



EASTERN CATHOLIC LIFE

Official Publication of the Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Passaic

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DECEMBER 2013

Eparchy of Passaic Celebrates 50 Years

By Father James Badeaux

On a chilly and blustery Sunday, November 10, 2013, the clergy, religious, and faithful of the Eparchy of Passaic, together with Metropolitan William, Bishop John (Kudrick) of Parma, Bishop Gerald (Dino) of Phoenix, and Bishop-Elect Kurt (Burnette) of Passaic, gathered at Saint Michael Cathedral in Passaic to celebrate the momentous occasion and milestone of the 50th Anniversary of the founding of the Eparchy of Passaic in 1963. Also concelebrating was Bishop Mar Thomas Eusebius of the Syro-Malankara Exarchate in the United States (Eastern Catholic Church of the Syriac tradition based in India). Also present, and representing the Bishops of the Latin Church, was Archbishop-Emeritus Peter Leo Gerety of Newark, who, at age 101, is the oldest Catholic Bishop in the United States and among the oldest in the world. The Cathedral of Saint Michael the Archangel was filled to capacity with the number of faithful and clergy who came to share their faith and joy at the august celebration on that day. Clergy of other Catholic jurisdictions also joined with us to celebrate the occasion.

The beautifully-sung Hierarchical Divine Liturgy, led by Cantor Elias Zareva and other cantors and choir members from local parishes, with the robust and joyful assistance of the faithful, was celebrated by Metropolitan William, his brother bishops, Bishop-elect Kurt, and the priest-consultors of the Eparchy. In his homily, Metropolitan

William sketched an outline of the history of the Eparchy, listing the names of each of our Bishops, from the first bishop, Bishop (later Metropolitan-Archbishop) +Stephen (Kocisko), who was followed by +Bishop Michael (Dudick), +Bishop Andrew (Pataki); and himself, Bishop William (now, Metropolitan William). The Metropolitan also praised the dedication of the faithful in maintaining their belief, generosity, hard work, customs, and traditions of the Byzantine Catholic Church



Metropolitan William, together with the concelebrating hierarchs and clergy, including Bishop-elect Kurt of the Eparchy of Passaic, following the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy marking the 50th Anniversary of the Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Passaic.

in making the Eparchy of Passaic as successful as it has been. The Hierarchs themselves distributed the Body and Blood of Christ in Holy Communion to the clergy and faithful. Father Michael Mondik and Father Edward Higgins were the masters of ceremonies for the Liturgy, very capably ensuring that everything was celebrated cor-



rectly and flowed smoothly, with great attention to detail – not an easy task, but beautifully, skillfully, and seamlessly accomplished.

At the end of the Liturgy, Bishop-elect Kurt chanted the Ambon Prayer, Metropolitan William gave the dismissal and intoned “God grant you many years!” which was sung with gusto by everyone present for our Holy Father, for the Metropolitan, for the bishops present, and for all the clergy, religious, and faithful gathered on that day as well as for those who could not be present, but were spiritually present, watching it streamed-live on the internet. This was the first time that a Hierarchical Liturgy from our Cathedral had been simulcast on the internet, and thanks go to Lector Jack Figel of Epiphany of Our Lord Byzantine Catholic Church in Annandale, VA, and owner/president of *Eastern Christian Publications* for providing this much-needed update to our technological offerings as part of the New Evangelization.

Following the Divine Liturgy, everyone – the faithful, clergy, religious, and bishops – journeyed to Paterson, NJ, to the *Brownstone* catering facility to enjoy Christian fellowship with their fellow Byzantine Catholics and other honored guests at

Continued on page 8.

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



New Bishop appointed for Eparchy of Passaic

Very Reverend Kurt Richard Burnette
to become Fifth Bishop of Passaic on December 4, 2013

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FATHER KURT BURNETTE NAMED BISHOP OF PASSAIC

ORDINATION AND ENTHRONEMENT ON DECEMBER 4, 2013



of Saint Michael the Archangel on Wednesday, December 4, 2013 at 2:30 PM.

The Bishop-elect was ordained a priest at Saint Mary Cathedral in Sherman Oaks, CA, for the Eparchy of the Holy Protection of Mary in Phoenix on April 26, 1989 by the late Bishop John M. Bilock. He served as pastor in several parishes including Saint Nicholas of Myra, Fontana, CA; Saint Irene the Virgin and Great Martyr, Portland, OR; Saint Gabriel the Archangel, Las Vegas, NV; and Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Albuquerque, NM.

He also served as Chaplain for the Fontana (CA) Police Department and regularly visited jails and prisons in California, Oregon, Washington, and New Mexico. He served his eparchy as Ekonomos and Consultor from 1991 till 1994. He also served as tribunal official for his own eparchy, and also for the Archdiocese of Santa Fe, the Diocese of Phoenix, and the Diocese of Gallup. His appointment as Rector of Saints Cyril and Methodius Seminary was made in October, 2012.

Bishop-elect Kurt received a doctorate in mathematics from the University of Utah and taught mathematics, engineering, physics, and computer science from 1978 until 2004 at University of Utah, University of California at Irvine, California State University at San Bernardino, and University of Portland. He is a member of the California Bar Association and has a licentiate in Canon Law from the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome.

Born at Sculthorpe Royal Air Force Base, Norfolk, England, in 1955, Bishop-elect Kurt grew up in Corpus Christi, Texas, and Houston, Texas. He has two sisters, and a brother, and nine nephews and nieces. His father is from Los Angeles, California and his mother is from Marietta, Ohio. They reside in Corpus Christi, Texas. The Bishop-elect attended Saint Patrick School, Hamlin Junior High School, and Ray High School in Corpus Christi; and The Kinkaid School and Rice University in Houston, TX.

May God grant him many happy and blessed years! Axios!

WOODLAND PARK, NJ – On Tuesday, October 29, 2013, The Apostolic Nuncio, Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganó announced from Washington, DC that Pope Francis has appointed the Very Reverend Kurt Burnette, Rector of the Byzantine Catholic Seminary of Saints Cyril and Methodius in Pittsburgh, PA as Fifth Bishop of the Eparchy of Passaic.

The official appointment was announced from Rome at 12:00 noon on Tuesday, October 29, 2013.

Bishop-elect Kurt's ordination and enthronement will be in Passaic at the Cathedral

Christmas Message

FROM THE BISHOP-ELECT

Christ is Born!

"Coasts and islands, listen to me, pay attention, distant people. The LORD called me when I was in the womb, before my birth he had pronounced my name...He hid me in the shadow of his hand." With these words, the prophet Isaiah announced the approach of the Messiah.

For us the Philip's Fast is such a pleasant time of anticipation. We await the coming of our salvation, but without all the stormy emotions surrounding Great Lent and Holy Week. Awaiting the quiet birth of the Savior reminds us that God has not forgotten us.

In our East Coast eparchy, from Maine to Florida, God pronounces your name, and hides you in the shadow of His hand. Every joy, and every injury - new or old, in work and at play, God looks down with kindly eyes on his creation. From the mighty to the simple, God hears every prayer equally, and every prayer is important to Him.

Glorify Him!



Your birth, O Christ our God, has shed upon the world the light of knowledge; for through it, those who worshipped the stars have learned from a star to worship You, the Sun of Justice, and to know You, the Dawn from on High. Glory to You, O Lord (Troparion for the Nativity of Our Lord)

Metropolitan William Congratulates the Fifth Bishop of Passaic

Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory forever!

Welcome to the Fifth Bishop of Passaic, Father Kurt Burnette! We offer you our prayerful best wishes as you begin your new ministry as the Shepherd of the Byzantine Catholics of the East Coast of the United States. I am sure that you will find that the clergy, religious, and faithful people of the Eparchy of Passaic will support you in your ministry, just as they supported me during my time as the Bishop of Passaic.

You bring with you many talents and gifts from your years of experience and service as a pastor in Fontana, California; Portland, Oregon; and Albuquerque, New Mexico. Moreover, your years of teaching at the university and seminary level will aid you in presenting the Faith to the people you serve. Your experience as a teacher has helped, and will continue to help you reach out to the children and the young adults of the Byzantine Catholic Church.

Your work in the eparchial offices of treasurer, tribunal, and chancellery of the Eparchy of Phoenix has given you experience with church affairs, as well as the skills to lead with wisdom. Through your efforts and insights, the Eparchy of Phoenix came to rest on a solid financial foundation. We pray that you will be a wise steward of the patrimony of the Eparchy you are now called to serve.

As you visit the parishes of the Eparchy of Passaic, you will follow roads that have been traveled by the priests and reli-

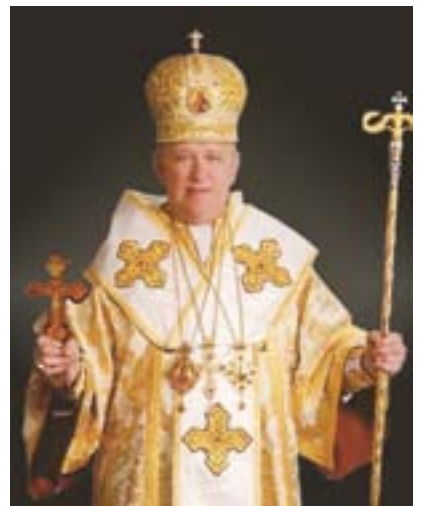
gious who first brought the Byzantine Catholic Church to the United States. You are blessed to have in your Eparchy the oldest parish of our Byzantine Catholic Church in America - Saint Mary of the Dormition Church in Freeland, Pennsylvania, founded more than 125 years ago. As you continue the work of our founding fathers, and the generations before us, know that their collective prayers are certainly with you from the heavenly realm.

Thank you for your acceptance of this important role in the life of the Byzantine Catholic Church. Please know that I look forward to working with you as a member of the Council of Hierarchs and the other committees on which you will serve. I will include you in my daily prayers, and I commend you to the clergy, religious, and faithful of the Eparchy of Passaic for a remembrance in their prayers as you begin your service to the Church for many happy and blessed years!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ William C Skurla

Most Reverend William C Skurla, DD
Metropolitan Archbishop of Pittsburgh



First Bishop

1963-1968



Bishop Stephen J. Kocisko

Second Bishop

1968-1995



Bishop Michael J. Dudick



THE BISHOPS OF THE EPARCHY OF PASSAIC

Third Bishop

1996-2007



Bishop Andrew Pataki

Fourth Bishop

2008-2012



Bishop William C. Skurla

Fifth Bishop

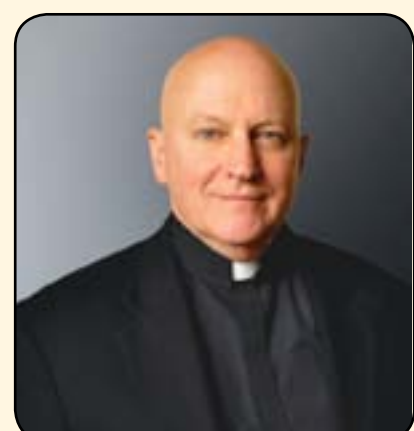
Bishop-Elect Kurt R. Burnette

Born - November 7, 1955

Ordained Priest - April 26, 1989

Appointed Bishop - October 29, 2013

Ordained Bishop - December 4, 2013



History of the Eparchy of Passaic

*In Celebration of the 50th Anniversary
of the Eparchy of Passaic - 1963 to 2013*



Part 14 and Conclusion - *A New Shepherd, A New Era*

The Appointment of Bishop William and Bishop-elect Kurt

By Father Jody J. Baran

On December 6, 2007, Pope Benedict XVI accepted the retirement of the Most Reverend Andrew Pataki as the Third Bishop of the Eparchy of Passaic and named as his successor, the Most Reverend William Charles Skurla, who at the time was the Third Bishop of the Phoenix Eparchy (and who is currently our Metropolitan Archbishop in Pittsburgh). Bishop William was appointed the Fourth Bishop of the Eparchy of Passaic on December 6, 2007 and was Enthroned on January 28, 2008.

William Charles Skurla was born in Duluth, Minnesota on June 1, 1956 to the late John and Mavis Skurla, one of five sons. His early education was in Catholic and public schools and he graduated from Chisholm High School, in Chisholm, Minnesota, in 1974. He then attended the Deerfield Academy Post-Graduate Program in 1974-1975 and then on to Columbia University in New York City from which he graduated with a Degree in Philosophy in 1981. It was at this time he received the call to the Holy Priesthood. He felt that he was being called to the Monastic life and entered the Byzantine Franciscan Community in Sybertsville, PA and became solemnly professed in 1985. During this

time he also entered Mary Immaculate Seminary in Northampton, PA, receiving a Master of Divinity Degree in 1986 and then a Master of Theology in 1987. Bishop Michael J. Dudick, our second Bishop, ordained him to the Diaconate in 1986 and then to the Holy Priesthood in 1987 at Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church in Freeland, PA – the oldest Byzantine Catholic Church in the United States.



Archbishop William Skurla
Our Current Metropolitan

In 1996, Father William received a dispensation from solemn vows as a member of the Franciscan Order and became incardinated into the Eparchy of Van Nuys (which is today the Eparchy of Phoenix) and served as Pastoral Administrator of Saint Melany's Byzantine Catholic Church

in Tucson, Arizona from 1993 until 2002.

At the time of Bishop George Kuzma's retirement in 2002 as the second Bishop of Van Nuys, the then Father William Skurla, was appointed as the third Bishop of the Van Nuys (now, Phoenix) Eparchy. He was ordained to the episcopacy and enthroned as the Third Bishop of Van Nuys on April 23, 2002 in Phoenix,



Bishop-elect Kurt Burnette
The Fifth Bishop of Passaic

Arizona. He served for five years as the Bishop of Van Nuys, helping the Eparchy to grow and thrive. In December of 2007, when Bishop Pataki retired as the Chief Shepherd of the Passaic Eparchy, Bishop William was appointed to succeed him. On January 29, 2008, Bishop William was enthroned as the Fourth Bishop of Passaic at Saint Michael the Archangel Cathedral in Passaic, NJ.

During his time here as our Shepherd, he reopened the Heritage Institute and encouraged visitations of all in our Eparchy and in the area to come and share the wonders of our heritage, our traditions, and our culture to help us better understand our roots and grow in our faith. During this time we had a wonderful exhibit on the late Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen and the tremendous ministry that he had fulfilled through his writing, radio and television programs as well as his preaching and works, especially with Catholic missions. Bishop William also traveled to the parishes of the Eparchy sharing with us his guidance and the Gospel Message.

Bishop William's time with us was short. In June of 2010, Metropolitan Archbishop Basil Schott

was called home to the Lord, and Bishop William, as senior bishop of our Metropolitan Province, traveled extensively between Passaic and Pittsburgh for over a year in his capacity as Administrator of the Metropolia. In January of 2012, Pope Benedict XVI named Bishop William as the fifth Metropolitan Archbishop of Pittsburgh. He was solemnly enthroned as Metropolitan on April 18, 2012 at the Cathedral of Saint John the Baptist in Munhall, PA by the Apostolic Nuncio, the Most Reverend Carlo Maria Vigano.

When Archbishop William began his ministry in Pittsburgh, the Very Reverend Edward Cimbala, was chosen by the Eparchial Consultors as the Administrator of the Eparchy. Father Edward served in this position faithfully for 18 months.

On October 29, 2013, His Holiness, Pope Francis, named the Very Reverend Kurt Burnette, as the Fifth Bishop of our Eparchy. Bishop-designate Kurt will be ordained to the episcopacy and enthroned on Wednesday, December 4, 2013 at our Cathedral of St. Michael in Passaic.

On Sunday, November 10th, our Eparchy celebrated fifty wonderful, golden years of Ministry and Service to God and His People with a Hierarchical Divine Liturgy celebrated by Metropolitan William, Bishop-designate Kurt and the Bishops of our Metropolitan Church as well as clergy and religious at Saint Michaels Cathedral.

We have been truly blessed by God with these fifty wonderful years and will continue for many more years to come under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and Grace of God.

A note from the Author

*I wish to thank everyone who made this journey through our history with me. I ask all of you to join me in welcoming our new Bishop and asking Almighty God to grant us many happy and blessed years.
Na Mnobaja I Blahaja L'ita.*

Father Jody John Baran

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Mrs. Diane Rabiej, *Associate Editor*

E-Mail us at: **EasternCatholicLife@verizon.net**

Eparchial Website: **www.EparchyofPassaic.com**




BYZANTINE CATHOLIC EPARCHY OF PASSAIC

STEWARDSHIP APPEAL

2013



Every donor pledging a generous gift of \$250.00 or more will receive a complimentary copy of the commemorative anniversary book:
“50 Years an Eparchy: Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Passaic 1963–2013”



BYZANTINE CATHOLIC EPARCHY OF PASSAIC

STEWARDSHIP APPEAL 2013

*In gratitude to God and to honor my commitment to the Church,
I have prayerfully considered my gift to the Eparchy of Passaic
this year and faithfully pledge:*

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Parish: _____

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50th Anniversary Celebration of the Eparchy of Passaic

Clergy Appreciation Day with Cardinal Dolan

50
YEARS AN
EPARCHY
Byzantine Catholic
Eparchy of Passaic



Clergy Appreciation Day

by Father Robert F. Slesinski, Ph.D.

Photos Credit: Father Ron Hatton

As part of the series of ongoing events celebrating the Golden Jubilee of the Foundation of the Eparchy of Passaic, a Clergy Appreciation Day in recognition of the service of eparchial priests and deacons afforded to the parishes of the Eparchy was held on Tuesday, October 15, 2013, at the Saint Michael the Archangel Cathedral Chapel Center in Woodland Park, NJ.



The esteemed guest of the Eparchy for the occasion was His Eminence, Timothy Cardinal Dolan, the Archbishop of New York and also a member of the Holy See's Congregation for Eastern Churches, who was the homilist at a Moleben to the Most Holy Theotokos celebrated by the Eparchial Administrator at the time, the Very Reverend Edward G. Cimbala, D.Min. Ever gregarious, Cardinal Dolan prefaced his more serious remarks with a quip of condolence to Father Edward, noting how the College of Cardinals managed to elect the present pontiff, Pope Francis within 48 hours,

whereas the Eparchy of Passaic was, at the time, still without a bishop after 17 months. The word of the Cardinal to the Administrator was simple and direct: "Patience!"

On a more serious note, His Eminence announced the requested theme for his sermon to the Clergy of Passaic, namely, "Joy in the Priesthood," seriously grimacing, remarking about the "apparent" incongruity of such a topic in our time. Not to be outdone by his initial grimace, the Cardinal himself became *ever-jubilant* in his bearing, boldly and unequivocally propounding his thesis: *Priests are happy servants of the Lord; priests do, indeed, exude joy in their ministry.* His words were from a welcome respondent to a skeptical public, whose *lay* perception is that priests are unhappy (*"joyless"*) in face of the onslaught against the Church and the clergy in these problematic, secular times that have been, most unfortunately, aggravated by *clerical* scandals. His Eminence dedicated the bulk of his reflections to how priests can and do *appropriate* the examples of Blessed Pope John Paul II, Pope-Emeritus Benedict XVI, and the present Holy Father, Pope Francis in their lives and ministries, underlying how the *apostolic joy* that renders them three-in-one can render priests "at-one" in their own apostolic joy.

Clearly appreciative of the hospitality shown to him and the Clergy of Passaic that was afforded to everyone by Saint Michael's pastor,

Father Marcel Szabo, along with the members of the parish's Holy Name Society and the eparchial secretarial staff, Diane Rabiej and Maureen French, His Eminence parted from the priests and deacons of the Eparchy on a note of regret. Another commitment in Manhattan precluded him from prolonging his stay with the clergy at the dinner that was to follow. Many *mnogolet'sva* ("many happy years") concluded the "solemn" celebration.



With the cardinal's departure, the "festive" part of the Clergy Appreciation Day was to begin. A truly *appreciative* luncheon/dinner, organized by Father John Cigan and Father Michael Mondik of the Eparchy, followed at *The Brownstone*



in Paterson, New Jersey. Clergy comments let it be known that this truly was the finest appreciation ever experienced by the eparchial clergy, who in turn were truly beholden to the sponsors of the dinner, as gratefully acknowledged by the Eparchial Administrator, Father Edward, namely, the Greek Catholic Union and Thomas De Vita, Esq., the Eparchial Attorney.

The Clergy Appreciation Day was only the penultimate celebration of a Jubilee Year culminating on November 10, 2013, at the Cathedral of Saint Michael the Archangel, Passaic, New Jersey. The Clergy present on a most "joyful" day were in unison in sharing their "jubilation" with the People of God of Passaic.



Eparchial 50th Anniversary Celebration

Message of Metropolitan William

*Homily at the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy
November 10, 2013 – Passaic, New Jersey*

Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory Forever!

Today we gather at Saint Michael the Archangel Cathedral to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the founding of the Eparchy of Passaic. We have gathered several times during the year to commemorate the half-century mark. It is a joy to see so many familiar faces and friends from the Cathedral of Saint Michael the Archangel and from so many other eparchial parishes, as well as the religious, cantors, deacons, and priests from across the Eparchy of Passaic.

And last, but certainly not least, we welcome for the first time your new Bishop-Elect Kurt Burnett. You will have an opportunity to meet him at the banquet today. His ordination and enthronement will be here on December 4, 2013.

Your newspaper, the *Eastern Catholic Life*, has published a series of articles reflecting upon the past fifty years from the founding of the Eparchy of Passaic in 1963. If you have not read about it, you can check your printed issues, or read them online when you return home. The public history of the past fifty years is marked by the milestones of succession of bishops: from Bishop Stephen Kocisko, Bishop Michael Dudick, Bishop Andrew Pataki, Bishop William Skurla, and now your new Bishop-Elect Kurt Burnett.

The Eparchy of Passaic and its parishes have had many challenges and many successes. It has been a time of building churches, rectories, schools, convents, as well as the retreat facility and shrine, the Carpathian Village. Various religious orders such as the Basilians, the Carmelites, the Franciscans, the Jesuits, the Sister Servants of Mary Immaculate, the Salesians, and others, have all worked to serve the people of the Eparchy through the years. The lay organizations such as the Greek Catholic Union and the Knights of Columbus have always been present when help was needed. There have been many great anniversaries marking the 100th and even 125th anniversaries of parishes. All of these public events, and the projects they celebrate, have made the Eparchy of Passaic one of the most successful eparchies of the Eastern Catholic Church in the world today.

But, on a personal level, I have always been impressed with the sincere love that people have for their parish. At this Cathedral parish, and in many other parishes I have visited, I see the dedication of the parishioners who awake early in the morning to come to the church to work, bake or make pirohi. A question always comes up as to why we work so hard to keep our churches and monasteries running. I found the answer to that question by meeting with the people, and listening to each person's faith story.

For some people, there is a single event in their life history which changes them. But, for most people, it is their relationship with a person or a church group that showed them the way to a strong belief in Jesus through the Byzantine Catholic faith.

In the personal history of most people, there is a partic-

ular person who inspired them such as their grandparents, parents, teachers, deacons, or priests. Perhaps something changed them when a teacher took interest in them and told them about the blessed martyrs from Eastern Europe and our history. Or, perhaps while traveling with them to one of the pilgrimages or eparchial programs or celebrations, the music and words of the prayers took on new meaning. Many times, the devotion of a parish member, or something special that they did for their family, changed the course of their lives.

After living and working in the Eparchy of Passaic for a third of my life, I have heard many of your stories. Many of you are here at this liturgy today. A public gathering like this is an excellent time to ask other people present why they are Byzantine Catholic. You will find that each person has a story. The events changed them into someone who is willing to sacrifice their time and their lives to pray and work to rebuild our Church.

Today's Gospel parable of the Good Samaritan is so appropriate for this celebration. When Jesus asks the man what is the greatest commandment, Jesus said to him, "What is written in the law? How do you read it?" The man said in reply, "You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your being, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself." He replied to him, "You have answered correctly; do this and you will live."

Each of us is called to use our whole body, mind, heart, and our very soul to bring the Holy Spirit to the East Coast of the United States. Sadly, a growing number to whom we reach out have not experienced Christ in their lives. Your local newspapers and television news reports are filled with negative stories of people who have lost their way. However, there is a positive side to having towns and neighborhoods surround our churches. There are new immigrants and families who have been here for generations with no church. Even if the people with no religion are the majority, it means that there are a greater number of people to invite to join our Church.

We have to remember when Cyril and Methodius traveled to the Slavic lands, there were no Christians. None of them had heard about Jesus Christ or His gospel message. It was through their teaching, and more so, through their dedicated service and love for the people that the Slavic peoples were brought to the Greek Catholic faith and the worship of God.

Each of us here today, as well as the people who are watching on the internet, are called to become the new missionaries. The first step in calling new people to the Faith is to meet them and share the story of why you love your Church. When they see that you love your Byzantine Catholic Church with your whole body, heart, and soul, then they will see that the churches and monasteries that we have built will be waiting for them as well. When we all do our part, the Byzantine Catholic Church of Passaic will be alive for the next fifty years.

Hierarchical Liturgy and Banquet Marks Eparch

THE CATHEDRAL OF SAINT MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL – PASSAIC

THE BROWNSTONE GRAND BALLROOM – PATERSON, NJ



Photo

Golden Jubilee Celebrated

Continued from page one.

a delicious banquet. More than 400 people filled the beautiful room to capacity, enjoying the beautiful ambiance and music provided by *Pajtsi* Slovak folk ensemble, who wore traditional ethnic costumes and performed popular and traditional folk songs. This musical performance helped many of those present to think of their childhood and their families and origins, especially those who were immigrants themselves or who had immigrant parents or grandparents, and to reflect on the beautiful gift of faith that the original Byzantine Catholic Carpatho-Rusyn immigrants brought with them from the "Old Country," what is now Eastern Slovakia, Southern Poland, Southwestern Ukraine, North-eastern Hungary, and Northwestern Romania. The immigrants came with hardly anything other than their beautiful Byzantine Catholic Faith, which we now gladly and openly share with everyone, regardless of their origins.

At the banquet, Bishop Gerald (Dino) of the Holy Protection of Mary Eparchy of Phoenix gave the invocation. Many will remember Bishop Gerald, when he was a priest of the Eparchy of Passaic, being pastor of several parishes during his years of ministry here, and also serving Protosyncellus of our Eparchy during the administration of Bishop Andrew (of blessed memory). During the course of the banquet, our new Bishop-Elect Kurt (Burnette) of Passaic spoke to us about the importance of the idea of "jubilee" in the Old Testament as a period not only of jubilation, but out of that jubilation the idea of forgiving grievances and canceling debts. Bishop John (Kudrick) of Parma gave the benediction.

The banquet concluded and everyone departed, returning home to their respective parishes, humbly grateful to God for his past blessings, justifiably proud of the accomplishments of our Eparchy in the last 50 years, renewed in their Byzantine Catholic Faith and confident of the intercession of the Holy Archangel Michael, our eparchial patron, for the future of our Church and beautiful Byzantine Rite.

Golden Jubilee Celebration – Sunday, November 10, 2013

50th Anniversary
Passaic, NJ



Credit: Michael Gimon and Nicholas Russo

Acknowledgements need to be made to the 50th Anniversary Committee, who planned everything, especially Father Edward Cimbala, pastor of Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church in Hillsborough, NJ, who served as chairman of the committee; Fathers John Cigan and Michael Mondik, who planned the banquet; Father Marcel Szabo, rector of the Cathedral, who hosted the Divine Liturgy; Diane Rabiej of the Eparchial Chancery, and other chancery staff; to Irene Vasyl, parishioner of the Cathedral, who planned the seating arrangements at the banquet; and other members of the committee who so skillfully and with much dedication and hard work enabled everyone present to enjoy themselves for the epochal event of our 50th anniversary as the Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Passaic.



SEASONAL REFLECTIONS

Msgr. John T. Sekellick, JCL



God is With Us! S Nami Boh!

The concluding liturgical night prayer of our Church is called Compline and is distinguished into two categories, Small and Great Compline. Small Compline is celebrated every day of the year, outside of the Great Fast. Great Compline is said during the Great Fast through the week and prior to solemn feast days. Other than in monastic communities, these Services are now seldom celebrated publicly in parishes. Most parishes, nonetheless, will publicly offer the Service of Great Compline on the eves of the feasts of the Nativity of our Lord (December 25) and His Theophany (January 6).

A notable and memorable portion of Great Compline is the solemn chanting of some eighteen verses taken from Chapters 8 and 9 of the prophecy of Isaiah with the haunting refrain of verses 9 and 10 from Chapter 8: "God is with us! Give ear, O you nations, and be humbled; for God is with us!"

Isaiah is called the greatest of the prophets. The Book of Isaiah takes up some 66 chapters and is



among the longest in the Bible. His oracles are of singular poetic beauty and power and constantly remind the wayward Chosen People of their destiny and God's unwavering fidelity to His promises, particularly a Savior: "For a Child is born to us. A Son is given to us; upon His shoulder dominion rests. They name Him Wonderful Counselor, God-Hero, Father Forever, Prince of Peace." (verse 5)

Isaiah lived at the end of the eighth and the beginning of the

seventh centuries B.C., the critical period during which the Northern Kingdom was conquered by the Assyrian empire and the Southern Kingdom survived only by paying tribute. Isaiah's prophecy is filled with the hope that the kings of the house of David would be the means through which God would bless His people with their Savior.

The basic conviction of Isaiah saw no hope for the Jewish people apart from complete reliance upon God. It would only be many centu-

ries later that God would send His Son to establish His reign of peace and justice over the entire world. In Saint Matthew's Gospel, chapter 4, verses 13-17, we hear of the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy as Jesus proclaims "... the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand" (verse 17).

As we joyously celebrate the holy birth of Jesus, the Redeemer foretold in the prophecy of Isaiah, by participating at the Office of Great Compline, our Church gives us reason for the event which changed forever our destiny: "May heaven and earth rejoice prophetically this day. May angels and people spiritually celebrate; for God appears in the flesh to those groping in the darkness and resting in a shadow. Having been born of a Virgin, a cave and a manger received Him. Shepherds relate a miracle; the Magi from the East bring gifts to Bethlehem, which we, with unworthy lips, render Him angelic praise: Glory to God in the highest and peace on earth; for the hope of nations has arrived. Having come, He has saved us from hostile bondage." *At the Litija*, Tone 1.



RESPECT LIFE FORUM

By Deirdre McQuade

Facebook & Our Intrinsic Worth



Whether or not you use Facebook, you probably know that it works on a popularity basis. The more something is "liked," the more attention it gains. This happens not only by simple word-of-mouth multiplication (she told two friends, who told two friends, and so on, and so on), but also by sophisticated formulas used to promote popular posts and let less popular ones recede from view.

When a cute picture, heart-wrenching story, or urgent cry for help gains momentum, those who pass it along to their network can feel like they are part of a mini-movement helping to make something obscure into something important. When a story spreads to a huge audience overnight, it has "gone viral" (think of an epidemic flu virus). It's almost the definition of an important story in the media these days: the more a story is followed, the more significant it is. When an important event occurs quietly and is overlooked, however, then its value can seem questionable to us as consumers of the media.

But what if that media consumer mentality spills over into how we think about the significance of human beings? Does our worth depend on outside factors like how popular we are? Is our

value really determined by our influence on others? These are things outside our control – extrinsic to who we are. As persons created in the image and likeness of God, our dignity is a gift. It is not extrinsic, but intrinsic. Nothing that others do to us can add to or subtract from our built-in value. Human persons have inherent worth and are deserving of respect from womb to tomb regardless of how we are treated by family members, friends, and strangers alike.

News of a positive pregnancy test is, sadly, not always met with joy, but this does not mean that the child growing in her mother's womb possesses less value than others *in utero* whose parents and communities welcome their conception. It is precisely because the vulnerable child has built-in, intrinsic worth that it's offensive to objectify her, label her "unwanted," and ultimately undermine her right to life. To honor the unborn child's dignity, we should walk alongside her mother with emotional and practical support as she plans for a healthy pregnancy and her child's upbringing.

We find a similar dynamic especially at the end of life. Neglect of our elders is an offense against their intrinsic dignity as persons made in God's image. Too many of those who are elder-

ly, sick, or dying may find that they are alone or abandoned in their final days. Sadly, many would treat that extrinsic circumstance as reason to think that their dignity has diminished. If one believes that lie, it becomes more tempting for the patient to give up on life, or even resort to assisted suicide. Truth is, the patient's value is, like that of the unborn child, intrinsic. His dignity is immeasurable. Attitudes that measure worth in terms of external factors (like productivity or attention from others) violate human dignity. To honor their God-given dignity, we should offer psychiatric and palliative care when needed to alleviate mental and physical pain.

Through prayer and the sacramental life, we can resist the worldly view that lets the less influential ones recede from view. Throughout the life span, let us honor the intrinsic dignity of those entrusted to us.

[Deirdre A. McQuade is Assistant Director for Policy & Communications at the Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (www.usccb.org/prolife). To follow the Secretariat on Facebook, visit www.facebook.com/peopleoflife.]

Jessup Cantor Honored for 40 Years of Service

CANTOR RICHARD COVALESKI BEGAN CHANTING AT AGE 10



Cantor Richard with his mentors and friends: (l. to r.) Msgr. John Sekellick, Pastor; Bishop Gerald (Dino), former pastor; Father Ronald Barusefski (parish vocation); Father Paul Tigyer (former pastor); and Father Ed Cimbala (Former Pastor).

JESSUP, PA – Set within the beautiful interior of the church where he has spent his entire life, Richard Covalleski's 40th Anniversary as Cantor for Holy Ghost Church in Jessup was celebrated with great joy! The day was beautiful and sunny on September 15, 2013, and the festivities began with a gathering at the Parish Rectory, hosted by Monsignor John Sekellick, Pastor. The gathering was joyous as Richard and his family were reunited with old friends including Bishop Gerald (Dino) of the Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Phoenix and a former Pastor at Holy Ghost Church; Father Paul Tigyer, the priest who mentored Richard as a fledging cantor; Father Edward Cimbala, also a former pastor of Holy Ghost Church and Eparchial Administrator at the time; Father Ronald Barusefski, a classmate of the jubilarian, as well as a parish vocation; as well as several members of Bishop Gerald's family.

The Divine Liturgy was a symphony of voices from Cantor Richard's career as the present and former pastors of Holy Ghost Church raised their voices in God's praise. The parish choir, under Cantor Richard's direction, led the responses. Members of Holy Ghost's choir include Richard's wife, Joyce, their children Riley, Alexandra, and Anya, and their God-child, Keli Pegula. Other members are Pat Morgan, Donna Tapiryk, Madelaine Pegula, Nicole Tanana, Carrie Caswell, Julie Caswell, Michael and Karen Sofko, and Nicholas Katchur. The Divine Liturgy ended with the singing of *Mnobja l'ita* by the Ekumen Chorale, Northeastern Pennsylvania's Premiere Eastern Liturgical Choir, in which Richard and his wife Joyce are members.

A parish banquet immediately

followed at Fiorelli's Catering in Peckville. Many kind tributes were made by His Grace, Bishop Gerald, as well as by the other priests who



Cantor Richard with Holy Ghost Choir: (front, l. to r.): Julie Caswell, Madeline Pegula, Anya Covalleski, Cantor Richard, and Kelli Pegula. (rear, l. to r.): Carrie Caswell, Donna Tapiryk, Joyce Covalleski, Karen Sofko, Pat Morgan, Mike Sofko, Nicole Tanana, Riley Covalleski, Nick Katchur, and Alex Covalleski.

helped Richard in his formation as Parish Cantor. Father Paul Tigyer recalled how committed Richard was to his ministry - even as a young boy, often riding his bike to church and cantor lessons with Father Paul.

Richard shared a story in which he believed that his calling to be a cantor came as early as his Baptism; he remembers his late mother and his aunts, who were also present, telling him that he cried during the entire Liturgy and Baptism, prompting the priest to ask if they were pinching the baby! Richard's love for music did not go unnoticed by the Sisters of Saint Basil the Great who taught at Holy Ghost Parochial School back in the 1970's. At that time, when Father Paul asked them for a

few students to learn how to cantor, Richard was among the ones chosen. He met with Father Paul frequently during the school week to learn the various services of the Byzantine faith, as well as learning to read Cyrillic and sing Church Slavonic. Because of his ability and dedication, Father Paul afforded Richard the opportunity to cantor the parish's 75th Anniversary Liturgy at the age of 10.

Richard was Parish Cantor for Bishop Gerald during his 17-year tenure as pastor of Holy Ghost Church. They share a birthday and Richard is as old as Bishop Gerald is a priest. They remain close, even now that His Grace, Bishop Gerald, lives in Arizona. Father Edward Cimbala was the next pastor at Holy Ghost; he was often amazed that Richard would literally arrive two minutes before Liturgy and that Richard never read a bulletin, but was always at the top of his game in terms of

his cantoring. The current pastor of Holy Ghost, Msgr. Sekellick, works closely with Richard and supported him as he trained three other cantors and formed a parish choir. Parish vocation, Father Ron Barusefski, attended Holy Ghost School and Bishop O'Hara High School with Richard and fondly remembered him as a talented, faith-filled parishioner.

Members of the Choir presented Cantor Richard with a giant jar of cough drops, as Richard always has a pocket full of cough drops to get the choir through a Liturgy, and they wanted to replenish his supply. Msgr. Sekellick presented Richard with a beautiful icon of Saint Richard, commissioned from Ray Mastroberte for the occasion, along with a beautiful vigil candle.

Having attended Catholic Schools for his entire academic career, Richard is a graduate of Holy Ghost Parochial School (today's La Salle Academy), Bishop O'Hara High School (today's Holy Cross High School), and the University of Scranton. Richard holds a Bachelor's Degree in Computer Science and works as a Senior Software Engineer for Siemens' Medical. He is happily married to Joyce Black Covalleski; they reside in Peckville with their three daughters. He is the son of the late Marion and Richard Covalleski, Sr. and is a lifelong member of Holy Ghost Church.

He is active with the Scranton Deanery Choir and participates in Eparchial events whenever asked. He is fluent in the services of the Byzantine Catholic Church, and sings in both English and Church Slavonic. He has been very blessed to serve his church for 40 years, and looks forward to the next 40 years with his wife and children singing along side of him. *Mnobja l'ita!*



Cantor Richard with Iconographer Raymond Mastroberte, Msgr. John Sekellick and the icon of Saint Richard presented to him on the occasion of his 40th Anniversary as cantor of Holy Ghost Parish.



FAITH AND COMMUNITY ISSUES

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

The Christian Family in Today's World

BLESSED JOHN PAUL II "FAMILIARIS CONSORTIO" NOVEMBER 22, 1981

What makes up a family in today's world? What place does a family have in society today? What credibility does the Christian family have in today's world? These questions barely scratch the surface of questions and issues families face daily in today's world. In the face of a society that appears to encourage individualism at the expense of familial support systems, the Christian family and its Judeo-Christian perspective offer both a credible lived experience and a challenge to the values of today's world as a livable option to secular values of today's society.

Composed in 1981, *Familiaris Consortio* contains both vision and truths that remain contemporary and timeless. It was Blessed John Paul II who authored this text and in it he reveals his profound concern for all who seek to live and understand the mystery of family life in the modern world. In the words of Blessed John Paul II:

The Church wishes to speak and offer her help to those who are already aware of the value of marriage and the family and seek to live it faithfully, to those who are uncertain and anxious and searching for the truth, and to those who are unjustly impeded from living freely their family lives. Supporting the first, illuminating the second and assisting the others, the Church offers her services to every person who wonders about the dignity of marriage and the family. (JP II Familiaris Consortio, 1981 §1)

For the Holy Father, the proclamation of the Gospel Message, acceptance of that message and putting it into practice is essential to the success of any marriage. Even in 1981, John Paul II was envisioning the destructive forces rampant in the society of that time and extant even to the present. Forces which threaten to tear asunder the unity and intimacies of family life are the reasons behind the authoring of this document.

John Paul II (1981) prefaces this document with a frank statement concerning the urgency

which he feels in directing his commentary toward married life. Because of the societal subversive forces breaking down marital unity the Church is called to reveal God's plan for the married life to ensure, in the Pontiff's own words, "ensuring their (marriage and the family) full vitality and human and Christian development, and thus contributing to the renewal of society and of the People of God.

Part I: Bright Spots and Shadows for the Family Today

The centrality of God's Plan in the daily living experience of the married couple and the family that will arise from that plan are the immediate focus of Blessed John Paul II (1981). Making the teachings relevant to today's family, His Holiness sees the need for concretization in understanding of the day-to-day situations the family meets. This understanding of daily family life is an absolute necessity in making the Gospel teaching of Christ relevant and credible today. John Paul II (1981) states: "the Church must bring the unchangeable and ever new Gospel of Jesus Christ, just as it is the families involved in the present conditions of the world that are called to accept and to live the plan of God that pertains to them" (*Familiaris Consortio* §4).

The Spirit of God with Its call to Holiness and the demand of living out the Gospel cannot be relegated to or contained in a single age or time. The reverberations of the Spirit are present in history's structure, its events, its experiences; The Spirit manifests Itself particularly and peculiarly within the living context of the people of the time. The Church, therefore needs to be open to the Spirit's guidance "to a more profound understanding of the inexhaustible mystery of marriage and the family by the circumstances, the questions and the anxieties and hopes of the young people, married couples and parents of today" (*Familiaris Consortio* §4).

There is a polemic often overt, at times subtle between moral and religious values and the values of the secular society and world in general. These secular values are fed in a constant stream through the technology of the media into the center of the lives of families ceaselessly. The result of this propaganda is subtle subversion of the fundamental values of responsible freedom and objectivity in judgment (1981, *Familiaris Consortio*). Even as far back as 1981, Issues of Freedom, responsibility, justice and morality were seen as crucial and many were motivated even then to pursue truth. John Paul II saw the intrinsic need and value of such pursuit and joined the quest, "offering her (the Church) own service to the truth, to freedom and to the dignity of every man and every woman" (*Familiaris Consortio* §4).

The vision of John Paul II in this offering is a direction for families and their membership to follow so that the dignity and integrity of Marriage and the family life it embraces is protected, kept whole and internalized. The development of this vision is rooted in a Charism of the Holy Spirit poured out generously upon the faithful, the *sensus fidelium*, and the Faithful's sense of the truth, what is right and wrong.

The work of this charism in the Church is to find a deeper understanding and concrete living out of the Gospel Word. John Paul II makes it clear this discernment is not accomplished solely through "The Pastors, who teach in the name and with the power of Christ, but also through the laity: Christ made them His witnesses and gave them understanding of the faith and the grace of speech (cf. Acts 2:17; Rev 19:10), so that the power of the Gospel might shine forth in their daily social and family life" (*Familiaris Consortio* §5). How this witness is manifested within the context of family life will be the subject of our next segment.



PREPARE FOR CHRISTMAS WITH PRAYER AND MUSIC!



*Emmanuel Moleben and Concert – 3:00 PM
Sunday, December 15, 2013
Franciscan Friary, Sybertsville, PA*

This prayer service with Scripture readings and hymns helps us to reflect on the meaning of Christmas as we prepare for this Great Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord. Join the Byzantine Franciscans as we welcome the Cantors of Northeast Pennsylvania, under the direction of Cantor Andrew Drozdik, for a concert following the prayer service at Holy Dormition Chapel, State Rt 93 at Main St., Sybertsville, PA. Reception following. For information or to help with refreshments: holydormition@gmail.com or 570-788-1212 ext 400.



UNDERSTANDING ICONS

Father Joseph Bertha, Ph.D.

The Prophet Daniel

Feast Day December 17th

The Holy Prophet Daniel, one of the Old Testament Prophets, is commemorated on December 17th, exactly one week before the birth of Our Savior Jesus Christ.

In icons, his portrait icon is usually found in the prophet range of the multi tiered iconostasis. The Prophet Daniel is depicted as a young man with a scroll (his prophecy) in his hands. He is shown as a young beardless youth, sometimes he holds the immovable mountain from which a stone is removed without human agency (an allegorical reference to the Virgin Birth of the Theotokos).

He wears the *teffilin* (phylacteries), the red box depicted on the crown of his head. This is a leather box, held in place by a white prayer cloth, resembling a tallit, the precursor of the yarmulke, which contains fragments of phrases of sacred scripture which acclaim that God is one, typically worn during prayers.

Like other prophets, Daniel was renown as a man of prayer, someone who intercedes both night and day for the recognition and reconciliation of all with God. The position of this distinctive Jewish article of headgear indicates his absolute conviction and focus of mind and soul to the Lord while being held captive in Babylon. His attire reiterates the first two commandments, "I am the Lord your God, you shall not have any false gods or idols."

In the Byzantine Liturgical cycle, two odes of Matins are taken directly from the book of Daniel. Ode 7 is the prayer of the three youths in the fiery furnace: Daniel: 26-56, the verses proclaim the glory of the God of our fathers. Ode 8 is a continuation of the praise of the works of God



found in Daniel 3:57-88, which dramatically is proclaimed at Holy Saturday vespers in anticipation of Our Lord's Resurrection.

There are several significant events recorded in the 14 chapters of the Prophecy of Daniel which are utilized in the Liturgical Year.

- Daniel and the youths fast from meat and eat vegetables and reflect the countenance of God to the Babylonians
- Daniel is thrown in the fiery furnace with his three companions and they survive as though walking in a dew filled meadow. This is an allegory of the Incarnation of Christ in the womb of the Virgin mother, who receives the Son of God in her womb and yet is not consumed by the fire - of his divinity.
- Daniel is thrown into a lions den and survives the night, and is fed bread (a Eu-

charistic reference) by Prophet Habacuc to sustain him.

- Daniel has a vivid vision of the Ancient of Days, understood to be God the Father.
- Daniel has a vision of a mountain with a stone removed untouched by human hands which prefigures the Virgin giving birth to the Messiah without human agency.

It is quite remarkable to us as Byzantines to commemorate on our liturgical calendar a model of persistence and forbearance in this figure of a Hebrew prophet. This is the reason why our Church Fathers have placed this great model before us on the icon screen, as a model of living in this world of shadows. Daniel and his companions thrive while fasting, while the Babylonians continue in their idol worship. Even when Daniel is thrown into the lions den, his belief in Almighty God sustains him, and he even receives (Eucharistic) bread as nourishment while the ravenous animals refrain from eating him alive.

What an appropriate prophet to commemorate during the week preceding the birth of the long-awaited Messiah, Jesus Christ, the stone hewn without human agency from the mountain which covers the earth. I wonder if the youngest of the Magi from Persia shown in the Nativity icon is modeled on Prophet Daniel, for he is portrayed in a very similar manner. This is the reason why the Nativity of Our Lord takes place in a mountain, He is the incarnation of this Daniel prophecy born in the flesh. Let us worship and glorify the Lord always!



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.

Graduates Hold Reunion

Mount Saint Macrina Academy



Trinity Center group: *Front Row: R. Sefcheck, K Sefcheck, J. Lazarz Todaro, K. Pechunka Rohall, M. Lazarz Martoncik, R. Magazine Golembiewski, Sr. M. A. Andrako, P. Zavislan Anthony, M. Franks Kletcho. Back Row: J. Krzton Baron, M. Furman Bradley, L. Franczyk Cole, A. Klepec Bell, J. Ferens Cuneo, B. Blair Bowman, V. Macosko McCarthy, and M. K. Marsinek Stiver.*



Jersey City Choir Offers Holiday CD's and Cassettes

Saint Mary Choir announces the sale of their four Compact Disc (CD) recordings and their four stereo cassette recordings. Compact Discs are \$12.00 each, or any four for \$43.95. Stereo cassette recordings are \$7.95 each or any four for \$29.95. All order are postage and handling free.

Select from: Great Fast and Resurrection; Divine Liturgy in Old Slavonic; Divine Liturgy in English; or Christmas caroling.

To order, contact: Saint Mary Choir, 231 Pacific Ave., Jersey City, NJ 07304

Cary, NC Parish Hosts 6th Annual Saint Nicholas Christmas Market

Saturday, December 7, 10 am - 3 pm

New, vintage, and hand-crafted gifts and treasures from Poland, Germany, Ukraine, Slovakia, Scandinavia, Italy, Ireland, and Mexico including Polish pottery and Russian nesting dolls

Hot Slavic or German lunch and European desserts, Piroghi and Kielbasa, kolach rolls, Christmas breads and cookies

Exhibit on the life of the real St. Nicholas and tours of our parish icon art

Music by the Little German Band

<http://www.saintnicholasmarket.com/>

A European Christmas Market right in the heart of Cary!

**Saints Cyril and Methodius
Byzantine Catholic Church
2510 Piney Plains Rd. Cary, NC**



UNIONTOWN, PA – Sister Carol Petrasovich, OSBM, Director of Mount Saint Macrina House of Prayer and a graduate of the Academy, hosted the bi-annual reunion that took place in Uniontown, PA. Approximately fifty-seven alumni were in attendance. Participants traveled from the Midwest and the East Coast for the October 11-13 event.

The former “day hops” and “boarders” shared many hours of fond memories about their high school days at the Mount – information about their advanced schooling, professional careers, marriages, children and grandchildren. It was a time of rekindling the friendships started years ago.

The alumnae held a planning meeting in the former Academy building and had the opportunity to visit with some of the sisters who were their teachers. They participated in singing the Divine Liturgy for the intentions of the living and deceased students of the Academy.

Another highlight of the weekend was sitting around a glowing bonfire at the racetrack Saturday evening. Everyone really enjoyed singing favorite songs of the past.

The weekend closed with the singing of the beautiful alma mater song and joyous mutual commitments to attend the next reunion in 2015.



House of Prayer group: *Front Row: B. Patchan, N. Jubera Ellis, B. Bobak, M. Hudock Maresco, B. Jubera Moricz, E. Lucas Skala, B. Harry Bergstrom, T. Magazine Booksbar, V. Machesky Borytsky, B. Baker Thomas. Second Row: C. Painley Sages, Sr. J. Kriss, A. Loncaric Esquela, Sr. M. Kapusnak, D. Seyko Jackson, M. Utlak Joswick, R. Toth Lewis, B. Smolak Takacs. Third Row: M. C. Timo Silvestri, B. Chemsak Kolodziej, Rose Sulich Scofield, D. Laughery Dominick, B. Blair Bowman, S. Valentine Mangello, A. Dvorchak Thurman, H. M. Dzuryachko Keiser, A. J. Loya Petty. Top Row: M.A. Thomas Skowron; G. Pozonsky Rhoads, B. Loya Karoffa, M. Kisha Pendzick, E. Hovanec, Sr. C. Petrasovich, and M. Dvorchak Lipnicky.*

Carpathian Cookery Cookbook for the Holidays

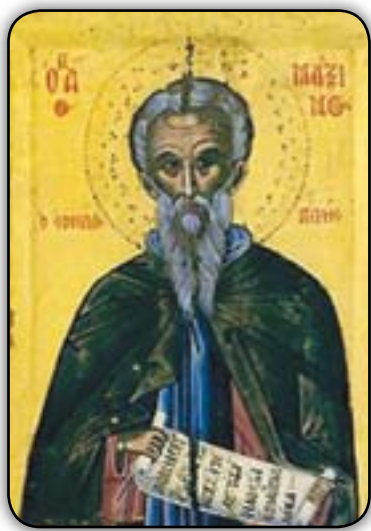
Now in its 15th printing, having sold over 15,000 copies, the Carpathian Cookery we requested by the LIBRARY OF CONGRESS to be in their ethnic cooking collection.

Tried and true traditional Rusyn and Slavic recipes for the Pre-Christmas Fast, the Lenten Fast and much more!

The 330-page cookbook is \$14.00 plus \$4.00 postage and handling (\$17.00).

If ordering from Canada, please send a \$25.00 US postal money order.

To order, send check or money order to “Ethnic Craft Club” – Saint John Byzantine Catholic Church, 201 E. Main St., Uniontown, PA 15401 or call 724-438-6027. You may also contact carpathiancookery@gmail.com.



Saint Maximus the Confessor calls Communion, “the climax of everything ... which transforms into itself and renders similar to the causal good by grace and participation those who worthily share in it.” (*The Church’s Mystagogy* 21) By this he means that Holy Communion is truly the goal and fulfillment of the Divine Liturgy. When we receive it, we are deified, we are transformed, we become more like God, whom Maximus calls here the “causal good,” that is, the good God who has created all that is. Despite this, for centuries Holy Communion has become a neglected part of the Liturgy. Until recently, people received very infrequently, though the priest was obliged to receive always so that the sacrifice could be completed. Why did people refrain from Communion? The Church teachers put the accent on the awesomeness of the mystery, and our unworthiness of God, who is all-good. Because of this, the presence of Christ’s Body and Blood became the most important aspect of the mystery, and the climax of the Liturgy was the consecration of the gifts making Christ present. In the East, the Eucharist became a presence hidden in the Holy of Holies, inaccessible to all but a few. In the West, the Host became an object worshipped from afar, seen but not tasted.

Saint Maximus wrote that Communion transformed those who worthily share in it. Who, indeed, is

worthy? The priest prays before the Great Entrance, “No one who is bound by carnal desires and pleasures is worthy to come to You, to approach You, or to minister to You, the King of Glory.” The fact is that we, as limited and mortal beings, imperfect in so many ways, cannot be worthy of the infinite, immortal, all-good Creator of all. Despite this, the priest receives Communion at every Liturgy. Likewise, the Church teaches the importance of frequent Communion. To attend the Liturgy and not to receive the gift of the Body and Blood of our Lord is like attending a banquet and not partaking of the food. We are unworthy and cannot make ourselves worthy, but we

Until recently, people received (Communion) very infrequently, Why did people refrain from Communion?

partake by grace, as Saint Maximus pointed out. The reality is that we are made worthy by the action of God, as the deacon proclaims, “It is time for the Lord to act.” When we have received, then, we pray, “We thank You, O Master, Benefactor of our souls, Who love us all, that this day You have made us worthy of Your heavenly and awesome mysteries.” (Prayer of Thanksgiving, Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom) We do not make ourselves worthy, but we are made worthy by God.

I have written many articles now on the importance of Holy Communion. The Second Vatican Council instructed all Eastern Christians to restore their own traditions. Much has been accomplished in the fifty years since, and there has been a continual restoration and renewal of the Liturgy, which is at the heart of

the Eastern Church. Much more remains to be done, and I feel that the most important area for renewal still to be accomplished is Holy Communion. Two practices have been largely restored. First, the faithful have heard the invitation of the Lord, “Take, eat; this is My body ... Drink of this, all of you; this is My blood of the new covenant,” which is given through the words of the Liturgy and the teaching of the Church. Yet there are still some who hold back because of qualms about our unworthiness. Second, Communion has been restored to all the baptized, even to small children and infants. In both cases, the true and genuine meaning of Communion is proclaimed

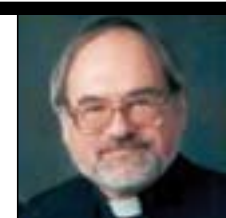
- it is God who takes the initiative and gives himself to us. He seizes us and transforms us because he loves us, and the only real unworthiness is to refuse his invitation. Communion does not depend on our powers of understanding, but all who are baptized are filled with God according to their potential.

There is still much work to be done toward an understanding of Holy Communion. The great liturgical theologian of the thirteenth century, Nicholas Cabasilas, constantly underlined the reality of the Eucharist as the Body and Blood of Christ. If it is not so, then it would only be a symbol without the ability to transform us. Instead, Nicholas writes, “... but when He has led the initiate to the table and has given them His body to eat, He entirely changes them and transforms them

into His own state.” (*Life in Christ* 4,1) Most of the faithful do appreciate the awesomeness of the mystery that they are to receive. However, living in a materialistic culture, where “what you see is what you get,” it is always tempting to see a little square of bread dipped in wine as a token prize merited by our participation in the holy liturgy. It is to be received as the most important act of faith that we make.

Saint Paul does warn us, “Whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily will have to answer for the body and blood of the Lord For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body, eats and drinks judgment on himself.” (1 Corinthians 11:27.29) When he speaks here of “discernment,” he is not talking about intellectual knowledge, but of introducing divisions between the members of Christ’s Body, which is the Church. When we receive Holy Communion, we are united not only with God as isolated individuals, but with all his people, who are becoming one in Christ. We may not all be the same, nor agree in all matters, but we must be joined in Christian love, wishing only the best for each other, for “God is love.” (1 John 4:8) Hatred of others destroys the grace of Communion. We can sing, “Taste and see how good the Lord is,” because He brings peace and good will among all His people. This is the condition for any faith in Holy Communion. If we feel that we cannot meet this condition, the solution is not to refrain from Communion, but to set aside our hatred, and “love one another,” as the deacon commands at the time of the Creed.

(To be continued)



THE BYZANTINE LITURGY

By Archpriest David Petras, SEOD

The Meaning of Communion



LETTERS FROM THE EDITOR

Compiled by Father James Hayer, Editor

Grandma’s Glasses



A little girl had just had her eyes checked and found that she would have to wear glasses all the time. While lamenting about her problem to her little friend, she asked her: “Would you like to wear glasses all the time?” “Yes,” was her friend’s reply. “I have always wanted to wear glasses.”

The other child was surprised at her friend’s answer and wondered why she would like to wear glasses. She received this reply: “My grandma wears glasses, and she can always see when I’m tired, when I’m sad, or when I need help with something. Because she can see what I need, she can always fix me up.”

The child went on to explain, “One day, I asked my Grandma how she could always see those things that bothers, and she said that it was *the way she looked at me* - I guess she meant that it must be her glasses.” ☺

When we look at one another, may we look through the eyes of Faith and see the image of Christ within. That image, in turn, will inspire us to acts of kindness done in the name of the Lord!

“Whoever pursues justice and kindness, will find life and honor.” (Proverbs 21: 21)

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



Joy, Praise, and Thanksgiving

Indeed, most people’s favorite holiday is Christmas. Christmas brings the most joy to the most people for the longest period of time; more so than any other secular or religious holiday of the year. This emotional phenomenon has great merit. Since we are believers in the Holy Spirit, we believe that the Holy Spirit is working through all of humanity during this time to bring a feeling of rest, peace, and comfort – even if it seems for just a little while. People get happy at knowing they will have a few days off of work and that they can spend some quality time with their closest family and friends.

This happiness and excitement of getting ready for the holiday is contagious and spreads easily from person to person. There is good food to make, good cookies to bake, and decorations that set this time apart from the rest of the calendar year. There are also many gifts to buy for those we love. “It is better to give than to receive”—this saying exposes a deep-seated human experience. The notion of giving gifts brings us great joy because we want to see those we care about be happy, we want them to know that we love them by taking the time to make or pick-out something for them we think they will enjoy. And who gave more than anyone else throughout all of history? Jesus.

Jesus, as part of the Holy Trinity was the Word of God that spoke the universe into being from nothingness. He is the creator, He is above all, and an overseer of all things. And at the coming Solemn and Holy Day of the Nativity of Our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ, we will celebrate God’s condescension. Why such a negative word? Wasn’t it great for God to become a man? Yes, but for God, He



willfully accepted to become one of His creations, to become less than what He truly is. For those parents out there, a good analogy would be this: You love your children so much, but you see them living their life in ways different from your own. You see them making decisions that cause them pain and that pull them away from you. You’ve told them time and again the way they should live but they just haven’t listened. So – if of course you had this power – you decide to be born of yourself with the full knowledge and wisdom you have as an adult and you become your children’s sibling so that you can show them first-hand, as a peer, the best way they should live. You, the creator, the parent, become the creation.

This is the joy we are experiencing. This is the joy of Christmas. We are so happy that God loves us so much, that He wanted to become one of us to show us that holiness is possible, that we can live according to God’s commandments, and that we too can love each other with the same unconditional love that God has for us. To continue the above analogy; you as your own creation have then shown your children how to stand up to enemies. You have shown them how to be actively non-violent towards those who would harm them by allowing yourself to be falsely accused and executed. But, this was not for a simple example or illustration based on principle, this act was for their redemption, for their salvation. This act opened-up the gates of heaven and allowed all to enter into the kingdom of heaven. This act would make every evil action past, present, and future, to be nullified if everyone accepts Jesus and chooses to follow Him.

As we gather with our family and friends, let us not only relish and experience this joy of humanity, but let us also gather together to give praise to God for this wonderful gift of life and salvation. Let us experience this joy in community and in prayer. Also, let us give thanks to God for this great gift of Christ’s mentorship that we read about in Scripture, and his sacrifice on the cross for our salvation. As the Psalm says, “Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; for his love endures forever.” Indeed, we shall celebrate this mystery of God’s compassion and condescension with sharing joy, giving praise to God, and thanking God for all of His good gifts. May the peace of Christ be with all of you during this holy and joyful season!

Upcoming Events for December

Eparchial and Parish Events

Christ is Born!
Glorify Him!

DECEMBER

4 Episcopal Ordination and Enthronement
BISHOP-ELECT KURT BURNETTE - PASSAIC, NJ

Eastern Catholic Life

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- 6 Solemn Holy Day
St. Nicholas of Myra
CHANCERY CLOSED
- 8 Solemn Holy Day
Maternity of St. Anna
- 15 Sunday of the Forefathers
- 22 Sunday of the Ancestors
- 24 Vigil of Christmas
- 25 Nativity of Our Lord
CHANCERY CLOSED
- 26 Solemn Holy Day
Synaxis of the Theotokos
CHANCERY CLOSED
- 27 Simple Holy Day
Saint Stephen the Protomartyr