



# EASTERN CATHOLIC LIFE

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## DEACON PAUL VARCHOLA WEST ORDAINED TO THE HOLY PRESBYTERATE! AXIOS! AXIOS! AXIOS!

By Father Paul Varchola West and photos by Fathert James Hayer and Peter Kulina



Newly-ordained Father Paul Varchola West with his wife, Pan'i Alissa, daughter, Addie, and son, Nicholas

Over the past six months, give or take, we have all had to make adjustments to just about every aspect of our lives. July 18, 2020, the date of my ordination to the presbyterate, was no exception. Attendance was very limited; masks a requirement; and some alterations to the liturgy were necessary to ensure the health and safety of the greater good. Despite these external aspects, the day of my priestly ordination was nothing short of a miraculously transcendent experience.

As the Divine Liturgy began, I remember looking at the congregation, quickly scanning to see just how many people were there. The church seemed packed. I could not help but think, "How can this be?" I remembered the days leading up to the ordination and my feelings of slight disappointment that more people could not attend in person. Now, however, the church felt packed! I began to internally worry. Did we count wrong? Did we make a mistake with the social protocols? Did we have

"unauthorized" guests? Slightly worried about the consequences of having a gathering, I took as deep a breath as I could through my masked face and continued on with the last of my diaconal responsibilities prior to priestly ordination.

Having achieved internal calm and focus, the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy proceeded as beautifully as one could

have ever hoped, masks and hand sanitizer included; however, I could not shake the feeling that the church was too crowded, that it was overflowing with voices. As Bishop Kurt placed his omophorion over my head and called upon the Holy Spirit through the ordination prayers, I began to feel even more crowded, almost as if the already crowded church attendants had all entered the Holy Place and were standing all around me. They weren't. When Bishop Kurt helped me up to vest me in the priestly vestments, no one had moved. As cries of "Axios!" rang through the church, everyone was right where they were just a few minutes prior to the ordination rite. I had to shake this feeling. I chalked it up to nerves and continued on with the liturgy, now a priest. What a blessing! As the liturgy concluded and I headed out of the Royal Doors for the very first time to publicly exclaim my first prayer as a priest, I could not stop feeling as if the church was too crowded! I could not figure out what was going on, not until the next day when I viewed the recording of the ordination on Facebook.

As I began to watch the video, I thought, "My goodness, that church looks empty...so empty that, if people did not know the circumstances surrounding the event, it would simply look sad that so few people were in attendance." I ran these thoughts past my wife (now Pan'i Alissa!) and she agreed with me that the church seemed far fuller than it looked on the recorded video. I then remembered something I learned in one of the liturgical theology classes I took at the seminary and all this confusion made complete sense!

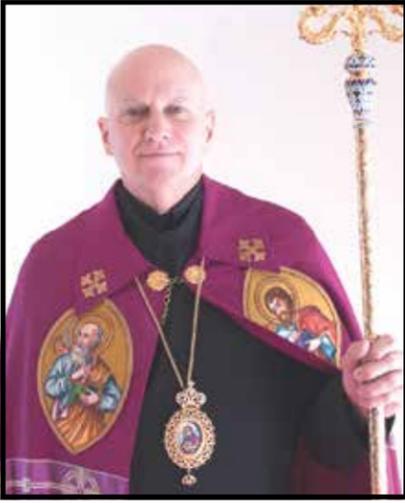
When we pray the Divine Liturgy, time is literally transformed, and the earthly liturgy combines with the heavenly liturgical worship of the angels and we all worship as one. Empty seats in the pews are by no means empty. Those seats are indeed occupied — occupied by the angels and the saints worshipping right along with us. The church seemed overcrowded to me simply because it was! What I was experiencing was not nerves or worries, but the metaphysical presence of the angels and saints praying along with the faithful here on earth. This thought stopped me in my tracks! Then I realized just how many people viewed the ordination via social media; I was shocked! Faithful from all over the country, people whom I do not even know were tuning in, watching, praying, and leaving comments. I was overwhelmed and tears filled my eyes. A day that was supposed to be a day of "restrictions" and "limited attendance" was anything but. This was a day of unity, of faith, and of prayer. This day was not merely my ordination date. July 18, 2020, was a day that demonstrates the unifying abilities of prayer and the transcendent nature of the Holy Spirit that, through prayer, the "impossible" is most certainly made possible. I pray that this day is an example to each and every one of us. I pray that we all realize that through Christian unity and through our prayer that magnificent things are not only possible, they are the inevitable outcome of our prayerful works as God's stewards on this earth.

I am beyond grateful to Bishop Kurt for calling me to the Order of the Holy Presbyterate and for spending as much time as he did ensuring everyone's safety by putting various social distanc-

*Continued on page 8*



Altar server Brandon D., Father Michael Salnicky, Altar server Zach B., Father James Badeaux, Father Edward Higgins, Father Francis Rella, Father Harry Untereiner, Father Robert Pipta, Bishop Kurt, Father Jack Custer, Father Paul Varchola West, Nicholas West, Addie West, Pan'i Alissa West, Deacon Nicholas Sotack, Father Edward Cimbala, Altar server Nicholas H., and Subdeacon Timothy Fariss



# I LIFT UP MY EYES...

Pastoral Reflections of Bishop Kurt



## PRAYING AT THE TOMB OF SAINT PETER

As far as we know, Rome was first called “the Eternal City,” i.e., *Urbs Aeterna*, by a Roman poet named Tibullus about a hundred years before it became the “City of Martyrs.” Christianity first spread to wherever there was already a Jewish synagogue, as many Jews at the time of Jesus accepted him as the Messiah, the Christ, the Son of David. The Jewish community in Rome goes back to the second century B.C. when Judas Maccabeus made an alliance with the Romans. In the eighth chapter of Maccabees, we read, “So Judas chose Eupolemus... and Jason... and sent them to Rome to make a league of amity and confederacy with them” against the Greeks, that is, the remnants of the empire of Alexander the Great. They entered the Senate chamber and said, “Judas Maccabeus and his brethren and the people of the Jews have sent us to you to make alliance and peace with you, and that we may be registered your confederates and friends.” The Romans were pleased with the offer of friendship and sent back the following on graven tables of brass: “Good success be to the Romans and to the people of the Jews, by sea, and by land, and far be the sword and enemy from them. But if there come first any war upon the Romans, or any of their confederates, in all their dominions: the nations of the Jews shall help them according as the time shall direct, with all their heart: neither shall they give them, whilst they are fighting, or furnish them with wheat, or arms, or money, or ships, as it hath seemed good to the Romans: and they shall obey their orders, without taking anything of them. In like manner also if war shall come first upon the nation of the Jews, the Romans shall help them with all their heart, according as the time shall permit them: and there shall not be given to them that come to their aid, either wheat, or arms, or money, or ships, as it hath seemed good to the Romans: and they shall observe their orders without deceit.”

We read in the Acts of the Apostles that wherever Saint Paul went to preach the Gospel, the Good News, he went first to the synagogue to tell his fellow Jews that Jesus was the Messiah for whom they had waited. Also in Rome we read at the end of the Acts, “When he arrived in Rome, Paul was allowed to live by himself with a soldier guarding him. After three days, Paul called the local Jewish leaders to a meeting.” After giving a little of his history, the leaders said to him, “We have not received any letters from Judea about you, nor have any of our people come from there with any

news or anything bad to say about you. But we would like to hear your ideas.” They set a date, and a large number came to hear Saint Paul explain Jesus to them, probably by explaining how their own scriptures and prophecies were fulfilled in the life of Jesus. The Acts say, “Some of them were convinced by his words, but others would not believe. So they left disagreeing among themselves.” The Acts of the Apostles concludes with these words, “For two years Paul lived in a place he rented for himself, and there he welcomed all who came to see him. He preached about the Kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ, speaking with all boldness and freedom.”

We know that at some point, Saint Peter came to Rome, and they were both martyred there, as described by Saint Clement the Pope of Rome about thirty years later. There is a place you can visit in Rome that, according to tradition, is the place where Saint Peter and Saint Paul parted ways before they ended their earthly pilgrimage in bloody martyrdom. Saint Paul, being a Roman citizen, was beheaded south of Rome, where his basilica is now located, and Saint Peter was crucified in Nero’s Circus next to the present day Basilica of Saint Peter.

In my second column about the ad limina visit to Rome by your eparchial clergy, we began the day bright and early with a bus ride to the Basilica of Saint Paul “Outside the Walls.” The next day, Tuesday, the plan was to take a bus to Saint Peter Basilica for our Liturgy at the tomb of the Apostle Peter underneath the main altar. Things were a little rockier our second day. Unlike Saint Paul which is far out of the city and was mostly empty, Saint Peter is the center of the liturgical life of the Eternal City and has one of the most crowded schedules. Groups arrive from all over the world early in the morning to celebrate their Mass or other Eucharists at many altars in the basilica, and the altar at the tomb of the Apostle Peter is the most sought after. As we stood outside the North American College waiting for our bus, we realized after it was 15 minutes late, or so, that it wasn’t coming. About seven bishops decided to walk to Saint Peter, and others waited a little longer. When we arrived at Saint Peter at the gate called the “Holy Office,” the Swiss Guards decided that we weren’t really bishops, and refused to let us in. Then, the next wave of our numbers arrived, and they decided maybe we were telling the truth, and let us enter. I was very concerned that we would lose our slot at the altar we were so late, or at least receive some stern words from the sacristans, but we were received graciously at the sacristy, and sent on our way into the great basilica, the largest church in the world. Saint Peter is more than three football fields long, and as you walk down the main aisle there are markings showing where

other great cathedrals such as Notre Dame would fit inside. Near the main altar, we descended stairs to the basement level which is the original floor of the basilica built by Constantine seventeen centuries ago.

When the Eastern bishops of the United States made their plans a few months earlier, we agreed to have a Syriac Liturgy at the tomb of Saint Peter. How wonderful it would be to hear the holy Qurbana sung in Aramaic, the very language of Jesus himself, and of Saint Peter. Unfortunately, Bishop Habash was unable to get help in Rome with singers and servers, and so on, so Bishop Mikael Mouradian was able to arrange an Armenian Liturgy instead. The priests and seminarians of the Armenian College came to assist him. Although many spectacular events of surpassing beauty occur in Saint Peter Basilica, the singing of the Armenian seminarians in the stone crypt was a real showstopper. People came from everywhere to find the source of the chanting.

Armenia has the honor of being the very first “Christian nation.” If you look at their official national website today, they claim that Armenia is 99% Christian. In addition to that honor, one and a half million Armenians were martyred at the end of World War I during the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. Bishop Mouradian preached an inspiring sermon about our commitment as Christians at the tomb of the martyr Peter, weaving in the sacrifices made by the Armenian people to preserve the Christian faith for almost 2000 years.

Rome is often called the “City of Martyrs.” In addition to Saint Peter and

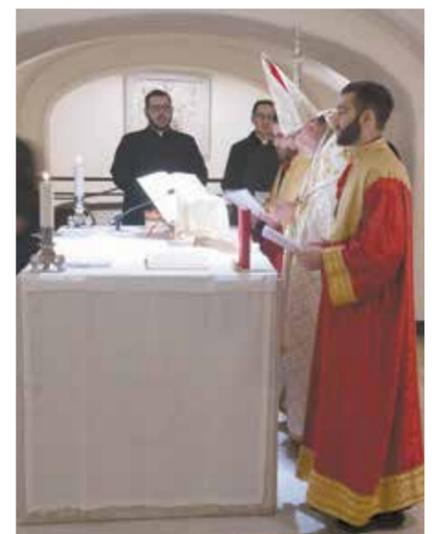


The place where the bones of Saint Peter were interred by the first Christians of Rome after his crucifixion in Nero’s Circus a few hundred yards from this spot. In the twentieth century, they were discovered directly under the main altar where the ancient tradition described.

Saint Paul, some of the greatest names in the history of the faith were martyred in the Eternal City. Saint Agnes, Saint Cecilia—the patron saint of music, Saint Sebastian, Saint Lawrence, Saint Anastasia, Saint Valentine, Saints John and Paul, and, of course, all the early popes, Saint Linus, Saint Anacleus, Saint Evaristus, Saint Sixtus, and

so on. It’s interesting that women are represented equally with men in these early martyrologies of Rome. After a hundred and fifty years of these persecutions, in his great work *Apologeticus*, the North African theologian, Tertullian, wrote to the emperor, “We flourish even more as often as you harvest us. The seed is the blood of Christians.” He actually said it in Latin, “Plures effici-mur, quotiens metimur a vobis. Semen est sanguis Christianorum.” People often paraphrase him as saying, “The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church.” Wikipedia actually misquotes his Latin, and that misquote is repeated all over the internet.

Some Christians died for the faith soon after Jesus, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles. Saint Stephen first, and then the Apostle James. Christianity was officially outlawed in Rome by an act of the Senate in the 30’s, but the great martyrdoms did not begin until Nero 64 AD. From July 18 till July 23 of 64 AD, a great fire consumed much of Rome. The fire then reignited. Tacitus says that out of the fourteen districts of Rome, “four remained uninjured, three were leveled to the ground, while in the other seven were left only a few shattered half-burnt relics of houses.” The fire began in the shops near the Circus Maximus between the Palatine Hill and the Caelian Hill. Tacitus gives a detailed description of the progress of the fire including this terrifying passage: “The blaze in its fury ran first through the level portions of the city, then rising to the hills, while it again devastated every place below them, it outstripped all preventive measures; so rapid was the mischief and so completely at its mercy the city, with those narrow wind-



Bishop Mikael Mouradian celebrates the Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom according to the rites of the Armenian Catholic Church in the crypt of Saint Peter.

ing passages and irregular streets, which characterized old Rome. Added to this were the wailings of terror-stricken women, the feebleness of age, the helpless inexperience of childhood, the crowds who sought to save themselves or others, dragging out the infirm or waiting for them, and by their hurry in the one case, by their delay in the other, aggravating the confusion. Often, while they looked behind them, they were in-

tercepted by flames on their side or in their face. Or if they reached a refuge close at hand, when this too was seized by the fire, they found that, even places, which they had imagined to be remote, were involved in the same calamity. At last, doubting what they should avoid or whither betake themselves, they crowded the streets or flung themselves down in the fields, while some who had lost their all, even their very daily bread, and others out of love for their kinsfolk, whom they had been unable to rescue, perished, though escape was open to them. And no one dared to stop the mischief, because of incessant menaces from a number of persons who forbade the extinguishing of the flames, because again others openly hurled brands, and kept shouting that there was one who gave them authority, either seeking to plunder more freely, or obeying orders.”

Nero, who was away during the fire, took advantage of the empty space in the center of the city to build an extensive palace, “in which the jewels and gold, long familiar objects, quite vulgarized by our extravagance, were not so marvelous as the fields and lakes, with woods on one side to resemble a wilderness, and, on the other, open spaces and extensive views.” This selfish act of Nero was so despised by the people that the entire palace was destroyed or buried after he was killed.

The rumor spread that Nero started the fire himself, and prevented its extinction, so that he could build his palace. No matter how he used his power, he was unable to eradicate this rumor, so Tacitus tells us, “Consequently, to get rid of the report, Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace. Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus, and a most mischievous superstition, thus checked for the moment, again broke out not only in Judaea, the first source of the evil, but even in Rome, where all things hideous and shameful from every part of the world find their center and become popular. Accordingly, an arrest was first made of all who pleaded guilty; then, upon their information, an immense multitude was convicted, not so much of the crime of firing the city, as of hatred against mankind. Mockery of every sort was added to their deaths. Covered with the skins of beasts, they were torn by dogs and perished, or were nailed to crosses, or were doomed to the flames and burnt, to serve as a nightly illumination, when daylight had expired.”

After our beautiful Armenian Liturgy at the tomb of the Apostle and Martyr Peter, it would have been enough for any day, but we still had meetings to attend. We first went to the Congregation for Clergy, which is in charge of many things to do with priests and deacons. It supervises all the seminaries in the world, for example, and is where an application is made if a priest or deacon asks to return to the lay state. The Congregation cannot laicize any-

*As we went to press, we learned that Bishop Milan Šašik, Bishop of Mukačevo, our mother eparchy in Europe, fell asleep in the Lord on July 14. Fuller coverage will appear in an upcoming issue. May his memory be eternal! Vičnaja jemu pamjat'!*

one, but it submits the application to the Holy Father who does the deed himself. Even though this Congregation is not generally concerned with our Eastern churches, if we do send an application for laicization, the Eastern Congregation will send it to this other Congregation for processing. The Prefect is Cardinal Stella of whom you may have heard if you read Catholic news. Since this Congregation is both in charge of laicization and also protecting clergy, it seems like it has conflict of interest in its mandate.

Next we headed to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith at 11:30. It seemed like it was a long day already. The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, or the CDF, is actually the oldest of all the Congregations. In 1542, Pope Paul III founded an institution to protect our ancient Christian teachings from the heresies sweeping Europe at the time, causing fights between Christians and even wars between nations. It was originally called the Supreme Sacred Congregation of the Roman and Universal Inquisition. The Catholic Church is so concerned to always teach only true doctrine about the Christian faith that this congregation stands out from the others. It used to be that the Pope himself was the prefect of this congregation, and in the old minutes of meetings you can read, for example, Pope Pius XII presiding and sharing in the theological debates. By the sixteen hundreds, the popes had given this congregation the dirty job of dealing with the worst crimes of clergy. At first, the crime of using the confessional for sexual seduction was assigned to this congregation. Pope Gregory XV calls it “shameful and dishonorable conduct” in 1622. More crimes were added over the centuries, and today it is the court that examines cases of the worst clergy crimes. Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger was the prefect of the Congregation for almost 24 years before he became Pope Benedict XVI. He was succeeded by Cardinal Levada, the highest Vatican office ever held by an American. According to some sources, it was Cardinal Ratzinger who read some of the abuse cases and began the task of cleaning up the Catholic Church. He was so horrified by what he read that he wrote his famous meditations for Good Friday that were celebrated by the Pope that year at the Colosseum. When Pope Paul VI reformed the Roman curia after Vatican II, he changed the CDF so that it has its own prefect now instead of the Pope. Pope Francis has shaken things up there by appointing three women as consultants for the first time in history, and he added a tribunal to try bishops who are accused of crimes in the Church. Although the ancient Church had a process for remov-

ing bishops, there had been no process in the Catholic Church since Rome began its long process of centralizing all authority. If you are ever accused of heresy, or if you are accused of clerical crimes, you might get a letter from the CDF or the “Holy Office.”

organized, I mean they had to line up according to various tribes and other social divisions.

Although there are over 900 churches in Rome (!), there are even more restaurants. Some of the restaurants are fa-



*Il Vero Alfredo, the restaurant of Alfredo di Lelio who invented Fettuccine all'Alfredo for his wife, Ines, after the birth of their son, Armando*

It would be a betrayal of confidence to repeat some things that were said at some of these meetings, but I will tell you that the meeting at the CDF was a stormy one! One of our Eastern bishops tried to tell them how frustrated we are in the United States with scandals in the Church.

Well, Rome isn't all boring meetings with Church officials or stormy ones. There are many beautiful churches to see and to pray at, many tombs of great saints. Saint Monica's tomb is in the church named after her son, Saint Augustine. Remember, she prayed for so long for her son. Saint Ambrose comforted her that so many prayers from a mother must be heard. When I lived in Rome, I stopped in there every time I walked through the Campo Marzio and prayed at the tomb of Saint Monica for some ne'er-do-wells. If you read really

mous in their own right. For example, La Carbonara on the Campo dei Fiori (Field of Flowers), claims to be the first home of pasta carbonara. Others claim it was invented by coal miners, for obvious reasons. Maybe it should be the official pasta of our eparchy. We didn't have time to visit restaurants during the ad limina, but I did walk by one near the tomb of the Emperor Augustus called Il Vero Alfredo, which means “the true Alfredo.” According to family history, Alfredo di Lelio began to work at a restaurant in Rome operated by his mother in 1892. Some 15 years later after his wife, Ines, gave birth to their first son, Armando, she was not recovering and had no appetite. Alfredo wanted something enticing and nutritious and he invented “fettuccine al triplo burro” which means fettuccine with triple butter. He prepared wide pasta noodles (fettuccine) with only butter and fresh



*Church of Saint Nicholas of Tolentino--the church attached to the Armenian College, given by Pope Leo XIII in 1883*

ancient history, you might recognize the Campus Martius as the place where Romans organized to vote in their most important elections. When I say they

parmesan cheese. He told her to try it, and if she didn't like it, he would eat it. She liked it so much she ate the whole

*Continued on page 6*



# PEOPLE YOU KNOW AROUND THE EPARCHY

## IN PITTSTON...

### Free Drive Thru Ziti Dinner for Community

The scene at Saint Michael Church on North Main Street, Pittston, PA, was anything but normal the afternoon of Thursday, June 4, 2020. Anyone driving past the church might have wondered why so many vehicles were being routed through the church parking lot. If not for a sign out front, some might have thought it was a traffic detour, especially seeing men directing cars to fall in line. But it wasn't that at all. The church volunteers set up a free dinner giveaway for the community.

dinner free to the community. This was a full dinner complete with homemade meatballs and cookies as dessert, given to anyone and everyone who simply showed up.

And the community turned out indeed and so did parish volunteers. Several cars arrived well before the 4 pm start time with the event publicized as first come, first serve until all dinners ran out. Vehicles were directed in a loop that twisted around the parking lot

At this time of year, the parish is usually preparing for an Annual Flea Market and Ziti Dinner in August, an event 23 years old and holding. But with plans uncertain due to Pennsylvania's coronavirus restrictions, parish organizers of the flea market were on board with a different idea. The church sexton suggested the parish could offer the ziti



Safely-packaged meals ready to be received

to avoid creating a real traffic jam on busy Route 11 in front of the church. Wearing gloves and face masks, the volunteers together with Saint Michael Parish's Administrator, Father Andrii Dumnych, handed out 469 meals at two food tents as the cars drove up.

As successful as this event was, even more was the generosity of donors, with all the food expenses covered totally by donations. Parishioners who



Father Andrii safely hands meals to driver



were able to volunteer did all the work both inside and outside. God gets the credit for ensuring a fine weather day. Saint Michael volunteers get the credit for their heartfelt desire to spread God's love and joy to a those in need of goodness. The only regret was at the point of running out of food around 5:30 PM, the event ended.

While no one was looking to be rewarded, it's nice to know that acts of kindness are multiplied in many ways. And Saint Paul offers this promise of faith in Hebrews 6:10 – "God is not unjust; He will not forget your work and the love you have shown to Him by your service, past and present, to his holy people." May God keep all safe and healthy.

## IN SMITHTOWN...

### Parish Celebrates Divine Liturgy Outdoors

Photos courtesy of Gregory A. Shemitz, 3VPhoto.com

On May 31, 2020, the Byzantine Catholic Church of the Resurrection in Smithtown, NY, resumed celebration of the Divine Liturgy outdoors. This enabled all parishioners and fellow Catholics in the vicinity the opportunity to attend Liturgy in person for the first time since the beginning of the Coronavirus health crisis.



Father Vladyslav Budash gives the homily

The Church of the Resurrection is the first Catholic Church in Suffolk County to offer open public Liturgies. Appropriately, this took place on Pentecost Sunday, the celebration of the establishment of the Church through the descent of the Holy Spirit and the preaching of the Apostles.

Through the efforts of Father Vladyslav Budash, parochial vicar of Resurrection Church, and a number of parishioners, the outdoor gazebo was transformed into the sanctuary, with icons and an altar. A sound system was set up so all could hear the Liturgy clearly. Picnic tables were spread out across the lawn so parishioners could enjoy the liturgy. For those who were not yet completely comfortable in public settings, they could park their cars close by, and a portion of the sound system was installed facing their direction as well. Finally, the live stream of the Liturgy on Facebook continued for all who chose to take part from home.

The morning began with a group of parishioners and faithful Catholics who arrived early to pray the Rosary together while still appropriately distanced from each other.

Of course, the liturgical color for the day was green, but there was no "green-

ing" of the church needed. The outdoor venue provided an abundance of natural green beauty, a physical symbol of our new life in Christ. During Father Vladyslav's sermon he noted, "After a long stay in the quarantine desert, we can finally feel God's presence among us. We can't gather all together in the temple yet, but the gazebo has now become our Tabernacle, our Tent of congregation. I am very glad that God can use the property of our parish for public prayer and the preaching of the Gospel, just as Jesus used Peter's boat."

Many of those present were guests – Catholics who are thirsty for the spiritual life and were grateful for the op-



"The servant of God receives the most precious, holy, pure..."

portunity to join us in prayer. Some had experienced Byzantine worship before, but for others this was their first experience. The opportunity to share our Eastern spirituality and tradition with others was an added benefit for the parish. A

number of parishioners remained after liturgy and answered our guests' questions. Some took advantage to the invitation to see the interior of the church and offer their private prayers. Father Nicholas Daddona is the administrator of Resurrection Parish.



**UPDATE: Due to the Coronavirus, the Sisters Servants of Mary Immaculate Announce that the 66<sup>th</sup> Holy Dormition Pilgrimage August 8 - 9, 2020 will be a Virtual Pilgrimage (via internet) this year.**

We had hoped that this year's pilgrimage would have been a place of sanctuary where all of us could gather to replenish our souls after the devastating effects of this pandemic. However, there is still uncertainty as to when travel and gathering in large groups will be safe.

We plan to live-stream Divine Liturgy for that weekend as well as offer other opportunities for the faithful to receive spiritual graces. We will try to have the Divine Liturgy also broadcast on television.

We hope to provide opportunities for those who do not have internet access. Please watch for details in the near future.

**For more information: <https://ssmi-us.org>**

# IN HILLSBOROUGH...

## Parishes Honor Music Director

On Sunday, July 26, the parish families of Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church in Hillsborough, NJ, and Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church in Dunellen, NJ, honored Glenn Sedar, music director and cantor of Saint Mary Parish, by presenting him with a hand-written icon of Saint Romanos the Melodist, patron saint of cantors and author of many liturgical hymns in the Byzantine Rite. During the three months of the Covid-19 lockdown, Glenn came faithfully every Sunday and holy day to serve as cantor for the Divine Liturgy, which was live-streamed on Facebook. This Liturgy served both the parishes of Saint Mary and Saint Nicholas and, of course, all the faithful and visitors who prayed with them via the internet. The communities of each parish, together with their pastor, Father James Badeaux, are grateful to Glenn and his wife, Martina, and their family, for the great personal sacrifices made for the spiritual good of all, so the Church's great act of public worship, the Divine Liturgy, could continue to edify and bring spiritual comfort to everyone during the unprecedented crisis.



## FROM THE OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

### Eparchial Appointments

#### June 13

Very Reverend Michael Salnick is re-appointed Chairman of the Eparchial Cemetery Commission.

Right Reverend Archpriest James G. Hayer, Very Reverend John Custer, Reverend Robert Lozinski CSC, are re-appointed members of the Eparchial Cemetery Commission.

Very Reverend Michael Kerestes is appointed as member of the Eparchial Cemetery Commission

#### July 19

Reverend Vasyl Sokolovych, is relieved as Parochial Vicar of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish, Levittown, PA

#### July 21

Very Reverend Mark Shuey is relieved as Parochial Administrator of Saints Cyril and Methodius Parish in Cary, NC

Reverend Vasyl Sokolovych, is appointed Parochial Administrator of Saints Cyril and Methodius in Cary, NC

#### July 27

Reverend Yuriy Oros is relieved as Parochial Administrator of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in Levittown, PA, retaining his appointments as Parochial Administrator of Saint Mary Parish in Trenton, NJ, and Saint Nicholas Parish in Roebling, NJ.

Reverend Paul Varchola West is appointed Parochial Administrator of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in Levittown, PA

## NEW BYZANTINE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY FORMING IN GREATER CHARLOTTE, NC, AREA

Divine Liturgies at the Byzantine Catholic Mission of Fort Mill, SC for the month of June will be broadcast online. Please contact Ron Somich by email at [ron.somich@gmail.com](mailto:ron.somich@gmail.com) for the link and dial in information. <https://carolinabyzantine.com/>

**August: 1, 8, 15, 22, 29**

## ANNUAL PILGRIMAGE TO GO VIRTUAL IN 2020



**M**y dear Friends,  
As we put up our 2020 calendars, I'm sure we did so hoping to fill each page with many plans, hopes, goals, and aspirations. We had it all figured out.

Needless to say, having passed through one fourth of this year, the picture looks entirely different. We all find ourselves in situations that we never expected or imagined, stretching our faith and trust. We need to dig deep into our spiritual treasure chest for encouragement. One phrase I like to remember is: "The only way to stay above the water is to trust the One who walked on the waves."

When we make plans, I imagine the Lord looks down upon us, shaking his head and smiling as He looks at what is actually on the horizon. So what do we do? We trust, we pray, we hold our plans with open hands. We surrender them to Him.

Such has been our need as Sisters of Saint Basil. We met, we discussed, we came up with ideas and plans to celebrate our 100th anniversary – a Century of Ministry to the Byzantine Catholic Church. Then COVID-19 arrived on the scene, and everything changed. We, too, need to remember that just because what's going on now doesn't feel good, it doesn't mean God's not working. Worrying does not empty tomorrow of its troubles, it empties today of its strength. We, too, strive to give up control and allow the Spirit of God to lead our lives.

One of the most difficult changes that we need to accept is the decision to cancel the Pilgrimage gathering in honor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. In the interest of safety and well-being of all, we will follow the lead of so many others and adhere to the guidelines provided. It is our intent, however, to work on providing a series of internet services which pilgrims can watch from their own homes. So, this year we will be making a pilgrimage of the "heart" rather than a pilgrimage of the "feet".

We know that all of you are likewise going through your own life changes and adjustments. Together, we Sisters and friends are like a quilt with lots of different shapes, sizes, colors, and patterns. Together, through our prayers for each other, we find warmth and comfort in a support system that makes our lives richer and fuller. Together, we discover God's plan for us.

With our loving prayers and support,

*Sister Ruth Plante, OSBM*

Sister Ruth Plante, OSBM  
Provincial

<https://sistersofstbasil.org/important-announcement-regarding-pilgrimage/>

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## Praying at the Tomb of Saint Peter

...Continued from page 3



An elegant and resplendent Armenian icon of the Annunciation. The Angel Gabriel who stands in the presence of God carries the message "Rejoice" to the Theotokos who is taken aback in her humility. Behind, a rod goes out from the root of Jesse and a blossom springs up from the root

dish. The dish became popular all over the world and was called Fettuccine all'Alfredo or simply Fettuccine Alfredo. It seems to me that he could have named it Fettuccine alla Ines or Fettuccine all'Armando. Alfredo was made a Knight of the Crown of Italy in recogni-

tion for his achievement. I suppose if Alfred Nobel had been Italian instead of Swedish there would be a Nobel Prize for recipes and statues and singing, and so on, instead of those other things.

Alfredo sold his restaurant to two of the waiters during World War II. In 1950,



Church of Saint Nicholas of Tolentino--the church attached to the Armenian College, given by Pope Leo XIII in 1883

Alfredo opened another restaurant with his son, Armando. It seems that the restaurant that I walked by is that second restaurant on the Piazza Augusto Imperatore. The two restaurants compete enthusiastically over the recipe in true Italian hyperbole. The second restaurant is named Il Vero Alfredo—The True Alfredo. Many American recipes include other ingredients such as cream and garlic and even chicken or seafood. In Italy, the meat course is after the pasta course, so you would never find "chicken alfredo" or shrimp alfredo." The original Alfredo is just fettuccine with butter (triple butter) and fresh (not aged) parmesan cheese.

Although we didn't have time to go to restaurants, we were invited on Tuesday evening for dinner at the Armenian College. The Armenian bishop for the United States, Mikael Mouradian, was eager to show us hospitality. In Rome, there are many restrictions on

where you can drive and many one-way streets. It seemed to me that the bus driver was lost as he circled way up north around the Villa Borghese and then back down again near the American Embassy. When he finally let us out, we really did get lost, walking all the way to the Piazza Barberini, and then circling back, and calling Bishop Mikael on a cell phone, and finally the Armenian seminarians had to come find us. The Armenian College is located at the Church of San Nicola da Tolentino, which was assigned to them by Pope Leo XIII in 1883. You might think the church is named for Saint Nicholas of Myra, but in fact there is a Saint Nicholas of Tolentino. He was an Italian friar who died in 1305. He was from Sant'Angelo in Pontano, but he had visions in which angels told him to move to Tolentino where he spent the rest of his life. He was a famous preacher and confessor. He avoided the heated Italian politics of the era, and dedicated himself to his sheep, especially the poor and criminals. He became famous for some miraculous cures. He was so recognized by the people for his holiness that petitions began soon for his canonization, and he was canonized in 1446. One of the more entertaining stories about him is that he was once served fowl, even though he was a vegetarian. He blessed the cooked bird and it immediately flew out the window. None of the food that was served to us at the Armenian College flew out the window that I saw, but the meal was very good. I really enjoyed the illuminated manuscripts on the wall. One of those is pictured in this article. We found our way back to the bus. It seemed like three days' worth of activity in one day, so we turned in and rested up for our next day of activities.

+Kurt Burnette

## MIRACULOUS "MARY, HELPER OF MOTHERS" ICON

Services will be celebrated at 7:00 PM

At the initiative of Bishop Kurt, a miraculous Marian icon will make a tour of all the Byzantine Catholic parishes in New Jersey, including the state active duty military base, and Saint Nicholas Parish in White Plains, NY, throughout 2020. It is especially beloved by women who struggle with infertility or difficult pregnancies. Several miraculous births have been attributed to this icon in the Byzantine Catholic community of Albuquerque, NM, where a copy has been venerated for twenty years.

The icon, known as the *Albazinskaya* from its place of origin on the borderlands between Russia and China, is also called "Mary, Helper of Mothers." The original icon is credited with defending the Russian Orthodox outpost against Chinese invaders on several occasions from the 17<sup>th</sup> to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. It depicts a calm and prayerful Virgin Mother looking directly at the faithful. She displays for us an image of her Son, newly born or perhaps yet unborn, resting over her torso.

A large, hand painted icon of the *Virgin Helper of Mothers* will be present in

each Byzantine Catholic parish in New Jersey for two weeks or more. Bishop Kurt will personally preside over a devotional service in each parish. There will be opportunities for the faithful to venerate the icon, to engage in personal prayer, and to take home holy cards depicting the Virgin Helper of Mothers.

The *Albazinskaya* icon celebrates how God became Man, and a Virgin became His Mother. It celebrates the mysteries of conception and birth by which God has shared His creative power with married couples. It reminds us that every human life has its origin directly from God, and it offers hope to the despondent and the oppressed.

The Byzantine Catholic parishes of New Jersey welcome our Latin Rite Catholic and Orthodox neighbors, as well as all Christians who honor the Lord's Mother, to join in the worship service of Psalms and Scriptural readings that will be offered in each parish.

More specific information about service times can be obtained from the individual parishes. Due to quarantine for coronavirus, this schedule is subject to change.

- Saint Elias, Carteret: July 30-August 13  
42 Cooke Avenue, Carteret, New Jersey  
Special Service--Wednesday, August 12, 7:00 PM
- Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Toms River: August 13-August 27  
1937 Church Road, Toms River, New Jersey  
Special Service--Wednesday, August 19, 7:00 PM
- Saint Mary, Jersey City: August 27-September 10  
231 Pacific Avenue, Jersey City, New Jersey  
Wednesday, September 2, 7:00 PM
- Saint John the Baptist, Bayonne: September 10-September 24  
15 East 26th Street, Bayonne, New Jersey  
Wednesday, September 16, 7:00 PM



- Saint Thomas the Apostle, Rahway: September 24-October 8  
1410 Church Street, Rahway, New Jersey  
Wednesday, September 30, 7:00 PM
- Holy Spirit, Mahwah: October 8-October 22  
Island and Church Streets, Mahwah, New Jersey  
Wednesday, October 21, 7:00 PM
- Saint Nicholas, White Plains, NY: October 22-November 5  
768 North Street, White Plains, New York  
Wednesday, October 28, 7:00 PM

## ETERNAL MEMORY! SISTER MARY ANN BOTSKO, SSMI 1955—2020

Sister Mary Ann Botsko, a Sister Servant of Mary Immaculate, passed away at Nyack Hospital in Nyack, NY, on June 10, 2020. She was 65 years old and 39 years in religious life.

She was born on April 15, 1955, along with her twin brother, Father Jerome Botsko, in Donora, PA. John and Mary Botsko nurtured the faith of their four children, John, Thomas, Jerome, and Mary Ann. They were parishioners of Saint Michael Byzantine Catholic Church in Pittsburgh, PA. Sister Mary Ann attributed her vocation to Consecrated Life and her twin brother's vocation to the priesthood, to the fruits of the continued prayers of their grandmother for vocations. Father Jerome Botsko is chaplain for the Order of Sisters of Saint Basil the Great in Uniontown, PA, and the pastor of Holy Protection of the Mother of God Church in Morgantown, WV.

Sister Mary Ann spent a few years in teaching and at Saint Basil Seminary Library in Stamford, but most of her years of ministry were in Sloatsburg, NY. Her ministry at Saint Mary Spiritual and Educational Center was to serve and care for the retreatants. Retreatants remember her willingness to spend time talking with them, her contagious smile, her joyful presence and uplifting laugh. Sister Mary Ann

also served at Saint Joseph Adult Care Home as Activity Director, as the elderly were always close to her heart.

Her life of prayer and service to the Church and the Sisters Servants was done in a simple, but faithful manner. She was sincere and conscientious about her religious life, prayer life, and felt strongly that this was her calling. Although she liked to stay in the background, we know she affected the lives of many. She did much to spread God's love behind the scenes.

A tribute to her memory by Father Paul Wolensky expresses the simple, yet powerful witness Sister Mary Ann gave as a Sister Servant, "I especially recall Sister Mary Ann's kind welcome of me whenever our paths crossed at various church events. She possessed a kindness and joyful demeanor, which I will never forget. Her happiness in her vocation and infectious laughter and smile, gave me a glimpse of the wonderful relationship she enjoyed with our Lord Jesus and His Most Blessed Mother Mary. What a great example she gave to those around her."

On June 14 at 6:30 PM, Monsignor John Terlecky, Chaplain, and Father Jerome Botsko blessed the casket and celebrated the Parastas for the repose of Sister Mary Ann's soul.

On June 15, Bishop Paul (Chomnycky), Ukrainian Eparchy of Stamford; Bishop Kurt, Eparchy of Passaic; Father Jerome Botsko; and Monsignor Terlecky celebrated the Funeral Divine Liturgy for the repose of the soul of

Sister Mary Ann. In his homily, Bishop Paul spoke about the calling of the first apostles and compared the apostles' response to both Sister Mary Ann and her brother Father Jerome, in answering positively, even though they may not have really known what that call entailed, but were willing to risk everything. Bishop Paul noted that she was a woman of prayer; and although she never held positions of authority in the Congregation, but she was a prayerful presence to the Sisters and those whose life she touched."



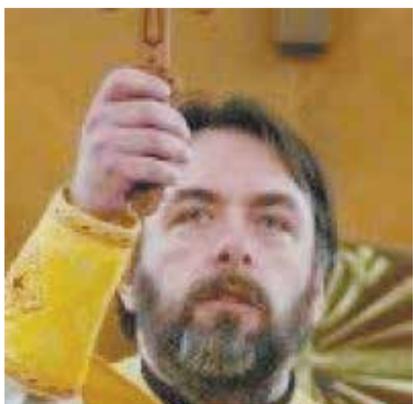
+Sister Mary Ann Botsko, SSMI

Father Jerome Botsko shared about how much of an impact his sister, Sister Mary Ann, made on his priestly life. Sister Kathleen Hutsko, Provincial Superior, shared in her remarks how Sister Mary Ann's life of prayer and service to the Church and the Sisters Servants was done in a simple and faithful manner. Interment was at the Sisters Servants Cemetery in Sloatsburg, NY. *Eternal Memory!*



Father Jerome Botsko, Bishop Paul (Chomnycky) (Ukrainian Eparchy of Stamford), and Bishop Kurt

## FATHER FRANK HANINCIK RECEIVES SECOND MASTER'S DEGREE

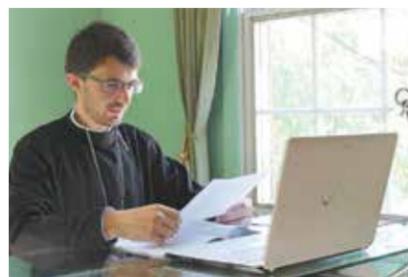


The Coronavirus global pandemic has changed how we interact with each other, how perform our daily tasks, and even how we celebrate major life events. As many of our high school and college graduates can attest, getting a diploma in 2020 has been an experience like no other class in history. "Graduation by Zoom" became the norm as graduates listened to commencement addresses and watched their names scroll by on their computer screens and smart phones. One name among the many graduates across the country this year was Father Frank Hanincik. While he already holds a Master of Divinity from our seminary in Pittsburgh, Father Frank says he always had an interest in psychology. "I wanted a chance to study psychology in a way that integrated a Catholic vision of the human person." The perfect place to find that vision and the flexibil-

ity necessary for a priest to balance his ministry and studies was Divine Mercy University. Located in Sterling, VA, Divine Mercy offers master's and doctorate degrees on campus as well as online. Father Frank took classes online for two and a half years, and on June 27 he was among the graduates to receive a Master of Science in Psychology. "One of the goals of the program is to help students identify and respond to mental health challenges in their specific ministry," Father Frank said. "Studying psychology from a Catholic perspective was so different from the psychology courses I took as an undergraduate at a secular university." Identifying and responding to mental health challenges is something every priest faces in his ministry. Having studied the human mind in a way that integrates the latest psychological research with a vision of the whole person, created in God's image and likeness, has impacted his pastoral work. "I've already seen the fruits of this approach in my ministry, both when I meet penitents in the confessional, and in encounters with parishioners and others who seek counsel, or just someone to listen to them."

Father Frank is pastor of Saints Cyril and Methodius Parish in Fort Pierce, and administrator of Saint Basil the Great Parish in Miami, FL.

## FATHER HRIHORIIY LOZINSKY DEFENDS DOCTORAL DISSERTATION



On July 1, 2020, Father Hryhoriiy (Gregory) Lozinsky successfully defended his doctoral dissertation at the Pontifical Biblical Institute, a university-level institution of the Holy See in Rome, and was awarded the doctorate in sacred scripture (SSD) *summa cum laude*. It was founded by Pope Saint Pius X in 1909 in order to be "a center of higher studies for Sacred Scripture in the city of Rome and of all related studies according to the spirit of the Catholic Church." From its foundation, the Institute has been entrusted to the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits). Due to the pandemic, Father Hryhoriiy presented his defense online from NJ, while the members of the doctoral committee were gathered in Rome.

The subject of Father Hryhoriiy's dissertation was *The Annual Sacred Feasts in the Book of Numbers in Light of the Biblical Texts and Some Ancient Sources of 200 BC—100 AD*. No monograph had been dedicated to this subject in biblical scholarship so the committee

allowed the publication of the whole dissertation. It is a contribution on the topics of the feasts, calendars, and sacrifices in the Old Testament.

This five-year academic achievement was made possible by the blessing of the Bishop of Mukačevo, the late Bishop Milan Šašik, CM. Bishop Milan gave his blessing to Father Hryhoriiy and obtained a scholarship from the Congregation of the Eastern Catholic Churches for him. Later, Bishop Kurt who welcomed Father Hryhoriiy to serve in the Eparchy of Passaic and complete the dissertation research.

Father Hryhoriiy utilized the resources of the following libraries: Pontifical Biblical Institute (Rome), *École biblique et archéologique française* (Jerusalem), and recently, Princeton Theological Seminary (New Jersey). He wants to share what he learned with future students and parishioners.

Father Hryhoriiy Lozinsky, SSD, serves Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church in Jersey City, NJ, and Saint John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church in Bayonne, NJ.

### Ordained to the Holy Presbyterate! Axios! Axios! Axios!

...Continued from page 1

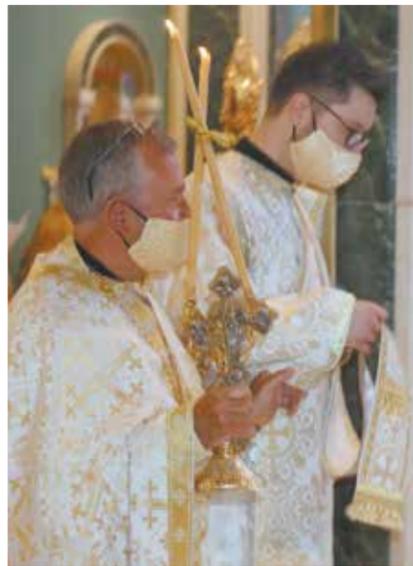
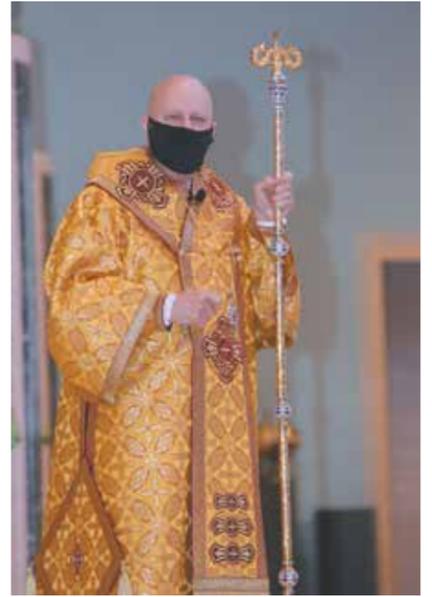
ing protocols into effect and for working with Father Ed Higgins (Master of Ceremonies) and the clergy to make any needed revisions. I am thankful to the following concelebrant priests who were able to be at the Holy Table: Father Jack Custer, Father Robert Pipta, Father James Badeaux, Father Ed Cimbala, Father Michael Salnicky, and Father Francis Rella. Thank you to Deacon Nicholas Sotack, who served as deacon as the ordination, and Deacon Alex Kubik of Saint Mary Parish for the years of fraternal support from

both. To the people of Saint Michael Cathedral for being home during my formative years and to the people of Saint Mary parish for being home for our family and for fostering my vocation in my adult years; this would all be impossible without your prayers, loving-kindness, and support. Thank you to Father John Petro and the faithful of Saint Stephen Parish in North Huntingdon, PA, for being our spiritual home away from home while we were living in Pittsburgh. I would also like to thank Father Marcel Szabo, my childhood

pastor. A special thank you to the choir members of Saint Mary Parish who were able to lend their musical gifts: the singing was absolutely phenomenal and made the day that much more special! To say that I am thankful for my parents and family who ensured I had a faithful upbringing is an understatement. To Alissa, Adelaide, and Nicholas: I love you and thank you for being with me every step of the way! Thank you to Father James Badeaux and all those who worked tirelessly behind the scenes to make this event, and the amazing socially-distant outdoor luncheon afterward, such a safe and beautiful day.

A prayerful thank you to all those who participated virtually: I am floored by the virtual response to this and you all are a testament to the life and vitality of Christ's Church manifest on earth! Inevitably, I am sure I left people off this list and, in my human frailty, I sincerely apologize, but please know that your contribution to this day certainly has not gone unnoticed.

I feel beyond blessed to have been ordained a priest and I am very much looking forward to serving the faithful of the eparchy of Passaic! *Slava Bohu!*



The Council of Hierarchs of  
the Byzantine Catholic  
Church Metropolitan  
Church of Pittsburgh, USA



Archbishop William Skurla  
Bishop Kurt Burnette  
Bishop John Pazak  
Bishop Milan Lach

invite you to participate in pilgrimage celebrating the  
**375th anniversary of The Union of Uzhorod and the  
250th anniversary of the founding of the Eparchy of Mukachevo**

**Poland, Slovakia, Ukraine, and Hungary**

Krakow-Prešov-Litmanova-Košice-Uzhorod-Mariapócs-Budapest

**June 21 - July 1, 2021**

Join us as we celebrate the  
375th anniversary of The  
Union of Uzhorod and the  
250th anniversary of the  
founding of the  
Eparchy of Mukachevo.

Coordinated by Fr. Ed Cimbala  
and Fr. Yuriy Oros

To receive more information  
as plans are confirmed this  
summer, please contact  
Fr. Edward G. Cimbala, D.Min.  
at [fredecimbala@gmail.com](mailto:fredecimbala@gmail.com) or  
call 908-872-2928 at St. Mary  
Byzantine Catholic Church,  
246 East 15th St.  
New York, NY 10003

Join us for the pilgrimage of a lifetime!

## kids corner

Prepared by Ann Keer

### ECF Participants: Let's learn the ABC's of the church together:

Due to the pandemic, our children's faith formation classes have been suspended. In an effort to continue their religious studies, we are going to provide them with these mini-lessons about our faith and teach the children the ABC's of the church. We will go through the alphabet posting a picture of something seen in the church that starts with each letter. The main resource for the lessons will be "Come and See," a recent publication from the ECF Office of the Eparchy of Passaic. We will also have a discussion question or questions for the families to engage the children in a conversation about the faith. Just as important, we want you to be part of our ECF family as we take this journey. We hope you find these lessons help you grow in your faith.

**Letter A:** A is for Ambon. The Ambon is a rounded or squared projection at the center of the walkway immediately in front of the Holy Doors of the iconostasis.

Discussion question: What do you see happen at the Ambon during the Divine Liturgy?



"Thank you to everyone who has made our Liturgies available on the internet. If your parish does not have its services available online, please ask the priest what you can do to help make it happen."—Bishop Kurt



## LIFE, LOVE, AND THE HUMAN PERSON

By Ann M. Koshute, MTS

### WITH ARMS WIDE OPEN

Sitting on the back deck of the house on a Sunday afternoon, I enjoyed the warm sun on my face, the sounds of neighbors splashing in their pools, children playing and birds chirping. It was a typical summer day in a year that so far has been anything but *typical*. As I gazed across the yard, I saw some neighbors gathered near one of the big old trees on their property, the kind that begs to be climbed. The woman held a baby in her arms and gently bounced him, while two men chatted with each other. Two little boys darted in and out of the small circle of adults, searching for rocks, sticks and leaves. The older boy, probably around six or seven, decided his ground exploration was complete; now it was time to survey the world from *the tree*! It took a moment to get the grownups' attention, but soon the boy had been helped up until he sat perched in the crook of the branches, a perfect spot from which to see all there was to see. But something was wrong. Evidently what had looked so enticing from below was suddenly scary now that he was "in it." The small boy in the bog tree quickly began to cry and beg to be rescued from this misbegotten adventure. The grownups rallied 'round the tree (the younger boy, oblivious to the drama, continued exploring), and the boy's dad raised his

arms to his distressed son. "Here, come to me," dad said, but the boy only became more upset. "Come on, it's okay; I have you," he said over and over, yet the boy was frozen in fear, crying and inconsolable. Finally, the patient father asked the boy why he wouldn't come to him. I myself wondered why the boy, so visibly shaken and scared, wouldn't simply surrender to the arms stretched out to transport him to safety. Finally, the boy admitted his fear: "I'm afraid I'll get hurt!" As the drama unfolded, the other man in the group had gone to retrieve a ladder and was ready to undertake a rescue mission. But the father was firm with the boy, "Just come to me. It's okay." At last the novice adventurer stretched out his arms and was scooped up by his father. For a few minutes after he was safely down, the boy continued to hold fast to his father's legs, secure in his feet on the ground and his arms wrapped around his rescuer just to make sure it was all real.

The impromptu "morality play" I witnessed from across the yard is illustrative of how each of us navigates our own spiritual and moral life in this world. How many experiences and possessions must we have *right now*? How many appetites do we seek to fulfill immediately, without much thought

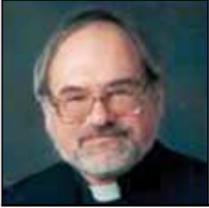
as to whether our desire is good, or if it will have bad consequences for us or for others? How often do we climb to the heights, only to realize the view from where we are is not what we'd expected? The great Christian writer C.S. Lewis once said that sin is "boring," and by that he meant that those sinful things we find so attractive sooner or later lose their appeal; they don't end up satisfying us as we'd hoped. Eventually we need bigger, and more spiritually and physically harmful sins to fill the void, but it's a never-ending cycle. Nothing can fill that void. Like the little boy in my Sunday drama, the "tree" is enticing, and we're sure that we can master it. We boldly climb it and settle in, but then we realize we've taken on more than we can handle. We become fearful, and like the boy we feel stuck where we are. We too don't want to get hurt; not any more than our sinful pursuits have already done to us.

Sometimes, even though we recognize that our sins have gotten us "stuck," our fear paralyzes us, just like the little boy. God stretches out His arms to save us, yet we are too afraid to move. The boy feared getting hurt (who knows what could happen to him during the rescue!), and as I watched I thought he could remain stuck in that tree for a

long time. He was scared, and probably a little embarrassed. Isn't that how we are when we sin? We talk a big game, walk around like we can handle anything, but when reality sets in and we find ourselves *stuck* (in habitual sin, in the aftermath of hurt to ourselves and to others), we too might push away the arms ready to rescue us. Like the dad reaching up to his son, Jesus Christ stretched out His arms for us, and though He is risen, His arms remain cruciform, open and ready to receive us. The only thing keeping us from rescue is our stubbornness and fear.

The drama of human existence is not found only in the "big events" in our world, but most poignantly in the smallest, seemingly least significant ones. Our pilgrimage on earth is a kind of adventure, filled with possibilities, exploration and wonder. But as the boy found out, our pride and need for instant gratification can easily be overwhelmed by the reality of our not being invincible. We are *creatures*, not the Creator Himself, but it's a hierarchy we disregard when we sin. Because He is Love, Jesus looks on us, stuck in whatever trap we've walked into, and beckons us to Him, His arms wide open.

ECL



## THE BYZANTINE LITURGY

By Archpriest David Petras, SEOD

### THE ANAPHORA: THE NARRATION OF THE MYSTICAL SUPPER

The Anaphora of Saint Basil is a full proclamation of the Gospel (the Good News) of Jesus our Savior, who became a human being to restore us to the glory of being God's obedient children, giving us the "salvation of rebirth from the sin of Adam," teaching us through the Law, the Prophets and through His Word, His only Son, who destroyed the power of sin by His obedience to the Father and His glorious resurrection and ascension. The anaphora quotes Saint Peter that "He purchased us from Himself as a chosen people, a royal priesthood and a holy nation" (1 Peter 2:9), by "cleansing us with water and sanctifying us with the Holy Spirit." (Romans 15:16) While Saint Basil tells this story in great detail, the Anaphora of Saint John Chrysostom says more simply, "You so loved Your world that You gave Your only-begotten Son so that everyone who believes in Him should not perish but have life everlasting." (John 3:16) "He came and fulfilled the whole divine plan in our behalf." When we hear these words, we must be moved to love God, who has done everything for our glory and salvation, and merely by praying them in faith, we are transformed individually into deified children of God and as a community into the Body of Christ, as Saint Paul taught, "[God the Father] put all things beneath His feet

and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of the one who fills all things in every way."

At the end of the narration of the anaphora, we discover that this is not only a story that we tell, but that it is also a present reality that we are living. Jesus revealed at the Mystical Supper, which we also call the "Last Supper," because it took place on the night, He was arrested and led to crucifixion, that the food and drink He was sharing at this meal were truly His precious Body and Blood. The narration of each anaphora then ends with the story of this holy supper, at which, in the words of Saint John Chrysostom, "He took bread into His holy and all-pure hands, gave thanks and blessed, sanctified, broke and gave it to His holy disciples and apostles, saying, 'Take, eat; this is My body, which is broken for you for the remission of sins.' Likewise, He took the chalice after supper, saying, 'Drink of this all of you; this is My blood of the new covenant which is shed for you and for many for the remission of sins.'" Saint Basil adds before the words over the bread, "presenting it to You, God and Father," and before the words over the cup of wine, "taking the chalice of the fruit of the vine, He mixed it, gave thanks, blessed, sanctified, and gave it

to His holy disciples and apostles." Not all of the ancient anaphoras contain this story, but it has become an essential part of the story of God's salvation, so that these words are now found in almost every Anaphora in East and West, and that the faithful participate in them by saying, "Amen," "that it may be so."

The Anaphora of Saint Basil adds after these words, Jesus' command to His disciples, "do this in remembrance of me." (Luke 22:19) Hearing these words, we see the summit of God's wisdom. God's remembrance is not like our feeble memories which only give a mental image of a past event. God is eternal, and what He "remembers" is real for all time, for He is "present and fills all things." The saving events of the Cross and Resurrection, therefore, were made part of His presence with us in a shared meal. Here the bread is His body, being broken now for us; His blood, poured out now for us. And while the bloody crucifixion happens only once, the identical reality of His love for us in His sacrifice becomes eternal, present every time we offer bread and wine and share them in a common meal.

These words spoken in the Liturgy are the resonance of Christ's words throughout eternity. In the theology of John Chrysostom, these words are like

the words of creation: "It is not man that converts the holy gifts into the Body and Blood of Christ, but Christ Himself, who gave Himself to be crucified. The priest, who utters these words, is only an image of Christ, but the power and grace are from God. He says: 'This is my body.' These words change the sacrificial elements. Just as the words, 'Increase and multiply and fill the earth' (Gen 1:28), although spoken once, give our nature the permanent power of procreation, so also these words once pronounced, are effective on all the altars from that time until now and will be to His second coming." (First Homily on the Betrayal of Judas, 6) According to Chrysostom, then, the priest "stands in the place of Christ," when he says these words, for the presbyter obviously does not mean that the bread is "his" (the priest's) body, but the body of Christ. It is important to note that Chrysostom is not referring to the words of the priest pronounced in the Liturgy, but to the words said by Christ at the mystical supper. The Divine Liturgy, therefore, is more than a mere commemorative meal, it is the presence of God sharing His life, His love and His salvation with us now and forever.

Through eating and drinking the Body and Blood of Christ, we become Christ who is God. By our deification, we carry on His work of sanctification. By living in Christ, we give this world its ultimate meaning, which transcends the space and time in which the world is wrapped, so that in all things the glory of God might be made manifest. For this reason, it is obvious that the Liturgy is the center of Christian life, and that the center of the Liturgy is communion, our sharing in the Body and Blood of Christ. **ECL**

## SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

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



### THE THEOTOKOS: THE HOLY ARK

The last mention of Mother of God in the Bible reports her presence in the original Jerusalem Church, just before Pentecost (Acts 1:14). There is no account of her death or of her bodily assumption into heaven. Or is there?

Revelation, the last book in the New Testament, describes a vision granted to Saint John the Apostle as an old man in exile on the island of Patmos, off the western coast of Turkey. After receiving messages for seven churches scattered around the western Turkish mainland, John beheld the glorious conclusion of God's plan for the world. First, the seven seals of a scroll were opened one by one. At the seventh seal, angels appeared to sound seven trumpets in succession. When the seventh trumpet sounded, John suddenly saw: "God's temple in heaven was opened, and within His temple was seen the ark of His covenant" (Revelation 11:19).

Like Isaiah (chapter 6), Saint John caught a glimpse of heavenly worship; he sees a heavenly temple with a heavenly ark. In fact, the second Temple in Jerusalem had been destroyed by

the Romans more than 20 years before this vision. The Ark of the Covenant had disappeared even earlier, when the Babylonians sacked the first Temple in 587 BC. It was either taken as booty (1 Esdras 1:54) or hidden by the prophet Jeremiah before the invasion (2 Maccabees 2:4-10; neither of these books is considered canonical Scripture by Jews or Protestants).

The specifications for the Ark had been dictated to Moses by God Himself (Exodus 25). In the Temple, it stood where the Holy Table does in our churches, behind the veil (our iconostasis) in the Holy of Holies, overshadowed by the Cherubim of glory. According to the tradition recounted by the Epistle to the Hebrews (Hebrews 9:1-4), the Ark contained the tablets of the law, a golden jar of manna (the food with which God had nourished Israel during the Exodus; Exodus 16:1-33), and the rod of Aaron that had blossomed miraculously to indicate him as the Lord's choice for high priest (Numbers 17:1-10). The Ark and its contents were the focal point of God's presence among people during the Exodus and later in

the Temple. But why would John see an Ark in heaven, where God Himself is actually present, and five hundred years after the physical Ark had vanished?

The liturgical hymns for Marian feasts almost always mention the Ark of the Covenant. Usually, the Epistle selection for the Divine Liturgy is Hebrews 9. We sing Psalm 132:8 as the prokimen for the Dormition: "Go up, Lord, to your rest, You and the Ark of Your strength." This Psalm recalls how King David rescued the original Ark from the Philistines and brought it first to Shiloh and then to Jerusalem (1 Samuel 6; 1 Chronicles 13). Pilgrims to Jerusalem would sing this Psalm in anticipation of visiting the Temple (although they would not have ever seen the Ark itself behind the veils). Now that the Ark has disappeared and two Temples have been destroyed, what meaning do these texts still hold? And what do we make of God's surprising announcement through His prophet (Jeremiah 3:16) at the time of the Babylonian threat that a time would come when the earthly Ark will no longer matter? The answer lies in the book of Revelation.

The very next thing Saint John sees after the heavenly temple and ark is this: "A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head" (Revelation 12:1). The Liturgy (and the theology of the Fathers of the Church who shaped it) invites us to recognize the Virgin Mary as heavenly Ark Saint John saw in his vision. The original Ark contained souvenirs of God's saving presence among the Israelites but the Theotokos literally contained God, the second person of the Holy Trinity, in her womb for nine months. The Lord "went up to His rest" when He ascended into heaven. At her Dormition, Mary, the "holy Ark" was taken up to her rest as well. Mary's presence in heaven already in a glorified body (1 Corinthians 15:35-58) proves the reality of the promise God has made to us as well: "there remains a rest for the people of God" (Hebrews 4:9). We express our hope in this rest every time we proclaim the Creed: "I expect the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come." **ECL**

**T.S.** Eliot ends his poem, *The Hollow Men*, with: “This is the way the world ends, not with a bang, but a whimper.” At the height of summer, our liturgical year draws to its close, but it does not end with a whimper, but a bang! And, by extension, the redemption of the world by the power of God is seen in two great feasts of our Church, The Transfiguration of Our Lord and The Feast of the Dormition and Assumption of the Theotokos. In the first, we see our Lord “revealing as much of [His] glory to [His] disciples as they could behold” (Troparion for the Transfiguration), revealing His divinity to Peter, James, and John. In the second, we see the fulfillment of Christ’s promise to us, that “...he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has eternal life; he does not come into judgment but has passed from death to life” (John 5:24).

The Transfiguration is a *theophany*—a manifestation of God—that shows us the divinity of Christ. “...His face shone like the sun, and His garments became white as light” (Matthew 17:2). It is also a theophany in that, as with His baptism by John the Forerunner, “...a voice from the cloud said, ‘This is my beloved Son, with Whom I am well pleased; listen to Him’” (v. 5). This took place just before His entry into Jerusalem, “That when they would see [Him] crucified, they would understand that [He] suffered willingly” (Kontakion for the Feast). There are

many hymns that we sing at Vespers and Matins for the Feast, but I will pass on to you one of these gems:

*Showing the change that mortals will undergo, O Lord,  
when they enter Your glory at Your second  
and awesome coming,  
You were transfigured on Mount Tabor.*

*Elijah and Moses conversed with You;  
and seeing Your glory, the three disciples  
Whom You had chosen  
were struck with Your splendor, O Lord.*

*As You covered them with Your brightness,  
confirming the mystery of Your incarnation;  
also send Your light upon our souls.*

*—Sessional Hymn I for Matins of the  
Transfiguration*

In this feast, we are assured that Jesus is fully Man and fully God, and worship Him as such. It brings to life all that we confess in the Nicene Creed, not only in the Truth of the Unitarian and Trinitarian nature of God, but also the fruits of our union with Him in this world and the one to come.

True, you won’t find any mention in Holy Scripture of the Dormition of the Theotokos and her Assumption into heaven, but it is firmly ingrained in the Holy Tradition of the Church. The feast has been acknowledged since at least the 5th century, with formal celebrations beginning around the 7th century. Writings about her death and assumption can be found as early as the 1st century, so it has always been a part of the Tradition. So important is this feast that it is anticipated in the Eastern Churches with a two-week period of fasting and is a holy day of obligation. In the universal Catholic Church, on November 1, 1950, Pope Pius XII proclaimed this as dogma in the Apostolic Constitution *Munificentissimus Deus*, stating: “By the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, of the Blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, and by our own authority, we pronounce, declare, and define it to be a divinely revealed dogma: that the Immaculate Mother of God, the ever Virgin Mary, having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory.”

The hymns for this feast are replete with the teachings of the Church, as they speak to the fact that God the Word took His flesh from the holy Theotokos,

and that, as a result, her flesh was not to suffer from the corruption of death. “You have gained victory over nature by giving birth to God, O pure Virgin; yet, like your Son and Creator, you have followed the laws of nature while being above it. Therefore, through your death, you have risen to eternal life with your Son.” “Just as He preserved your virginity in childbirth, He saved your body from suffering corruption in the tomb” (Odes 1 & 6, Matins of the Dormition). But we should not overlook this fact as well, that as Christ “is the first-born of the dead” (cf. Col. 1:18), and that He raised His Mother after her death, we can also see in *her* the first-fruits of the resurrection of *all the dead* on the last day. Again, we see the fulfillment of God’s promises to us (John 5:24, I Thess. 4:13-18).

The Church gives the world two great proclamations during this season: Christ is True God and True Man, was born in the flesh from the Virgin Mary for our salvation, and that, through His death, resurrection and ascension, we are freed from the power of death, and will be raised on the Last Day, “...and so we shall always be with the Lord” (I Thess. 4:17). **ECL**



## SEASONAL REFLECTIONS

Father Ronald Hatton

### END OF YEAR CELEBRATIONS



## SCHOOL OF PRAYER

Father G. Scott Boghossian

### TRUST GOD

If you look at the world, the Church, and our country, you might be tempted to worry. We are confronted by the coronavirus and its related restrictions, by confusion in the Church, and by civil unrest. In a time like this, we must trust God. Solomon says, “trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make straight your paths” (Pr. 3:5-6). David says to “Commit your way to the LORD; trust in Him and He will act” (Ps. 37:5), and “some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God (Ps. 20:7). The entire Psalter as a “book of trust.” Consider the trust in God expressed in Psalm 23, or Psalm 91. The prophet Isaiah says, “You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on You, because He trusts in You” (Is. 26:3). In the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord Jesus reminds us that if God takes care of the flowers of the field and the birds of the air, He will most certainly take care of us (Mt. 6:25-34).

From beginning to end, the Bible emphasizes the central importance of trusting God. The Venerable Louis of Granada (d. 1588) writes, “scarcely a

single chapter can be found in the Sacred Writings in which God does not promise His help, and grace, and provision to those who trust in Him.”

Saint Francis De Sales (d. 1622) urges us to trust, saying, “Do not fear what may happen tomorrow. The same loving Father who cares for you today will care for you tomorrow and every day. Either He will shield you from suffering, or He will give you unflinching strength to bear it. Be at peace, then, and put aside all anxious thoughts and imaginings.” Again he says, “anxiety is the greatest evil that can befall a soul except sin. God commands you to pray, but He forbids you to worry.”

The renowned British convert, Father Frederick Faber (d. 1863), wrote an essay entitled: “Confidence – The Only Worship.” Such a brief title speaks volumes. Father Faber’s message is that confidence in God, trust in God, is the foundation of the entire spiritual life. If we do not learn to trust in our heavenly Father’s power, wisdom, and love, we will not grow spiritually.

Father Faber suggests some practical means to grow in trust and confidence

in God. He recommends frequent and prolonged meditation on the character of God. Meditate on the fact that God is omnipotent, omniscient, all-wise, merciful, and loving. By thinking through and praying about His attributes, qualities, and characteristics, we will grow in humble reliance on Him.

Daily prayer, frequent Communion, and frequent Confession will imperceptibly increase our trust in God.

Pray for more confidence in God. Just as the Apostles prayed, “Lord, increase our faith” (Lk. 17:5), so we might pray, “Lord, increase my confidence in You.”

We can grow in trust by making frequent acts of trust. When fear, anxiety, or obsessive worry plagues our mind, it is the perfect time to make an act of trust, praying: “Jesus, I trust in You” or “Father, I trust in You.” If we are stressed, we can make these acts many times, over and over, even hundreds of times, until our anxiety passes, and our worry subsides.

If we can learn to trust God, we will be rewarded. Trusting God brings victory! “This is the victory that has overcome

the world—our faith (trust)” (Jn. 5:4). “Whoever trusts in Him will never be disappointed” (1 Pt. 2:6).

If we trust God, we will have “perfect peace” (Is. 26:3), and the “peace that surpasses all understanding” (Phil. 4:7). Confidence in God will produce the peace of mind that everyone desires.

Whether we trust God or not, trials and hardships will come. “In the world you will have tribulation” (Jn. 16:33). But if we trust God, He will, in the words of Saint Francis De Sales, “give us unflinching strength to bear it.”

Finally, trusting in God will, in the words of Jeremias Drexelius (d. 1638), make us omnipotent! Saint Paul said, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (Phil. 4:13), and Jesus said, “Only believe (trust), all things are possible to him who believes (trusts)” (Mk. 9:23).

Times are tough. If we trust God, we will prevail. Don’t fear, worry, or anxiously obsess. Pray and trust God. **ECL**

# EPARCHIAL PARISHES LIVE-STREAM THE DIVINE SERVICES

Below are just a few examples from our eparchy

Below is a list of many of the Parishes of the Eparchy of Passaic which are Live streaming Divine Liturgy on Saturday, Sunday, and Holy Days. You may access the links to their streaming sites (Facebook, Youtube, etc,) on our website: [www.eparchyofpassaic.com](http://www.eparchyofpassaic.com).

### CONNECTICUT

Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church—Danbury, CT

### NEW JERSEY

- Cathedral of Saint Michael the Archangel—Passaic, NJ
- Assumption of the Virgin Mary (Saint Mary)—Trenton, NJ
- Our Lady of Perpetual Help—Toms River, NJ
- Our Lady of Perpetual Help—Toms River, NJ—Radio
- Saint Michael Byzantine Catholic Church—Perth Amboy, NJ
- Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church—Perth Amboy, NJ
- Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church—Hillsborough, NJ
- Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church—Dunellen, NJ
- Saints Peter and Paul Byzantine Catholic Church—Somerset, NJ
- Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church—Jersey City, NJ
- Saint John Byzantine Catholic Church—Bayonne, NJ
- Nativity of Our Lord Byzantine Catholic Church—East Brunswick, NJ
- Saint Thomas the Apostle Byzantine Catholic Church—Rahway, NJ
- Saint Elias Byzantine Catholic Church—Carteret, NJ
- Saint George Byzantine Catholic Church—Linden, NJ
- Saint George Byzantine Catholic Church—Newark, NJ

### NEW YORK

- Saint Andrew Byzantine Catholic Church—Westbury, NY
- Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church—White Plains, NY
- Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church—New York, NY
- Holy Spirit Byzantine Catholic Church—Binghamton, NY
- Resurrection Byzantine Catholic Church—Smithtown, NY

### PENNSYLVANIA

- Saint Michael Byzantine Church—Mont Clare, PA
- Saint Mary Byzantine Church—Wilkes-Barre, PA
- Saint Mary Pokrova—Kingston, PA
- Saint John Byzantine Church—Wilkes-Barre, PA
- Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic — Mahanoy City, PA
- Saint John Byzantine Church—Wilkes-Barre, PA
- Saint John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church—Lansford, PA
- Saints Peter and Paul Byzantine Catholic Church—Bethlehem, PA
- Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church—Old Forge, PA
- Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church—Taylor, PA
- Saints Peter and Paul Byzantine Catholic Church—Minersville, PA
- Saint Michael Byzantine Catholic Church—Dunmore, PA
- Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church—Hazleton, PA
- Saint John Byzantine Catholic Church—Hazleton, PA

- Holy Dormition Friary—Sybertsville, PA
- Holy Ghost Byzantine Catholic Church—Jessup, PA
- Our Lady of Perpetual Help Byzantine Catholic Church—Levittown, PA
- Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church—Scranton, PA
- Saint Ann Byzantine Catholic Church—Harrisburg, PA

### GEORGIA

Epiphany of Our Lord Byzantine Catholic Church—Roswell, GA

### VIRGINIA

- Ascension of Our Lord Byzantine Catholic Church—Williamsburg, VA
- Our Lady of Perpetual Help Byzantine Catholic Church—Virginia Beach, VA
- Epiphany of Our Lord Byzantine Catholic Church—Annandale, VA

### FLORIDA

- Saint Nicholas of Myra Byzantine Catholic Church—Orlando FL
- Saint Anne Byzantine Catholic Church—New Port Richey, FL
- Saint Cyril and Methodius Byzantine Catholic Church—Fort Pierce, FL
- Our Lady of the Sign Byzantine Catholic Church—Coconut Creek, FL

### NORTH CAROLINA

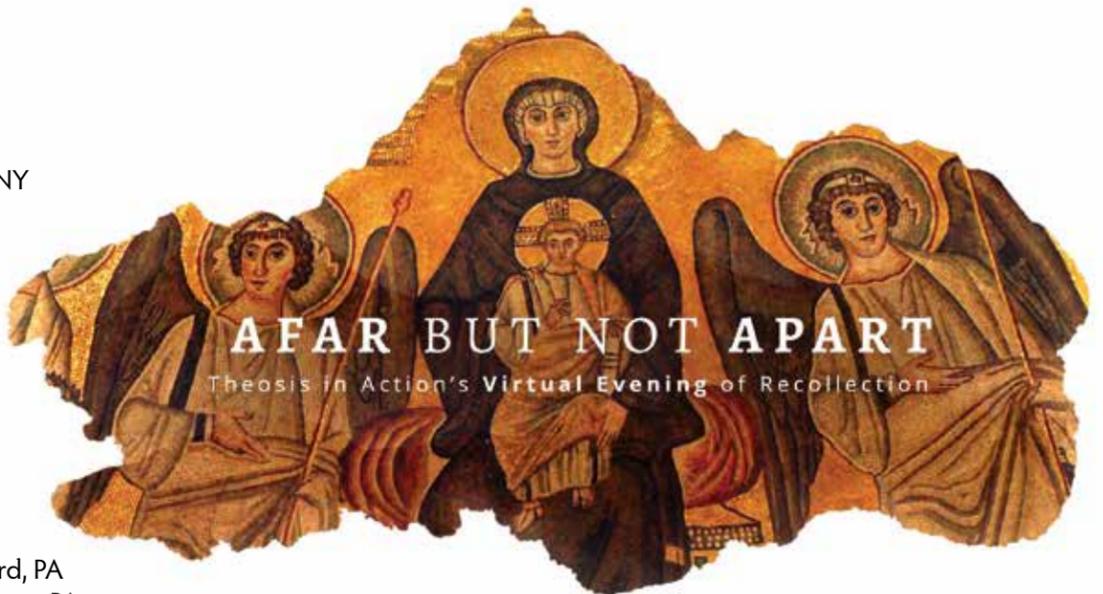
- Saints Cyril & Methodius Byzantine Catholic Church—Cary, NC
- The Mission Community of Greater Charlotte

### SOUTH CAROLINA

Charlotte, NC, Byzantine Catholic Mission at Fort Mill, SC

### MARYLAND

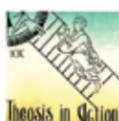
- Patronage of the Mother of God Byzantine Catholic Church—Arbutus, MD
- Saint Gregory of Nyssa Byzantine Catholic Church—Beltsville, MD



## For Young Adults Ages 18-25

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## Theosis in Action 2020 events

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Philip's Fast afternoon of recollection

December 12  
Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church in NYC; Christmas social

Open to all young adults ages 18-35.

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## UPCOMING EPARCHIAL AND PARISH EVENTS

### AUGUST, 2020

- 6 Holy Transfiguration of Our Lord  
*Solemn Holy Day • Blessing of fruit*
- 15 Holy Dormition of the Theotokos  
*Solemn Holy Day • Blessing of flowers*
- 29 Beheading of John the Baptist  
*Simple Holy Day*

### SEPTEMBER, 2020

- 7 Labor Day  
*Civic holiday • Chancery closed*
- 8 Nativity of the Virgin Theotokos  
*Solemn Holy Day*
- 14 Exaltation of the Precious, Holy, and Life-giving Cross  
*Solemn Holy Day • Chancery closed*

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:

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All Wedding Jubilarians are moved to next year.