



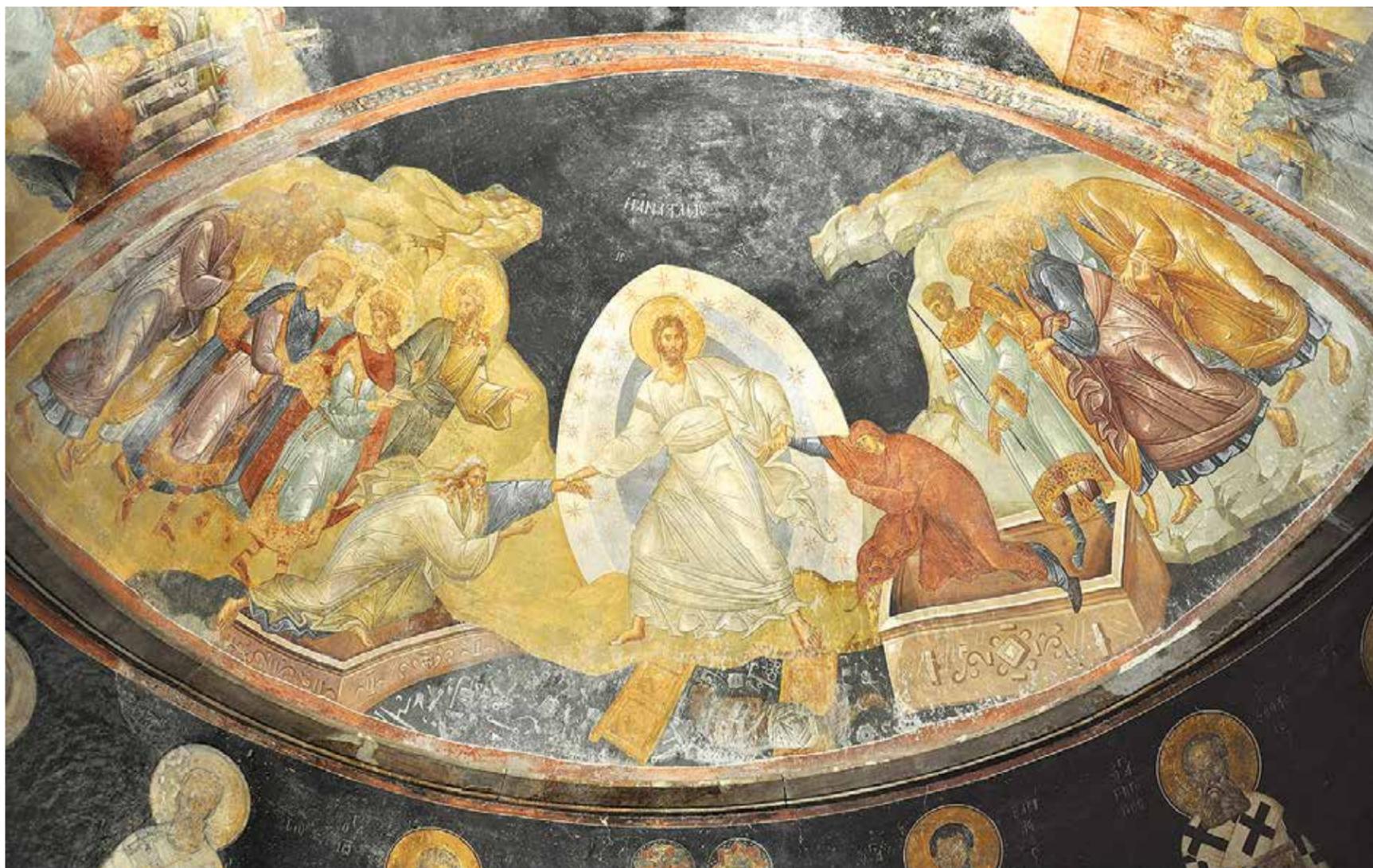
EASTERN CATHOLIC LIFE

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APRIL 2017

CHRIST IS RISEN! INDEED HE IS RISEN!



Icon of the Descent Into Hades from the interior of the Church of Chora, Istanbul, Turkey. Photo by Father Lewis Rabayda

THE PASCHAL SERMON OF SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

Circa 400AD

If any man be devout and love God, let him enjoy this fair and radiant triumphal feast. If any man be a wise servant, let him rejoicing enter into the joy of his Lord. If any have labored long in fasting, let him now receive his recompense. If any have wrought from the first hour, let him today receive his just reward. If any have come at the third hour, let him with thankfulness keep the feast. If any have arrived at the sixth hour, let him have no misgivings; because he shall in nowise be deprived thereof. If any have delayed until the ninth hour, let him draw near, fearing nothing. If any have tarried even until the eleventh hour, let him, also, be not alarmed at his tardiness; for the Lord, who is jealous of his honor, will ac-

cept the last even as the first; he gives rest unto him who comes at the eleventh hour, even as unto him who has wrought from the first hour.

And he shows mercy upon the last, and cares for the first; and to the one he gives, and upon the other he bestows gifts. And he both accepts the deeds, and welcomes the intention, and honors the acts and praises the offering. Wherefore, enter you all into the joy of your Lord; and receive your reward, both the first, and likewise the second. You rich and poor together, hold high festival. You sober and you heedless, honor the day. Rejoice today, both you who have fasted and you who have disregarded the fast. The table is full-laden; feast ye all

sumptuously. The calf is fatted; let no one go hungry away.

Enjoy ye all the feast of faith: Receive ye all the riches of loving-kindness. Let no one bewail his poverty, for the universal kingdom has been revealed. Let no one weep for his iniquities, for pardon has shown forth from the grave. Let no one fear death, for the Savior's death has set us free. He that was held prisoner of it has annihilated it. By descending into Hell, He made Hell captive. He embittered it when it tasted of His flesh. And Isaiah, foretelling this, did cry: Hell, said he, was embittered, when it encountered Thee in the lower regions. It was embittered, for it was abolished. It was embittered, for it was mocked. It

was embittered, for it was slain. It was embittered, for it was overthrown. It was embittered, for it was fettered in chains. It took a body, and met God face to face. It took earth, and encountered Heaven. It took that which was seen, and fell upon the unseen.

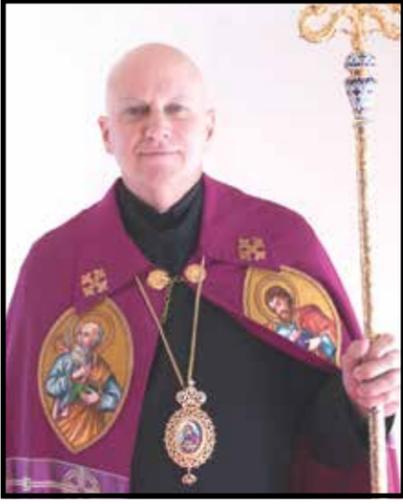
O Death, where is your sting? O Hell, where is your victory? Christ is risen, and you are overthrown. Christ is risen, and the demons are fallen. Christ is risen, and the angels rejoice. Christ is risen, and life reigns. Christ is risen, and not one dead remains in the grave. For Christ, being risen from the dead, is become the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. To Him be glory and dominion unto ages of ages. Amen.

Great and Holy Week
Schedule at Saint Michael
Cathedral, Passaic—p3

Eparchial priest returns to
ministry after serious
accident—p4

Photos of March "big snow"
event in Northeast PA —p5

A Journey from Holy Week
to the Resurrection—p8-9



CALLOUSNESS— THE LOSS OF THE FEAR OF GOD



When I lived in Italy for four years, I watched television over there to learn Italian. Mostly I watched cooking shows and quiz shows. The quiz shows were especially helpful because they would display the possible answers on the screen. When I returned to the United States, I tried to return to watching a little popular television here, but I found it very painful. In the four years that I was gone, the entertainment industry in the United States had become openly blasphemous. I don't remember the popular shows being so openly contemptuous of faith, and so viciously insulting to God and to Jesus Christ. I don't think our country changed that much, but the entertainment industry certainly had stopped hiding its intense hatred for Christianity. Over a period of many years, the culture slid into irreverence, and the population was so desensitized to blasphemy that the top-rated shows in the United States could insult Jesus Christ with no fear of a backlash. The prophetic words of King David were fulfilled again, "Why do the nations rage and peoples plot vain things? The kings of the earth and the rulers conspire against the Lord and against his anointed One." Why indeed? With so many difficulties, why would cultural leaders mock the Prince of Peace and his sacred death on the cross?

Well, we certainly can't fix other people, but during Lent we do pray, "Lord assist me to know my own faults, and not to judge my brother or sister." If we look at our own sins, the deep sin that is discovered here is what Saint John Climacus or Saint John of the Divine Ascent calls "callousness" or "insensitivity". According to Saint John, the sin of callousness manifests itself when we laugh at the terrible, and feel nothing for the sublime.

Many years ago, I took a walk in a university building and, unprepared, I happened to walk by a room in which a student was working on a corpse; I suppose it was a medical student. I must have turned pretty white, because when I passed by again, the door was closed. Indeed, the experience of seeing someone being dissected for an anatomy lesson, someone like me who lived, breathed, enjoyed life and suffered pain, who was now refrigerated like

lunch meat, that sight was one of deep horror. If a cadaver must be dissected, quite properly it should take place behind closed doors.

In the East, we have a strong sense that the sacred should be hidden from view so that we do not become insensitive to it or callous. That is why we cover the bread and wine as we carry them through the church even when they are yet unconsecrated. That is why we have an icon screen to separate us from the holy mysteries. There is a passage in the Holy Apostle Paul, one which I have never heard preached, in which he says that the most sacred parts of the body are the ones that we cover up. They are treated with more honor because they are more sacred. It is a beautiful passage—we don't cover up those parts of our body because they are ugly or because we are ashamed of them; we cover them up because they are too sacred to be looked upon. Indeed, the callousness of our culture, and the destruction of faith has been accomplished as everything that is holy, whether it is the sacred mysteries of the faith or the sacred flesh of the human body, is exposed to view.

Our guide through this distressing landscape is Saint John of the Divine Ascent. According to him, the first effect of callousness is "benumbed thought", that is, thought that cannot reach right conclusions because the feelings have been cut off from reason or numbed. This phenomenon is what C. S. Lewis called "men without chests" seventy-four years ago in his critique of English education, *The Abolition of Man*. By "men without chests" he meant that the head was not connected to the gut. Sometimes we know that something is right or wrong in our gut, no matter what the head thinks. C. S. Lewis says that when the educational system produces "men without chests", we "laugh at honor and find traitors in our midst".

Saint John says that the next effect of callousness is "the birth of presumption". Presumption is the sin of believing that we will be saved, no matter how we act, no matter what we believe, and whether or not we beg for mercy from the Righteous Judge. In the Western tradition, presumption is considered one of the sins against the Holy Spirit. Presumption was the deadly sin of the Pharisee in the Parable of the Publican and the Pharisee. He cut himself off from God's mercy, not by doing the good works of phariseism, but by refusing to ask for God's help.

After presumption, callousness is "a snare for zeal". Zeal refers to enthusiasm for good things and good works, even joy. It's easy to

see why presumption is a snare for zeal. If we are saved no matter what, then why bother, why go to all that trouble? Good works are begun, but as soon as we hit a rough spot, there is no urgency to continue, and they fall by the wayside.

The next step down, according to our guide, is "the noose of courage". He doesn't mean that courage is a noose, rather Saint John means that callousness kills courage as an executioner hangs a criminal. Imagine soldiers about to rush into combat; it is the warriors with passion who rush in first, while the one who is callous or cynical holds back and allows the others to risk their lives. Much like zeal, courage is what gets us past the rough spots. It takes no courage to start an honorable action, but it takes courage to go past the opposition of critics or the humiliation or ridicule of the weak or scornful. How prophetic when C. S. Lewis said, "We make men without chests and expect of them virtue and enterprise. We laugh at honor and are shocked to find traitors in our midst. We castrate and bid the geldings be fruitful."

This descending staircase of insensitivity now leads to "ignorance of compunction". Compunction is sorrow for sin. Saint John warns us that now we are worse off than simply lacking in compunction, we are even ignorant of it. How many are unable to be sorry for their sins, not because of an act of the will, but because they see no point in it? They are truly ignorant of the medicine that will heal their calloused hearts. Each step down is more frightening than the last, and indeed the next is "the door of despair". Evil always contains a self-contradiction, and how astonishing it is that at one stage we are presumptuous, and then soon at the threshold of despair.

Second to the last, callousness is the "mother of forgetfulness". Having passed through all the stages of spiritual death, the mother of forgetfulness encourages us to abandon all of our spiritual practice. We forget to attend liturgy, forget to support the church, forget to control our tongues, forget to study our faith, forget to fast, forget to avoid temptation, forget there is a difference between good and evil, and finally forget to talk to God at all, that is, to pray.

Having reached the basement, or if you prefer, the dungeon, Saint John says that lastly callousness gives birth to a loss of the fear of God. After we have forgotten our gut feelings, and forgotten heaven and hell, and forgotten the last judgment, what is there to fear? Inter-

estingly enough, all of the Abrahamic religions teach that we will all be judged at the end of time. The Jewish scriptures say (among other things) that all nations will be gathered in the Valley of Jehoshaphat for judgment. Likewise, the Moslems teach that all will be judged after the resurrection of the dead. We Christians read about the Last Judgment in the twenty fifth chapter of the Saint Matthew (and other places). Even pagan religions teach about hell. But in popular culture, there is nothing more offensive to people than any mention of judgment, hell, or especially fear of God.

Saint John warns us that this spiral staircase into spiritual darkness doesn't have a bottom, but as he puts it poetically, finally callousness becomes the daughter of her own daughter, that is, the loss of the fear of God gives birth to further insensitivity or callousness. To lighten the mood with a little humor, he says that he who has lost sensibility is "a brainless philosopher, a self-condemned commentator, a self-contradictory windbag, a blind man who teaches others to see". (I have noticed that even in the most sobering passages, Saint John always takes time to help us laugh at ourselves.)

As he often does, Saint John orders the evil vice to speak in its own voice, and these are its chilling words, "My subjects laugh when they see a corpse, but feel nothing when they see the holy altar, and when they partake of the Gifts, it is as if they eat ordinary bread. They mock the sorrowful sinner. From my father, I learned to kill all good things that are born of courage and love. When exposed, I do not grieve. I walk hand in hand with fake piety."

Is there no cure for this deadly affliction? Saint John gives us hope, but warns that callousness is not easy to overcome. The first step is to find the source, and our divine guide says that the parent is usually a habitual sin. One of my friends used to say, "Whenever someone has a theological problem, there is almost always a moral problem behind it." In other words, bad theology is usually invented to justify sin. Saint John says that if a sinful habit is the cause of callousness, then the only way to cure the callousness and its pervasive syndrome of spiritual putrefaction is to attack the sinful habit. What if I can't get rid of a sinful habit? At least call it for what it is! Call it sin. Call it an offense to God. Apologize to God for it. Confess it regularly. Trust a spiritual director. But for the love of God, don't deny it.

+Kurt Bunette

CATHEDRAL OF SAINT MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL, PASSAIC

Schedule of Divine Services For Great Week and Pascha

FLOWERY SUNDAY

5:00 PM (Chapel) Saturday Vigil Divine Liturgy
 9:00 AM (Cathedral) Divine Liturgy
 11:00 AM (Chapel) Divine Liturgy

GREAT AND HOLY MONDAY

9:00 AM (Cathedral) Bridegroom Matins

GREAT AND HOLY TUESDAY

9:00 AM (Cathedral) Bridegroom Matins

GREAT AND HOLY WEDNESDAY

9:00 AM (Cathedral) Office of Holy Oil for Spiritual Healing
 7:00 PM (Chapel) Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts
 with Anointing

GREAT AND HOLY THURSDAY

7:00 PM (Cathedral) Great Vespers with the Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great

GREAT AND HOLY FRIDAY

9:00 AM (Cathedral) Office of Matins and the Reading of the twelve Passion Gospels
 3:00 PM (Cathedral) Vespers with the Shroud Procession

GREAT AND HOLY SATURDAY

9:00 AM (Cathedral) Jerusalem Matins at the Grave
 12 NOON (Cathedral Auditorium) Blessing of Paschal Foods

PASCHA—THE GREAT DAY —THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD

8:00 AM (Cathedral) Resurrection Matins and Divine Liturgy
 —followed by Blessing of Paschal Foods
 11:00 AM (Chapel) Divine Liturgy
 —followed by Blessing of Paschal Foods

BRIGHT MONDAY

9:00 AM (Cathedral) Divine Liturgy with Paschal Procession
 7:00 PM (Chapel) Divine Liturgy with Paschal Procession

BRIGHT TUESDAY

9:00 AM (Cathedral) Divine Liturgy of Pascha



SUNDAY AFTERNOON DIVINE LITURGY IN BAYONNE PARISH SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST

15 EAST 26TH STREET, BAYONNE, NJ
All Welcome to Attend!

For the convenience of the area faithful, Bishop Kurt has introduced the celebration of a Sunday afternoon Divine Liturgy at Saint John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church, Sundays at 4 PM

Father Marcel Szabo, Pastor, together with Byzantine Catholic clergy from Northern and Central New Jersey, will provide a weekly schedule of service which will include:

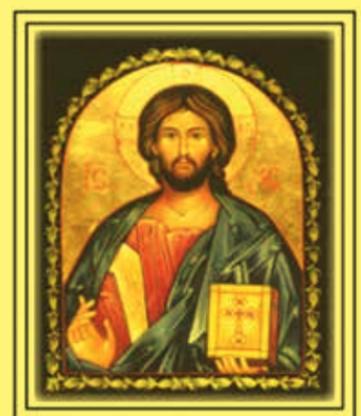
- The Holy Mystery of Reconciliation prior to services
- 3:30 PM - Prayer Service (Moleben) to Blessed Miriam Teresa
- 4:00 PM - Celebration of the Sunday Divine Liturgy.

Saint John Church is the baptismal parish of Blessed Miriam Teresa Demjanovich.



FROM THE
 OFFICE OF THE
 BISHOP

Deacon Nicholas A Daddona
 will be ordained to the Order of the Presbyterate
 through the action of the Holy Spirit
 in the imposition of hands by
 the Most Reverend Kurt Burnette
 Eparch of Passaic
 on Tuesday, April 25, 2017,
 the Feast of Saint Mark at 3:00 pm
 Saint Catharine Catholic Church
 215 Essex Ave, Spring Lake, NJ 07762



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PEOPLE YOU KNOW

IN PASSAIC...

The Knights of Columbus Father Juan Perez Council 262 in Passaic, NJ, provided clothing and supplies to Birth Haven, a shelter for homeless pregnant women in Newton, NJ. Council 262 meets at Saint Michael Cathedral in Passaic.



Council members: Robert P. Keenan, PGK, PFN; Peter J. Walentowicz, PGK, PFN, DD; Andres Ramirez; and Edward Maksym, Jr, GK

IN LEVITTOWN...

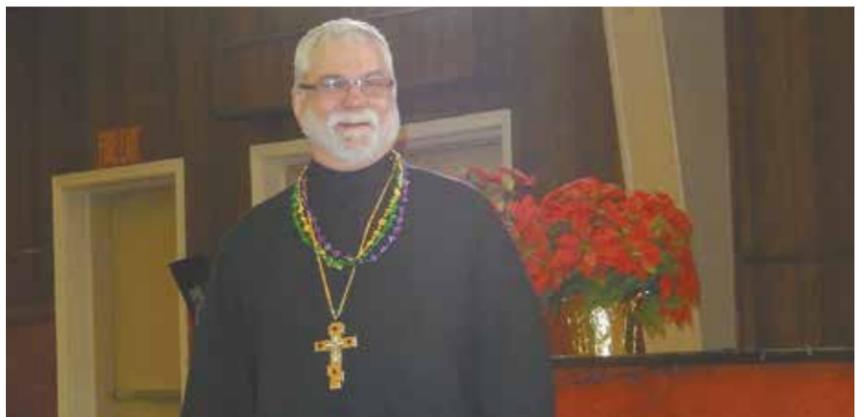
Our Lady of Perpetual Help Byzantine Catholic Church, Levittown, PA, celebrated their first *Fashengy* (the equivalent of Mardi Gras) on the Sunday of Cheesefare, February 26, with Father Edward G. Cimbala, D.Min, Pastor. The Divine Liturgy was held at 9:00 AM and was followed with a festive brunch in the auditorium. This special event, "A Feast Before the Fast," marked the last day before the beginning of the Lenten Season. All were welcome. Matt Rayner, a parishioner, provided the music. At 12 Noon, the first service of The Great Fast (Lent) was celebrated, Forgiveness Vespers. At this service, the beautiful ceremony of mutual forgiveness took place. This was the most appropriate way to begin our observance of Great Lent. The service of Forgiveness Vespers was a special way that we as Eastern Catholics began the Great Fast 2017. Father Myron Badnerosky is Pastor Emeritus.



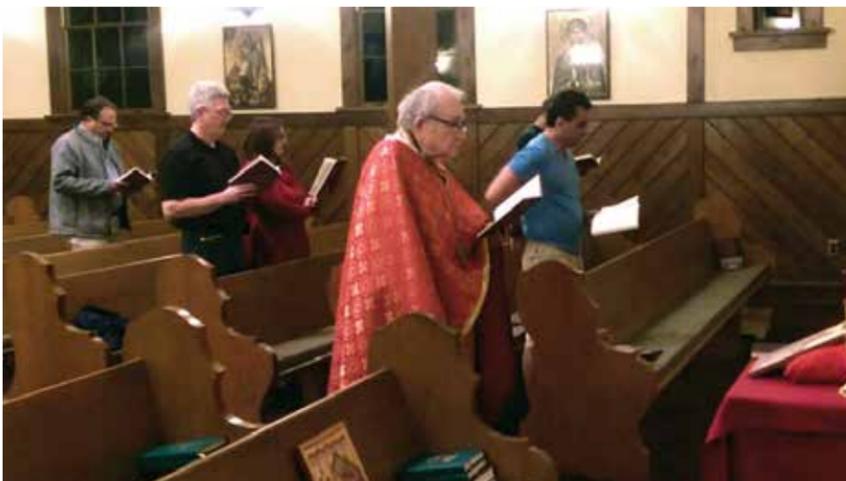
A parish family enjoys the event

IN ROSWELL...

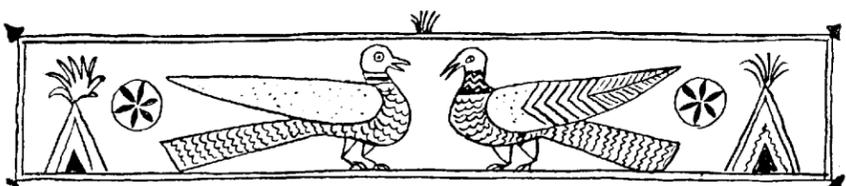
Early in June of 2016, after 32 years of service to the Eparchy of Passaic, Father Philip Scott, PhD, pastor of Epiphany of Our Lord, Roswell, GA, was planning to retire in July. However, late in June, all of that changed. Father Scott was involved in a serious life threatening automobile accident that left him in the hospital for many months. Father Lewis Rabayda and Father Steven Galuschik would serve the liturgical and sacramental needs of the parish and provided council to Deacon James Smith who was appointed administrator of the parish. For Father Scott, many months of recovery followed. By December, Father Scott was able to stand and walk with assistance, and was able to attend Divine Liturgy for the Nativity. In February, 2017, on Forgiveness Sunday, Father Scott returned to the altar at Epiphany and served his first Divine Liturgy since the accident. At this Liturgy Father Scott expressed his gratitude to all those who prayed for him. Father told the parish how important the power of prayer was for his recovery. Father Scott's dedication to the Church is revealed in his commitment to Bishop Kurt to serve at Epiphany until a new pastor is assigned.



Father Ed Cimbala, D. Min., pastor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help



Parishioners sharing a laugh



Parishioners wearing their fashengy Beads

AROUND THE EPARCHY



IN PITTSTON...

Michael Cherasaro, Jr., was awarded the rank of Eagle Scout in November 2016, and his Court of Honor was held on February 19, 2017. Michael is a parishioner and altar server at Saint Michael Byzantine Catholic Church in Pittston, PA. He is 14 years old, and is homeschooled. There are several requirements for a boy to complete to attain the rank of Eagle Scouts in Boy Scouts. A boy must complete certain badges and be active in his troop. He must have a certain number of service hours in the community. He must also complete a project that shows his leadership, and finally, he must appear before an Eagle Scout Board of Review with his scoutmaster. Michael's project was to erect a Memorial Prayer Garden at Saint Michael/Saint Peter and Paul Cemetery in Duryea, PA. He raised the funds for the project and oversaw the completion of the project which includes two concrete benches, five concrete circular discs representing the five branches of the military, a prayer for the souls in purgatory on a plaque, and an outdoor icon replica of Saint Michael the Archangel. Michael would like to again express his thanks and gratitude to Father Gary Mensinger, pastor, and all the parishioners at Saint Michael Parish and Saint Nicholas Parish in Swoyersville, his parents and scout leaders, and all those who supported him in his project.



SNOW 2017

At the Carpathian Village and Holy Annunciation Monastery



Ol' Gutsy vs The March Storm of 2017

Ol' Gutsy is Carpathian Village's 33 year-old Chevy Pickup/Snowplow. It took about 9 hours of plowing over two days to handle the snowfall from the storm, but Ol' Gutsy came through. Here are some photos from its cab. Father Michael Salnicki is the Protopresbyter of the Wyoming Valley Protopresbyterate; Director of Carpathian Village, Canadensis, and Pastor of Saint Nicholas Parish in Pocono Summit.

As Mother Nature kept piling it on, Ol' Gutsy kept piling it up! This photo is from the kitchen of the Director's Cottage during the heart of the storm.



One thing Ol' Gutsy can't plow, the steps of Cottage 6 with two feet of snow!

Miniature Horses Play in Hallowed Snow

The horses bred by the Carmelite Nuns at Holy Annunciation Monastery in Sugarloaf, PA, had a fun time in the late season snow storm.



The monastic dog patrols the path lined in walls of snow.



The snow is so high the miniature horses' heads peak just over the banks.



A miniature horse jumps through the deep snow.

THE BYZANTINE CATHOLIC EPARCHY OF PASSAIC subscribes to the
 Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People

adopted by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. The Eparchy, within all its parishes, institutions and programs, is committed to assuring a safe environment in ministry for its children and young people that conforms to Charter requirements.

For further information regarding the Eparchial Safe Environment Program please contact:
 Father David J. Baratelli, Ed.S., M.Div. • Safe Environment Program Coordinator • 973.890.7777
 Dr. Maureen Daddona, Ph.D. • Eparchial Victim Advocate • 516.457.5684

WHAT'S COOKING FOR PASCHA?

By Georgia Zeedick

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

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

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

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

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

Hrudka (Sirets)

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

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

Pascha

- 3 cups scalded milk, or enough scalded milk added to whey from *hrudka* to make 3 cups
- ½ tsp. salt
- 6 beaten eggs
- ½ cup lukewarm water

- ½ cup sugar
- 1 cup melted butter
- ½ large cake yeast or equivalent portion of dry yeast
- 12 to 14 cups flour.

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

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

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

After second rising, shape into four balls and place into greased pans. Small, 1½ quart enameled saucepans can be used for baking. Let rise. Brush tops with 2 tablespoons eggs to which some milk has been added. To achieve that glazed appearance on the loaves, brush

- 3 bottles horseradish (Do not use creamed horseradish.)

Grind beets, using fine grinder attachment. The juice can be saved for soup. Add horseradish to beets; mix well, refrigerate. An empty horseradish jar (washed, label removed and dipped in boiling water to sterilize it) can be filled with the mixture and placed in the Easter basket. The jar's cap can be disguised with aluminum foil, thus hiding any advertisement.

Kolachi

(Nut and poppyseed)

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

Beat eggs and sugar. Melt butter and shortening in hot milk, saving ½ cup for the yeast. Dissolve yeast in lukewarm milk and let stand for a few minutes. Combine both mixtures in large bowl.



Photo by Bob Bruce.

tops several times prior to removing them from the oven. Bake at 325 degrees for about 1 hour.

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

Hrin

(Beets with Horseradish)

- 8 cans whole beets, drained

Add flour and mix well with hands until dough leaves the hands. Refrigerate overnight. In the morning, divide the dough into eight balls and let rise for one hour. Roll out on floured board and spread with filling. Roll up gently, tucking in ends.

Bake at 350 degrees until brown, about 45 minutes.

Brush tops of rolls, prior to putting into oven, with an egg-milk mixture. Doing so produces beautifully browned, shiny rolls.

Nut Filling

- 1 lb. ground walnuts
- 1 cup canned milk
- ½ cup sugar

- 2 eggs
- ½ cup honey (optional)

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

Poppseed Filling

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

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

Ham

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

Kolbasi

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

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

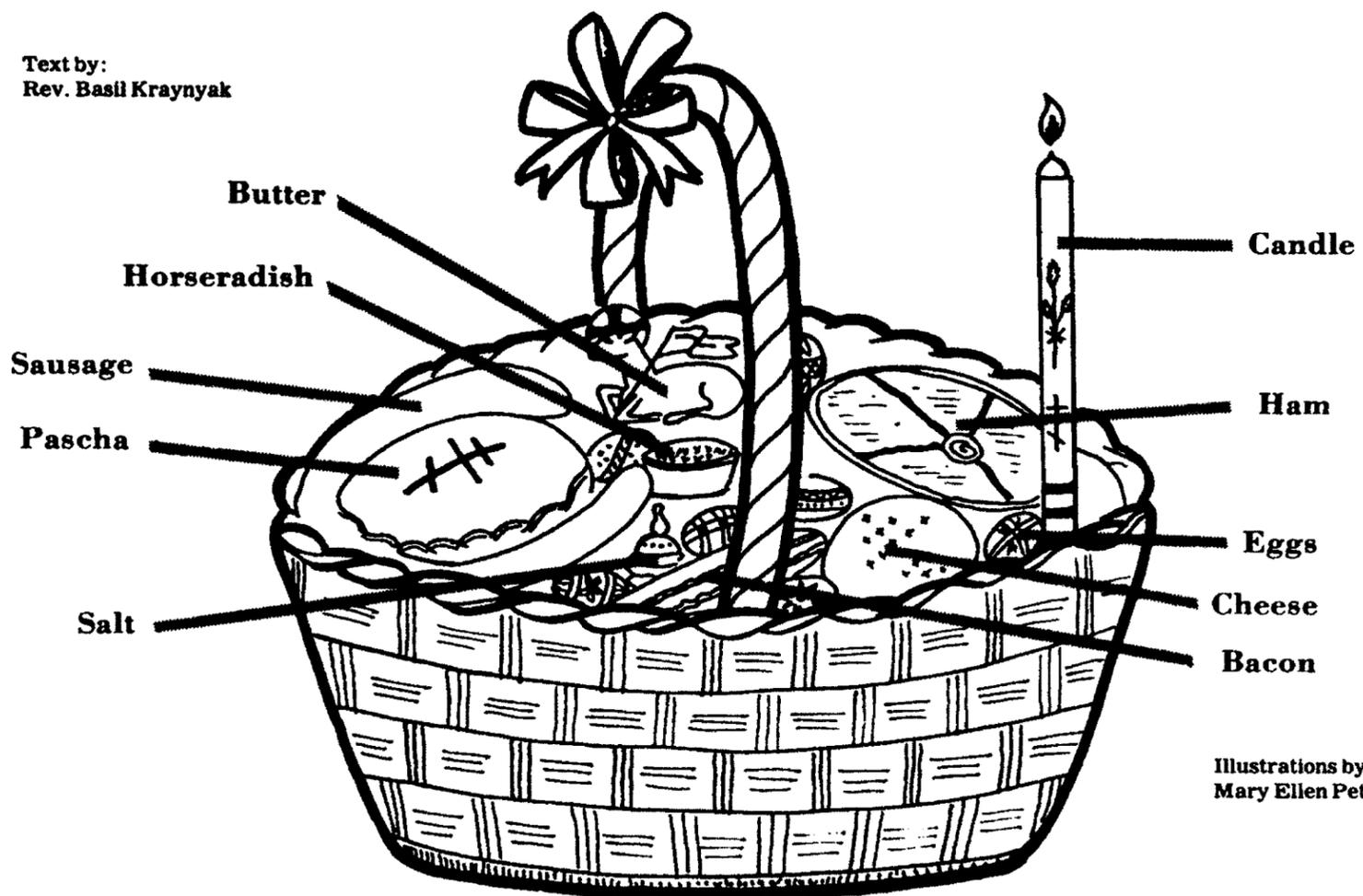
Butter

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

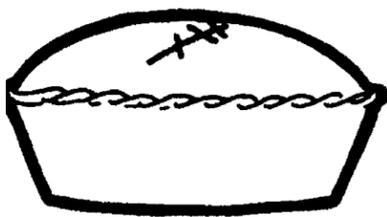
(The above is a revised version of an article that originally appeared in the April 10, 1979, edition of the *Homestead, PA, Daily Messenger*.)

How to Put Together a Traditional Easter Basket

Text by:
Rev. Basil Kravnyak

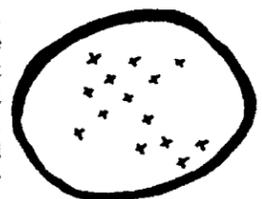


Illustrations by:
Mary Ellen Petro

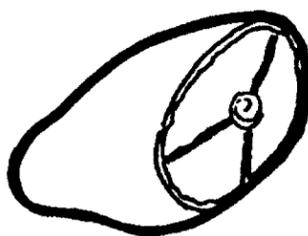


PASCHA - The Easter Bread (pron. pá-ska.) A sweet, yeast bread rich in eggs, butter, etc. Symbolic of Christ Himself who is our True Bread. Usually a round loaf baked with a golden crust decorated with a symbol indicative of Christ. Sometimes a cross (+) of dough is placed on top encircled by a plait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

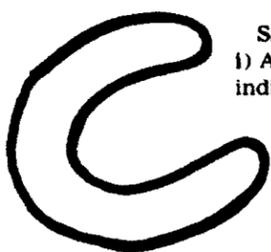
CHEESE (Slav. Hrudka or Sirets pron. hrood-ka or sí-rets) A custard-type cheese shaped into a ball having a rather bland but sweet taste indicative of the moderation that Christians should have in all things. Also, creamed cheese is placed in a small dish and both are decorated with symbols (see Pascha)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



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



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



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



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

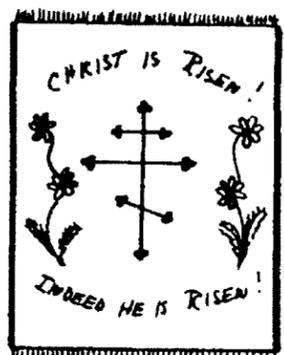
EGGS (Slav. Pisanki pron. pi-sún-ki) Hard-boiled eggs brightly decorated with symbols and markings made with beeswax. Indicative of new life and resurrection.



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

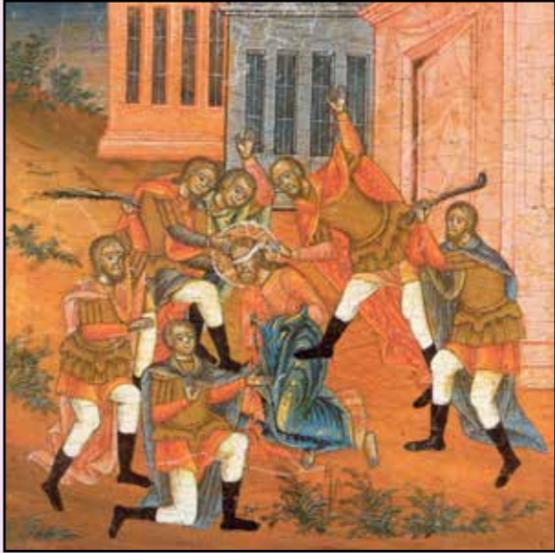
These articles are placed in a wicker basket and a ribbon or bow is tied to the handle. A decorated candle is placed in the basket and is lit at the time of blessing. A linen cover usually embroidered with a picture of the Risen Christ or symbol with the words "Christ is Risen" is placed over the food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

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



CHRIST IS RISEN! INDEED HE IS RISEN!

A JOURNEY FROM HOLY WE



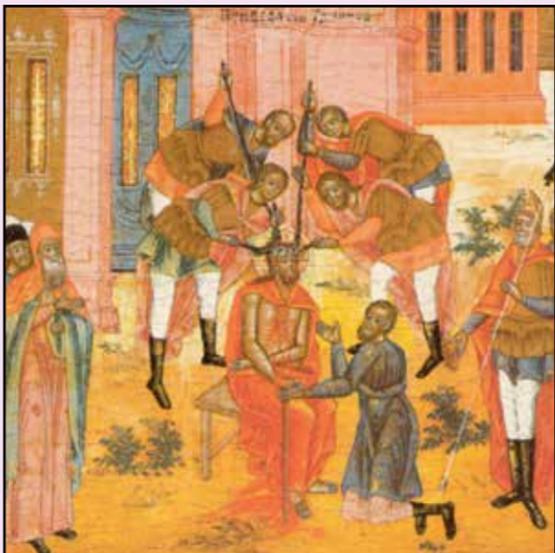
Passion Week or Great Week

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

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

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

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



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

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

Good Friday

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

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

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

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

As mentioned already, there is no Divine Liturgy on Good Friday. If, however, the feast of the

Annunciation should fall on the same day, then the Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom is celebrated before the service just described.

Holy Saturday

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

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

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

Having suffered t
Jesus Christ,
have mer

The Resurrection Period

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

Resurrection

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

WEEK TO THE RESURRECTION

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

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

the passion for us,
Son of God,
mercy on us!

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

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

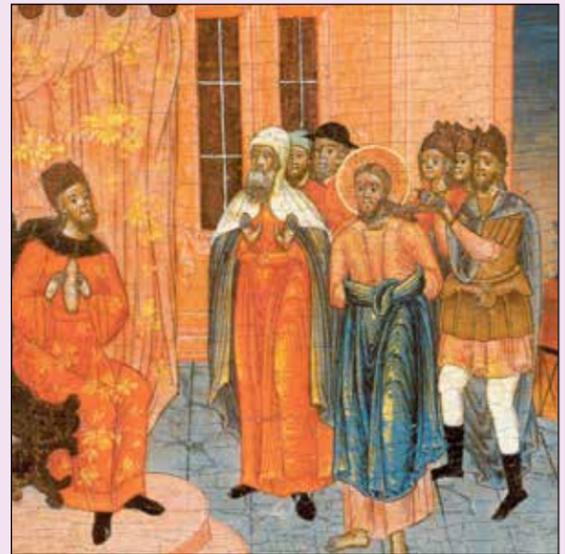
hymns appeared in the East already around the middle of the seventh century. It replaced the kontakion, a type of liturgical poetry composed of 24 short odes or strophes with the purpose of conveying to the people a certain religious message.

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

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

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

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



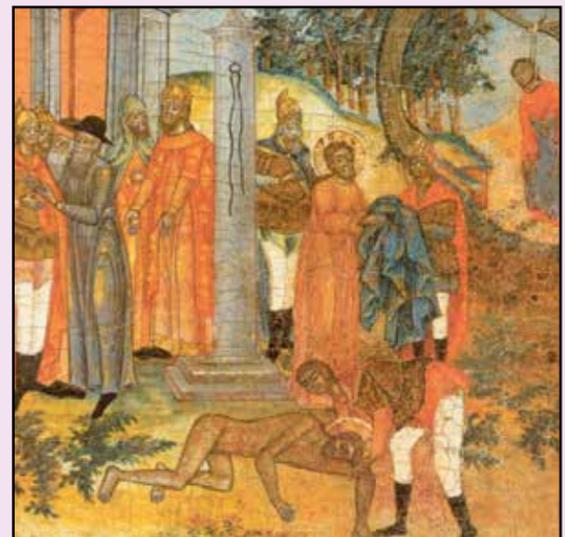
all peoples, to the whole world. During the Eucharistic commemorations, instead of the usual hymn in honor of the Mother of God, "It is truly proper to glorify you ..." the Angelic Salutation from the Resurrection Service with the irmos of the ninth ode is sung: "Shine, shine, O new Jerusalem..." After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

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

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

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

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





FAITH AND COMMUNITY ISSUES

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

GREGORY PALAMAS—ENCOUNTER WITH JOY

Hesychasm and the encounter with Christ = Joy!

In the writings researched by this writer, there were no direct references to the actual charism of “joy” *per se*. Understanding of joy with Palamas took a more indirect approach. Joy is the result of contemplation, the fruit of intense focused prayer that leads to a personal, mystical encounter with the Risen Lord Jesus.

For Palamas, joy begins with the awakening in the human person of the in-dwelling of Jesus Christ within our human nature and form. This insight took the form of a reply to an argument presented by Barlaam, a Calabrian philosopher/theologian who believed it was both impossible and reprehensible to the holiness of God that the Glory of God could be found within the person of one who claims that entering into contemplation of God results in the experience of the radiant Glory of God Himself. For Barlaam, this is impossible, given the sinful brokenness of human nature *per se*, almost from its beginnings (1974, Meyendorff, *Saint Gregory Palamas and Orthodox Spirituality*).



Icon of Saint Gregory Palamas

In refuting the Calabrian Philosopher, Meyendorff (1974) quotes Saint Gregory as saying:

When spiritual joy comes to the body from the mind, it suffers no diminution by this communion with the body, spiritualizing it. For then, rejecting all evil desires of the flesh, it no longer weighs down the soul that rises up with it, the whole man becoming spirit, as it is written: ‘He who is born of the spirit is spirit’ (Jn, 3:6, 8)” (Meyendorff quoting from Palamas’ Triads II, 2 § 9, p. 336-338, as found in Saint Gregory Palamas and Orthodox Spirituality, 1974, p. 108 [italics Meyendorff’s]).

It bodes well at this point to discuss something about the doctrine of the Hesychasm and Hesychastic prayer from Palamas’ perspective so an understanding of how such an indwelling of God’s Presence is possible. For Saint Gregory, the Hypostatic Union, the joining of the nature of God and the nature of human seamlessly into one person, did not cease to happen after the Conception and Birth of Jesus Christ, but extended to all of humanity for all time. The means of this is found in the communion in and of the Sacred Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. In Gregory’s own words:

In His incomparable love for men, the Son of God did not merely unite His Divine Hypostasis to our nature, clothing Himself with a living body and an intelligent soul, ‘to appear on earth and live with men’ (Baruch 3:38), but O incomparable and magnificent miracle! He unites Himself to human hypostases, joining Himself to each of the faithful by communion in his Holy Body. For He becomes one body with us (Eph. 3:6) making us a temple of the whole Godhead—for in the very Body of Christ, ‘the whole fullness of the Godhead dwells corporeally’ (Col. 3:9) (1974, Meyendorff, p. 107; quoting from Palamas’ Triads I, 3 § 38, p. 193).

For Palamas, according to Meyendorff, God’s

sharing of His Divine Radiance is not meager but bounteous in generosity in His willingness, enlightening those who worthily come to eagerly seek divine illumination. The exterior manifestation on Tabor to the disciples occurred for a humanity not yet reconciled with God through the passion, death and resurrection of Christ. When the Saving Act occurred, and the reconciliation accomplished irrevocably, it became unnecessary for the Divine Epiphany to manifest exteriorly but now united to us and by an act of the Holy Spirit, an indwelling has occurred and purdures, such enlightenment is now an interior act of God with the cooperating human spirit (Meyendorff, 1974).

How does such experience of the Divine Presence happen? For Palamas, the prayer of the Hesychasm provides a direct means to encounter the Living God radically. John Meyendorff (1974) provides us with Palamas’ description of the process of the Hesychasm (*Saint Gregory Palamas and Orthodox Spirituality*, p. 56), the focusing of the mind on the ever to be repeated phrase: “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner” draws one into an ever-deepening awareness that eventually reveals the Divine Light that was shown to the Apostles on mount Tabor that same glory now inhabiting the human spirit.

It is in this radical encounter with the Divine Transcendent now immanent Presence that the spirit of the human person is filled to overflowing with Divine Love. That in-dwelling of the Holy Spirit is experienced as a radiant superabundance of Love, resulting in the experience of pure Joy or bliss.

In the next installment of this series, a discussion about Christian life in terms of joy and growth into the full personal image of Christ will be presented from the perspectives of Metropolitan Anthony Bloom, an Orthodox Metropolitan Archbishop, and Margherita Laski, a professed atheist, from their text: “God and Man.” **ECL**

2017 PROGRAMS AT HOLY DORMITION FRIARY, SYBERTSVILLE, PA

Holy Week Services

Monday-Saturday at 7AM: Matins

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday at 5 PM: Divine Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts

Thursday at 5 PM: Vespers with Divine Liturgy for Great and Holy Thursday

Friday at 3 PM: Vespers for Great and Holy Friday with Burial Shroud Procession

Saturday, April 15 at 5 PM: Vespers with Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil – vigil of the Resurrection

Sunday, April 16 at 8 am: Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom – the Resurrection of our Lord

Sunday, August 6, 2017

Pilgrimage for Peace: Transfigured by Peace

Retreats and programs listed here are co-sponsored by the Bishop Michael Dudick Center, supporting awareness of the Byzantine traditions that bolster our Christian faith.

For more information, or to register for any of our programs, please contact holydormition@gmail.com or call Father Jerome, OFM, at 570-788-1212 ext 402.



SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

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

OVERCOMING THE SILENCE OF THE GRAVE

In most Churches of the Byzantine Tradition, Resurrection Matins begins with the proclamation of a Gospel outside the closed church doors. The Gospel selection is Mark 16: 1-8. Saint Mark describes the Myrrh-bearers coming to the tomb just after sunrise on Sunday, fretting about how they will move the stone, finding the stone moved and encountering an angel sitting triumphantly on the stone. The angel (tradition identifies him as Gabriel), tells them that Christ is risen, invites them to see the empty tomb for themselves, and then instructs them to tell Peter and the other disciples the good news. The passage, and perhaps originally the whole Gospel according to Saint Mark, seems to end on a negative note that sounds even clumsier in Mark's original Greek: "they said nothing to anyone for they were afraid."

Well, they couldn't keep the secret for long, as we learn from Matthew 28:8, and Luke 24:10. But it's worth stopping to ask why the women's first reaction to "the joyful message of the Resurrection" was silence.

What are you inclined to keep silent about? Something so precious, so fragile, so new, like your first love, that you keep it to yourself for fear of spoiling it? Something you want to have all for yourself, like the perfect paska recipe or fishing hole or stock tip? Something you're not sure of and don't want to be proved wrong about? Perhaps something you really don't want to commit to. How many invitations or requests do you an-

swer with "maybe" or "we'll see" or "I'll let you know," and then silence? Or maybe something you don't want to deal with because it's too hard, too messy, too shameful, too painful. And so, to all those questions about "what's the matter?" you answer, "nothing."

What kind of silence were the Myrrh-bearers tempted to keep? Was the message too good to be true? So strange they didn't believe it themselves? In any case, that silence didn't last—it didn't last the day. The Word of God spread without media, without books, simply because they talked to the Apostles and the Apostles talked to everyone and many came to believe. For a whole generation, the Word of God spread from the empty tomb around the known world simply because people kept talking about it. And the message that spread like wildfire is summed up in 4 Greek words (7 in English): "Christ is risen! Indeed He is risen!" (Luke 24:34).

In the reading from the Acts of the Apostles on Pascha, Jesus looks up from the page, across the ages, to us and says, "You are my witnesses" (Acts 1:8). Where do we need to fight against the temptation to keep silent? The experience of Pascha can't remain a warm and wonderful festive feeling. It has to move from a feeling to fact of faith to way of life—expressed in how we eat and drink and dress and drive; expressed in how we spend our time and our money; expressed in what we say, and what we say "no" to, and what we refuse to say, even when everyone else is saying it.

Might doubt keep us silent? Just saying "whatever" and adopting doubt as a way of life is lazy. Saint Thomas (John 20:19-29) showed us how to resolve doubt: ask, study, explore, and above all, don't absent yourself when the Church gathers!

Do we stay silent because we don't want to commit? Are we hedging our bets? Either Christ is risen or He is not and, as Saint Paul says, if Christ is not risen then we have no hope and we will die in our sins (1 Corinthians 15:14-19).

Is ours a silence of avoidance? If Christ is risen, everything we think about life is changed. Saint Peter realized early on that Jesus would upset his lifestyle and he said, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man" Luke 5:8). It didn't work. Jesus didn't go away. Peter stayed. The women may have started out silent. It didn't last. Christ is risen and that changes everything.

For many folks in our congregations, it's even a struggle to raise their voices to sing the troparion of Pascha, or to share the greeting, "Christ is risen! Indeed He is risen!" Finding your voice to share the Good News in the safe confines of the Liturgy is the first step toward learning how to break the silence for Christ everywhere else in our lives. **ECL**

Lenten Day of Renewal for Men and Women

"Taking the Fast from Routine to Relationship"

presented by Ann Koshute • Saturday, April 1

at Saint Michael Cathedral Chapel

445 Lackawanna Avenue, Woodland Park, NJ

The day will begin with the Akathist Hymn at 9:30 AM followed by two presentations with opportunity for discussion and questions. A Lenten luncheon will be served. The day will conclude with the celebration of Vespers at 3:30 PM. There will be opportunity for the Sacrament of Repentance after Vespers, and Divine Liturgy will be celebrated at 5:00pm. There is no charge for this event. For information call 973-777-2553 or email passaiccathedral@gmail.com.



LIFE, LOVE, AND THE HUMAN PERSON

By Ann M. Koshute, MTS

NOT JUST A BODY

Several years ago, a friend shared his daughter's experience in religion class at her Catholic grade school. The teacher spoke about the events around Jesus' Crucifixion. When she got to "the third day," she described His Resurrection as "spiritual": that an actual body was not raised, but the "spirit" alone. In other words, what's most important - the "God-part" of Jesus - rose from the dead. My friend's daughter, sheep-

ishly but bravely, raised her hand and said, "Um, I don't think that's right. Jesus rose from the dead, body and soul." Unmoved, the teacher responded that Jesus' Resurrection was spiritual, not physical. But what does it matter anyway? Fortunately, my friend taught his children well, and he affirmed his daughter in her right understanding of the central belief of our Faith: that Christ - God-made-man - died on the Cross and rose

from the dead, flesh and blood, body and soul. If this isn't true, then Christ didn't give His "whole self" for the forgiveness of our sins, and our Faith is a sham.

Pascha celebrates our redemption, our freedom from the bonds of sin and death. But it also affirms our humanity and the goodness of our bodies. God created Adam and Eve in His im-

age and likeness, not a new type of angel. God created them as body-persons, and named this new creation “very good.” From the beginning, God intended human beings to be the kind of persons who are body and soul, male and female.

The entire Paschal Mystery – Jesus’ conception and birth, ministry, and his suffering, death and resurrection, all show us that our bodies – our whole selves – are good! Jesus’ life is a “bodily experience,” chosen by God as the means of our salvation, and to sanctify and affirm us in our bodies. Every stage of His life – from His Incarnation to His Ascension – is a lesson on how and why we’re created uniquely by God as His “embodied icons.”

Though Jesus’ conception was different from ours, He took flesh from the Virgin, was nurtured and grew inside of her body, just as our mothers nurtured us. Jesus’ “human beginning” shows us how good our beginning is, in its hidden silence known intimately by our mother. Jesus matured, “advanced in wisdom and age and favor before God and man,” (Luke 2:52) from infant, to boy, to young man. We learn from Him the beauty of growing into our own as we live within a family and community, and learn through education and experience. As part of His growth Jesus didn’t sin, like we do. But He did experience temptations (see Matthew 4:1-11) that weren’t

merely spiritual or intellectual but challenged Him in His “bodiliness,” with food, possessions and power. By experiencing such things in a human way Jesus teaches us how to tame our appetites and choose the Good.

Jesus’ life and ministry were dedicated to re-orienting people to God and away from an obsession with possessions and power. Yet He accomplished this, not with abstract ideas, but through personal presence. The Shepherd lived among His sheep, ate with them, heard their stories, called them to a converted life, prayed with them, healed them, and wept with them. Thus, Jesus teaches us the meaning of our humanity: to honor our personal dignity as God’s icons, and to love and honor others in theirs. Jesus’ humanity shows us that God created us for a relationship with Him and with each other; one which engages our senses, allowing us to touch Him and each other, and to be touched. This is the heart of the Holy Mysteries, which aren’t abstract concepts, but actual physical and spiritual encounters with the Living God. Because of our bodies, Jesus took the ordinary ‘stuff’ of our lives (oil, water, bread, wine, the touch of human hands) and transformed them into the means by which we can literally “Taste and see how that the Lord is good.” (Psalm 34:9).

In Jesus’ physical suffering and death on the Cross, He teaches us how to suffer in our bodies – especially when they don’t cooperate with our will, when they are hurt and break down. Jesus’ intense physical pain and injury (and His prayer in the Garden to be relieved of it) teach us it’s okay to be frightened and pray the pain away. But He also teaches us how to surrender that pain to God, and by His personal surrender promises to be with us in ours. Jesus gives our suffering purpose and meaning, and shows that, while difficult and uncomfortable, suffering unleashes Love in unexpected ways. In His death, Jesus teaches us how to die, too. In that inevitable experience, each one of us will face on our own (even if we’re surrounded by others), we’re accompanied by the one Companion who faced Death and conquered it.

The bodily Resurrection of Jesus is not only central to our Faith, but a fact we should relate to our own human experience on this earth – and our preparation for eternal life. Christ is Risen! And His glorified body is no longer subject to hunger or thirst, fatigue or pain, nor Death itself. Christ is Risen! – and He was raised in His body so that one day each of us might be risen, too: whole, holy, and bodies no longer subject to sin and death. **ECL**



UNDERSTANDING ICONS

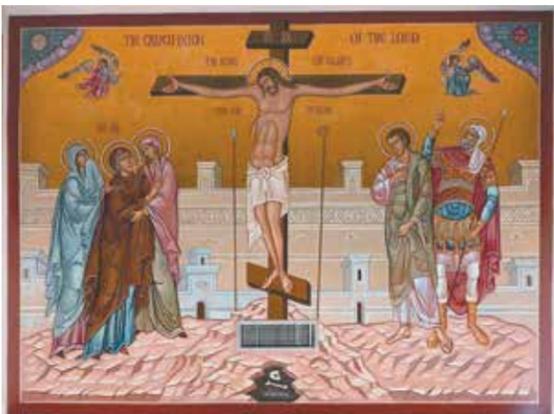
Father Joseph Bertha, Ph.D.

PRAY FOR THE LIVING AND THE DEAD

What an interesting manner to end the icons of the spiritual and corporal works of mercy: praying for the living and the dead. Both of these intentions are fulfilled during our prayers at the Divine Liturgy. Each Liturgy has an intention prayed for, most frequently for the deceased. However, on five Saturdays, we commemorate the deceased as a group, the celebrant reciting the names during the Memorial Service (Panachida) following the Liturgy.

As for the living, we remember during the multiple litanies prayed in the liturgy: presidents, bishops, pope, priests, the sick, the suffering, those who travel, those in peril from storms at sea, and the list goes on and on.

However, one startling omission stands out from the list of prayers for the living and the dead: prayer for our enemies. In Matthew 5:44, our Lord specifically instructs us: “But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you!”



Icon of the Crucifixion

There is a brief prayer for enemies during the anaphora of the Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great when the celebrant prays for those who love us and for those who hate us. But on a regular consistent basis we rarely hear an invocation to those who are enemies.

Our Blessed Lord, the consummate Teacher, Preacher of God’s mercy, prays for enemies as he is dying on the Cross! His first of seven last words on the Cross is a prayer for enemies: “Father, forgive them for they do not know what they are doing” (Luke 23:34).

From the pulpit of the Cross, our Blessed Lord prays for enemies who bring Him to His death. Our Lord petitions and prays for those who are in the very act of crucifying him.

Do we pray for our enemies? Do we let go of the grudges that we carry against individuals? Or are we continually crying out, cursing and reviling them? Learn from the Victim of all of our sins, He who pays ransom for our transgressions to let go of these dangerous sinful habits which ultimately lead to death. Our Lord prays for enemies, living and dead. Particularly at our moments of anger and pique when we remember the abuses and hurts of others, He invites and teaches us to pray for these individuals!

Our Lord teaches us: “For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you salute only your brethren, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” (Matthew 5: 46-48)

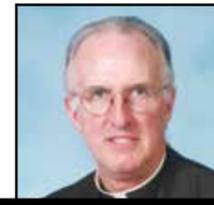


Icon of the Crucifixion

The icon of the Crucifixion is a wonderful illustration not only of this work of mercy, praying for the living and the dead, but also it is the summation of all the fourteen wonderful acts of mercy. Behold the Cross of our Lord, bow to Him, the victim of our hurts, and praise His glorious and triumphant Resurrection! The God of Mercy has bestowed His great Mercy upon the world, the forgiveness of sins. Repentance and reconciliation brings us to new life in the glorious Pascha on the third day! **ECL**

CATECHETICAL REFLECTIONS

Father Robert F. Slesinski, Ph.D.



MAN BEFORE GOD

Moments of Selfhood: "Independence and Incommunicability"—Installment 1/6

From what has been opined so far, the human soul has been found to be spiritual and substantial in its own right, meaning that the individual soul that animates our individual bodies sets our *lived* bodies *apart*. Each of us is independent of one another. Each of us enjoys our own unique existence. No other person or entity, in other words, can dominate us *from within*. "From without," of course, we are subject to coercive powers, but, "from within" we truly are *at one* with ourselves, not ultimately subject to external coercion, even if our *lived* relationships with other personal entities like ourselves ultimately *link* us with a world beyond the intimacy of our own unique beinghood.

But the fact that the primordial datum of "being-at-one-with-oneself" is an essential mark of our beinghood brings out another corollary insight into the nature of human personhood. We are *independent* beings; independence, in other words, is an integral mark of each human being. Without independence there is no true human personhood. "Being-at-one-with-oneself" (*self-presence*) cannot but mean that we enjoy *freedom*. Put otherwise, what *becomes* of

us in life largely, nay, chiefly, depends on what we *make* of ourselves in life—how we *commit ourselves* to "being-in-the-world," how we *freely* choose to interact with other persons and entities in life.

Now these insights may well be very Augustinian, categorically speaking, and at one with the traditional Christian understanding of human personhood, but they are *not* uniquely Christian, they are not truths owing to Divine Revelation, but are at one with the created order itself, *naturally* understood by human *reason*. The fact that all human beings enjoy independence in being and in action merely evokes a fundamental principle of Roman (pagan) law—which aptly serves as a foundational definition of the human person: *Persona est sui iuris et alteri incommunicabilis* (A person is of his own law [a being which belongs to itself] and is incommunicable with another [and cannot share its being with another]).

With this "pagan" (but one in full accord with the Christian point of view) definition of the human person, two foundational points are

made. Persons, entities under their own law or enjoying *self-subsistence*, are endowed with *freedom*; they can speak, will, and act of their own accord. But not inconsequentially, intertwined with this fact of human freedom is another truth ultimately bespeaking the mystery of human *being*: it is ultimately a personal *secret* that needs to be freely given and shared. No other person can take fully hold of our personal being. We are a *whole* to ourselves, *not* a "part" of something else enveloping us. *Belonging* to ourselves, we are *ends* in ourselves, rightfully demanding the respect of others, who *cannot* use us, instrumentally, as a *means* at the hands of someone else for something else, however "purportedly" noble this end may be. Does the truth about the human person, as stated here, possibly serve as a clear counterpoint, indeed, outright rejection, of all "socialist" reductions of the human person that would render him or her a mere cog in the socialist machine, the human individual ever being at the disposition (i.e., being disposable) by the social powers that be according to their superior, commandeering will? Might not the Lord Almighty be whispering something to us in our ears in this regard? **ECL**



SCHOOL OF PRAYER

Father G. Scott Boghossian

PRAY FOR YOUR ENEMIES

In the Sermon on the Mount, Our Lord tells us: "Love your enemies: do good to them that hate you: and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you" (Matt. 5:44). While Our Lord hung on the cross, He prayed for His enemies saying, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do (Luke 23:34)." While Saint Stephen died as a martyr, he prayed, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them!" (Acts 7:60). Saint Peter writes, "Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing" (1 Pt. 3:9).

We all have family members and other acquaintances who, for whatever reason, are not to our liking. Occasionally, personalities conflict. This kind of problem is not anyone's fault. Simple personality conflicts can turn quickly into mutual dislike or even hatred. Furthermore, there may be people in our lives who have serious character flaws. We don't want to be around them. They mean well, but they rub us the wrong way. Finally, there are some truly malicious people out to do us harm deliberately.

Whatever the case may be, Jesus commands us to love our enemies and to pray for them. The great danger is that a "root of bitterness" can spring up in us and "defile us" (Heb. 12:15). Our whole personality can turn sour, because of some "enemy" in our life. We might even be tempted to pray against him, to wish him harm, and in some way put a "curse" on him. All of this is entirely contrary to the humble Spirit of Christ

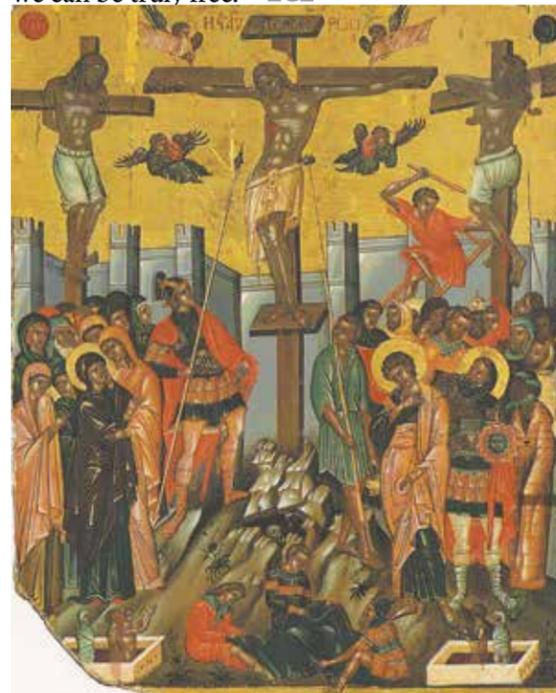
that leads us to love, peace, patience, kindness, and gentleness (Gal. 5:22). If we can't "let go" of the offender and forgive him, he or she will continue to harm us. Anger, hatred, and a spirit of revenge can easily be confused with a strong sense of justice. We can fool ourselves into thinking that our hatred and rage are justified, while such sentiments eat away at our soul and body like a deadly cancer.

If our enemy or persecutor is intent on harming us, we must protect ourselves. It may be necessary to report the person to law enforcement and cut him off altogether for our safety, as in the case of a battered wife or an abused child. Even so, we cannot let the spirit of rancor and vengeance possess us. We must love our enemy and pray for our persecutor.

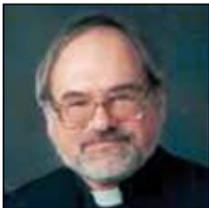
Instead of cursing your enemy, bless him and pray for him. As you pray, you will notice a change taking place in your heart. Pray something like this: "Father, I forgive this person for all that he has done to me. I ask you to bless him. Heal whatever wound he has in his soul that leads him to behave the way he does. Make him successful and prosperous in all things and grant all of his good desires. Grant him eternal happiness with you in heaven. Amen." Some of our enemies have died and gone into eternity. We are still bitter about what they did to us. Now is the time to start again, to forgive them, to bless them, to pray for them, and to move on. We can pray: "Lord, I forgive them. Grant them blessed repose in the place of light, joy, and peace,

where there is no pain, sorrow, or mourning. Let them now experience the joy of heaven in all its fullness. Amen."

Such prayers may seem a little extreme. Pray that my offender is blessed, successful, prosperous and saved?! The goal here is to root out mercilessly any sense of vengeance, hatred, or rancor in our soul toward our offender. Even a little drop of hate, a spark of unforgiveness, will cut us off from further spiritual growth and a deeper intimacy with Our Savior. It is through the power of prayer, prayer for our enemies, that we can be truly free. **ECL**



Icon of the Crucifixion



THE BYZANTINE LITURGY

By Archpriest David Petras, SEOD

GREAT LENT: AN ENCOUNTER WITH DEATH, TOWARDS GOOD FRIDAY

In the first week of the Great Fast, it is like a whole new creation is beginning. We retell the story of the creation of the universe by a loving and life-giving God: sun, moon and stars; land and oceans; beasts and fish and birds, and as the crown of all, mankind, male and female, made in the image and likeness of God, and God saw that it was “very good.” Yet on Friday, the goodness of creation comes crashing down, as Eve and Adam rebel against God’s plan for creation, and disobey His law forbidding them to eat of the fruit of the tree in the middle of Eden. As a result, God tells Adam, “you are dust, and to dust you shall return” (Genesis 3:19). We see sin as the coming of death into the human reality, as Saint Paul said, “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:23). We call God the Giver of Life, and when we receive him in Holy Communion, the formula for reception joins together forgiveness of sin and life everlasting.

On the Fridays of the Great Fast, particularly in the readings from Genesis at the Presanctified Divine Liturgy, we see consistently this encounter with death: in the story of Noah, God destroys the human race because of its wickedness; in the story of Abraham and Isaac, God demands the sacrifice of his only beloved son, Isaac, though the point of the story is that God gives life, and stays Abraham’s hand when he has proven his obedience to God’s command; and on the final Friday, we tell the story of Joseph’s funeral. Finally, on Good Friday, we hear the story of the death of God’s only Son on the Cross, and now see the point of this encounter with death: “by death God trampled upon death!” The whole point is that God gives life. The sin of Adam and Eve was that they would achieve life by their own will, by scrapping God’s plan and making up for themselves what is good and evil. They would make the laws, not God, so that all

sin is really pride. Our task in the Great Fast, then, is to integrate the resurrection into our lives. Over and over again, the hymns of the Great Fast tell us that we are embracing the resurrection. We are turning from sin and accepting God’s plan for life. In the Great Fast, we integrate the resurrection into our lives. This is why the Great Fast is a time for joy, a time of returning to God, a time of “Alleluia!”

The readings from Genesis on the Fridays of the Great Fast point like an arrow to the covenant made on Good Friday, when our Lord gave His Body and Blood as a new covenant for the life of the world. The first and second Fridays tell of the breaking of covenants, first of the covenant with Adam and Eve, when they ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in sinful rebellion against God, and second, of the decision of God in the time of Noah to destroy the human race because of its wickedness. The third Friday is the renewal of the covenant with Noah, and the fourth Friday is the covenant God made with Abraham. On the fifth Friday, Abraham replaces the disobedience of Adam and Eve with obedience to God in the sacrifice of his beloved son. However, God does not want this sacrifice, though He allows His only-begotten Son to die on the cross for the salvation of the human race. On the sixth Friday, the funeral of Joseph, the reading looks forward to the burial of Christ, who through his death will trample upon death.

This is our Fast, the making of a new covenant with God, who, as the Anaphora of Saint Basil says, “freed us from Death’s despair, and rose on the third day, preparing the way for the resurrection of all flesh from the dead.” When Adam and Eve sinned, they were expelled from paradise, and God stationed a cherub with a fiery sword to guard the way to the tree of life. Four curses were imposed on Adam and Eve: on Eve, pain in

childbirth, and servitude to her husband; on Adam, hard labor and death.

In the New Covenant of our Lord Jesus Christ, the curse is abrogated, as the Kontakion of the Third Sunday of the great Fast proclaims: “No longer does the flaming sword guard the gates of Eden, for the tree of the cross has come to quench it wondrously. The sting of death and the victory of Hades have been driven out.” The curse is truly abrogated, but in God’s mystical and wondrous way. In childbirth, the woman still suffers pain, but her anguish gives way to joy because of new life (John 16:21); the marital relations between man and woman are now marked by mutual love and respect, as we see in the subtle reading of Ephesians 5:9-19; and the harshness of labor is eased by the Sabbath rest (Hebrews 4:9). Death remains, and even the Son of God must suffer death: “Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us, for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree’” (Galatians 3:10, quoting Deuteronomy 21:23).

When Eve and Adam disobeyed God, we heard the terrible words which are proclaimed aloud: “By the sweat of your brow you shall eat bread, until you return to the ground, from which you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return” (Genesis 3:19), but in the serenity of the Great Fast, other words, silently now but soon to be proclaimed, are spoken: “to those in the grave he granted life,” “you will know that I am the Lord, when I open your tombs to lead you, my people, up from their graves” (Ezekiel 37:13), and “I am the resurrection and the life” (John 11:25). God seizes death by the throat, and turns the curse of death into life, for “by death He trampled upon death.” **ECL**



ASK A PRIEST A QUESTION

Father Vasyl Chepelsky

CHURCH’S INTERPRETATION OF PSALM 110:7

Question: How does the Church interpret Psalm 110:7 as stated: “He (the Lord) will drink from the brook by the wayside and therefore he will lift up his head.”? DJ

In order to understand verse 7 of this Psalm we need to look at it in the broader context of the meaning of the whole Psalm.

Psalm 110 (according to the Hebrew tradition, 109 according to the Graeco-Latin one) is a royal Psalm in which a court singer recites three oracles in which God assures the king that his enemies are conquered (Ps 110:1-2), makes the king “son” in traditional adoption language (Ps 110:3), gives priestly status to the king and promises to be with him in future military ventures (Ps 110:4-7). Many interpretations state that the meaning

of verse 7 is uncertain. Some see an allusion to a rite of royal consecration at the Gihon spring (cf. 1 Kgs 1:33, 38). Others find here an image of the divine warrior (or king) pursuing enemies so relentlessly that he does not stop long enough to eat and drink.

One of the greatest interpretations of the meaning of this Psalm was given by Pope Benedict XVI, which we will present in this article.¹ During the November 16, 2011, general audience in Saint Peter’s Square, attended by over 11,000 pilgrims, Pope Benedict XVI imparted the final catechesis of his cycle dedicated to the Psalms. He focused on Psalm 110, which “Jesus Himself cited, and which the authors of the New Testament referred to widely and interpreted in reference to the Messiah... It is a Psalm be-

loved by the ancient Church and by believers of all times,” which celebrates “the victorious and glorified Messiah seated at the right hand of God,” he stated.

According to the Holy Father, “this prayer may at first have been linked to the enthronement of a Davidic king; yet its meaning exceeds the specific contingency of an historic event, opening to broader dimensions and thereby becoming a celebration of the victorious Messiah, glorified at God’s right hand.”

The Psalm begins with a solemn declaration: “the Lord says to my lord ‘Sit at my right hand, till I make your enemies your footstool’” (v. 1).

God Himself enthrones the king in glory, seating him at His right, a sign of very great honor and of absolute privilege. The king is thus admitted to sharing in the divine kingship, of which he is mediator to the people. The king's kingship is also brought into being in the victory over his adversaries whom God Himself places at his feet. The victory over his enemies is the Lord's, but the king is enabled to share in it and his triumph becomes a sign and testimony of divine power.

The royal glorification expressed at the beginning of the Psalm was adopted by the New Testament as a messianic prophecy. For this reason, the verse is among those most frequently used by New Testament authors, either as an explicit quotation or as an allusion. With regard to the Messiah, Jesus Himself mentioned this verse in order to show that the Messiah was greater than David, that He was David's Lord (cf. Mt 22:41-45; Mk 12:35-37; Lk 20:41-44).

Hence an indissoluble relationship exists between the king celebrated by our Psalm and

God. The two of them govern together as one, so that the Psalmist can say that it is God Himself Who extends the sovereign's scepter, giving him the task of ruling over his adversaries as verse 2 says: "The Lord sends forth from Zion your mighty scepter. Rule in the midst of your foes!"

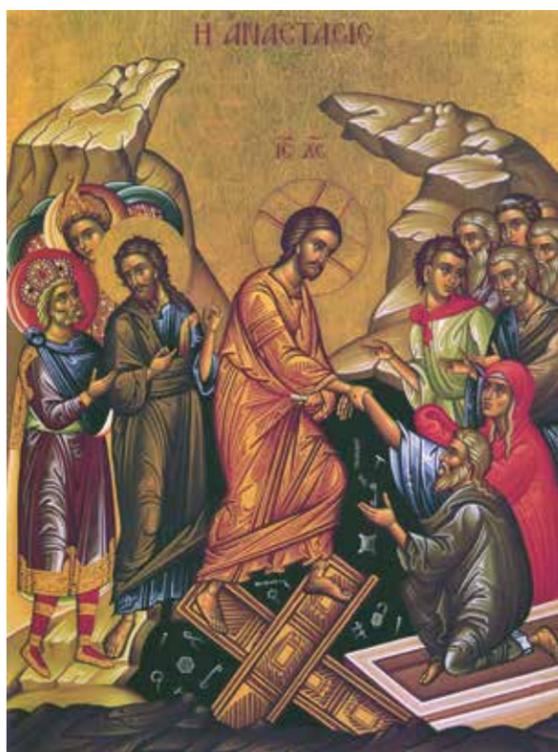
After the divine pronouncement in verse 4, with its solemn oath, the scene of the Psalm changes and the poet, addressing the king directly, proclaims: "The Lord is at your right hand" (Psalm 110:5a). If, in verse 1, it was the king who was seated at God's right hand as a sign of supreme prestige and honor, the Lord now takes His place at the right of the sovereign to protect him with this shield in battle and save him from every peril. The king was safe, God is his champion and they fight together and defeat every evil.

Thus, the last verses of the Psalm open with the vision of the triumphant sovereign. Supported by the Lord, having received both power and glory from Him (cf. v. 2), he opposes his foes, crushing his adversaries and judging the nations. The scene is painted in strong colors

to signify the drama of the battle and the totality of the royal victory. The sovereign, protected by the Lord, demolishes every obstacle and moves ahead safely to victory. He tells us: "yes, there is widespread evil in the world, there is an ongoing battle between good and evil and it seems as though evil were the stronger. No, the Lord is stronger, Christ, our true King and Priest, for he fights with all God's power and in spite of all the things that make us doubt the positive outcome of history, Christ wins and good wins, love wins rather than hatred."

This article will continue in the May, 2017, issue of the ECL. We encourage all the readers to ask any questions you have on subjects such as theology, spirituality, the sacraments, morality, church history, and the lives of the saints. Submit your questions to the email: sjpastor@ptd.net, or on the wall or by private message at the Facebook page: [SaintJohntheBaptist-ByzantineCatholicChurch](https://www.facebook.com/SaintJohntheBaptist-ByzantineCatholicChurch).

¹ https://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/audiences/2011/documents/hf_ben-xvi_aud_20111116.html ECL



Icon of the Descent Into Hades

"An awesome and glorious mystery occurs today: the One Who cannot be contained is now restrained. He, Who freed Adam from the curse, is bound. The Searcher of Hearts and Souls is questioned unjustly, He who confined the deep, is now confined to prison. In front of Pilate now stands the One before Whom the heavenly powers tremble. The Creator is struck by the hand of a creature. The Judge of the Living and the Dead is condemned to the cross. He, Who conquered Hell, is sealed in a tomb. O innocent Lord, Who graciously suffered for all things and saved all Mankind from the curse, glory be to You!" –From the Stichera for Great and Holy Friday

With Holy and Great Friday come a number of our traditional services: "Strasti" (Matins of the Passion) with its twelve gospel readings; the Royal Hours; and, finally, Burial Vespers. The tone of all these services are somber, with dark vestments and low lighting. Although the tones for the stichera, etc., are the usual ones for the particular services, they sound more somber. At Burial Vespers, in imitation of Joseph of Arimathea, the priest takes the burial shroud of Christ on his shoulders and processes, with all present, around the church and places the

SEASONAL REFLECTIONS

Father Ronald Hatton



WHAT A DIFFERENCE THREE DAYS MAKE

shroud in the tomb. Saturday continues the tone of heaviness of heart as we pray the "Lamentation" Matins, and the Hours. With the Vespers with the Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil, we see the shroud in the tomb, but a subtle change can be noted, especially with the clergy changing from dark vestments to bright, and singing hymns promising the Resurrection.

"Let us rise at early dawn and bring to our Master a hymn instead of myrrh; and we shall see Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, Who enlightens the life of all. When those bound by chains in the realm of Death saw Your boundless mercy, O Christ, they hastened to the light with joy, praising the Eternal Pasch. Bearing torches, let us meet the bridegroom, Christ, as He comes forth from His tomb; and let us greet, with joyful song, the saving Pasch of God." –Ode Four, Matins of the Resurrection

Come the morning, as we "rise at early dawn," we experience a profound change: this time, in imitation of the Ointment-bearers, we process around the church to the entrance of the "tomb," this being the closed doors of the church. We may hear the proclamation of the Gospel selection from Mark, chapter 16. We then begin the Matins of the Resurrection, singing the odes, and proclaiming, "Christ is risen from the dead. By death He trampled Death, and to those in the tombs, He granted life." At the climax of the hymns, the priest sings this proclamation while knocking on the doors. The doors open, and we see, like the Ointment-bearers, that the tomb is now empty; instead of purple or red altar cloths, we see white; instead of dimmed lights, every light and candle in the church is lit. "Christ is risen! Indeed He is risen!" We process in and, instead of canons of penitence and mourning, we sing the Canon of Saint John Damascene, the canon not of death and despair, but of life and hope and forgiveness! Instead of mourning our

sins, we rejoice that sin has been conquered and that we have been redeemed, reborn, and can spend eternity with our Lord.

What a difference three days can make! From darkness into light; from sin to forgiveness; from death to life. The Church, through her services, hymns, prayers, and readings, leads us from sin to salvation, and from death to eternal life in Christ. She shows us God's ultimate plan for us, and if we take all this for granted, it can lose all significance for us. Instead of The Pasch being "the Lord's Passover, since Christ our God has brought us from death to life and from earth to heaven," it becomes merely Easter, with eggs, chocolates, jelly beans, and over-eating. The Church gives us Lent, Holy Week, Good Friday, and the Feast of Feasts to help us attain the salvation that she proclaims all year long. Lent teaches us to give the spirit power over the body in fasting; to give alms "to the least of My brethren," to pray, not only in the words given to us in prayer books and formal services, but in a way that opens a conduit between us and God, that we may know and do His will for us. Through these services, we spiritually join with the disciples as Christ enters into Jerusalem to the cries of the Hebrew Children; to break bread with Him and ponder the words, "Take, eat; this is My Body," to see His betrayal, not only by Judas, but also by the other disciples as they flee at His arrest, and Peter when he denies he knows his Best Friend. We stand with John and the Blessed Mother at the foot of the cross. We endure the silence of His burial. But then? We stand with the Ointment-bearers in front of the empty tomb. We cry out with joy at the words of the angel. Indeed, what a difference three days make, not only for us, but for all Mankind. ECL



SEMINARIAN REFLECTIONS

Seminarian Timothy Farris

ARE WE PREPARED?

How often do we feel unprepared? I began to write an article on the Great Fast, because my favorite go-to topic of “discernment” was covered last month by my wonderful and esteemed colleague—I won’t name any names; let’s just call him “Paul”. Having never written anything for a newspaper, I finished only to realize by the time we go to print, the Great Fast will have run the final leg of the race. Writing for me doesn’t come naturally and I was so proud of what I managed to pull together.

But boy, do I feel unprepared for this. Thinking back, I have felt unprepared for a lot of things, a lot of which can be attributed to hitting the snooze button one too many times, not leaving time for traffic, or I flat out procrastinated on things that I thought for the moment were more important.

Are we prepared? See what I did there, took what I’m

experiencing and turned it around. In a few more days, Christ will have been crucified. In a few more days, Christ will have risen. It is that time to ready ourselves for the traffic-laden roads and the parking lots and the “standing room only.” Last Christmas, this rang a little differently for me. The clattering and shuffling in the pews had a different tone. In the seminary, we have almost a dozen kids floating around the chapel; every now and then one goes clunking off a pew followed by the wailing and gnashing of teeth. My feelings went out to the mother who immediately went into consolation mode but when an infant is born this wailing is a sign of life and vibrancy, it called for a sign of relief. It may interrupt our prayer but is our church’s life force, every creak of the pew, the scribbles of crayons, and occasional munching of Cheerios.

Pascha is a twice-yearly reprieve for many. Those who know that

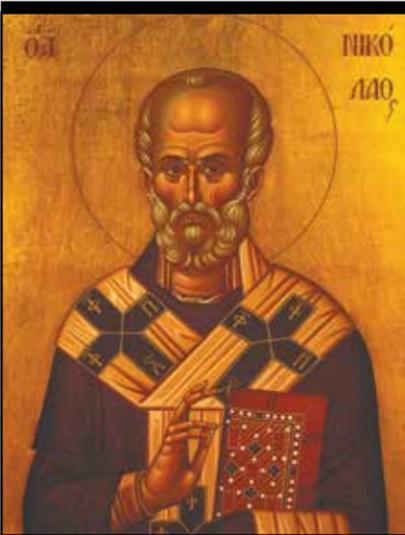
they belong in the Catholic Church but for one reason or another struggle to make it feel like home. I’ve been there, after a year and a half of bad Sunday habits at college, one invite brought me home. I didn’t need convincing, I knew I belonged but not that it was home.

Are we prepared?... to offer up our parking spot by the front entrance, our favorite pew by the middle aisle so that we can catch all the action, our patience for the toddler who ‘literally’ just lost their marbles; are we prepared to welcome guests as family leaving a place setting at the head of the table for them? Christ can take all these little offerings and work wonders.

Lastly are we prepared for what Christ has offered to us? Every year we follow Christ through His mission, offering miracles to the sick, only to be taken away from us in the garden, and nailed for the sins we have committed. We take great

solace in hearing the words, “I forgive you”, but it can be really challenging to ask for forgiveness. I say this, the hypocrite that I am, as I avoided confession the last two weeks. It is liberating, all of the weight that slowly piled up, gone. We hate admitting that we fell short, that we ‘missed the mark’. God knows this already, he wants us to hear those confirming, relieving, life-saving words, “You are forgiven.”

If you haven’t already, prepare yourself. The season can be overwhelming as the weather might decide to actually be spring. It’s a toss-up in Pittsburgh, yesterday was 70 degrees, today it snowed. All I know is in a few short weeks we will celebrate that Christ conquered Death and it was well worth taking the time to prepare myself for the miracle that God would take on flesh and die so that we may have eternal life. **ECL**



Mark Your Calendars!

The Saint Nicholas Pilgrimage at Carpathian Village Cresco, PA is returning on **July 9, 2017**



The Altar Server Camp at Carpathian Village Cresco, PA, will be on **August 5-9, 2017**
Boys ages 7-17 welcome!

UPCOMING EPARCHIAL AND PARISH EVENTS

Eastern Catholic Life

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- APRIL**
- 2 Fifth Sunday of the Great Fast
Sunday of Saint Mary of Egypt
 - 9 Flowery Sunday (Palm Sunday)
Triumphal Entry of Our Lord into Jerusalem
 - 13 Great and Holy Thursday
Chancery closed
 - 14 Great and Holy Friday
Chancery closed
 - 15 Great and Holy Saturday
 - 16 PASCHA*THE GREAT DAY* THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD
Christos voskrese! Voistinnu Voskrese!
 - 17 Bright Monday
*Solemn HolyDay *Chancery closed*
 - 18 Bright Tuesday
 - 24-27 Annual Presbyteral Days

- MAY**
- 8-10 Eastern Regional Conference of Canonists
Hilton Meadowlands, East Rutherford, NJ
Hosted by the Eparchy of Passaic
- JULY**
- 9 Saint Nicholas Pilgrimage
at Carpathian Village, Cresco, PA
- AUGUST**
- 5-9 Altar Server Camp
at Carpathian Village, Cresco, PA
 - 6 Pilgrimage For Peace
at Holy Dormition Franciscan Friary
 - 12-13 Holy Dormition Pilgrimage
Sister Servants of Mary Immaculate, Sloatsburg, New York