just as the Trinity is one God, so we become one people in God, Father, Son and Spirit.



Feeling footloose and frisky, a feather-brained fellow forced his fond father to fork over the family finances. He flew far to foreign fields and frittered his fortune feasting fabulously with faithless friends. Finally facing famine and fleeced by his fellows in folly, he found himself a feed-flinger in

LETTERS FROM THE EDITOR

Compiled by Father James Hayer, Editor

The Prodigal Son in "F" A Lenten Meditation

a filthy farmyard. Fairly famished he feign would have filled his frame with the foraged foods of the fodder fragments left by the filthy farmyard creatures.

'Fooley', he said, 'My father's flunkies fare far fancier,' the frazzled fugitive found feverishly, frankly facing facts. Frustrated by failure and filled with foreboding he forthwith fled to his family. Falling at his father's feet, he floundered forlornly. 'Father, I have flunked and fruitlessly forfeited family favor.'

But the faithful father, forestalling further flinching frantically flagged the flunkies. 'Fetch forth the finest fatling and fix a feast.' But the fugitive's fault-finding frater frowned on the fickle forgiveness of the former folderol. His fury flashed.

But fussing was futile, for the far-sighted father figured, such filial fidelity is fine, but what forbids fervent festivity? The fugitive is found! 'Unfurl the flags, with fanfares flaring! Let fun and frolic freely flow!'

And the moral is: "Former fail-

ure is forgotten, folly is forsaken! And forgiveness forms the foundation for future fortitude."

[Many thanks to an Anonymous reader for forwarding this fantastic fable!]

If you have an inspiring story or article you wish to share you may send it to Father James at: "Letters from the Editor" c/o: Saint Mary Church, 695 N. Main St., Wilkes-Barre, PA 18705. or E-Mail him at EasternCatholicLife@verizon.net.





“LORD I BELIEVE AND PROFESS” A PARISH MISSION FOR THE “YEAR OF FAITH”

*Presented by Father Frank Hanincik
Sponsored by the Eparchy of Passaic*

As part of its commemoration of the Year of Faith, the Eparchy of Passaic is offering a parish mission to be preached in the parishes of the eparchy.

What is a Parish Mission?

A Parish Mission is a time of personal renewal, where we are challenged to “commit ourselves and one another and our whole life to Christ our God.” (Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom) During three evenings of prayer and preaching we are invited by the Lord Jesus to renew our faith in Him and in the teachings of His Church.

The Mission will consist of three weeknight sessions in church. Each session will begin with a brief prayer service and include a 35 to 45 minute sermon. There will be an opportunity for you to participate in the Mystery of Reconciliation both before and after the service. You are warmly encouraged to receive the Mystery of Reconciliation (Confession) This Mystery is an encounter with the Lord’s merciful love and can be a wonderful first step in renewing our decision to follow Him.

Who is invited to the Mission?

In a word: everyone! The Mission is not limited to parishioners. You are encouraged to invite family and friends, churchgoers and non-churchgoers, Catholics and non-Catholics. The Mission is an opportunity for us to meet Jesus again or for the first time.

About the Mission Preacher

The mission will be preached by Father Frank Hanincik. Father Frank is a graduate of the Pennsylvania State University and obtained his Master of Divinity degree from Saints Cyril and Methodius Byzantine Catholic Seminary. He is a member of the Youth Secretariat of the Eparchy of Passaic and of the Inter-eparchial Evangelization Commission. He has given a number of retreats and talks for the Eparchy of Passaic and the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. He is currently pastor of Saint John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church in Trumbull, CT and administrator of Holy Trinity Byzantine Catholic Church in New Britain, CT.



YOUR parish can be NEXT!

To Schedule a mission,
Pastors may contact
Father Frank at
203-377-5967
or email him at
stjohnbyz@gmail.com.



Upcoming Mission locations:

- Resurrection Church, Smithtown, NY
March 2nd, 9AM
- Saint John Church, Forest City, PA
March 17th, 3PM
- Holy Ghost Church, Jessup, PA
March 18th, 6PM
- Saint Michael Church, Dunmore, PA
March 19th, 6PM
- Saint Mary Church, Scranton, PA
March 20th, 6PM
- Saint Mary Church, Trenton, NJ
April 16th, 17, and 18th, 7PM
- Saint John, Lansford, PA
Saint Mary, Nesquehoning, PA
May 21, 22nd, and 23rd, 7PM



SEASONAL REFLECTIONS

Msgr. John T. Sekellick, JCL

Reading The Psalms During the Great Fast

Having entered into the penitential season of the Holy and Great Fast, our Church reads more intently the Book of Psalms. Scripture scholars call the Psalms a “school of prayer” because they not only teach us models to follow but inspire us to voice our own deepest feelings and aspirations. They are, as it were, a mirror of the Bible itself which is God’s Word to us.

The Book of Psalms, or the Psalter as it is known in our Eastern Church, is a collection of 150 hymns, prayers and poems expressing every kind of emotion. What unites them is deep faith in and love for God. For the People of God in the Old Testament, the Psalms were Israel’s hymn book and prayer book. For us in the New Testament or Christian Era, we still use them as such. The Psalter is quoted 186 times in the New Testament writings.

Our Savior Himself, the Apostles and followers of Christ had these prayers on their lips, used them and chanted them. Services in the early Church were composed almost exclusively from the Psalms. Till this day, there is hardly a Service of the Church which does not have some Psalm reference. The themes of the Psalms range from the utmost joy to the deepest despair. The common message is that in every area of life God Himself is present. Every human experience is rooted in an abiding faith in God’s love for His creation.

Just about everyone has a favorite psalm. Among the most known are “The Lord is my Shepherd” (23); a plea for mercy and forgiveness (50); praise of the Lord (95); God as Protector (90 and 121); He is our refuge and strength (46); an expression of God’s goodness (103), and the seven penitential psalms which Tradition recounts Saint Augustine had posted on the walls of his chambers as his life was ending.

Although the Psalms are often attributed to King David, many authors contributed to this vast collection which went on through much of Israel’s history particularly when the Jews returned from exile in Babylon and rebuilt the temple in Jerusalem. One of the features of a visit to the Holy Land usually includes the experience of reading the 15 Psalms of ascent as an individual or tour group approaches the holy city (Psalms 119-133) in imitation of the pilgrims who went up to Jerusalem for the great annual feasts.

A helpful focus during this penitential season are the psalms which include a vast body of Messianic prophecy leading to Christ’s suffering (22 and 69); His Kingship (2, 21, 44, and 71); His second coming (49, 96 and 97), and the rather brief Psalm 109 depicting Christ as the Son of God and eternal Priest according to the order of Melchizedek.



A custom which unfortunately has fallen into disuse at the time of departure of our deceased was the chanting or reading of the Psalter during the wake which precedes the funeral. At the end of each section of the Psalter there is a special prayer recited on his or her behalf which in part reads: “Remember, O Lord, our God, Your servant and our brother (sister) departed in the faith and hope of eternal life, and as One good and Who loves us all, Who forgives sins and overlooks iniquities: remit, pardon and forgive all his (her) transgressions, both voluntary and involuntary; deliver him (her) from eternal torments and the fire of Gehenna, and grant him (her) to partake of and enjoy Your everlasting good things, prepared for those who love You...”

During this holy Lenten season, may we make our own the prayer of Psalm 67, verse 20 – “Blessed day by day be the Lord who bears our burdens; He is our salvation!”



The Eparchy of Passaic and the **GCU** *Invite All to Attend*

“BYZANTINE CATHOLIC FAMILY DAY” AT KNOEBLES AMUSEMENT PARK, ELYSBURG, PA SUNDAY, JUNE 2, 2013

***Open to all Parishioners, Family, Friends,
GCU Members and Guests – Rain or Shine!***

Tentative Schedule

12:00 pm	Park Opens
1 pm - 2 pm	Catered Lunch! (optional)
3:00 pm	Bingo / Games for Adults (with prizes!)
4:00 pm	PRAYER SERVICE (Moleben)
4:30 pm	Kids Games with prizes!
5:30 pm	Evening Entertainment / Sing-A-Long!
7:00 pm	Park Closes - hope you had a great day!

Discounted ride-all-day passes and tickets! Free admission! Free Parking!

Lunch ticket purchase will not be required to join us in Pavillion “O”

Families may instead bring a picnic lunch or buy food in the park.

Questions? Call Christie Petty: 1-724-495-3400 x209.



UNDERSTANDING ICONS

By Father Joseph Bertha, Ph.D.



God is With Us, and so is Bishop Milan Šašik!



Bishop Milan Šašik and Father Bertha by the Uzhorod window.

On Sunday 23 December 2012, the Bishop of our mother Eparchy of Mukachevo (Uzhorod, Ukraine), His Grace, Bishop Milan Šašik celebrated Grand Compline (*Povecherije*) with the faithful and clergy gathered at Saint Michael Archangel Church in Pittston, PA. This service, which some refer to as the trademark Byzantine service in preparation for the Birth of Our Savior Jesus Christ, contains the wonderful “God is with us” verses after the praying of psalms. These Old Testament verses intermingle with the refrain “God is with us, rejoice all you nations, be humbled, for God is with us.” Our Byzantine ancestors composed beautiful musical notation, even choral arrangements for this magnificent hymn. As these were chanted, all gathered sensed the imminent arrival of the Christ Child to be born of the Virgin in the cave of a manger in Bethlehem.

Joining the local Wyoming Valley cantors was the Susquehanna Syncellate Cantor choir, which magnificently amplified the beautiful singing and praising of the Newborn Christ Child. At the conclusion of the Compline, the faithful received a blessing with the Mirovanije oil from the Bishop, as the choir continued to sing traditional Christmas hymns and carols. After most of

the faithful had proceeded to the church hall for a reception, the Bishop remained in church listening to the charming Christmas songs sung by the choir. Amid one of these hymns, the Bishop walked to the back of church in order to view the tapestry icons displayed on the west wall of the church showing the beatified Greek Catholic Bishops; including his predecessor Blessed Bishop Theodore Romzha.

While walking past the European made stained glass windows on his way, the Bishop happened to notice the words: *Dar Uzhorodskich virnikov zos Pittston Jct., Port Griffith, Brown-town i Sebastapol, Pa. (Gift of the Uzhorod faithful living in Pittston Jct., Port Griffith, Brown-town and Sebastapol, PA.)*, written in the donation bracket of the Dormition of the Virgin window. With great delight, the Bishop enthusiastically noted, that this particular window had been donated by the founding parishioners from Pittston and the surrounding towns, who had emigrated from Uzhorod. What an incredible coincidence that some nine decades later, the present-day bishop of the eparchy of Mukachevo, who resides in Uzhorod, would be present at Saint Michael's and read this inscription!



Bishop Milan thanks Cantor Andrew Drozdik while Father Leonard Martin looks on.



Bishop Milan Šašik, Father Bertha, and Msgr. Sekellick following the Compline Service.

The Bishop met with all the faithful gathered at a Christmas cookie and hot beverage reception was served in the church hall. All departed home-bound filled with the spiritual uplift that this encounter had bestowed, and supercharged for the upcoming Nativity of Our Lord celebration.



The Cantor's Choir led the responses.



Hillsborough Parish Presents *Lenten “Munching & Learning”* Fridays During the Great Fast at Noon and 7 PM



“Beholding The Face Of God”

Presented By The Institute For Christian Spirituality At Seton Hall University

On the first four Fridays of the Great Fast 2013 (February 15, 22, March 1 and 8) a short Lenten Service will be celebrated at Noon and 7:00 PM in St. Mary's Church. The service will be followed by a Lenten fasting meal with a series of guest speakers in the St. Mary's Parish Center. The service, program and meal are scheduled to last 90 minutes. The speakers will stay for a while if the conversation wishes to continue. St.

Mary's is located at 1900 Brooks Boulevard, Hillsborough, New Jersey. For more information call 908-725-0615.

Remaining dates and speakers include:

- March 1, 2013 (Noon and 7PM) Carol C. Keilp-Tobin, M.A., who will present a topic entitled, “Beholding the Face of God in Your Work, Co-creating in the Vineyard”

- March 8, 2013 (Noon and 7PM), Marie Harwanko, M.A.P.M will present a topic entitled, “Beholding the Face of God in People who are Difficult to Love.”

ALL WELCOME!

The Feast of the Annunciation

A Great Feast within the Great Fast

This feast commemorates the most sublime moment in history, that moment in which the second Divine Person assumed human nature in the womb of His Mother. The event on which the feast is based is recorded in Luke 1:26-38. There, the Evangelist tells us that in the sixth month after the conception of Saint John the Baptist by Elizabeth, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a virgin of Nazareth named Mary, a woman of the house of David and espoused to one Joseph of the same royal family. The angel came and said to her, "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women." Mary, having heard this greeting, was troubled, not having grasped the full meaning of the angel's words. But the angel continued

and said, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found grace with God. Behold, you shall conceive in your womb and will bring forth a son; and you shall call His name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of David His father, and He shall be king over the house of Jacob forever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end." Mary, having already vowed her virginity to God, could not understand why she of all women should be chosen to be the mother of the Messiah. To remove Mary's anxiety, the angel said, "The Holy Spirit shall come up to you and the power of the Most High shall overshadow you. And therefore the Holy One to be born of you shall be called the Son of God." As a proof of this veracity he then told of the miraculous pregnancy of her aged cousin, Elizabeth. Mary may not yet have fully understood the meaning the heavenly message, but trusting in God she replied, "Let it be done to me according to your word."

This feast, therefore, is the anniversary of the most solemn event that time has ever seen. On this day, the Divine Word was made flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14). The Eastern Church has always regarded the Feast of the Annunciation as a most important event in the story of our salvation. It was the custom of the ancient Church of Constantinople to celebrate this feast with such solemnity – even during the season of the Great Fast – that the patriarch or the emperor himself was present. The Trullan synod of 692 AD decreed that the Divine Liturgy should be celebrated on the feast of Annunciation even if it fell on Good Friday, a practice retained to this day.

The Feast of the Annunciation was one of the earliest feasts to be observed by the Christian Church. Saint Gregory the Wonderworker, who died in 273 AD makes mention of it, and in the fourth century,

Saint John Chrysostom refers to it in his homilies. In the fifth century, it was already being celebrated in many communities. The original date of the feast was March 25th, and was observed on this day in both Rome and Constantinople. Christian tradition has come to connect several important events at least indirectly with the feast of the Annunciation. It recognized March 25th as the day of our Lord's death, as the day of creation and the fall of Adam, as the day of Lucifer's fall, as the day of the passing of the Jews through the Red Sea, and as the day of the sacrifice of Isaac. All these associations found in ancient martyrologies, especially in a pseudo-Cyprianic work, *On the Computation of Easter*, written around 240 AD. The arguments usually offered are

either that the coming of our Lord and His death must have coincided with the creation and fall of Adam or that, since the world was created in spring, the Savior was also conceived and died in spring. Such fanciful calculations undoubtedly helped establish the date of the feast of the Annunciation and, consequently, of Christmas.

In the Byzantine Church, the feast of the Annunciation emphasizes, in words of great beauty, the role of the Mother of God in the incarnation and, therefore, in the work of our redemption. The prayers of this feast makes it clear that this was the day that turned Mary's destiny toward preeminence both in suffering and in glory. For instance, Saint John Damascene, in one of the hymns composed for the vespers of the feast, asks heaven and earth to rejoice because of the great wonder that happened today – namely, that God came down from His heavenly throne and took His abode in the womb of the Virgin. "Let the heavens rejoice and the earth be glad; for He Who is co-eternal with the Father ...

takes His abode in the womb of the Virgin sanctified by the Spirit."

Theopane also makes a beautiful comparison between the humility of Christ and the pride of Adam in the stichera of matins when he writes, "Today is disclosed the mystery before all ages and the Son of God becomes the Son of Man, that by His adoption of the lowest He may grant me the Highest. Adam of old failed to become a god as he desired; thus God became man that Adam might become a god. Therefore let creation rejoice and let nature exchange greetings for the archangel did stand reverently before the Virgin and offered her joy instead of sorrow. Wherefore, O our God, who by Your compassion became man, glory to You."

[Excerpted from *The Liturgical Year of the Byzantine-Slavonic Rite* by Msgr. Basil Shereghy]



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History of the Eparchy of Passaic

*Preparing for the 50th Anniversary
of the Eparchy of Passaic - November 10, 2013*

Part 5 - Growth and Development

A new Bishop and a new Eparchy

By Father Jody J. Baran

Bishop Daniel Ivancho resigned as Bishop in very quick and unexpected way. The responsibility of governing the ever-growing Pittsburgh Exarchate was entrusted to the Vicar General of the Exarchate, Monsignor Nicholas T. Elko. On the morning of March 6, 1955, Monsignor Nicholas Elko became Bishop Nicholas T. Elko in the beautiful ceremonies of episcopal ordination at Saint Peter's Basilica in Rome. Pope Pius XII was the celebrant and main consecrator of



Bishop Nicholas T. Elko

Bishop Elko while bishop's mother and two brothers watched.

During Bishop Elko's administration a major change in our Liturgical life was made. Bishop Nicholas petitioned Rome to allow English to be used in the celebration of the Divine Liturgy and the Sacraments. He received permission to do so and the Liturgical language changed from Church Slavonic to English here. The Bishop also brought the growing Exarchate closer together with the establishment of a weekly newspaper, *The Byzantine Catholic World*, in 1956. It was meant to evangelize and spread church and religious news to the Faithful. The term *Greek Catholic* was changed at this time to the term we use today, *Byzantine Catholic*.

During Bishop Elko's tenure the Exarchate saw continuous growth, expansion, development of all physical properties throughout the Exarchate. His administration saw the construction and reconstruction of over 100 churches. In April of 1956, Monsignor Stephen

J. Kocisko was named as Chancellor of the Exarchate and, in October of 1956, Monsignor Kocisko was appointed Auxiliary Bishop to Bishop Elko. His Episcopal ordination took place at Saint Paul Roman Catholic Cathedral in Oakland, a suburb of Pittsburgh. Although ordained to assist with the spiritual and temporal administration of the ever-growing Exarchate of Pittsburgh, Bishop Kocisko would eventually play a major role in the establishment of our own Eparchy of Passaic.

In recognition of the continual growth and development of the Byzantine Catholic Exarchate of Pittsburgh, the Holy See acted very quickly in updating the status of our Church. By a special decree issued by newly-elected Pontiff, Paul VI in 1963, the Exarchate which encompassed the entire United States was divided from one to two ecclesiastical jurisdictions. The first was centered in Passaic, New Jersey and this territory included the states of New Jersey, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, Rhode



First Bishop of Passaic
Bishop Stephen J. Kocisko

Island, Vermont Virginia, North and South Carolina, New Hampshire, all of eastern Pennsylvania and the District of Columbia. The territory of Pittsburgh included the remainder of the nation. In addition, the Holy See decreed that both jurisdictions (territories) were raised to the canonical status of an eparchy (full diocese). Bishop Nicholas T. Elko was transferred to Rome in December of 1967.

(To be continued)

Lenten Vespers and Confession Schedule

Updated Schedule for Northeast Pennsylvania



Scranton Area - 3PM

Sunday, March 3	Saint Michael – Dunmore
Sunday, March 10	Saint Mary – Scranton
Sunday, March 17	Saint John – Forest City

Wyoming Valley Area - 3PM

Sunday, March 3	Saint Nicholas – Swoyersville
Sunday, March 10	Saint Michael – Pittston
Sunday, March 17	Saint Mary – Kingston

*Hazleton Area - 3PM**

Sunday, March 3	*Saint John – Hazleton (2PM)
Sunday, March 10	Saint Mary – Hazleton
Sunday, March 17	Saint Mary – Freeland
Sunday, March 24	Saint Michael – McAdoo

*All services at 3PM, except March 3rd

Most services begin at 3PM and will include the opportunity to receive the Holy Mystery (Sacrament) of Reconciliation, and will conclude with a Social Hour.





SEMINARIAN REFLECTIONS

Subdeacon Steven M. Galuschik

Called to Repentance

How can we come to know Jesus more fully? This is a question that we often ask ourselves at the beginning of the Great Fast. I want to become more like Christ and a better Christian, but I do not know where to start. The Holy Scriptures, especially in the Gospels, is where we meet Christ face-to-face. The Scriptures can offer us a way of understanding our Christian beliefs and the mandate of Christ to baptize all nations. Before we can go out to baptize and preach the good news, there are a few things we must do. One important item we must do before we become a follower of Christ is to repent. Christ says, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel.” (Mark 1:15) He says this just after His baptism, and again, after Him forty days in the desert. We, as Byzantine Catholics, are baptized, and are purified. We have also been through more than one Great Fast. Now as followers of Christ, we are encouraged to repent for our sins that we have committed after baptism.

Repentance for our own sins can be a daunting and scary task, especially if we have been away from the Sacrament of Penance for any length of time. The Sacrament of Penance is one of the most rarely used Sacraments by the Christian Faithful in the Church today. I think that has a lot to do with our misunderstanding of Confession.

Confession is something that is supposed to be liberating instead of burdensome. However, our sins become burdensome to us, like a weight that we are unable to carry but do nevertheless

We hear countless times in the Holy Scriptures that the Lord’s ways are the best ways and His yoke is easy and His burden light. Yet, we have a hard time listening to that because we realize how much our sins are holding us down. Our sins will continue to hold us down until we allow Jesus to come, remove the weight, and pick us up again. The Sacrament of Penance allows us to own up to our faults and allows Jesus to save us.



If all of this is true, which it is, then why is there never a long line to go to confession? I ask myself this same question, especially when I know I need to go to confession. Even after having said that, sometimes I, too, find it hard to motivate

myself to go. Yet, every time I leave confession, I know that it was the right decision, nevertheless I still have a hesitation to go back. There are countless reasons why we do not receive confession as often as we should. I do believe that the hesitation to go to confession seems to reside inside all of us. This hesitation could be a consequence of a fallen world. We see this in the story of Adam and Eve. After their sin, they hid from God because they were afraid. Our hesitation to go to confession is our way of trying to hide from God. We know it is not really possible to hide from Him but it does not stop us from trying.

The Great Fast is upon us once again and we begin to look at ourselves and our relationship with God. One question that I want you to pray and think about is how God sees you and your relationship with Him. What steps have you taken to grow closer to Him? Jesus desires us to have a relationship with Him, and this is not possible if we do not know Him. We can read about Him in the Scriptures, and this is one way to know Him. However, if we do not follow His words and teachings, then how can we really get to know Him in a personal way. The words in the Scriptures are just words if they do not become a part of our lives. Jesus commands us to repent for the wrongs we have done. It is through the Sacrament of Penance that we are able to see Jesus face to face. Hopefully through this opportunity of the Great Fast, we can choose to live our lives for Christ and allow Him to pick us up after we have fallen.

Upcoming Events for March

Eparchial and Parish Events

MARCH, 2013	10	4th Sunday of the Great Fast
2	3RD ALL SOULS SATURDAY	Each Wednesday and Friday of the Great Fast <i>Fast Day - No meat</i> <i>Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts</i>
3	Third Sunday of the Great Fast	
	17	5th Sunday of the Great Fast
	24	Palm Sunday
	25	Feast of the Annunciation <i>Solemn (Holy Monday)</i>
	28/29	Chancery Closed <i>Holy Thursday, Good Friday</i>
	31	PASCHA - EASTER SUNDAY <i>Christ is Risen!</i>

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The Resurrection
of Our Lord

