



EASTERN CATHOLIC LIFE

Official Publication of the Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Passaic

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SEPTEMBER 2013

Golden Jubilee Observance of Eparchy Inaugurated PILGRIMAGE MARKS EPARCHY'S BEGINNINGS

By Father John Basarab



The clergy and faithful gather in the Ruthenian Chapel of the National Shrine in Washington, DC for the inaugural celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Eparchy of Passaic. Shown (l. to r.) are Peter Turko, Deacon Mark Koscinski, Father Michael Kerestes, Deacon Charles Laskowski, Father Edward Higgins, Father Scott Boghossian, Father Michael Mondik, Father John Zeyack, Father Ronald Barusefski, Very Reverend Edward Cimbala, Eparchial Administrator, Father John Basarab, Deacon Elmer Pekarik, Father David Baratelli, Father Ronald Hatton, Father Martin Vavrak, Father James Badeaux, Altar Server Joseph Stone, Subdeacon Steven Galuscik, Altar Server Michael Noyes, Msgr. George Dobes, and Father Conan Timoney. The Eparchial Anniversary celebration will conclude with a Hierarchical Divine Liturgy at the Cathedral of Saint Michael and Banquet on Sunday, November 10, 2013.

The pilgrims began arriving at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, DC Tuesday, July 30th around 10:00 am on a beautiful Washington summer morning. These members of Christ's faithful were parishioners and clergy of Byzantine Catholic parishes in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia and other states of the Eparchy of Passaic and Religious Sisters from New York, and they had journeyed, some a short distance, others many miles, to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the canonical establishment of the Eparchy of Passaic by Pope Paul VI.

Soon they gathered in the Byzantine Ruthenian chapel and overflowed into Memorial Hall, their numbers estimated at over two hundred twenty-five, and, led by the cantors of parishes of the Middle States Syncellate, began enthusiastically and devotedly filling the chapel and Memorial Hall with the sounds of hymns honoring the Theotokos in thanksgiving for her protection for this past half century of church life. They offered their thanks for her care here in the very place where, thirty-nine years earlier, the bishops of the Byzantine Ruthenian Metropolitan Church entrusted their Church in the United States to the care of the Theotokos under her title and feast of "Protection" in imitation of a similar dedication almost two centuries earlier by their mother church in Europe.

The Slava Men's Chorus under the direction of Don Springer began singing the hymn "We Hasten to Your Patronage" and the pilgrims joined their voices with fervor to the choir's song as the altar servers, seminarians, deacons and priests processed to the chapel to begin the Divine Liturgy.

Monsignor Walter Rossi, rector of the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception, welcomed Father Edward Cimbala, Administrator of the Eparchy of Passaic, Father John Basarab, who cares for the chapel on behalf of the Eparchy, the fourteen priests, and the deacons, sisters, seminarians and faithful to "Mary's House" as the Basilica is popularly called. Msgr. Rossi briefly traced the history of the Byzantine Ruthenian chapel, its dedication in 1974 on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Exarchate of Pittsburgh, the renovation of the chapel and the installation of upgraded lighting in the year 2001 supervised by Bishop Andrew Pataki and donated by the Eparchy of Passaic, to the present joyful jubilee. As he completed his words of welcome he wished all the members of the Eparchy of Passaic a happy anniversary and God's blessings.

Father Cimbala invoked the blessing of God's Kingdom and began the sacred and Divine Liturgy. Concelebrating with Father Ed were two members of the College of Consultors of the Eparchy of Passaic, Father John Basarab, pastor of Epiphany of our Lord Church, Annandale, VA and Epiphany Mission, Gaithersburg, MD, and Father Ronald Barusefski, graduate student in the Department of Canon Law at the Catholic University of America, Washington, DC. Deacon Elmer Pekarik of Epiphany parish was the deacon for the Divine Liturgy. Subdeacon Steven Galuschik, a seminarian of the Eparchy chanted the epistle while Seminarian Lewis Rabayda was also in attendance. The Slava Men's Chorus sang the responses chiefly in four-part plain chant so that the clergy and faithful were able to sing with

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Father Edward Cimbala Celebrates 25 Years of Priestly Ordination

By Father Ronald Hatton



Father Ed with the clergy, religious, and servers following the Divine Liturgy.



Father Ed with his brother, Paul.

*This is the day the Lord has made,
let us be glad and rejoice in it!
(Psalm 118:24)*

May 8, 2013, marked the twenty-fifth ordination anniversary of The Very Reverend Edward G. Cimbala, D. Min., Pastor of Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church, Hillsborough, NJ, and Administrator of the Eparchy of Passaic. Brother priests, deacons, parishioners, family and friends of Father Ed celebrated this milestone in his life and priesthood with a Liturgy of Thanksgiving and a dinner in his honor in Saint Mary Church on Sunday afternoon, June 23, 2013. This was truly a day of gladness and rejoicing!



Father James Hayer preached the homily.

The Divine Liturgy was celebrated at 3:00 PM, with Father Ed as main celebrant. Concelebrating were Father Ronald Hatton, priest in residence at Saint Mary, and Father James Hayer, Pastor of Saint Mary's Byzantine Catholic Church in Wilkes-Barre, PA, who also served as homilist. Thirty-one priests and 11 deacons were present, with over 360 of the faithful of the Eparchy as well.

In his homily, which was often speckled with humorous recollections of Father Ed, Father James recounted the many years of service Father Ed gave to the Church in his



Some of the many clergy in attendance.

various parish assignments over the past 25 years, from his first assignment as Assistant Pastor at Saint Michael Cathedral in Passaic, NJ, to his first pastorate at Ascension of our Lord Parish, Williamsburg, VA where he also served as Founding Pastor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish, in Virginia Beach, VA, when he had been a priest for only 17 months! Father James noted that Father Ed went on to serve as Pastor of Saint Therese Parish, Saint Petersburg, FL; Holy Ghost Parish in Jessup, PA; Saint Mary Church in Trenton, NJ; and to his current assignment in Hillsborough, NJ.

Over the past 25 years, he also served as Director of Formation of Seminarians and Deacons, and established a Metropolitan-wide program of discernment and Vocation awareness known as "Called By Name." He also served as a member of the College of Eparchial Consultors during the time of Bishop Michael Dudick, of blessed memory, and Protopresbyter in Northeast Pennsylvania during his time in Jessup, PA.

Father James went on to mark the qualities that Father Ed has shown over the past 25 years as a servant and shepherd to God and

His people; as a prophet, teaching and speaking the Truth of the Gospel, and his dream and vision of what the Church can and should be. "He strives to improve himself and the people and parishes he serves. That is what makes him a good pastor and a good formation director. He believes in people. He sees the best in people. He engages them to be 'self-starters'." He went on to say that, "Father Ed has shown himself to be a preacher and teacher in the formation of seminarians and deacons, helping others to discern their call to serve God. Today we are celebrating 25 years of Father Ed's faithfulness, which is deeply imbued with an unwavering and inspiring trust in God. That is what makes Father Ed a good priest, pastor, leader, eparchial administrator, and a good friend: he holds the reins and encourages all of us by saying, 'Hang on folks – God is taking us on a wonderful journey!'"

After the celebration of the Divine Liturgy, everyone retired to the Parish Center, where a fine meal was awaiting all those who attended. Presentations were given by Elias Zareva, President of Lodge 254 of the



Deacon Mark Koscinski and Deacon Nicholas Daddona.

GCU, the Holy Name Society, the Rosarians, Saint Mary's kitchen staff and volunteers, the Bingo Workers, and the ECF children, with a special singing of "God grant you many years..." by a quartet of girls from the youth program. After dinner, there was a time of music and dancing, with Father Ed, of course, being the first one out on the dance floor.

We pray that God grant his priestly servant, Father Ed, many more years of serving God and His Church, in peace, health and happiness!



The church was filled with song and prayer!



25th Ordination Anniversary Celebration of Father Edward Cimbala



+Sister Ambrosia Homa, OSBM ENTERS INTO NEW LIFE



UNIONTOWN, PA – Sister Ambrosia (Magdaline) Homa entered into eternal life very peacefully and quietly on the afternoon of July 9 at Mount Macrina Manor surrounded by the company and prayers of her Sisters in Christ. The daughter of the late George and Elizabeth (Curty) Homa, Sister Ambrosia was born in Koritnan, Czechoslovakia.

She entered the Sisters of Saint Basil from Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church in Mahwah, NJ on July 22, 1943. Sister Ambrosia pronounced her First Vows on August 19, 1945 and made her Perpetual Profession on August 19, 1951 in the presence of the late Father John Kocisko.

Regardless of whatever work she was assigned to do, Sister Ambrosia filled her ministries with enthusiastic and loving service of the Lord. As a young religious, Sister served in ministry at Saint Nicholas Orphanage in Elmhurst, PA, where she served as Prefect of Children. Many years were spent assisting the Sisters on missions in Pennsylvania and Ohio and in the monastery in Uniontown. For twenty years Sister Ambrosia helped with the care of the residents at Saint Basil's Home for Aged Women. She

also worked at the Byzantine Catholic Seminary in Pittsburgh. In her later years, she used her talents to assist in the Vestment Department at the monastery in Uniontown. In her eighties, Sister devoted much time and effort assisting and accompanying her brother Father Joseph Homa during the last years of his life spent at Mount Macrina Manor.

Sister Ambrosia was well known for her faithfulness to her prayer life. She could often be found in the chapel asking the Lord to bless those who had asked for her prayers. She was very sincere in her religious vocation and strove to faithfully and lovingly live out all of her commitments.

Continued on page 5.

Eternal Memory!

Condolences are extended to Father Jack Custer on the passing of his mother, +Irene Custer, who fell asleep in the Lord on July 28, 2013 and was buried on August 2, 2013 from Saint John Church in Guttenburg, NJ with interment at Holy Name Cemetery in North Arlington, NJ. May her memory be eternal!



PEOPLE YOU KNOW

AROUND THE EPARCHY



Jonas Wiseburn, an Altar Server at Saint Nicholas of Myra Byzantine Catholic Church in Pocono Summit, PA, received

his Eagle Scout award at a Court of Honor held at Carpathian Village on Saturday, June 8, 2013.

Jonas' Eagle Scout project was to raise funds for and build a replacement gazebo for the Holy Trinity Shrine at the Carpathian Village. His ceremony was attended by State Representative Mario Scavello, who presented Jonas with a special commendation from the PA House of Representatives. A host of Monroe County officials were also present.

Jonas is preceded in reaching this scouting achievement by his two older brothers: John, who is presently a Lance Corporal in the US Marines serving at Miramar

SAINT NICHOLAS CHURCH - MT. POCONO, PA ALTAR SERVER RECEIVES EAGLE SCOUT AWARD

NAS near San Diego, and James, who is contemplating military service in the future. Jonas also has a younger brother, Jesse, who is a Boy Scout and looking forward to the day when he can become an Eagle Scout. All four are the sons of Mary and Jack Wiseburn of Stroudsburg, PA.

Saint Nicholas Church and the Carpathian Village are served by Father Michael J. Salnicko.



EPIPHANY CHURCH - ANNANDALE, VA MEN'S CLUB ACTIVITIES



Fathers and sons from Epiphany of Our Lord Parish in Annandale, VA recently gathered for the Epiphany Men's Club annual "Father-Son Steak Night." A delicious meal and time together was enjoyed by all! Epiphany Church is served by Father John Basarab with the assistance of Msgr. George Dobes and Deacon Elmer Pekarik.



Members of the Epiphany Men's Club at Epiphany of Our Lord Byzantine Catholic Church in Annandale, Virginia heard from D-Day Veteran Roger Neighborgall in July on "Leadership From a Foxhole." Neighborgall was a member of the Army Rangers, seeing action at both Omaha Beach and the Battle of the Bulge. Pictured are (l. to r.), Club member John Onufrak (another WWII Vet), Father John Basarab, Roger Neighborgall, Club Member Steve Seman (USMC), and guest David Shelby.

40th Annual Slavic American Festival



Sunday, September 8, 2012
Epiphany of Our Lord Church
3410 Woodburn Road
Annandale, VA 22003

Featuring: Traditional Slavic foods: holupki, pirohi, kol-basi, haluski, and potato pancakes; dance to *Joe Stanky and the Cadets*, from 12 Noon to 6 PM; Enjoy children's events; religious art & crafts sale; handmade Slavic art & crafts; rummage sale; bake sale; nutrolls; bingo; football on TV; raffles; and cold refreshments.

Church tours at 12:30 PM, 2:30 PM, 3:30 PM and 4:30 PM.

Byzantine Sacred Music Concert at 1:30 PM.

Liturgical schedule: Saturday, September 7th - 5 PM and Sunday, September 8th - 8 AM and 10:30 AM.

Rain or Shine - Noon to 6:30 pm - Free admission - Free shuttle parking - No pets please - Event times may vary - Quantities while they last - Proceeds benefit the Building Fund. Epiphany Church is served by Father John Basarab.

For more information call 703-573-3986
or visit www.epiphanyofourlord.org

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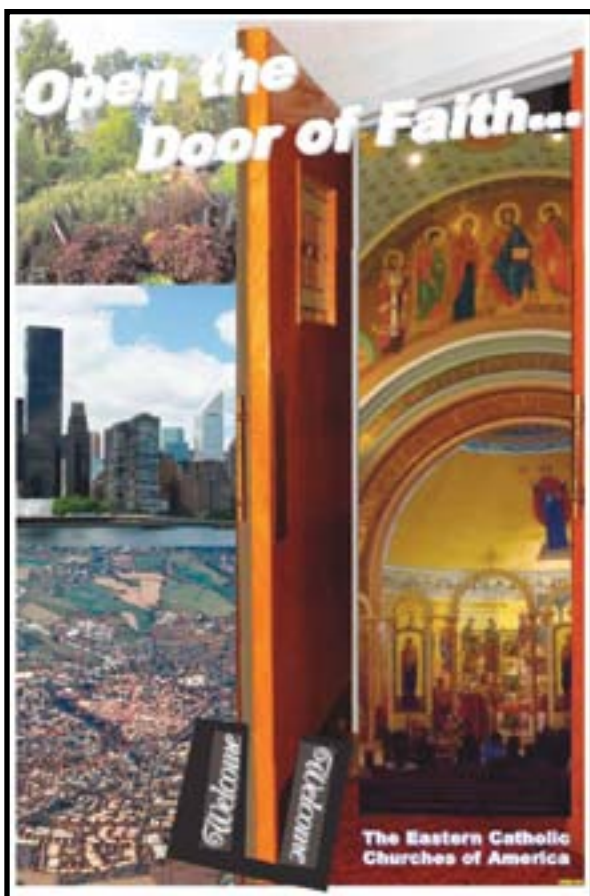
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Labor Day weekend has been for many years the signal for the “Back-to-School” process. Students, teachers, parents and the community at large are well aware of the ritualistic cycle from mid-August through mid-September.

New books, new clothes, new school supplies bring together the anxieties of pupil and educator alike in anticipation of the sounding bell of opening day.

Focusing the attention beyond the physical realm, the Church in the United States has long collaborated with the seasonal shift in schedules of a multitude of people. Putting emphasis on the importance of learning, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) has spon-

sored “Catechetical Sunday” to reinforce the need for knowledge beyond the academic sphere.

Prayers and posters and programs are produced to point to the profound message that underlies the whole need for learning. Through learning truth is found: in the sciences; in the use of language skills of spelling and grammar; in the application of principles that provide aesthetic works in sight and sound. Human activities that bring grace and enjoyment to life are reflected in manipulation of light and color to produce art in many forms and music made of sounds meant to be pleasing when arranged by tone, pitch, volume and tempo.

But all would be futile if learning were to be confined to externals.

This year, the USCCB has directed a theme to express two very important elements: the “New Evangelization” and the “Year of Faith”

Working with this concept, ECED (the Eastern Conference of Eparchial Directors of Religious Education) has utilized the motto “Open the Door of Faith” set forth by USCCB for the year 2013.

You may soon see (or already have seen) a poster on a parish or school bulletin board. There are bulletin and pulpit announcements to point out the features of the poster and the guidelines for practical application on the local parish level.

The words “Open the Door of Faith” are etched across the top of the poster. A church door

stands mid-page between a majestic cathedral and three scenes of the world into which the sacred space of the church is to extend.

A two-way “welcome” mat invites these two realms to intermingle. Each side must exert effort to find the other on the other side of the door—which, you see, has no lock. Each side is nurturing and nurtured by the exchange. Each benefits from the shared experience.

It is through application of principles learned in “catechism” class that helps the Church transmit its divine truth to a waiting, hungry world. It is this same salvation-seeking world that finds the Church the beacon it is meant to be through Christ’s commission to “Go, teach all nations...”

By now, all should be aware that religious education is not the sole domain of students in graded K-12 age groups. Parishes have the responsibility, too, to provide regular sessions designed for the faithful of every age in study or discussion groups, conducted or monitored by the clergy and catechists prepared for this ministry to everyone who needs to know how the loving God touches each soul.

Catechetical Sunday in your parish is meant to be a time of renewal of the promises made at your baptism—to believe in and serve Christ, *In thought. In word. In deed.* Its observance should be a momentous occasion.

The Eparchial Director for the Eparchy of Passaic is Father Gregory Noga.

EPARCHIAL PRIEST PENS NEW BOOK

“*The Holy Apostolate*”

By Father Robert Slesinski, PhD

FAIRFAX, VA – *Eastern Christian Publications* has recently added another title to its collection of published works, namely, *The Holy Apostolate: The Liturgy after the Liturgy*, written by Father Robert F. Slesinski, Ph.D., a priest of the Eparchy of Passaic. The work is dedicated to an analysis and appreciation of the Feast of the Holy, Pre-Eminent Apostles Peter and Paul (June 29), which Father Slesinski has also fashioned as the “Feast of the Holy Apostolate.”

Such topics as Petrine, Pauline, and Johannine ministries are treated

in the book. With the publication of this work, he has completed a study in mystagogical catechesis of all the major holy days of the Byzantine Liturgical Year.

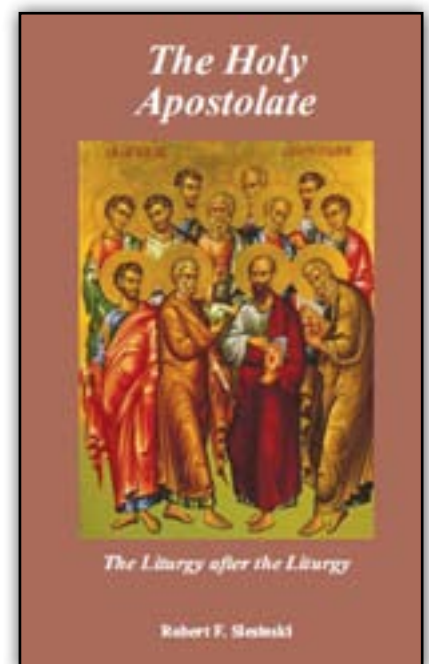
In thematic order, these works, all published by Eastern Christian Publications, include *The Holy Theophany* (2011), *The Holy Encounter* (2008), *The Holy Transfiguration* (2009), *The Holy Pentekostarion* (2010), *The Holy Theotokos* (2012), and now *The Holy Apostolate* (2013).

Written during the extraordinary Year of Faith proclaimed by

Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, the work has clerical and lay action in the world particularly in mind, thus the significance of the subtitle of the work, “The Liturgy after the Liturgy.”

The book is dedicated “To the Clergy and Religious serving the Eparchy of Passaic.”

The Holy Apostolate may be ordered from Eastern Christian Publications, PO Box 146, Fairfax, VA 22038-0146 or online at www.ec-pubs.com.



+Sister Ambrosia Homa, OSBM

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In his homily, Metropolitan William noted that the Gospel reading referred to Christ’s compassionate care in feeding the five thousand. He compared this to Sister Ambrosia and her life-long service of taking care of other people and their needs. He also noted that Sister Ambrosia was born on July 19, the Feast of Saint Macrina. The Metropolitan quoted from the Kontakion for her feast: “You loved the good God with all your heart, O Macrina. You shouldered your cross and sincerely followed Him. You found the total remis-

sion of your sins in Him.” Metropolitan William applied these words to Sister Ambrosia’s life and challenged all the Sisters and faithful to accept all that God sends and to offer it back to Him.

Sister Ambrosia was preceded in death by her parents, her sisters Elizabeth Kuruc and Helen Pahule, and her brothers Father Joseph Homa, Michael Homa and George Homa. In addition to her Sisters in community, she is survived by her nephew Ernest Kuruc, her niece Margaret (Pegi) Homa, and her cousin Dr. Robin Lucas. The Parasas Service was celebrated on Thurs., July 11th by Father Michael Huszti, Monastery Chaplain, Archpriest John Petro, and Father Robert Ora-

vetz. In attendance were Father Ronald Larko and Father James Ragan. The Funeral Divine Liturgy was celebrated by Metropolitan William on July 12th. Concelebrants were Father Michael Huszti, Monastery Chaplain, and Father James Spontak. In attendance were Archpriest John Petro and Father Ronald Larko. Others in attendance included family members, Basilian Associates and friends. Entombment followed in the Resurrection Mausoleum of Mount Saint Macrina Cemetery.

May God grant to his handmaiden, +Sister Ambrosia, eternal memory and peaceful repose.

Knoebels Amusement Resort

Byzantine Catholic Day 2013

Enjoyed by 450 smiling faces!

Hot food, cool rides, inspiring songs, and of course, prayer, marked the celebration of the third annual Byzantine Catholic Family Day at Knoebels Amusement Resort in Elysburg, PA. Co-sponsored by the Eparchy of Passaic and the Greek Catholic Union (GCU), Byzantine Catholic Family Day was celebrated on Sunday, June 2, 2013. Over 450 people attended this year's celebration. Christie Petty, Fraternal Director of the GCU, was instrumental in organizing and planning the day. Local priests, deacon, cantors, local GCU Lodge members, and parish volunteers insured that all present were well cared for with good food for the body and the spirit. Also present to enjoy the day was GCU President George Juba.

The day began with a celebration of a Moleben Prayer Service by Deacon Lawrence Foran, Deacon Edward Frey, and Deacon Basil Soroka. Following the Moleben Prayer Service, Father Peter Donish offered a Prayer of Blessing for the Food and all enjoyed a bountiful hot catered meal of BBQ chicken, hot dogs, mac & cheese and many, many donated homemade desserts.

The schedule for Family Days is well-planned, but quite relaxed. Inside the pavilion, there are activities scheduled throughout the day for youth, adults, and everyone. After rid-

ing a few rides, strolling through the park, or just exploring the beautiful wooded grounds, one can return to the pavilion and always find some activity in which to participate. From relay races for kids, to bingo for adults, and a sing-a-long for everyone, the day was teeming with activities, good cheer and great food. Even after the catered meal, the grills remained fired up as some parishes took it upon themselves to provide complimentary hot dogs and snacks throughout the day. What a wonderful day of sharing and camaraderie - certainly, no one went home hungry, either!

After a day of prayer, food, rides, games, fun, food and more food, the Cantors Mike and Paul Komishock and the Parish Choir from Saints Peter and Paul Byzantine Catholic Church in Beaver Meadows, PA led all in a sing-a-long of liturgical, ethnic and traditional songs.

The day ended all too soon with promises to return next year for the fourth celebration of the annual event - already scheduled for Sunday, May 18, 2014. Mark your calendars and don't miss it! It's a wonderful way to celebrate family and faith, with a heaping measure of good food and great fun!



**Mark your calendars for next year's
Byzantine Catholic Day at Knoebels Amusement Resort
Sunday, May 18, 2014**

Co-Sponsored by the Eparchy of Passaic and the **GCU**

Photo Highlights

Byzantine Catholic Day 2013



Pilgrimage Marks Eparchy's Beginning

THE RUTHENIAN CHAPEL OF THE BASILICA OF THE NATIONAL S *OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION IN WASHINGTON, DC*



Golden Jubilee Inaugurated

Continued from page one.

the chorus, and sing they did! Thanksgiving to God and the intercession of the Mother of God and the saints filled the sacred space. The Trisagion was sung in English, Church Slavonic and Hungarian in remembrance of the founding generations who brought their faith with them to the United States. Later, Msgr. Rossi mentioned that their songs of prayer filled the entire lower level of the Basilica—the largest Catholic church in the United States and the tenth largest in the world—all the way to the crypt church.

Taking his inspiration from the New Testament, from the Second Epistle of Saint Paul to Timothy, "I have competed well; I have finished the race; I have kept the faith" (2 Timothy 4:7), Father Cimbala explained that the past fifty years and the future decades should not be understood as a marathon but a relay race. In a relay race, each runner does their part and then hands the baton to the next relay runner. Each runner must do their best to run their part of the relay but the crucial part of the relay is the successful passing off of the baton. Here, Father Ed used a baton and illustrated the eparchial church history by having one of the eldest pilgrims, Mrs. Anna Wroblewski of Saint Gregory of Nyssa Church, Beltsville, MD, hand the baton off to the youngest pilgrim, four-month-old infant John Francis Spierenburg from Epiphany of our Lord Church, Annandale, VA. As he queried the congregation, Father Ed enlisted the help of a young congregant, Gracie Klikus, to provide answers to his questions about the responsibility of all the faithful for the New Evangelization.

After the completion of the Divine Liturgy, as is custom at pilgrimages to the Byzantine Ruthenian chapel, a panachida for the deceased bishops, priests and faithful who made offerings to construct the chapel was prayed.

The Divine Liturgy of Thanksgiving was taped for the archives of the Basilica under the supervision of Dr. Ger-

Golden Jubilee Observance of Eparchy Inaugurated

50 YEARS AN EPARCHY
Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Passaic

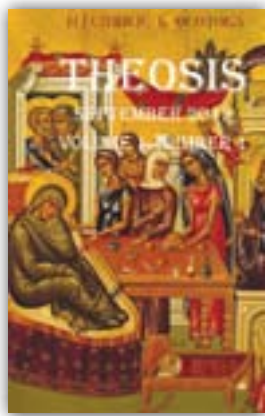
SHRINE



aldine Rohling, the curator/archivist of the Basilica of the National Shrine. In addition, Dr. Rohling wrote a pamphlet explaining the icons and furnishings of the Byzantine Ruthenian chapel with the assistance of Father John Basarab and Jack Figel, a member of Epiphany parish who owns *Eastern Christian Publications* which publishes the bulletin series many Byzantine Catholic parishes utilize. This pamphlet was composed to replace the 1974 pamphlet available to visitors and pilgrims to the Basilica. The pamphlet debuted at this anniversary liturgy and was distributed to all participants.

Following lunch at the Basilica cafeteria, there was time to visit the gift shop and the book store before the guided tours of the Basilica began. As they toured the Basilica the people saw the triple tiara of Pope Paul VI displayed in a special case in the narthex of the Crypt Church. Pope Paul VI, the last pope to have been crowned with the triple tiara at his enthronement and the pope who, just several weeks after he assumed this very tiara, established the Eparchy of Passaic in the Apostolic Letter *Passaicenses-Pittsburgensis* of July 6, 1963, the feast of Saints Cyril and Methodius in the Latin calendar on the 1,100 anniversary of their arrival in Great Moravia. How fitting to inaugurate the observance of the 50th anniversary at the Shrine where the triple tiara of the pope who canonically established the Eparchy is displayed!

After a quick prayer before departing and farewells offered to people of other parishes, the pilgrims boarded their busses or climbed into their cars with fond memories of the anniversary day. That day another page in this chapter of the history of eparchy was added with the prayer that our Lord will guide and increase the Eparchy in the next half century through the prayers and with the protection of the Mother of God.



FAIRFAX, VA – *Theosis: Spiritual Reflections from the Christian East* has completed its first full year of publication with the August 2013 issue. The monthly magazine from *Eastern Christian Publications* is a small format, full color, pocket-size booklet that contains a collection of educational essays by leading scholars and daily prayers for the saints and feasts according to the Byzantine Church calendar. Despite the small size, it's full of a month's worth of reading material, photos essays and iconography.

Editor and Publisher Jack Figel said, "In addition to the general spiritual enrichment of the faithful and clergy, I believe *Theosis* is also a valuable product that can be used for:



- Gifts to catechists at a local parish in thanks for their service
- Material for teens to provide them with a colorful, informative, regular publication to combat the pressures of our secular world
- Monthly reminders from parishes for young adults away at college to keep them involved in their Eastern traditions through short daily prayers, educational essays and colorful images
- The basis of a monthly prayer group or adult catechetical activity using the writings of world-class theologians
- Monthly meditations, daily prayer and short stories of the lives of the saints for elderly shut-ins"



Father John Basarab, Jack Figel's pastor at Epiphany of Our Lord Byzantine Catholic Church in Annandale, VA said, "*Theosis* is a cross between *Reader's Digest*, a prayer book, and the wall calendar of saints, that all fit in your pocket." Father Chris Zugger, author and retired priest in Albuquerque, NM, commented that "*Theosis* feeds your soul for a whole month for only \$5.00, less than a typical fast-food meal." Subscribers have commented:

- "I carry it with me in my purse and pull it out to read some-

thing short while I wait for my coffee to cool off at the local cafe."

- "I keep mine next to my bed and read a little from it each night."
- "It's so great to read a little story about each saint on each day so we know a little bit about them when we pray for them."
- "I send them as gifts to my adult children who don't live near a Byzantine church so they can stay connected to their roots."
- "After I read a few pages of an essay, and it says 'to be continued', I want to read more right away and can't wait for the next issue to arrive."

Individual subscriptions are available for just \$60 per year for the print version and \$29.95 per year for

the electronic version which is sent by email each month to your computer or smartphone. Bulk subscriptions are available for \$48/year in quantities of 10 or more per month for church store or distribution in a parish. The first full year of publication—12 booklets—are available at a special discount of \$25 plus postage. Place your orders online at <http://www.ecpubs.com/theosis.html> or by calling the ECP office at 703-691-8862.



DISCOVER YOUR PASSION

Take Classes This Fall with **BCS Online**

BCS Fall 2013 Courses

The Sacramental Mysteries: Life in Christ
Fr. David M. Petras

The Plainchant Melodies of the Byzantine Catholic Church
Jeff Mierzejewski

The Gospels
Dr. Sandra Collins

Introduction to Catholicism
Fr. James Hess, O.Carm.

For more information, contact:

Sandra Collins, PhD
Faculty, Biblical Studies
Director of Library and Byzantine Online

412/321-8383, ext. 23
scollins@bcs.edu

Our 8-week Fall Courses begin September 23, 2013!



Byzantine Catholic Seminary | 3605 Perrysville Avenue | Pittsburgh, PA 15214

Sunday, September 22, 2013
11 AM – 7 PM

Day of Pilgrimage For Peace

Holy Dormition Byzantine Franciscan Friary
Sybertsville, PA

Pilgrimage Schedule

11:00AM	CHAPEL open for private prayer; Gift Shop and Dinner
1:00PM-3:00PM	Confessions. Locations in Chapel and Outdoors. Liturgy intentions accepted in Gift Shop area Candles available for intentions (<i>in chapel and outdoors</i>).
12:30PM	Panachida Service: Memorial Service for the Faithful Departed (<i>Chapel</i>)
1:00PM	Moleben and Healing Service (<i>Chapel</i>)
2:00 PM	Spiritual Presentation by Sister Ann Laszok, OSBM
2:30PM	Concert of Byzantine Traditional and Spiritual Hymns
3:45PM	Procession to the Main Altar
4:00PM	Hierarchical Divine Liturgy

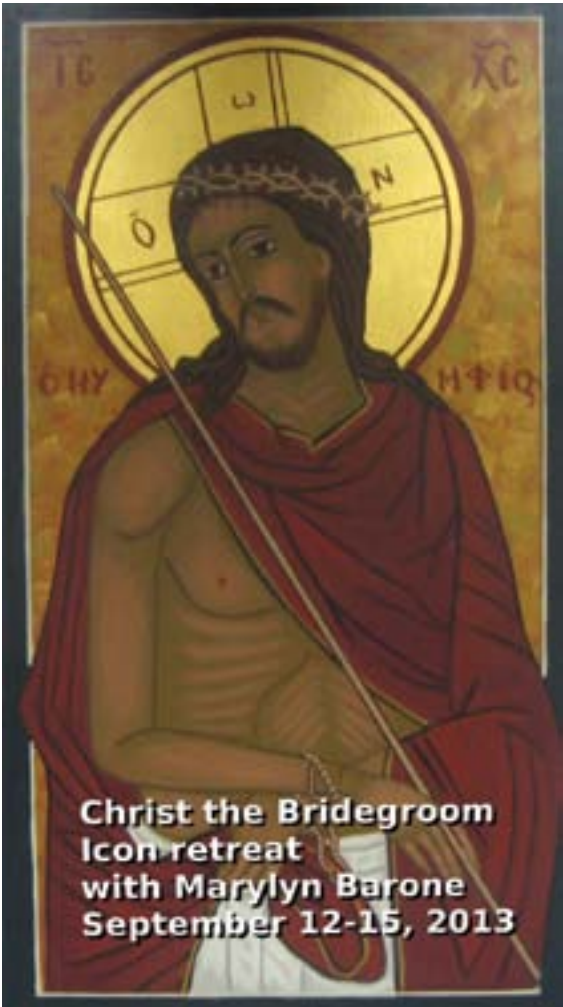
Special Note: *Parishes requested to bring decorated Procession Crosses.
Please bring lawn chairs*



Food Service

11:00AM-2:30PM Pilgrimage Dinner
(*Indoors in Emmaus Hall*)

12:00PM-3:00PM and after the 4PM
Divine Liturgy: Slavic and American
Foods/Beverages, Bake Sale (Outdoors)



Christ the Bridegroom Icon Retreat *Thursday-Sunday September 12th-15th Sybertsville, PA*

No experience needed to learn how to make your own icon. Iconographer Marylyn Barone teaches people of any (or no) skill level how to go from paint and wood to a complete icon.

This workshop will be at the beginner level for adults. Each student will write an 8"x14" icon of Christ the Bridegroom, using a prepared prototype, learning techniques for faces, garments, 23k goldleaf gilding, and background. All supplies are included. Mary-

lyn will also present the theology of icons, focusing on Jesus and the Passion.

Cost: \$200 includes all materials and Friday and Saturday lunch. Thursday 6:30-9:30pm, Friday & Saturday 9:30am-4:30pm, Sunday noon-4pm. Optional room and board available at additional cost.

For more information: 570-788-1212 ext 402; or, email holydormition@gmail.com - Subject: Icon Retreat.

History of the Eparchy of Passaic

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



Part 11 - A Pilgrim Filled with Faith and Love

Do you remember the many pilgrimages?

By Father Jody J. Baran

The word *pilgrimage* is used to describe a long journey to a sacred place as an act of religious devotion. People for centuries have made pilgrimages to sacred sites. The two most common and famous sites are the Holy Land and Rome. For years, pilgrims would travel to the Holy Land to walk and visit the many places that were part of the life of our Lord and our Blessed Mother. By walking in their footsteps, by touching the very Tomb of Christ, by meditating on His Passion, pilgrims received many graces that can only be obtained from such a pilgrimage.

Throughout Europe there are shrines dedicated to the Blessed Mother, to many Saints and Martyrs, all being founts of grace and the love of God. Our people have been among these pilgrims. Shrines to Our Lady of Mariapocs in Hungary, Lourdes in France, Fatima in Portugal, and recently the village of Litmanova in Slovakia and Medjugorje in Bosnia/Herzegovina, are just a few of pilgrimage sites to which our people flock. This desire for pilgrimage was brought to the United States and was supported by our bishops, especially Bishop Michael. When Bishop Michael came to the Episcopal throne, there were pilgrimages already in place here in the United States.



Bishop Michael was always prepared to distribute a religious gift to children at every pilgrimage!

The pilgrimage to Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Uniontown, PA was established at the Motherhouse of the Sisters of Saint Basil the Great in 1933 by Mother Macrina Melnychuk and takes place every year on Labor Day Weekend. Bishop Dudick went to Uniontown as a child and continued supporting this pilgrimage as a seminarian, priest and bishop. He enjoyed being with the Faithful and celebrating the Divine Liturgy and various services with them. It truly is a wonderful weekend dedicated to our Blessed Mother.

Another pilgrimage was established in Sybertsville, PA at the Byzantine Franciscan Friary. In 1946, the Byzantine Franciscans began with the Pilgrimage for World Peace. It was a two-day pilgrimage dedicated to prayer for peace in our world. Bishop Michael ardently supported this pilgrimage and attended every year. The pilgrimage was held on the first weekend of August. Due to some setbacks the pilgrimage was suspended for a few years in the 1990s. However, when Metropolitan William was the Bishop of Passaic, the pilgrimage was revitalized and has once again become part of our spiritual heritage.

(To be continued)



The faithful and friends of the
Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Passaic
are cordially invited to attend the

50th Anniversary Celebration

of the canonical establishment of the
Eparchy of Passaic
on

Sunday, November 10, 2013

3:00 PM

The Hierarchical Divine Liturgy
Cathedral of Saint Michael the Archangel
96 First Street, Passaic, New Jersey

5:30 PM

Dinner Reception at The Brownstone
351 West Broadway, Paterson, New Jersey



Response Card

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Tables at the Dinner Reception will seat 10. I wish to be seated with:

Phone: _____ E-Mail: _____

Parish: _____ City/State: _____

of Adults @ \$40 each: _____

of Children @ \$20 each: _____ Amt. Enclosed: \$ _____

Reservations will be accepted until September 30, 2013.
Space is limited to the first 400 guests.

To confirm your dinner reservation, return this page to:

Anniversary Committee, Eparchy of Passaic, 445 Lackawanna Avenue,
Woodland Park, New Jersey 07424

No phone reservations will be accepted!

SEASONAL REFLECTIONS

Msgr. John. T. Sekellick, JCL



The Exaltation of the Holy Cross

One of the salient features of our liturgical Services is what can be termed a didactic or teaching element. This is quite usual with the hymns of Matins and Vespers together with the readings from Sacred Scripture proper to each liturgical event.

In the Vespers for the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross (September 14), the first Vesper hymn tells us: "By its elevation, the Cross is like an appeal to the whole of creation to adore the blessed Passion of Christ our God Who was suspended on it; for Christ destroyed by this Cross the one who had destroyed us. In His great goodness, He brought us back to life after we had been dead, and He beatified us and made us worthy of heaven; for He is merciful. We exalt His Name with great rejoicing and glorify His infinite condescension."

With this great Feast of Exaltation, our Church solemnly remembers not only the historical event of the discovery of the Cross by Empress Helen in Jerusalem, but also exalts that very holy instrument on which the price of our salvation was paid – the death of Jesus, God's own Son, for you and me. Unjustly condemned to an agonizing and horrible death, by His divine Blood, He washed away the venom of that serpent who deceived Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden bringing on the curse of death. The very one who enchained creation itself has been en-

chained forever in the confines of hell.

By God's mysterious plan, death that had come from a tree, would be conquered by a tree. The suffering which resulted would be healed by



the suffering of the Lord. As the Cross was lifted up, all creation was delivered from corruption which no longer has any meaning or power; for

we have been lifted up from the consequences of that fall from grace in Paradise which is reopened to us because of the divine Power emanating from that Cross.

Accordingly, the Cross is a sign of joy for us and a terror to our spiritual enemies. Other hymns in Vespers call the Cross, "...the help of Christians, the stronghold of the Church, the glory of kings, the strength of the just, the splendor of priests, a staff of power to all people and a source of peace, a glory indeed for saints and martyrs, a haven of salvation and a source of mercy to the world."

Our Church teaches and has us believe that Christ's passion on the wood of the Cross merited justification for all of us. (Cf. The Catechism of the Catholic Church, 617) The Cross is the symbol of the unique sacrifice of Christ, "the one mediator between God and man," as Saint Paul writes for the first time to Timothy (2:5). Appropriately, then, our Church sings, "We bow to Your Cross, O Lord, and we glorify Your holy Resurrection."

As we bow deeply to the Cross displayed in our churches during this solemn Feast, may the prayer of the Good Thief crucified to the right of Jesus there on Calvary also be ours, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your Kingdom." May we always be found worthy of that great grace.



RESPECT LIFE FORUM

By Anne McGuire

Because of Love

I feel a little bit like a "woman without a country." I think of my hometown as "home." Yet when I visit, I realize anew that my place is no longer there. In this transient stage of young adulthood, I take great comfort in the stability and the unchanging nature of Christ and His Church. I hold onto His words, "I am with you always, until the end of the age." (Matthew 28:20)

But I also know that I can't perceive my relationship with Christ and His Church as my own isolated comfort zone. In the verse right before Matthew 28:20, Jesus gave the disciples a command which Pope Francis explained in his Sunday homily at World Youth Day to 3 million attendees.

Jesus did not say: "go, if you would like to, if you have the time", but he said: "Go and make disciples of all nations." Sharing the experience of faith, bearing witness to

the faith, proclaiming the Gospel: this is a command that the Lord entrusts to the whole Church, and that includes you; but it is a command that is born not from a desire for domination, from the desire for power, but from the force of love, from the fact that Jesus first came into our midst and did not give us just a part of himself, but he gave us the whole of Himself, he gave his life in order to save us and to show us the love and mercy of God.

This command means that I cannot be solely focused on myself. I have been given the incredible gift of knowing that I am cherished by God and that by following Him, I become more fully myself. This gift must be shared.

We live in a society where people don't know and respect their own dignity or the dignity of those around them. People long for fulfillment, yet spend their lives trying to fill the emptiness that only God

can fill with other unsatisfying substitutes. It is our responsibility to reach out in love and share Christ with all. Yet even the ways we do this face many challenges, such as the increasing threats to life, marriage, and religious liberty. One example is the HHS contraceptive mandate, which reaches so far as to threaten the ability of Catholic schools, charities and hospitals to serve others in accord with their moral teaching.

The US bishops have called on the faithful to renew a culture of life, marriage, and religious liberty in our country through prayer, penance and sacrifice. We can participate in many powerful ways: monthly Eucharistic Holy Hours, daily rosary, special prayers of the faithful, and abstinence from meat and fasting on Fridays. A new intention, reflection, and "Did you know?" section is sent out each week by e-mail or text. (To sign up, text "fast" to 99000 or

visit www.usccb.org/pray.)

So many today lack an understanding of God's love for each of us and what that means for our lives. That is why I am glad to join with thousands of Catholics across the country in responding to the Call to Prayer for Life, Marriage and Religious Liberty. Please consider how you can participate and invite your family and friends to do the same.

As Pope Francis said later in his homily: "When we face challenges together, then we are strong, we discover resources we did not know we had." Let us re-discover the power of prayer.

[Anne McGuire is a staff assistant for the Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities, US Conference of Catholic Bishops. For more information on the bishops' pro-life activities, please visit www.usccb.org/prolife.]





FAITH AND COMMUNITY ISSUES

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

The Role Married Love Has in the Family

MARRIED LOVE WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF FAMILY

Is married love defined solely by the quality of sexual performance? Does it bespeak of a mediocre marriage where love is concerned if the wooden bedposts are not set aflame with the passion expressed therein of the couple? The values of the world would have us believe so. I remember a scene from the TV sitcom "All in the Family" where Edith and her daughter were having a women-to-women chat. The discussion got around to lovemaking and the daughter was expressing to Edith the joys of her lovemaking with her husband "the Meathead." She waxed eloquent describing the experience in terms of the Fourth of July celebrations complete with pyrotechnics (fireworks) music and grand celebration to make the "Cirque du Soleis" appear to be a walk in the park. Edith looked on mouth agape completely taken aback at the frank description. When the daughter asked her what her lovemaking with Dad was like, Edith composed herself looked at her daughter and said something to the effect that with Archie and her it was more like Thanksgiving than the Fourth of July. While the reply to the daughter drew hysterics from the audience, there was and is a kernel of truth and wisdom in Edith's response.

The perspective of the Church sees married love as ordained by God and as such renders marriage and married life a multi-leveled sacred experience. A look into the Bible reveals an invitation to the engaged couple in terms of nourishment and fostering their relationship with a chaste love that will move into their eventual marriage. "True Love" is a gift and a virtue universally admired with high regard. This regard is expressed in Ritualization unique to the various cultures, geography and time where this love is manifested hence the wedding ceremony unique to the Eastern Churches that is celebrated today.

The document makes it clear that "married love is an eminently human love because it is an affection between two persons rooted in the will and it embraces the good of the whole person; it can enrich the sentiments of the spirit and their physical expression with a unique dignity and ennoble them as the special elements and signs of the friendship proper to marriage" (*Gaudium et Spes*, Married Love, §49).

The married state then is not only an obligation; it is a friendship and a unique friendship, exclusive, perpetual broken only by death itself. The married relationship is an eminently human experience of love. In the midst of this friendship, God's desire is to restore, perfect and elevate it through the infusion of His Grace so natural friendship becomes supernaturalized, a meeting place of the human and the divine. Such a coming together of the divine and human, "leads the partners to a free and mutual giving of self, experienced in tenderness and action, and permeates their whole lives." (*Gaudium et Spes*, Married Love, §49) This type of love finds itself growing in strength and fervor the more it is used. This places such love as the document states, "a far cry from mere erotic attraction, which is pursued in selfishness and soon fades away in wretchedness." (§49)

The act of sexual intercourse then becomes the vehicle through which the couple shares their loving friendship. According to the document, it is through the act of sexual intercourse and the intimacy experienced therein that the self-giving so desired by the couple is fostered; the couple is thereby enriched

in their joy and gratefulness for each other (Hence, Edith Bunker's "Thanksgiving" . . .). This raises the marital act to a noble and honorable state indeed something holy as the document states, "Endorsed by mutual fidelity and, above all, consecrated by Christ's sacrament, this love abides faithfully in mind and body in prosperity and adversity and hence excludes both adultery and divorce." (§49)

Marriage demands by its very nature a unity that is especially recognized by Christ Himself and manifested in the dignity of persons which is shared equally by the couple in a manner of unreserved and mutual affection. Faithful carrying out of this calling demands outstanding courage. Spouses will need the infusion of grace in order to lead a life of fidelity and holiness proper to the marital state. With that grace, the couple will find the strength and eagerness, "to practice a love that is firm, generous and prompt to sacrifice and will ask for it in their prayers." (§49)

A faithful fully lived-out married life is readily recognized and held in high esteem by "healthy public opinion," (Married Love, §49) provided that the Christian couple witness to it in an outstanding way in faithful and harmonious love relationship,

that their concern for proper education of their children is readily apparent and contribute meaningfully to the social, psychological, cultural and religious renewal of marriage and the family life.

A large part of that witnessing is concretized in the instruction of the young people concerning the dignity and mystery of marriage and family life. It is especially meaningful when such teaching takes place within the context of family life so the theory is borne out in the actual day-to-day living out of the mystery. It is through this experience and teaching that young people will be provided an excellent opportunity to learn properly about the married state and so "be able to engage in honorable courtship and enter upon marriage of their own." (Married Love, §49)

One of the fruits of marriage is the continuation of the species of humankind. In the next installment, the role of children and their purpose in the Christian marriage, as well as the role of the parents in the children's lives will be presented, and yes, there is a real purpose for child rearing other than driving the parents crazy! We'll look at that next issue.



Transcarpathian Mother of God
Heritage Galleries of the Eparchy of Passaic
(19th Century)

Women of Faith

Mary, Our Model:
Lighting Our Path in Faith, Hope and Love!

A Special Retreat for Women at:

Saint Mary's Villa

150 Sisters Servants Lane, Sloatsburg, New York

Director of Retreat: Sister Natalya, SSMI

Spiritual Advisor: Reverend John J. Zeyack, Eparchy of Passaic

September 27 - 29, 2013

Cost: \$160.00 per person (Includes Lodging & Meals)

- **Arrival, Welcome and Registration:** Beginning at 3PM Friday, September 27, 2013
- **Friday Evening Prayers:** 8:30 PM
- **Saturday:** Breakfast, Morning session, Lunch, Afternoon Session, Dinner
- **Sunday:** Breakfast, Liturgy and Luncheon with the Sisters Servants of Mary Immaculate

TO REGISTER OR FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

Please contact: Mrs. Diane Rabiej, Chancery, Eparchy of Passaic,
445 Lackawanna Avenue, Woodland Park, NJ 07424

Phone: (973) 890-7777. Make checks payable to: "Saint Michael Cathedral."

This year of Faith is a call to deepen our lives as followers and friends of Jesus. We continue to be invited to walk the path of faith: faith in God's presence, power and Love, faith in other people, and faith in ourselves as the dwelling place of God. Jesus Constantly said to everyone He healed: "Your faith has saved you!"

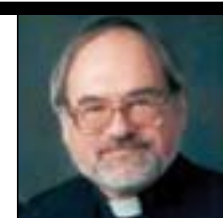




St. John Chrysostom

THE BYZANTINE LITURGY

By Archpriest David Petras, SEOD



Holy Communion: Theology of the Body

In Holy Communion we receive the Body of our Lord. This is the foundation of our Christian faith. Saint Paul told the Corinthians, only twenty years after the Last Supper, that this was the tradition of the gospel of Jesus, “The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?” (1 Corinthians 10:16) Saint Paul said that the bread is to be broken. This is a dimension of Communion that many who think they are following Christian tradition have forgotten. Communion in the Body of Christ is something active, something that unites us and transforms us. By sharing in one loaf - broken for communion - we constitute one new family, God’s people, the Church. In sharing in Christ, we are united with Christ and are transformed into Christ, which Saint Paul again expressed in his letter to the Christian community in Ephesus, “[God] put all things beneath [Christ’s] feet and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of the one who fills all things in every way.” (Ephesians 1:22-23) Here Saint Paul is certainly not speaking of church as a building where we gather, but of the community that gathers, nor of the church as an organization headed by bishops and priests, but of all the people, the “fullness,” the sum total of all who receive the Body of Christ in Communion.

That the Church is a community of all united in the Body of Christ, which is communion, is a challenge to our predominant ideas of individualism that we have today. Communion is certainly a relationship with God, but it is not just our private relationship with the Lord. We are made members of a community, we must have faith in what the body of the Church believes, not in our individual opinions. We have hope together with all believers in God’s salvation and redemption, revealed in his death and resurrection. That is why Saint Paul teaches, “For as often as you eat this bread and

drink this cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until He comes.” (1 Corinthians 11:26) Communion, moreover, explains why we must love one another as we love ourselves, for we are united into one “self” in Christ. This is why Jesus gave us a commandment to love one another on the very night He revealed the mystery of Holy Communion, “I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another.” (John 13:34) This is only logical, for if we are united in the Body of Christ, we must love one another as Christ loves.

For all these reasons, Communion is an expression of our unity in Christ, and, therefore, of our equality, for in Communion we are all united in the one Lord, Jesus Christ. As the Son and Word of God, equal to the Father, He is God, not bound by space or time. As the Epistle to the Hebrews expresses it, “In these last days, [God] spoke to us through a son, whom He made heir of all things, and through whom He created the universe, who is the refulgence of His glory, the very imprint of his being, and who sustains all things by his mighty word.” (Hebrews 1:2) We are united in this one God, whom we profess in the Creed, is “Light of Light, true God of true God.” In Him all our differences are infinitely small, no matter how big or important or smart or beautiful or talented or beloved we are.

Saint John Chrysostom had a profound understanding of this mystery: “All things are equal between us and you, even to the very chief of our blessings. I (as bishop) do not partake of the Holy Table with greater abundance and you with less, but both equally participate of the same. And if I take it first, it is no great privilege, since even among children, the elder first extends his hand to the feast, but nevertheless no great advantage is gained thereby. But with us all things are equal. The saving life that sustains our souls is given with equal honor to both. I do not indeed partake of one Lamb and you of another, but we partake of the same. We both have the same baptism. We have been vouchsafed the same Spirit. We are both hastening to the same kingdom. We are all alike brethren of Christ, we have all things in common.” (Homily 4 on 2 Thessalonians).

John Chrysostom said, “We all have the same baptism.” Baptism is our entry into Holy Communion, and in this “common union” we are united in the one God. Saint Paul speaks of baptism, “We were indeed buried with [Christ] in baptism into death [to sin], so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live in newness of life. For if we have grown into union with Him through a death like His, we shall also be united with Him in the resurrection.” (Romans 6:4-5) Everyone who has been baptized into Christ, whether infant or old, whether male or female, of whatever people or race, has become equal in Christ and can be united with God in Communion. Communion does not depend on our own merits, it is a gift of the grace of God.

We do not earn Communion by our own efforts. God, who is almighty and infinite, takes hold of us and has created us in his image and likeness. (Genesis 1:26) This is why infants can receive Communion, for we are all children of God, and receive God according to our capacity. Moreover, this union comprises both body and soul, and this is why the bread of the Eucharist must be truly the Body of Christ.

All are invited to Wilkes-Barre Church 125th Anniversary October 13, 2013

St. Mary Church in Wilkes-Barre will be celebrating the 125th Anniversary of its founding on Sunday, October 13, 2013. A Divine Liturgy will be celebrated at 3PM followed by a Banquet at Gus Genneti's in Wilkes-Barre. Any former parishioners or friend of St. Mary's is cordially invited to attend!

To receive an invitation to the dinner, please contact the parish office at 570-822-6028.



LETTERS FROM THE EDITOR

Compiled by Father James Hayer, Editor



Half empty or Half Full?

A psychologist walked around a room while teaching stress management to an audience. As she raised a glass of water, everyone expected they'd be asked the “half empty or half full” question. Instead, with a smile on her face, she inquired: “How heavy is this glass of water?” Answers called out ranged from 8 oz. to 20 oz. She replied, “The absolute weight doesn't matter. It depends on how long I hold it. If I hold it for a minute, it's not a problem. If I hold it for an hour, I'll have an ache in my arm. If I hold it for a day, my arm will feel numb and paralyzed. In each case, the weight of the glass doesn't change, but the longer I hold it, the heavier it becomes.”

She continued, “The stresses and worries in life are like that glass of water. Think about them for a while and nothing happens. Think about them a

bit longer and they begin to hurt. And if you think about them all day long, you will feel paralyzed – incapable of doing anything.” It's important to remember to let go of your stresses and burdens. Don't carry them through the day and into the night. Instead, remember to put the glass down!

Cast your care upon the LORD, who will give you support. God will never allow the righteous to stumble. (Psalm 55:22)

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.



SEMINARIAN REFLECTIONS

Seminarian Lewis Rabayda

Our Lives as a Pilgrimage Towards Christ

As a good number of the faithful travel to Uniontown, PA for the annual pilgrimage in honor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, I thought it would be appropriate to reflect on our lives as a pilgrimage towards Christ. Attending the pilgrimage in honor of Mary brings us closer to her Son—Mary always points toward her Son because He is our Savior. But how is the rest of our life a pilgrimage? How are we moving towards Christ everyday?

If you are a wise person advanced in years or have talked with someone who has worn-in the paths of life, you will know or they have told you that life is a journey. It is a journey through love and hate and overcoming challenges to do the right thing for the right reason. For us, as faithful Christians, our “right reason” is to do the will of God in our lives. As Christians we are to follow the precepts of God, keep His commandments, and to share the love that He gave us with those we meet along the path.

This path does not only consist of the milestone of our lives, it is not only the major turning points and events, but it is more so the small moments of everyday. There is an eternal fork in the road at every second. Right now you can choose to do good and move closer towards God, or you can choose to neglect God’s will and stun your progress, or worse, move further away from God. From when you started reading this paragraph to now, you could have gone in any direction, but you continued to read, and continued to be open to what God is trying to tell you. These small moments are the mile markers of this journey towards Christ. Every good act of kindness and love that we perform will bring us closer to Him, and every act of indifference, neglect, and sin, will halt us or tear us further away.

In most respects, the pilgrim is an individual. Each is venturing to find something of great value. For us it is similar. But when we set out towards God, we find ourselves more and more one with Him. Our journey is not to fulfill our own desires or dreams, but rather, to fulfill God’s desire that we imitate Christ’s example of unconditional love. The further we go on this pilgrimage, the more we find that we must give up our own desires and ambitions, and then we become more like Christ. By emptying ourselves of our own negative wills, we do

not have a void or an empty space, but Christ comes into our hearts to fill what was lacking and replaces our will with His own.

One. Christ prayed to His Father, “May they all be one.” One is a powerful understanding to have. God is three persons—in one. Likewise, we are countless persons who share in the unity of God by accepting His spirit in us. We are one with the Holy Trinity, one with the spirit of God, and one with each other. Hence by journeying towards God in our pilgrimage of life, we journey towards unity with each other and bring the whole Church together. This earthly pilgrimage is the path that leads us to paradise.

True, we will never see heaven on earth until after the second coming of Christ. God promised the Jewish people that He would bring about the Kingdom of Heaven on earth through the Messiah. He has. But it is not an earthly kingdom of geographic borders and governments; it is a spiritual kingdom of joy and love that has Christ as its king and high priest. Our everyday actions and decisions show where we are in this pilgrimage towards Christ. The more we open ourselves up to let the will of God act through us, the further we travel the path towards God.

So how do we know what the will of God is? How do we know if how we live is truly a pilgrimage towards Christ or if we are leading lives that reject Christ? Without personal reading of Scripture—often, if not daily—we may never truly know exactly how God is showing us to be like Him. By reading Scripture, we learn first-hand how God interacts with His people, we read the words of Christ and place them into our minds, so that hopefully they will emanate from our hearts. We read the struggles of the Apostles and how under dire circumstances they were able to hold true to their faith in God. By reading Scripture, we encounter certain passages that speak to our particular situations in life, and help us to make good decisions. Reading Scripture guides our pilgrimage towards Christ, because it is the most direct way that God speaks to us. As we journey through life, let us listen to the voice of God, who will lead us to Himself and to eternal life.

Upcoming Events for September

Eparchial and Parish Events

Glory to Jesus Christ!
Glory Forever!

SEPTEMBER		8	Feast of the Nativity of the Theotokos (Solemn Holyday)
1	Pilgrimage continues at Mount St. Macrina Uniontown, PA	8	40TH ANNUAL SLAVIC FESTIVAL Epiphany Church, Annandale, VA
2	LABOR DAY Chancery Closed	14	Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross (Solemn Holyday)
<div><div>Eastern Catholic Life</div><div>Circulation Department 445 Lackawanna Avenue Woodland Park, NJ 07424</div><div>Next Issue: October, 2013 Copy Deadline: September 14th</div><div>The current issue of the ECL was printed at Evergreen Printing, Bellmawr, NJ and was distributed from the U.S. Post Office via second class mailing in Bellmawr, NJ.</div></div>		14/15	CATHEDRAL PICNIC St. Michael Chapel, Woodland Park, NJ
		15	40th Anniversary of Cantor Richard Covaleski HOLY GHOST CHURCH, JESSUP, PA
		20-22	Annual Eparchial Deacon Retreat Mount Pocono, PA
		22	Annual Pilgrimage for Peace FRANCISCAN MONASTERY, SYBERTSVILLE, PA
		22	Eparchial WEDDING JUBILEE CELEBRATION St. Mary's, Hillsborough, NJ
		23-26	Annual Eparchial Priest Retreat Long Branch, NJ