



EASTERN CATHOLIC LIFE

Official Publication of the Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Passaic

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Annual Pilgrimage in Uniontown Attracts Thousands THEOTOKOS, STEADFAST FOUNDATION OF FAITH

The beautiful weather was an appropriate backdrop for two days of prayers, processions, and spiritual song during the 79th Annual Pilgrimage to the Shrine of our Lady of Perpetual Help at Mount Saint Macrina in Uniontown, PA. Conducted under the patronage of the Byzantine Catholic Metropolitan Church of Pittsburgh, the theme for this year's pilgrimage was, "Theotokos, Steadfast Foundation of Faith." Pilgrimage Directors, Metropolitan William C. Skurla and Sister Seraphim Olsafsky, OSBM, Sisters of Saint Basil Provincial, along with Bishop John M. Kudrick (Eparchy of Parma), Bishop Gerald N. Dino (Eparchy of Phoenix), Bishop John S. Piazak, CSsR (Canada) and Very Rev. Edward G. Cimbala (Administrator of the Eparchy of Passaic) welcomed hundreds of pilgrims to the scenic and peaceful grounds of Mount Saint Macrina, home of the Our Lady of Perpetual Help Province of the Sisters of Saint Basil The Great.

"Our children look forward to the pilgrimage every year," said Amy Opachko, whose children enjoy the special treat of "going to church outside" each year at the pilgrimage. "It was wonderful," remarked Mary Ann Pieszala, who was impressed by the many improvements she had seen on the grounds, as well as by the increased number of families in attendance.

Indeed, "this year's pilgrimage was special," noted Sister Regina Adams, OSBM. "There was such a calm spirit on the Mount; everyone seemed more attentive and more prayerful this year," she said. Perhaps, Sister wondered, it was because of an awareness of the political and economic unrest plaguing so many parts of the world, and the need for increased prayer. Perhaps, too, it is the stillness of heart, amidst the storms of life, that draws so many to the calm haven of Mount Saint Macrina each year.

For those attending the annual pilgrimage, spirits were lifted and the resonance of prayerful singing was truly a sign of a genuine outpouring from the heart. Sister recalled being particularly touched and impressed by the overflow crowd at the 8:30 AM Sunday morning Slavonic Divine Liturgy and the singing that resonated throughout the entire Mount. "I don't remember when something like that happened last," she said.

There was also an abundance of children in attendance this year, as well. This was evidenced by numerous participants in the ever-popular Children's Procession on Sunday afternoon, as well as the Children's Pilgrimage with plenty of timely lessons and activities. Teens had their own special space in the Prayer Garden, where chanting of the Jesus Prayer dominated the air. There was plenty of camaraderie, catching up on the latest news, finding out new things about old friends, making new friends, and sharing the Good News. Young adult pilgrims also found their way to nearby Trinity Center to socialize and exchange ideas at their Saturday and Sunday evening gatherings.

The House of Prayer, Gift Shop, and kitchen facilities also were hubs of activity where pilgrims respectively could find quiet time for prayer and reflection, purchase religious artifacts and have them blessed by a priest, and re-fuel with delicious homemade delights for the long treks up and down

the gentle hills of The Mount. Food for the soul was offered at the Trinity Center and at the Holy Resurrection Mausoleum with the annual Enrichment Sessions.

Sister Theodosia, OSBM, observed that this year there were many more children coming to the Icon and Gift Shop to purchase Holy Icons. "They all seem to have a renewed desire to have a holy image of their own," Sister noticed. "They would look for an icon of their Patron Saint," Sister said, "but they all wanted an Icon of Christ the Teacher or the Holy Trinity, as well." Sister Theodosia saw this as a very positive indication. "Because if we can appreciate the image of Christ in a Holy Icon," she said, "we will be better able to see the image of Christ in one another."



Seeing the image of Christ in one another and calling out each other's special gifts and talents is the responsibility of everyone, said Father Ed Cimbala, Administrator of the Eparchy of Passaic. "We are all vocation directors," he said. "Resolve to commit yourself to accept this task," he said as he commissioned them go forth on a mission as vocation directors at the Pilgrimage, after the Pilgrimage, and everyday.

From Vespers and Divine Liturgy to Compline and Akathist, numerous services were celebrated by the hierarchs and the many Byzantine Catholic priests and deacons in attendance from across the country. Metropolitan William, at the concluding service on Sunday evening, commented on the *Year of Faith* theme and encouraged all pilgrims in attendance to continue to share throughout the year, the faith that they celebrate during the Pilgrimage weekend. "The Faith," he said, "is transferred from one generation though the sharing of lives with one person at a time." The Metropolitan then went on to thank all the bishops, priests, deacons, religious, Basilians, Basilian Associates, volunteers and faithful who travelled to Mount Saint Macrina and assisted for the 79th Annual Pilgrimage.

Sister Seraphim, OSBM, Provincial Superior, echoed these sentiments when she addressed the pilgrims and offered words of gratitude from all in the Basilian Community.

The pilgrimage was instituted in 1934 when the Sisters acquired the Monastery property in Uniontown. In 1935, Pope Pius XI gifted the Sisters with a beautiful icon of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, and requested that they repeat the journey each year, in order to spread a special devotion to the Blessed Mother under that title. It is one of the great unifying events in the life of the Byzantine Catholic Church, and it is the oldest and largest Byzantine Catholic Pilgrimage in the United States.

May the Theotokos, the Steadfast Foundation of Faith, be with us as we journey throughout life. And may our footsteps lead us, once again, to the calm acres of Mount Saint Macrina next year for the 80th Annual Pilgrimage!

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Golden Jubilarians: A Quartet Of Harmony

JUBILARIANS BRING BEAUTIFUL MUSIC OF BLESSINGS



Jubilarians, Sister Susan Harvey, Sister Margaret Ann Andrako, Sister Sylvia Burnett, and Sister Barbara Jean Mihalchick with Father David Hannes and Archpriest John Petro.

Sunday, August 4, 2013 was a day of gratitude and celebration for the Sisters of Saint Basil at Mount Saint Macrina in Uniontown, PA - gratitude for the four Sisters celebrating their Golden Jubilee of religious life and celebration of their combined 200 years of ministry in our Byzantine Catholic Metropolitan Church.

The Divine Liturgy of Thanksgiving was concelebrated by Archpriest John G. Petro and Father David Hannes. A host of family and friends joined the community in honoring the four Jubilarians, Sister Margaret Ann Andrako, Sister Sylvia Burnett, Sister Susan Harvey and Sister Barbara Jean Mihalchick.

Mercy was the key word Father Petro focused on in his homily. It was a word that we kept hearing over and over from Pope Francis at the World Youth Day in Brazil. Mercy is another way of expressing God's loving kindness and compassion. In their lives as teachers, administrators, spiritual directors, religious education coordinators; in whatever ministry they were engaged, God's mercy came to those to whom they ministered through their hands, their hearts, their words. All of us are called to do the same, to be vessels of mercy, pouring out God's love and compassion to all. In closing, Father John again borrowed from Pope Francis's advice: "Don't take yourself seriously; it's not about you; it's about Jesus." Father noted that the Jubilarians have taken the above quote to heart and lived it out over the span of these 50 years.

At the festive dinner following the Divine Liturgy, Sister Elaine Kisinko spoke admirably of the Jubilarians in the following tribute: Sister Margaret Ann, Sister Sylvia, Sister Susan and Sister Barbara Jean can be thought of as a quartet who in their dedicated lives of consecration to our Lord have brought the beautiful music of blessings in ways beyond measure and to people beyond counting. At times, they were together, in the same place, sharing prayers, study, ministry and community. Other times saw them many miles apart, sometimes even in the circumstances of playing a solo part of the quartet. They have taught or been principals of many elementary schools in parishes of the Byzantine Catholic Metropolitan Province. The miles they traversed in both Europe and America would be a number envied by any frequent flier and would probably win a prize from the American Automobile Association.

From being unofficial nurse's aides at Maria Manor in Ebensburg, PA (where you learned on the job!) while studying at Mt. Aloysius College, to offering pastoral and parish ministry, or providing eparchial ministry in the offices of Religious Education, to retreat work and spiritual direction, to working in chanceries, to directing Basilian Associates, or serving in Provincial Administration, Generalate Administration, Seminary Administration - all the way to cemetery and bereavement ministry, it can be safely said that these jubilarian Sisters have done it all! Moreover, they did it with all of the grace, generosity and capability befitting every Sister of Saint Basil.

Our Jubilarians continue to play in the harmony and diversity of consecrated women - each one active, enthusiastic and committed to the ministry

and people she serves. Fifty years used to be a long time mile marker - but not anymore as both Sister Margaret Ann and Sister Susan stand poised in the beginnings of new places and challenges. Sister Sylvia continues to unravel the mysteries of broken marriages in her tribunal work, and Sister Barbara Jean currently serves as director of programs at the House of Prayer at Mount Saint Macrina as well as directing and speaking to both individuals and groups.

Sister Margaret Ann Andrako, OSBM

Sister Margaret Ann's home parish is Saint Eugene Church in Bedford, OH. Her ministry journey has taken her to parish schools, to Religious Education in the Archeparchy and Passaic Eparchy, to organizational work in the Van Nuys (Phoenix) Eparchy, to director of the House of Prayer, Assistant Provincial and councilor, and past administrative assistant at the Byzantine Catholic Seminary in Pittsburgh, PA. Sister Margaret Ann has accepted a position as administrative assistant at Central Catholic High School in Ohio. Sister Margaret Ann holds a Masters Degree in Religious Studies from the University of Dayton in Dayton, OH.

Sister Sylvia Burnett, OSBM

Sister Sylvia joined the Community from Saints Peter and Paul Church, Erie, PA. Her ministry also took her to parish schools, then to retreat work and spiritual direction at Mount Saint Macrina, the Jesuit Retreat Center in Clinton, OH and Ecclesia Center in Girard, PA. She also worked on research, planning and development for the Community, served as motherhouse director, and councilor and director of grounds and facilities. Since 2007, Sister Sylvia has served as an auditor in the tribunal of the Erie Diocese. Sister Sylvia earned a Masters Degree in Christian Spirituality from Creighton University in Omaha, NE.

Sister Susan Harvey, OSBM

A vocation from Saint John the Baptist Church in Avella, PA, Sister Susan devoted 29 years in the parochial elementary schools around the Metropolia serving as teacher and principal. She taught at nearly every grade level from first through eighth. Following her years in the education apostolate, Sister Susan went on to serve in Pastoral Ministry and as assistant director for the Office of Religious Education for the Parma Eparchy. Presently, Sister Susan is on the staff of the newly-organized school at Saint Gabriel's Parish in Las Vegas, NV. Sister Susan holds a Masters Degree in Education from the University of Dayton in Dayton, OH.

Sister Barbara Jean Mihalchick, OSBM

Sister Barbara Jean entered the community from Saint Nicholas Church, Roebing, NJ. Also beginning in ministry as a teacher, she moved on to retreat work and spiritual direction at the Retreat Center. In 1989, Sister Barbara Jean was elected to the position of Vicar General in the General Administration of the Order in Rome, Italy. During this time, Sister traveled to all parts of the Order, especially working in formation with the young professed Sisters. At the same time, she carried out the duties of General Secretary for the Order. Sister Barbara Jean returned from Rome in 2001 and currently serves as director of programs for the House of Prayer at Mount Saint Macrina. Sister Barbara Jean earned a Masters Degree in Christian Spirituality from Creighton University in Omaha, NE.

Each Sister is, in her own way, remarkable and admirable; unique, yet united, and grateful for all that has been and looking forward to serving Our Lord for many years. All present joined in heartily congratulating the Jubilarians and wishing them many more spiritual fruitful and happy years!



ECL Subscriptions

The ECL is in the process of converting to a new data base to generate the mailing of the newspaper. If you have concerns about your subscription, please contact Maureen French at 973-890-7777.



+Sister Celestine Petruska, OSBM

Youthful and Energetic Spirit was Hallmark of Her Life

UNIONTOWN, PA – While doing a favor for another Sister, Sister Celestine (Margaret) Petruska winged her way to the Lord in the afternoon of Tuesday, September 10, 2013. The previous day she had just returned from a week's vacation with her good friend Sister Christopher. Neither she nor anyone expected that this vacation would be a prelude to the eternal vacation which awaited her the next day. Without a doubt, she carried with her into eternity that same joyful spirit with which she returned to the Monastery.

The daughter of the late Michael and Anna (Varhol) Petruska, Sister Celestine was born in Lambertton, PA. She entered the Sisters of Saint Basil from St. John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church in Uniontown, PA on January 26, 1947. She pronounced her First Vows on December 9, 1948 and made her Perpetual Profession on August 28, 1953 in the presence of the late Bishop Daniel Ivancho.

Sister Celestine celebrated her birthday with great enthusiasm just two weeks before her eternal birthday. One could truly say of her that

she was 93 years young. Her youthful and energetic spirit was the hallmark of her life. If she had any regrets, it would have been that she had to retire from active ministry due to health issues in 2011. Sister served in a variety of ministries. Starting out, as many in the community did, as teacher and principal for a good number of years; then as Novice Directress and as a member of the Renewal Team. Still in ministry full time, she served first as Assistant Chancellor and then as Finance Officer in the Eparchy of Phoenix for 14 years. Retirement was not in Sister's vocabulary, so after a brief hiatus, she was assigned to Saint Therese parish in Saint Petersburg, FL where she worked as pastoral assistant until her return to the monastery in February of 2011. In the last two years of her life, Sister Celestine made herself useful wherever she could. Visiting the Sisters who were residents at Mount Macrina Manor to check on their personal needs was one of the services she enjoyed doing.

Without a doubt, it can be said that Sister Celestine enjoyed life to the fullest; she valued her religious vocation; she was faithful in all that was required of her as a Sister of Saint Basil, and she shared her joy in life with her Sisters in community, her family and her friends. Never flagging in her interests, she took up violin lessons in the latter years of her life, and she was heard practicing on her violin the morning before she

died in preparation for her violin lesson later in the day.

Metropolitan William, in his reflections, noted that this was a bittersweet day for all. There is joy because Sister Celestine has gone to her heavenly reward; but there is sadness, since we will no longer be able to share in the vitality of spirit which Sister brought into our lives. Metropolitan William remarked that he got to know Sister Celestine during the time she served in the Eparchy of Phoenix when he was Bishop there. In conversations with Sister, she would say that her years in the West were the best years of her life. She especially took pleasure in the sunny weather which enabled her to be outdoors when she was not at work, and she did work very hard. Her work, however, did not in the least stop her from finding ways to bring joy to others. One of the ways she did that was to invite her co-workers or the senior residents of the condos to take time to party. If you did not know how to do the "hokey-pokey" before Sister Celestine came to Phoenix; you surely did once Halloween came around.

In a more serious vein, referring to the Feast of the Exaltation of the Most Precious Cross of the Lord, Metropolitan William noted that Sister Celestine responded to the Gospel call to take up the cross and follow Christ. This she did joyfully, and we are all called to do likewise

in the same positive spirit. Finally, Metropolitan William commented on Sister's love of travel; she has now made that final journey into the Kingdom of God where all of her family members were waiting to welcome her and where she will continue to pray for us.

Sister Celestine was preceded in death by her parents, her brothers Michael, Joseph, John, Steve and George; and her sisters Anna and Mary. In addition to her Sisters in community, she is survived by her devoted brother William, her cherished sister Dorothy Petruska Medvitz and many nieces and nephews and their families. The Parastas Service was concelebrated on Thursday, September 12th by Father Michael Huszti, Chaplain; Father Robert Evancho and Father Ronald Larko. In attendance was Archpriest John Petro. The Funeral Divine Liturgy was celebrated on Friday, September 13 by Metropolitan William. Concelebrants were Archpriest Dennis Bogda, Father Robert Evancho, Father Ronald Larko and Father Michael Huszti, Monastery Chaplain. In attendance were Father Joseph Kapusnak, Father James Spontak and Father Stephen Wahal. Interment followed in the Dormition Section of Mount Macrina Cemetery.

May God grant to His handmaiden, Sister Celestine, eternal memory and peaceful repose.



Encounter 2014

*Encounter of the Eastern Catholic Churches
Together in Christ, Orlando, FL*

January 31-February 2, 2014

The bishops of the Eastern Catholic Churches of the U.S.A. and Canada recently announced that an "Encounter of the Eastern Catholic Churches – Together in Christ" will be held from January 31 to February 2, 2014 at the Renaissance Hotel, Orlando, FL.

The concept of the "Encounter" began in 1999 in Boston, MA with the approval and encouragement of the Holy See of Rome. A subsequent gathering was held in Chicago in 2006 with representation of the Vatican

Congregation of the Oriental Congregation in the person of Cardinal Daoud, then Prefect of the Congregation.

Owing to the success of these two Encounters, the Bishops took the unusual step of conducting the *Encounter 2012* in Cleveland, OH; Hillsborough, NJ and El Segundo, CA. That event, which was really one event in three locations, won the admiration of the faithful of the Eastern Catholic Churches, who expressed the desire

for more events of this kind; hence the announcement of this latest Encounter under the spiritual guidance of Bishop Nicholas J. Samra of the Eparchy (Diocese) of Newton, MA.

Bishop Samra is the vice-president of the Eastern Catholic Associates, as the organization of the Bishops is collectively known, and the Eastern Catholic Conference of Eparchial (diocesan) Directors of Religious Education which is under the aegis of the ECA.

PEOPLE YOU KNOW

AROUND THE EPARCHY



SAINT ANN CHURCH - HARRISBURG, PA PARISH HOSTS GUADALUPE ICON

On July 10, 2011, His Holiness Pope Benedict bestowed his Apostolic Blessing from the Vatican on the icon of Our Lady of Guadalupe. The image was touched to the original image of Our Lady of Guadalupe and sealed with the soil from the first church at Tepeyac Hill, Mexico.

For the past 2 years, this icon has been making a pilgrimage throughout the Americas in celebration of the 500-year anniversary of Our Lady of Guadalupe appear-

ing to Juan Diego.

The Knights of Columbus Council 15107 at Saint Ann Byzantine Catholic Church in Harrisburg, PA, arranged to have this icon available for veneration at Saint Ann Church on June 16, 17, and 18. Each night Father Michael Popson, pastor at Saint Ann Church, and the congregation joined in prayers honoring the Theotokos.



SAINT THERESE CHURCH - ST. PETERSBURG, FL SCHOOL YEAR OPENS WITH LITURGY



On Wednesday, August 14, 2013 the School of the Immaculata started their first day of classes for the school year.

The school leases the parish facilities and the children attend the Divine Liturgy on a daily basis. God has blessed our parish with their presence on the church property.

Father Robert Evancho is the Pastor of Saint Theres Church.

At left: school children and faculty following the Divine Liturgy with Father Evancho.



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Fall Bible Study
Oct-Nov 2013

Birth of the Messiah

Led by Fr Jerome, OFM



Holy Dormition Friary Chapel, all rights reserved

Four Mondays
October 7&21, November 4&18

Choose morning (10-11:30am) or evening (7-8:30pm).

Prepare for the feast of the Nativity of our Lord exploring Scripture on the birth of Christ.

*October 7: Luke; October 21: Prophets and Law – the Promise;
November 4: Scripture in the Liturgy; November 18: Paul – the significance of God born as Man.*

Cost: \$20. Please bring a Bible (available in Gift Shop).

For information or registration, contact Fr Jerome:
holydormition@gmail.com; 570-788-1212 ext 402.

Holy Dormition Friary, the home of the Byzantine Franciscans, is located on State Hwy 93 at Main Street in Sybertsville, PA 18251.

History of the Eparchy of Passaic

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

50
YEARS AN
EPARCHY
Byzantine Catholic
Eparchy of Passaic



Part 12 - A Faith-Filled Life

From Pilgrimages to the Carpathian Village

By Father Jody J. Baran

Bishop Dudick showed his nature as a pilgrim by establishing pilgrimages in the Eparchy of Passaic. When he founded and developed Carpathian Village in the Poconos (Canadensis, PA) in 1983, Bishop Michael saw it as a retreat center and a place of pilgrimage. The Saint Nicholas Pilgrimage began in 1985 and has continued for many years. People come from all over to experience the quiet and peace of the Pocono Mountains and have a chance to recharge their spiritual batteries.

When the Eparchy began to expand southward into Georgia and Florida, Bishop Michael felt that a pilgrimage in for the faithful in the Southern states would be of great benefit. Therefore, in the true fashion of a spiritual father and guide to his people, Bishop Michael established a pilgrimage in Florida. The location of the pilgrimage was at the Shrine of Our Lady of La Leche in Saint

Augustine, FL. The pilgrimage is dedicated to Our Lady of Perpetual Help and, as time went on, a Shrine Altar was constructed and the icon of Our Lady of Perpetual Help was donated by Bishop Dudick himself. The pilgrimage gathered together all of our Faithful in the area of Florida and Georgia and has become a beacon of prayer and grace and continues this wonderful tradition.



*The Dormitory at
the Carpathian Village*

Bishop Michael brought the spirit of pilgrimage to life for many people. Over the years, he also established pilgrimages to the Byzantine Carmelite Monastery in Sugarloaf and established a presence at Saint Anne's Monastery in Scranton, PA during the Annual Novena to St. Anne. On this occasion, the Bishop would celebrate a Byzantine Liturgy to give further exposure to our Byzantine Rite, as well as to give honor to the Virgin Mary's mother. Bishop Michael also helped to establish the pilgrimage at the Basilian Fathers Monastery in Matawan, NJ, in honor of Our Lady of Mariapocs. All these spiritual journeys were made possible through Bishop Michael's efforts and encouragement. These pilgrimages throughout the Eparchy have become a rich legacy that has touched the lives of many people over the years.

In addition to pilgrimages, Bishop Dudick also saw the need for a place for recreation and spiritual renewal. In 1984, the Eparchy purchased land outside of Canadensis (near Stroudsburg) Pennsylvania. It was here that he wanted to bring into being our Eparchial retreat center and he named it *Carpathian Village*. The property had to be planned and developed. The task was now set to accomplish this. The land had to be cleared for the various buildings



*A young Altar Server learns
to chants the Epistle at
the Carpathian Village.*

that would be needed to accommodate individuals, families and large groups. A cottage was constructed to house a priest who would be the director of the Carpathian Village and also act as a spiritual guide when necessary along with the day-to-day running of the Village itself. A pavilion was built along with a full working kitchen to feed these large groups who came to make use of the facilities.

(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
Dinner by Reservation Only

**Saint Mary Church
Wilkes-Barre, PA
to Celebrate 125th Anniversary
Sunday, October 13, 2013
All Invited to Attend!**

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 Genetti'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.



79TH ANNUAL PILGRIMAGE AT MOUNT SAINT MACRINA *LABOR DAY WEEKEND, UNIONTOWN, PA*

Message of Metropolitan William

It is an honor to be with you for the procession this evening at the 79th Pilgrimage to our Lady of Perpetual Help. For those who are new to the Pilgrimage, my name is William Skurla and I am the Archbishop of Pittsburgh and the Metropolitan Archbishop of the Byzantine Catholic Church in the United States. For those who are returning, it is good to see many familiar faces who have returned to Uniontown this Labor Day weekend to pray with us.

The focus of this year's pilgrimage is "Theotokos, Steadfast Foundation of Faith." From the moment she was contacted through the Archangel Gabriel, she said *yes* to God's plan for her to be the Mother of God. Because of her special bond with Jesus, Mary is strictly connected to what we believe. As the Son, Jesus brings to the world a new beginning and light. As Jesus' mother, Mary connects Jesus to us. Throughout her life, she was present with Jesus until the end. After Jesus' death and resurrection, she became the spiritual mother to the apostles and to us today. Most of us receive our faith from our families. And like Jesus, our mothers hand the faith on to us. Just like our hair or eye color, our mothers have a special role in forming and nurturing the gift of faith in each one of us here this evening. Pope Benedict XVI called the Catholic Churches to begin a renewal of the faith of the people.

For me, I was amazed to learn at last year's Bishops Synod what Churches are doing in each country. In the United States, the Catholic churches have tried to renew the faith and to reach out to people who have not heard the word. During this Year of Faith, our Byzantine Catholic churches have reflected upon the faith through prayer, workshops, encounters, this pilgrimage, and our own renewed study of what we believe and

how it affects our lives. We hope that this will continue for years to come. Our Faith begins and is fed by our personal experience of Jesus Christ. Each of us is called to share our experience with our families and friends.

The faith is transferred from one generation through the sharing of lives with one person at a time. We convey to them that Jesus is alive in our hearts. We lead them into the great pilgrimage story of God's love for us beginning with Abraham to us - right here and now.

We thank all who have traveled far to come today - the Basilian Sisters and Associates, the volunteers, bishops, priests, deacons, seminarians and the faithful who have come to this pilgrimage. In closing, I leave you with Pope Francis' new prayer to Mary, the Mother of our Faith:

"Mother help our faith! Open our ears to hear God's word and to recognize his voice and call. Awaken in us a desire to follow in his footsteps, to go forth from our land and to receive his promise. Help us to be touched by his love, that we may touch him in faith. Help us to entrust ourselves fully to him and to believe in his love, especially at time of trial, beneath the shadow of the cross, when our faith is called to mature. Sow in our faith the joy of the Risen One alone. Teach us to see all things with the eyes of Jesus, that he may be light for our path. And may this light of faith always increase in us, until the dawn of that undying day which is Christ himself, your Son, our Lord!"



Pilgrimage Homily of the Very Reverend Edward Cimbala *Administrator of the Eparchy of Passaic*

Happy New Year! Yes, today is New Year's Day - the beginning of the New Church Year! Today, and every day the joys of my vocation as a priest make me grateful to God. God constantly gives me awesome gifts as a priest. They are such wonderful surprises that come just when I need them.

I hope you don't mind, but I would like to share with you a personal story about a great gift God recently gave me was when we were celebrating the Mystery of Reconciliation with my second graders in one of my parishes. These children made such beautiful and reflective confessions and I was so moved by them. One of the boys came in and made a wonderful confession and as he was leaving and he was almost at the door, I asked him to please say a prayer for me. He immedi-

ately turned around came back to the kneeler and prayed the Our Father right then and there. Now, I have asked many people in the past twenty-five years of my priesthood to pray for me - but this was the first time that anyone did it immediately. What a gift he gave me that day - and it is one of many that I have received from God as a priest.

With great gifts like these I can't imagine why someone wouldn't want to be a priest!

I am not only grateful to God but I am also grateful to those who supported and encouraged me when I first considered a vocation.

My family. The people of my parish as I was growing up. The sisters who taught me. I have to note in a special way my favorite 5th grade teacher - Sister Elaine - she keeps reminding me that she

was my only 5th grade teacher - but she was and still is the best. Even the people I worked with before going into the seminary. Many people saw something in me that I didn't see in myself. These people called me to a vocation just as Jesus called his disciples.

Jesus called these fishermen to follow him. It is interesting to note what kind of men they were. They were not men of great scholarship, or influence, or wealth, or social background. They were simple working people.

It was these ordinary men that Jesus called. He said "Follow me!" And they left their nets and followed him. Jesus had a mission to accomplish and as a man could not do it alone. He needed helpers and went out and found them. He didn't

79TH ANNUAL PILGRIMAGE AT MOUNT SAINT MACRINA *LABOR DAY WEEKEND, UNIONTOWN, PA*



put up a sign-up sheet for volunteers. He called them. These were men in everyday circumstances. God often chooses ordinary people in ordinary conditions. When they respond with their whole heart, he makes them extraordinary to accomplish His purposes.

The work of Jesus continues to day. Probably with even more need than ever before. After Jesus ascended into heaven - he left us with his work to do here on earth. He needs workers - the church needs laborers in the vineyard.

"You know, Father, I might have considered becoming a priest, but no one ever asked me." In my vocation work for the Eparchy of Passaic, I frequently hear this comment when talking about church vocations. I often wonder why these people didn't respond to God's inner call. I really do think it is because we are not inviting them to think about the priesthood.

Every eparchy has someone designated to be Vocation Director. But they really are not the only vocation director.

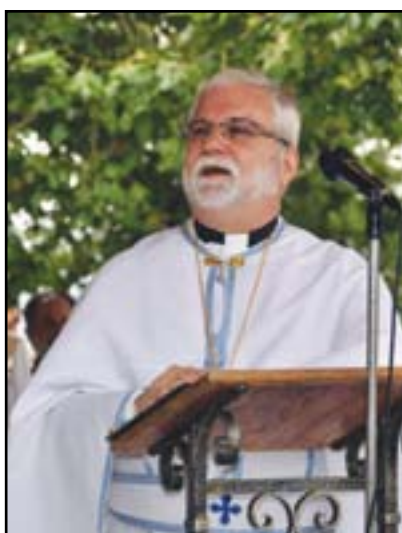
The Bishop of the Diocese is always the first vocation director.

The other priests of the Diocese are vocation directors. By their example and love of priesthood and their joy in serving the Lord will attract other men to the priesthood. I challenge all our priests to be joy-filled men, living the gospel and let potential vocations see something in you that they would like to have.

Our sisters are vocation directors - I remember as a young person that they constantly encouraged vocations - I think they were surprised that I was one of the ones that paid any attention

to their prompting - of course, it took me almost thirty years to respond to God's call.

But, would you believe that our eparchies have thousands of vocation directors? Who? Each and every member of our parishes - each and every one of you sitting here today is called to this ministry. "What," you say, "that's not my job." Oh, but it is.



You are in your parishes - you see the men and women who may have the potential to be a priest or sister. You may see the awesome potential of these men and women that they themselves may not even be aware. We need to let them know what we see. There are men and women in our parishes who need someone to call them that they may realize their potential and contributions that they may make in the world around us.

So, for your New Year's resolution - I am asking you to be like Jesus and call out the possibilities that are within those around us. I am asking

you to look in the pews of your parish and see parishioners in your midst, that by their talents, their abilities, their goodness, cause us to wonder if possibly they might make good priests or sisters.

Many people today have not been asked or encouraged to consider a religious vocation. Surveys repeatedly report this lack of encouragement.

In the early years of the church, when the local community was in need of people to minister to their needs, they prayed to God for direction, looked around their own community, selected those having the necessary qualities and asked them to be their leaders.

The work of encouraging and fostering vocations belongs to the entire Christian community.

That we as a Church face difficulties in vocation work today is no excuse for wringing our hands and doing nothing. The Spirit is present among us, urging us to meet the challenge with new energy and creativity.

So today as we celebrate the New Year - I commission each of you to assume the responsibility of being vocation directors and to be an instrument through which God's call may be heard. God calls each of us by name and shares with us the work of inviting persons to follow. If it is important for you that good men and women answer God's specific call to the priesthood or religious life, you will pray fervently and faithfully - you will do something!

The priests, deacons, monastics, and religious of the future are in your parishes. They are just waiting to be called - by God - and by you!

A Word of Gratitude from Sister Seraphim

Dear Friends,

Thank you for participating in the 79th Pilgrimage honoring the Theotokos under the title of Our Mother of Perpetual Help. Many Pilgrims have commented on the sacred and prayerful atmosphere which permeated the Mount during these days.

We Sisters sincerely believe that all of you, our cherished Pilgrims, bring with you the irreplaceable manner in which you reflect the light of God's Son. Your presence brings a little foretaste of the lasting peace and joy which will be the fullness of the heavenly Kingdom.

Over our 79 years of hosting the annual Pilgrimage, we the Sisters of St. Basil, continuously acknowledge that without our Pilgrims, the Pilgrimage would not be possible. Your presence lights up Mount St. Macrina and the shadow of your being casts a peaceful, prayerful glow over our Mount throughout the

year. We pray that you carry with you a special mindfulness as being chosen to bring the dazzling light of God's presence into a world darkened by turmoil and disbelief.

We sincerely thank you and offer our assurance that you will be held within the depth of our prayers throughout this coming year. May Our Mother of Perpetual Help gently shelter your way.



Sister Seraphim, OSBM

Sister Seraphim Olsafsky, OSBM
Provincial

PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 79TH ANNUAL

PHOTOS CREDIT: SISTER MONICA HUSOVICH, OSBM, LORY

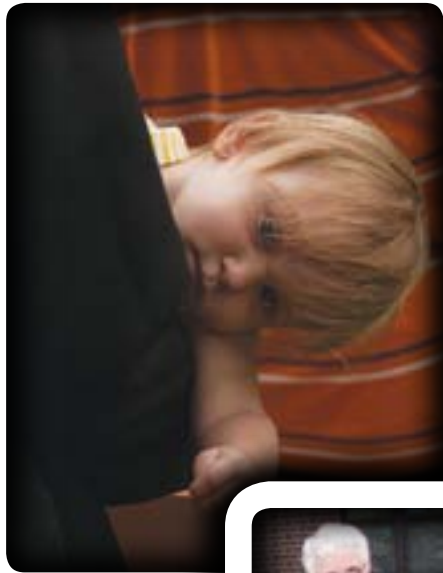
Theotokos



Metropolitan William blesses the pilgrims at the 79th Annual Pilgrimage.



The Bishops in attendance: (l. to r.): Bishop John (Pazak) of Toronto; Metropolitan William; and Bishop John (K...



The Sisters process for the o...

L PILGRIMAGE AT MOUNT SAINT MACRINA

NEMETH OF HORIZONS AND DARLENS FEJKA OF THE BCW



*Steadfast
Foundation of Faith*



Father Edward Cimbala, Administrator of the Eparchy of Passaic, celebrates the Divine Liturgy for Vocations.



Bishop Gerald (Dino) of Phoenix, Archbishop William (Skurla) of Pittsburgh; and Bishop (Kudrick) of Parma.



Opening of the Pilgrimage.





OCTOBER IS RESPECT LIFE MONTH

Open Your Hearts to Life

“Open Your Hearts to Life” has been a favorite theme of Pope Francis and one that has particular urgency today, as the “culture of death” is gaining an ever wider foothold.

Some may think the phrase “culture of death” is too grim or too exaggerated because, on the surface at least, ours looks like a culture of fun and pleasure. Most Americans are living comfortably, indulging in a tantalizing array of food and drink, and entertaining themselves with high-speed Internet and hundreds of cable channels. And among many young singles, casual sexual encounters are the norm.

We live in a culture dedicated to maximizing pleasure and minimizing pain or inconvenience.

No less than the U.S. Supreme Court has told us that it is our choice to live as we wish – letting nothing and no one stand in our way, including the child who may be growing in her mother’s womb. In upholding legal abortion for any reason or none, the Court declared in *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*: “At the heart of liberty is the right to define one’s own concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe, and of the mystery of human life.”

But when “liberty” leads to the doorstep of Kermit Gosnell and other abortion practitioners who have been in the news, we are forced to confront our culture’s real views about human life.

Although it seems to have fallen out of fashion today, there is, in fact, a way of defining a concept of existence, meaning and human life that has worked exceptionally well for individuals and society wherever it has been tried. Jesus Christ explained this concept in his every word and every action: Our origin and our destiny is God, our Father, who loves each of us with an infinitely tender and merciful love. The mystery of human life is that we – every one of us – are precious to God even as we are – weak and sinful. As Pope Francis has pointed out more than once, God our Father never stops loving us and never tires of forgiving us. At our least sign of remorse, he fills us with his consolation, peace

and hope.

Opening our hearts to life means that we reject the killing of human beings from the moment of conception to their natural death – by abortifacient “contraceptives” and abortion, in destructive embryo research and IVF procedures, by denying life-saving treatment to those with disabilities, and by “hastening death” of the elderly and dying in assisted suicide and euthanasia. Opening our hearts to life means opposing the death penalty, as well as slavery, human trafficking, terrorism and unjust war, and that we work to eradicate the conditions that prevent our brothers and sisters from realizing their full human potential.

To open our hearts to life, however, we must first overcome every tendency to reject people and the demands they make in our daily lives. The culture of death begins and flourishes in a culture of rejection. It begins with seeing oneself as the person whose ideas, interests and wishes should prevail over those of others, even when it will cause them lasting harm. A dramatic but all too common example is the single man who fathers a child, but wants nothing to do with the mother or his baby. Today, unmarried women account for 85% of abortions, and 41% of all children are now born to single women.

Nearly all of us are sometimes guilty of rejecting those who get in the way of our plans or make us feel insecure. We may honk with impatience at the driver in front of us or speak abruptly to a colleague who is slow to learn new skills, and perhaps use harsh words at home when a spouse or child forgot to do a promised task. In all these seemingly minor everyday ways, we tear away at the Body of Christ. And when we act this way in front of our children, the family ceases to be a school of love.

That is what family is meant to be: a haven of unconditional love, acceptance, affirmation and consolation, where children learn by modeling their parents to accept others and love generously, to share with and care for those in need. It is a place to learn humility and mercy, to learn to imitate

Christ. Like the saints, we can learn to love others sacrificially by recognizing our own weaknesses and littleness, and by begging God to transform us.

It’s not just selfishness that makes it difficult to put others’ needs and lives ahead of our plans. We fear losing control over the plans that we think will make us happy and fear not having time to do the things that give us pleasure now. The irony is that lasting happiness in this life is found in giving of oneself generously to others, loving gratuitously and seeking nothing in return. The mother of a child who is ill can’t help but be moved to comfort her baby through the night, to suffer with him. The son of an elderly parent with dementia can’t help but respond with patience and affirmation to the often repeated stories, questions and fears. Those who love need no other reward beyond the happiness they feel in knowing they have brought comfort to another person.

Through prayer and through the celebration of Liturgy and the Sacraments, we can know and love God better. With His help, we can be more aware of the needs of those around us and open our hearts to all human life. After all, the focus of the New Evangelization isn’t on memorizing doctrines. It’s about learning to live our Christian life fully and bringing Christ’s love, alive within us, to all we meet.

CATHOLIC CHURCH ON ABORTION

“Since the first century the church has affirmed the moral evil of every procured abortion. This teaching has not changed and remains unchangeable. Direct abortion ... is gravely contrary to the moral law.”

Source: Catechism of the Catholic Church; section 2270-2275



RESPECT LIFE SUNDAY BYZANTINE CATHOLIC PRO-LIFE PRAYERS


THE FOLLOWING PRAYERS MAY BE USED AT THE DIVINE LITURGY
OR FOR PRIVATE REFLECTION.

Again we pray for our Holy Father Benedict, that his proclamation of the Gospel of Life may lead all to a love for all of God’s creation and for our Bishops, that united with all the successors of the Apostles, they may lead us all in the ways of Truth and Justice. Let us all say, Lord hear us and have mercy.


Let us pray that all of God’s people may come to more dearly cherish the Gift of Life and that all who are weighed down by hardship may find strength in God’s holy grace and let us pray for all who have died by violence, especially for children who have not been allowed to live, let us say, hear us, Lord, and have mercy.

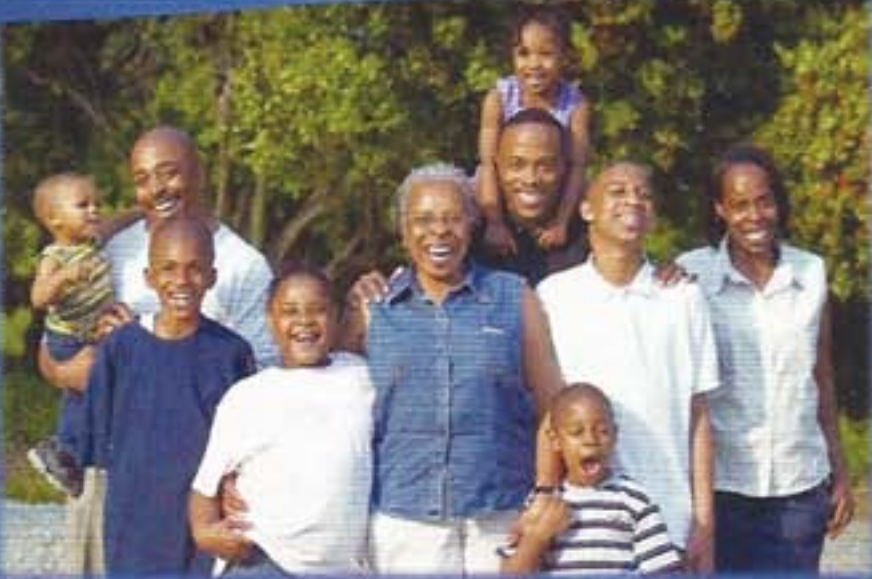
Again we pray for the Lawgivers in our country, that they may have the courage and wisdom to establish and promote laws which protect the dignity of Human Life from conception until natural death, and we ask, O Lord, that You hear us and have mercy.


God our Father, Giver of Life, we entrust the United States of America to Your loving care. You are the rock on which this nation was founded. You alone are the true source of our cherished rights to Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness. Reclaim this land for Your glory and dwell again among Your people. Send Your Spirit to touch the hearts of our Nation’s leaders. Open their minds to the great worth of Human Life and the responsibilities that accompany Human Freedom. Remind Your people that true happiness is rooted in seeking and doing Your will. Through the intercession of Mary Immaculate, Patroness of our Land, grant us the courage to reject the “culture of death” which now prevails. Lead us into a new millennium of life. For every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from You, the Father of lights of heaven, and we render glory, thanksgiving and worship to You, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.

A large photograph of Pope Francis, wearing his white zucchetto and glasses, kissing a young man on the cheek. The young man is wearing a dark blue jacket. Several hands are visible around them, some with watches and a red wristband, suggesting a crowd or a supportive group.

Open your hearts to life!

A photograph of a family: a pregnant woman in a white dress, a man in a yellow shirt, and a young girl in a white dress.

A large group photograph of a diverse family of about ten people, including adults and children of various ages, smiling outdoors.

A small, square ultrasound image showing a fetus in the womb.

Respect Life

OCTOBER IS RESPECT LIFE MONTH



UNDERSTANDING ICONS

Father Joseph Bertha, Ph.D.

Patriarch Abraham

Feast Day October 9th

Troparion: Tone 1

In the night universal of ignorance towards God, and in that starless, profound gloom bereft of heavenly light, you, O Abraham, were kindled in the firmament, burning with bright far-shining faith in the Everlasting light. Who shines forth to us from your seed, entreat Him with fervor, that He enlighten us and save our souls.

Kondak: Tone 2

You were a servant, a mortal fashioned from the earth, your master was God, Lord and Fashioner of creation, yet, well-pleased to glorify your celestial greatness, the Lord of all called Himself the God of Abraham Procure for us mercies from your merciful God.

There are two iconographic characteristics typical to portrayals of our Father in Faith, Patriarch Abraham:

1) he has a long flowing white hair and beard; and

2) he is depicted enthroned with Isaac on his lap, the fruit of his loins with Sara in their advanced age. Alternately, in the Hospitality of Abraham and Sara icon, three angels (interpreted by Christians as a Theophany of the Trinity) visit the Patriarch at the oak of Mamre, Abraham is a small figure in stature compared with the angels, while still showing his long white hair and beard, as can be viewed in Saint Andrew Rublev's magnificent Old Testament Trinity icon.

Abraham's long sinuous hair and beard signify the manifold mercies flowing from God the Father. We recognize the imprint of God the Father's mercy in the book of Genesis 12-25, when we see the deep faith of Patriarch Abraham and



how he obeys God the Father despite what must have been overwhelmingly difficult obstacles against sacrificing his beloved son Isaac as a holocaust a sin offering. Abraham follows God's command even unto the death of his son. God's plan of reconciliation includes the eventual sacrifice of His own beloved Son Jesus on the Hill of Golgotha for the remission of sins. This pattern or typology is repeated throughout biblical history and demonstrates God's mercy as it is portrayed throughout the Hebrew Scriptures.

God the Father sends an angel to halt the sacrifice and bestows an extraordinary grace upon

Abraham, he promises him descendents as numerous as the sands of the seashore, or as countless as the stars in the night sky. This is literally visualized in the icon as the long elaborate hair and beard of the Patriarch. White hair illustrates the darkness of the world enlightened by the grace of God.

Isaac is usually shown seated on the lap of his father and evokes the countless descendents proceeding from the Father. This depiction recalls the funeral prayers we pray which petition God to rest the soul of the faithful departed in the bosom of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Usually depicted in scenes of the Last Judgment, the three Patriarchs are shown enthroned with their respective sons seated on their laps. The progeny are portrayed emanating from their father's loins.

Beginning in the eleventh century depictions of Abraham were used as prototypes for their portrayals of God the Father in the Paternity icons, showing God the Father as an with long white hair and beard, enthroned with the Christ Child seated on his lap. Actually, this type of depiction links the Old (Hebrew) Testament with the New (Christian) Testament by depicting both Abraham and God the Father as great Patriarchs of the Faith.

We remember that God the Father called Abraham ten generations after Noah to re evangelize the world with his loving presence and mercy. Abraham re kindled through his deep faith the relationship between God and the world. During a time period of darkness of faith it is imperative that we invoke the intercession of our father Abraham in order to allow the faith in God's mercy to shine brightly like the evening stars to enlighten this world with the presence of God.

GUEST COMMENTARY

Father Robert Slesinski, PhD



Lumen Fidei: A Tag Team Effort



In this "Year of Faith" as proclaimed by Pope-Emeritus Benedict XVI, His Holiness, Pope Francis, for his part, from his own

unique perspective, has boldly entered into the mix, as it were, issuing his first papal encyclical, *Lumen fidei* ("The Light of Faith") on the Feast of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul (June 29, 2013), acknowledging at the same time that this work was primarily the effort of his predecessor, being the completion of a papal trilogy on the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity in reverse order, the prior encyclicals being *Deus Caritas Est* ("God is Love") (2005) and *Spe Salvi* ("In hope saved") (2007). As Pope Francis writes (n. 7) "the Successor of Peter, yesterday, today and tomorrow, is always called to strengthen his brothers and sisters

in the priceless treasure of that faith which God has given as a light for humanity's path."

Unfortunately in our own time, the pontiff laments (n. 2), faith is often viewed as an "illusory light" that cannot dispel the darkness of misunderstanding, adding that "once the flame of faith dies out, all other lights begin to dim" (n. 4). Stressing the fact that faith is a response "to a 'Thou' who calls us by name" (n. 8), God's love for us becomes a primal reality as proclaimed in the teaching of the Evangelist John: "We have come to know and to believe in the love God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God

and God in him" (1 Jn 4:16). It is, indeed, the unfailing love of God for us that serves as the foundational *truth* of our faith. In this way we also grasp how faith and truth are inescapably linked together. Curiously, in this regard the pope specifically cites (n. 23) the Greek Septuagint translation of the Hebrew Bible which has the prophet Isaiah counseling King Ahaz: "Unless you believe, you will not understand" (Is 7:9), only to expand upon this point: "Faith's understanding is born when we receive the immense love of God which transforms us inwardly and enables us to see reality with new eyes" (n. 26).

"Since faith is a light," we read

SEASONAL REFLECTIONS

Msgr. John. T. Sekellick, JCL



Marian Devotions



Just about every month on our liturgical calendar there is an observance of some Feast particular to the holy Mother of God. It may be a major event in her life such as her Falling Asleep (Dormition on August 15) or a day marking a lesser observance such as the enshrining of the Mantle of our Lady at Blachernae in the 5th century (July 2). Our Church provides two Gospel readings common to Marian feasts. The Matins Gospel is taken from Luke 1:39-49, 56; the Gospel of the Divine Liturgy, from Luke 10:38-42 and 11:27-28.

The Scripture and liturgical texts that are used for Marian feasts shed

a great deal of light on and understanding about the kind of veneration our Church accords Mary. Both the Eastern and the Western Churches also have special devotions proper to Mary. We are fairly familiar with her holy rosary and the beautiful “Hail Mary” prayer which is taken from the salutation of the Archangel Gabriel as he greeted Mary with the stunning announcement that she is to become the Mother of God. Perhaps less familiar are our Office of Consolation (Paraklis) and Akafthist Services which are filled with beautiful theological expression and fervent supplication to her.

The Matins Gospel expresses our Church’s understanding regarding Mary very well and indicates why she has been set apart above all saints. Saint Luke records her words, “From henceforth all generations shall call me blessed; for He Who is mighty has done great things for me.” Then there is the greeting of Elizabeth, her cousin: “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the Fruit of your womb.” These words keep together Mother and Son; they are never separate. In our Eastern Church, hardly ever is Mary depicted without her Son in her arms.

The Gospel used for the Divine Liturgy puts into perspective Mary’s position with her divine Son – one of contemplation and of service to Jesus exemplified in Lazarus’ sister

Mary who sat at the Lord’s feet and listened to His word, in contrast to her sister, Martha, who was so busy about the details of hospitality. Jesus’ holy mother, Mary, is “blessed” not only because she bore and nourished Him, but also because she was obedient and faithful, even to standing by Him to the very sad end as Jesus died on the Cross.

This fidelity is the root or foundation of our devotion to her. One of the short verses used as we sing the Alleluia instructs us: “Listen... and see and incline your ear.” It is an instruction to take to heart the sterling example of this special, graced woman of faith who was given to us by Jesus on the Cross as He said to the holy Apostle John, “Son, behold your mother.”

The readings from Scripture and the texts of our Marian Services help us integrate Mary’s life and mission in God’s mysterious plan for our salvation and in particular into Jesus’ life and mission of the Church. Mary, Virgin ever-pure, invites us to be pure in body and soul. It is a sad commentary on our society today that the sacredness and dignity of the human body have been seemingly forgotten. The world today witnesses violation of the body, especially women’s bodies. The virtue of chastity could be called a word found only in a dictionary rather than a

lived reality.

As we observe Respect Life month now in October, the foundation of that respect is chastity in mind and body. Irresponsible and dangerously liberal attitudes toward premarital and extramarital sex sadly lead to the pain of abortion, broken relationships and disintegrated families. Mary, Mother of God, brought Jesus into the world where He became a member of the Holy Family. Every follower of Jesus is invited also to bring Him forth in his / her life situation. Mary gave birth to Jesus once in history. We can bring Him forth innumerable times daily whenever and wherever we stand for His values and are witnesses to His love and mercy.

Devotion to God’s holy Mother truly supports us in our spiritual lives. May we renew our love for her and seek her holy intercession in any and all needs exemplified with this prayer from the Office of Consolation (Paraklis): “O Most holy Lady, do not abandon me to any human help. Let the prayer of your servant rise to you. Distress is all around me. No longer can I bear the darts of Satan. I have no shelter, no place to hide. I have no consolation, except you alone. O Queen of all, you are the hope and the protection of the faithful: do not reject my prayer, but grant what I ask.”

Guest Commentary

Continued from Previous Page

(n. 36), “it draws us into itself, inviting us to explore ever more fully the horizon which it illumines, all the better to know the object of our love.” In this way faith should never be construed as being in opposition to science and rational investigation. As the pontiff also writes (n. 34), “by stimulating wonder before the profound mystery of creation, faith broadens the horizons of reason to shed greater light on the world which discloses itself to scientific investigation.”

Faith, moreover, is never something private or individualistic; it is meant to be shared. It is communal in scope and thus needs the Church for its proper expression. Citing St. Paul, “God...has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ” (2 Cor4:6), the pontiff only adds (n. 37): “The light of Christ shines, as in a mirror, upon the face of Christians; as it spreads, it comes

down to us, so that we too can share in that vision of reflect that light to others.”

In this way also, we see how “faith becomes a light capable of illumining all our relationships in society” simply because, as he adds, “as an experience of the mercy of God the Father, it sets us on the path of brotherhood” (n. 54). Faith can thus supplant the failed aspiration of modernity for universal brotherhood as “this brotherhood,” in the words of the pontiff, “lacking a reference to a common Father as its ultimate foundation, cannot endure” (*ibid.*).

Faith, however, cannot make us forget the sufferings of this world. “Faith is not a light which scatters all our darkness,” Pope Francis notes, “but a lamp which guides our steps in the night and suffices for the journey” (n. 57)—sagacious words, indeed.

HOLY DORMITION BYZANTINE FRANCISCAN FRIARY

is pleased to
participate in an
important national
climate change
education event.

In celebration of the **Feast of St. Francis** the Byzantine Franciscans will join hundreds of other Catholic parishes, schools and colleges in a program *Melting Ice, Mending Creation: A Catholic Approach to Climate Change.*

Feast of St. Francis | 2013



**MELTING ICE,
MENDING CREATION:**
a Catholic Approach
to Climate Change

Holy Dormition Byzantine Franciscan Friary will offer this program on
Sunday October 6 from 4:30 – 6:30 PM
at the Friary on Route 93 in Sybertsville PA.

It will include a facilitated discussion of the film and about steps you can take in response—ones that are based in authentic Catholic teaching.



FAITH AND COMMUNITY ISSUES

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

The Gift of Children

THEIR ROLE IN MARRIAGE

Is marriage exclusively ordered to the building up the inter-personal relations between spouses? One of the main purposes and goals of the married state is the continuation of the human race. Marriage is the way by which humanity continues onward through time into eternity, the alternative would be simply our disappearance forever. In the words of the Document on Marriage, "Marriage and married love are by nature ordered to the procreation and education of children" (the *Fruitfulness of Marriage* §50).

Although at times, it may seem paradoxical, the reality is that children are a supreme gift from the marriage bond and actually contribute positively to parental benefit. They do this "with sentiments of gratitude, affection and trust, they will repay their parents for the benefits given to them and will come to their assistance as devoted children in times of hardship and in the loneliness of old age" (*Holiness of Marriage and Family* §48).

The origin of marriage and family life goes back to the first book of Sacred Scripture, the creation story of Genesis. God's response to His own observation that man's aloneness was not a good thing, was the creation of a suitable partner to man. God's activity brought forth male and female persons through which each could complement the other. In wanting to associate these new creatures with Himself in the creative act, God blessed them with the mandate to "be fruitful and multiply." (Genesis 1:28)

So in addition to the other ends of marriage, God also ordered the procreating and rearing of children as a prime directive; as the document states, "true married love and the whole structure of family life which results from it is directed to disposing the spouses to cooperate valiantly with the love of the Creator and Savior, who through them will increase and enrich his family from day to day." (*The Fruitfulness of Marriage* §50) This understanding of marriage focuses the life of the marital couple as a mission to continue the species by the transmission of human life and to assure the continuance in ages to come by educating the issue of their union, their children.

In performing these duties the couple are working in cooperation with God's creative design again, as the document words, "(the parents) are in a certain sense, its interpreters (of God's love)." (§50) The parents fulfill this interpretive responsibility through the formation of correct judgments which reflect docility and respect for God's Will as well as timely investment in reflection and consistent application of the fruit of that reflection. All of this is performed with due regard to the good both of themselves as well as their children. This regard is balanced with judicious reading of the signs of the times relating to the material and spiritual condition of their own situations. All of this ultimately leading to an estimation of what is

The origin of marriage and family life goes back to the first book of Sacred Scripture, the creation story of Genesis.

good for the immediate family, that of the society in which the family finds itself and for the Church Universal. Such estimations will ultimately be tried and found either worthy or wanting at the last judgment where before God the Couple must render an account of their life together.

The married life excludes the possibility of fulfilling flights of fancy but the couple rather find themselves guided by the light of properly formed conscience; conforming their decisions to God's Law made plain in the teachings of the Magisterium of the Church, the certain interpreter of Divine Law. It is in the light of Divine Law that marriage and married love finds its ultimate and deepest meaning, is protected and lead toward its truest fulfillment.

In terms of human fulfillment from the marital perspective, the document asserts that couples, who fulfill their pro-creational responsibilities generously and with Christian spirit of sacrifice, trusting in the providence of God, bring Glory to God and perfection to themselves in the Image

of Christ. This rings especially true with couples who after prudent thought and deciding among themselves, choose to bring forth a large number of children. In today's economy and society, such a decision cannot be made lightly and does not constitute the norm but should be arrived at only after a thorough and profound investigation and discussion regarding resources and needs of such an undertaking is successfully completed.

The Document emphasizes the fact that procreation in itself is not the sole goal of marriage. By its nature, the married state is a covenant between two people that is dissolvable by death only. For their own sake children for their edification and education, need to experience the mutual love of the partners one to the other. That mutuality is shared with the children such that, the love so generated be allowed to grow and mature through the years. This reality persists even when child-bearing is not a possibility for the couple as the document states, "marriage still retains its character of being a whole manner and communion of life and preserves its value and indissolubility." (the *Fruitfulness of Marriage* §50) Fundamental to the development of the characters of the respective family members is a foundation in prayer. The example set by the parents forges the path upon which the children and all who live under the roof of that couple, find holiness, salvation and the development of authentic humanity.

With regard to religious education the document makes it very plain, "when they (the spouses) are given the dignity and role of fatherhood and motherhood, they will eagerly carry out their duties of education, especially religious education, which primarily devolves upon them." (*Holiness of Marriage and the Family* §48)

Concomitant with the fruitfulness of marriage is the relationship of marital love and the respect for human life in all its stages and forms. The next article of this series will briefly address these very issues emphasizing both the sanctity of and responsibility toward the gift of human life.

Columbia University Lecture on Sub-Carpathia Rus

INTERWAR SUB-CARPATHIAN RUS': NEWLY DISCOVERED VISUAL SOURCES

Tuesday, November 19, 2013 at 12 Noon

New York City



Marshall D. Shulman Seminar Room (1219 International Affairs Building, Columbia University, 420 West 118th Street, New York, NY)

Please join the Harriman Institute for a lecture by Edward Kasinec (Harriman Institute). In his presentation, Edward Kasinec, a curator, historian of Slavic and East European cultures, and son of interwar Carpatho-Rusyn immigrants, considers the legacy of the Czech official, editor, translator, and artist, Rudolf Hulka (d. 1961).

While Hulka's expansive and recently uncovered photographic legacy covers several parts of Europe and North Africa, Kasinec's heavily illustrated presentation will focus on and 'situate' those color and hand-colored photographic images that depict Sub-Carpathian Rus' in the Twenties of the last century. Hulka's images represent a marvelous visual evocation of the land and varied peoples, material and sacred culture of Sub-Carpathian Rus'.



In a previous article we saw that the Communion Hymn, called the *koinonikon* in Greek, was usually a psalm that was sung in its entirety, with the threefold “alleluia” sung as a refrain to each verse. The psalm then ended with a doxology intoned by the priest, “Blessed is our God, always, now and ever and forever,” and the people responded with the well-known hymn, “May our mouth be filled with Your praise ...” As this hymn was being sung, the priest took what remained of the Holy Gifts that had been distributed, and placed them on the table of preparation (the side altar). In the city of Constantinople, the table of preparation was in a separate building given the name “tabernacle.”

This basic structure can be seen in the Divine Liturgy to the present day, though the Communion Hymn has been reduced to only one verse, usually the first, possibly because the faithful did not frequent Communion for many centuries. The rest of the psalm has been replaced by popular hymns or prayers as Communion is being distributed, though many places have restored the singing of psalms.

One might observe, however, that this basic structure has now been interrupted. When the priest has completed giving Communion, he turns to the faithful and blesses them, saying, “Save your

people, O God, and bless Your inheritance,” which is a quotation of Psalm 26, verse 9. The people then respond with the hymn, “We have seen the true light, we have received the heavenly Spirit, we have found the true faith, and we worship the undivided Trinity, for the Trinity has saved us.” This hymn is from the stichera sung at Vespers on the Feast of Pentecost, which celebrates the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the followers of Christ in the upper room in Jerusalem on the fiftieth day after Jesus’ resurrection.

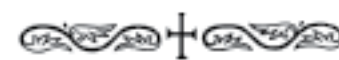
This blessing and hymn were the last element to be added to the Communion rite, perhaps in the twelfth century. Because it was the last hymn added, it is sometimes replaced by other hymns. In particular, it is not sung in the Liturgy

Though the blessing and the hymn, “We have seen the true light ...,” is an insertion into the structure of the Communion Hymn, it does have a profound theological significance. The Divine Liturgy is a commemoration of what God has done for us. It is, however, not simply a human remembering, but remembrance by God together with us. When we remember something, it remains simply a memory, but as God is eternal, what He remembers is present again. The Divine Liturgy is Christ present to us in His pure Body and precious Blood, accomplishing salvation for us today as certainly he accomplished it in the wondrous deeds He did for us.

That is why we pray in the Liturgy, “Remembering ... all that has come to pass in our behalf: the cross,

bodies have received the Body and Blood of Christ in the perceptible form of bread and wine. Christ is the incarnate Son of God, and so by our union with Him, we are united to God. As Christians, we believe in one God. That we believe in Three Persons does not compromise our faith in one God, contrary to the accusations of some. Through our union with one God, we are united in the Three Persons. “We worship the undivided Trinity.” The hymn, therefore, begins, “We have seen the true light.” The true light is Jesus, the Son and Word of God, who has revealed to us divine mysteries and who shone forth in the glory of God on Mount Tabor in the Holy Transfiguration.

Thus, Jesus was able to say, “Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.” (John 14:9) “We have seen the true light,” means that we have received the revelation of God, through the “true light, which enlightens everyone.” (John 1:9) We then sing, “we have received the heavenly Spirit,” because by receiving Christ in Communion, we have received the Holy Spirit, whom He breathed upon His disciples after the Resurrection (John 20:22) and which He has sent us as the promise from on high (Luke 24:49, fulfilled on Pentecost, Acts 2:1-12) that He would be with us always (Matthew 28:20). This, we proclaim, is the “true faith,” and it is fulfilled in the Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, “for the Trinity has saved us.” This hymn that we sing after Communion, therefore, is the summary of our whole faith and an affirmation that we live in God.



*When we remember something, it remains
simply a memory, but as God is eternal,
what He remembers is present again.*

from Pascha, the Feast of the Resurrection, until Pentecost, because it would anticipate the descent of the Spirit. For forty days, therefore, we sing the Paschal troparion, “Christ is risen from the dead ...,” and for the ten days from Ascension to Pentecost, we sing the Prokeimenon of the Feast of the Ascension, “Be exalted above the heavens, O God, and let Your glory be over all the earth.” (Psalm 56:6) The removal of the gifts remaining after Communion, since they are truly the Body and Blood of Christ, has come to symbolize the Ascension of our Lord, and the priest says this same verse when incensing the gifts before their removal.

the tomb, the resurrection on the third day, the ascension into heaven, the sitting at the right hand, and the second coming in glory.” The Body we receive in Communion is the risen Lord for everlasting life. The center of our remembrance is the fifty days from the Resurrection to the descent of the Holy Spirit, who is God with us now, as Jesus promised, “I will be with you always.” (Matthew 28:20) The chanting of this hymn proclaims that by receiving the Body of Christ, we are truly in the presence of God acting here and now in our behalf.

This hymn also teaches us about the mystery of the Holy Trinity. Physically, our human, material

LETTERS FROM THE EDITOR

Compiled by Father James Hayer, Editor

The 10 Commandments



All those ‘shall’s’ and ‘shall not’s’ in the Ten Commandments are words that folks just aren’t used to using. So, at a church in Tennessee, some thoughtful folks translated the traditional “Bible words” into something everyone can understand...

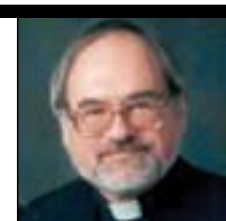
- (1) Just one God
- (2) Put nothin’ before God
- (3) Watch yer mouth
- (4) Git yourself to Sunday meetin’
- (5) Honor yer Ma & Pa
- (6) No killin’

- (7) No foolin’ around with yer buddies gal
- (8) Don’t take what ain’t yers
- (9) No tellin’ tales or gossipin’
- (10) Don’t be hankerin’ for yer buddy’s stuff

Now that’s plain an’ simple. Y’all have a nice day and bless your little heart! ☺

(Many Thanks to Sister Regina from Pennsylvania for sharing this story)

If you have an inspiring story or article you wish to share you may send it to Father James at:
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695 N. Main St., Wilkes-Barre, PA
18705. or E-Mail him at
EasternCatholicLife@verizon.net.





SEMINARIAN REFLECTIONS

Seminarian Lewis Rabayda

Answering the Call to the Christian Vocation

As I now begin my fourth and final year of seminary I feel more prepared than ever to fully enter into a life of service to God through His Church. The journey has seemed long, but it has barely begun. And my understanding of my vocation in service of the Church is no less surreal to me now than it was when I first accepted it. But what is more surreal to me is how much I've grown as a Christian. The Holy Trinity is an essential part of my day. I constantly have liturgical hymns in my head and in my heart, and I find myself more frequently conversing with Our Lord. I am also constantly aware of the level of virtue or vice that I practice while interacting with others and can then see how to align my actions with God's instructions. As I see myself living like this I wonder, how many other people live this way? How many people—especially those who have been baptized into Catholicism—have the commandments of God from Scripture on their minds as they go through their everyday lives?

True. You don't have to be Christian to be a decent human being or to act with some relative set of morals. But, we *are* Christians. So, if the reason we are acting civilly towards others is for some reason other than to glorify God, then we have missed a necessary understanding of being God's people. Scripture tells us to do all things for the glory of God. But this is the question, have we *allowed* ourselves to

be God's people? He chose us to be baptized members of His Church, but have we willingly chosen to follow Him? If this answer is an all encompassing YES that is proven by both our struggle to practice virtue and our desire to follow God's commandments, then we have accepted the vocation of Christianity.

I truly believe that God calls many of His people to religious vocations—catechists, altar servers, deacons, priests, male and female monastics—but some of us fail to understand that call or are not active in a life of prayer to respond to it. I know from my own experience, that I was consciously being called to the priestly vocation in the winter of 2003—however, it is possible that God had called me earlier as a child. But at this time in my life (I was 20) I had not accepted my Christian vocation; so accepting a vocation to a stronger commitment to the Christian life was something further from my mind. But over the next few years I began to assume the responsibility to learn more about God through reading Scripture and the writings of the Saints. I began to pray more and to apply God's commands to how I lived my daily life. But it wasn't until I had fully chosen to be an active member of the Church—5 years later—that I finally accepted this call to a much deeper commitment to God.

There is an adage about priestly vocation, which is true of all vocations: what makes a

good priest? Answer—a good man. Likewise we can say: who can accept the religious vocation with all of its challenges? Answer—one who has taken seriously their vocation to Christianity. I do not believe that God has forsaken our Byzantine Catholic Church in America by withholding religious vocations, but rather, that He is calling us again to experience a deeper relationship with Him. Our Church, with its beautiful and deeply symbolic Divine Office and Liturgy, Sacraments, customs, hymns, and spirituality, is the best place to experience the Holy Trinity. When we make a deeper commitment through our Christian vocation to become disciples of Christ, we let God know that His Church bears fruit.

In Luke's parable of the Barren Fig Tree, Jesus tells us about taking our vocation seriously: "And he said to the vinedresser, 'Behold, these three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and I find none. Cut it down; why should it use up the ground?' And he answered him, 'Let it alone, sir, this year also, till I dig about it and put on manure. And if it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not you can cut it down.'" Let us fertilize our commitment to God through accepting our Christian vocation. Let us bear good fruit, the fruit of religious vocations, by first deepening our relationship with the Holy Trinity.

Upcoming Events for October

Eparchial and Parish Events

*Glory to Jesus Christ!
Glory Forever!*

OCTOBER

1 Solemn Holy Day
Protection of the Mother of God
CHANCERY CLOSED

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- 6 Seminar at Franciscan Friary
SYBERTSVILLE, PA
- 13 125th Anniversary - Wilkes-Barre, PA
St. Mary Church
- 14 Columbus Day
CHANCERY CLOSED
- 15 PRIEST APPRECIATION DAY
Cardinal Dolan - Guest Preacher
- 17 Ineparchial Vocation Committee Meeting
PITTSBURGH, PA
- 20 50th Anniversary - Harrisburg, PA
St. Ann Parish
- 22 Annual Pilgrimage for Peace
FRANCISCAN MONASTERY, SYBERTSVILLE, PA
- 26 Eparchial WEDDING JUBILEE CELEBRATION
Annandale, VA