



Glory to Jesus Christ!
My dear friends,

What a year 2020 has been! A woman told me she decided to skip the rest of the year and start her new year on September 1. On our calendar from the Eastern Roman Empire, we do start the year on September 1, so maybe we should all move on early. At a Divine Liturgy at the cathedral I was admitting that I get confused about what order to do everything because our services are so disrupted by our sanitary processes. The priest said to me, “Don’t apologize, Bishop. We’re all newly ordained priests this year, trying to figure out what to do.” Thanks to your generosity, we really do have a newly-ordained priest this year, but the rest of us are all beginners, too.

Every year I enjoy sharing an icon with you from your collection here in Woodland Park. That’s one thing we are still allowed to do. One of our most popular icons and most popular feast days is the Protection of the Mother of God, also called Pokrov. In the icon you can see the Mother of God in the center. She is holding her veil, spread out in protection for us. Her raised hands are the posture used for prayer by the early Christians. One of the most ancient paintings of Mary is in a catacomb in Rome and shows her in this posture. Our Lord Jesus Christ is above blessing with one hand and holding a book with his other hand. She is surrounded by four archangels and twelve saints. On the bottom is Saint Romanos the Melodist, and the lower right corner shows the Mother of God giving Saint Romanos his vocation while he sleeps. There is a complete description with all the names on our eparchial website. We certainly do need extra protection this year.

I am so inspired at how our people stepped up to take care of each other and their parishes during the epidemic, and how the priests reinvented ministry for our time. I know many people have lost their income, or had their lives disrupted in other ways. This year, I ask for financial assistance in the work of the Eparchy only if you can afford it. If you are unable to assist financially this year, I completely understand. You need to care for yourself, your own family, and your own parish first. Please pray for our Eparchy in any case. As you can see all around the country, people need the light of Jesus Christ more than ever before. Please pray as never before for God’s mercy and blessings in our country. I pray every morning to the Mother of God for everyone of you. May the Holy Virgin protect you under her mantle this year.

+Kurt Burnett

The Pokrov Icon

Origin of Icon

On Sunday, October 1 of the year 911, Saint Andrew the Fool for Christ and his disciple Epiphanius had a vision in the Church of the Blachernae in Constantinople. The Mother of God escorted by Saint John the Forerunner and Saint John the Beloved Disciple entered into the Church. She stopped at the ambo where she knelt and prayed fervently. She then proceeded to the altar where she prayed again, then removed her veil and spread it out as a sign of protection of the City.

2020 BISHOP’S APPEAL

Pledges Can Now Be Made Through December 31



The Pokrov Icon, The Protection of the Theotokos

Description of Icon

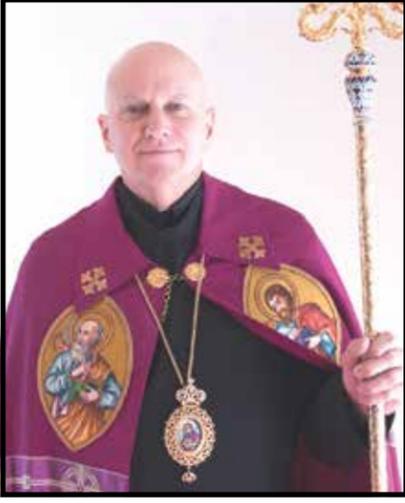
This exquisite antique icon is in the Heritage Center of the Eparchy of Passaic. The Mother of God is in the center of the icon with her veil spread out as a symbol of her motherly protection of the city, and her arms raised in the “orans” posture, the prayer posture of the early Christians. Above her is Jesus Christ blessing with his right hand and holding a book in his left hand.

Starting from the center of the icon and moving outwards to our left, in the middle row, Saint Michael the Archangel is closest to the Theotokos, then Saint John the Forerunner (the Baptizer), then Saint Peter the Apostle, Saint Paul the Apostle. Above Saint Michael is Saint Uriel the Archangel, and next to him is Saint Basil the Great, then Saint Gregory the Theologian, and Saint John Chrysostom (not the usual portrayal of him).

Starting from the center of the icon and moving outwards to our right, in the middle row, Saint Gabriel the Archangel, Saint John the Theologian (the Evangelist and Beloved Disciple), Saint James the Apostle, and the Holy Prophet Isaiah. Above Saint Gabriel is Saint Barachiel the Archangel, then the Monks Saint Zosimus, Saint Savvaty, and Saint Sergej.

On the bottom row, Saint Romanos the Melodist is in the center of the icon. Moving outwards to our left, the one closest to Saint Romanos is the Patriarch Saint Gennadius, then Emperor Leo the Wise and his wife Zoë.

Moving in the other direction from the center, next to Saint Romanos is Saint Andrew the Fool for Christ pointing to the Theotokos for the benefit of Saint Epiphanius his disciple. Finally, in the lower corner of the icon is the Mother of God appearing to St. Romanos while he was sleeping, bringing him healing and his vocation as a songwriter.



I LIFT UP MY EYES...

Pastoral Reflections of Bishop Kurt



O GENTLE PROTECTRESS

It seems like years since last October, so many things have happened. What seemed like just another exotic illness on the other side of the globe took control of our entire economy. At the beginning of the year, I saw Chinese people wearing masks in airports, and now we all are. Then the social upheaval has been remarkable. I just learned through my own family in California that two banks were burned to the ground in a quiet suburb of San Diego. An unprecedented number of people are out of work. What a relief that it is October, the month when we remember the Protection of the Mother of God, as we say in the troparion, the gentle protection.

The feast of the Protection of the Mother of God is linked to several historical events, all of which are about the city of Constantinople, or “New Rome,” the city from which we received our liturgy and theology of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. When Constantine built a new capital at the ancient city of Byzantium at the straits separating Europe from Asia, he did not intend to split the Roman Empire into two halves. Indeed, he had fought some bloody wars to reunite the Roman Empire. Nevertheless, there was a natural division between the old empire of Alexander the Great dominated by the Greek language, and the western part of the empire dominated by the Latin language. Only two hundred years later, Old Rome fell to barbarian invaders in 476 after a glorious 1229 years. It was founded in 753 BC according to its own traditions.

There are of course many ways to name the years, even today. The Jews have year numbers, the Moslems have year numbers, the Buddhists, etc. One ancient system for numbering the years was from the founding of Rome which is abbreviated A.U.C. In that system, Old Rome fell to the barbarians in 1229 AUC, Constantinople fell to the Turks in 2206 AUC, and we live in 2773 AUC. (Though I might be off by a year because I didn’t take into account when these years begin. They don’t begin on January 1.) In the sixth century AD, the Roman Empire numbered years from the beginning of the reign of Diocletian. A monk by the name of Dionysius Exiguus created our current calendar in the 500’s based on the putative birth of Jesus. JRR Tolkien created systems for numbering years in his fantasy writings, based of course on events in his mythical universe. Though when I tried to google them, all I could find was lists of modern calendars printed with Tolkien

inspired artwork, etc. There seem to be hundreds of them in a large number of foreign languages and cultures. If people today reject our current calendar as culturally biased, perhaps we could all agree on one of the ones that Tolkien invented. Another calendar invented for modern fiction is from *Brave New World* in which years are numbered from the birth of Henry Ford. In Huxley’s brave new world, the years are styled “in The Year of our Ford,” and the Christian cross is replaced with a T in honor of the model T. Henry Ford is idealized as the inventor of mass production and assembly lines. The novel begins in the Year of Our Ford 632, which is 2540 AD.

Getting back to Constantinople, on Sunday, October 1, in the tenth century, Andrew the Fool for Christ had an early morning vision of Mary the Theotokos in the Church of Blachernae. Andrew saw the dome of the church open and Mary entered in the air surrounded by angels and saints. She knelt in the church and wept, praying to her Divine Son for all the people in the world. She then walked to the altar and spread her veil over all the people in the church. Andrew asked his disciple Epiphanius if he also saw the vision, and Epiphanius answered, “Yes. I see it and I am astonished.” At the same time, the city was under attack. When the armies withdrew, the people attributed it to the protection of the Mother of God, and so this feast day is dated on October 1.

Saint Andrew, the Fool for Christ, was actually a Slav or Scythian who came to Constantinople as the slave of a bodyguard named Theognostus. He feigned insanity as a path to the traditional role of “Fool for Christ.” Saint Andrew spent many years as a beggar in Constantinople, feigning insanity, and giving the alms he received to other beggars. Based on a phrase in the epistles of Saint Paul, the fool for Christ lives contrary to anything that might bring earthly glory. One famous example is Basil the Fool for Christ who lived in Moscow. He helped beggars who were too ashamed to ask for help and went naked in all weather. Oddly enough, he shoplifted for beggars—in his mind he was helping both the beggar and the miserly merchant at the same time. He even rebuked Ivan the Terrible. By the way, the famous church at the Moscow Kremlin is called Saint Basil. We would assume in our tradition it might be in honor of Saint Basil the Great, but it is actually named after Saint Basil the Fool for Christ. The official name of that church, one of the most photographed buildings in the world, is the Protection of the Mother of God. A lot of those churches seem to have several names for complicated historical reasons. There are some examples in the West as well. Saint Francis of Assisi followed this tradition in many ways. One of his early followers was especially

obsessed with avoiding honor after the Franciscans began to be honored by the people. When entering one village he put his pants on his head so that no one would honor him as a holy man as he walked through the village. In the movie *Ostrov*, or *Island*, the most ascetical monk acquires a reputation for holiness and people in trouble come to him for spiritual advice. For example, a troubled woman asks him to bless her before an abortion. He goes in another room and pretends to be talking to the holy man within earshot of her so that she won’t honor him as a saint. In my own life, I knew a man who entered recovery for alcohol and drug addiction. His sponsor wanted to cure him of vainglory and the desire to be thanked, so he told him he had to do kind acts for people and never identify himself. So, in the middle of the night, he used to clean people’s windshields and leave bags of groceries, and so on, and never identify himself. I suppose he was following the tradition of the fool for Christ, also.

Our feast day of the Protection of the Mother of God falls on October 1 because of the vision of Saint Andrew the Fool for Christ, but there were a number of other times that Constantinople was saved from an existential threat and the people attributed it to the Mother of God. For example, the following passage occurs in the “Tales of Bygone Years,” the oldest Slavic history: “Askold and Dir attacked the Greeks during the fourteenth year of the reign of the Emperor Michael. When the Emperor had set forth against the infidels and had arrived at the Black River, the eparch sent him word that the Russes were approaching Tsar’grad, and the Emperor turned back. Upon arriving inside the strait, the Russes made a great massacre of the Christians, and attacked Tsar’grad in two hundred boats. The Emperor succeeded with difficulty in entering the city. He straightway hastened with the Patriarch Photius to the Church of Our Lady of the Blachernae, where they prayed all night. They also sang hymns and carried the sacred vestment of the Virgin to dip it in the sea. The weather was still, and the sea was calm, but a storm of wind came up, and when great waves straightway rose, confusing the boats of the godless Russes, it threw them upon the shore and broke them up, so that few escaped such destruction and returned to their native land.” (translated by Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor). Notice that the Old Slavonic name for Constantinople was Tsar’grad. Notice also that this is a Slavic document, but it ironically documents the Mother of God saving Constantinople from Slavic invaders. One of the great ironies of this feast is that after Constantinople fell to the Turks in 1453, the feast fell into desuetude among the Greeks, but has grown in popularity with the eastern Slavs, even though it commemorates Mary pro-

tecting the Greeks from Slavic invaders. By the way, if you are part of our church, and you are not familiar with the “Tales of Bygone Years” also called “The Primary Chronicles,” it is worthwhile to read about it on the internet. It is a history of the eastern Slavs, beginning with Adam, and continuing through Saint Vladimir and the adoption of the Christian faith in Kiev in 988, and then another century or so, ending in 1117 AD. Like many ancient histories, it is most reliable closest to its own time. The author Nestor, of course, had access to many documents at the time that we no longer have. It is available in both English and Old Slavonic on the internet. It isn’t very long by our standards and will reward anyone who takes the time to read it.

The Mother of God also saved the city of Constantinople from various plagues, so this feast day is really a wonderful feast day for us this year. Every year, I enjoy sharing with you one of the treasures from your Heritage Center in Woodland Park. This year we are looking at a very fine icon of the Protection of the Mother of God. It is not very large, about like a sheet of typing paper, but is wondrous in details. The main features, as you no doubt noticed, are Jesus Christ at the top of the icon, blessing with His right hand, and holding a book with His left hand. The book looks like a gospel book in our tradition. Mary, who has a crown, is holding her hands up in the “Orans” posture. This is an ancient posture for prayer. It is the most ancient posture depicted in Christian art. There is a painting of the Mother of God praying in this posture in a catacomb in Rome. The posture is important because it reminds us that a key part of Andrew’s vision was that Mary prays for all of us. In addition, she is holding a mantle or omophor extended to show that she spreads her gentle protection over everyone.

Recall that in Andrew’s vision, Mary was accompanied by an entourage of angels and saints. In this icon we see four archangels and twelve saints. In some icons, I couldn’t understand the choice of saints that were added on the sides, and someone explained to me that if the icon was painted for a family, the auxiliary saints would be related to the family names and patrons. In this icon, the lower left archangel is Michael (that’s on our left), and the lower right archangel is Gabriel. The upper left archangel is Uriel and the upper right archangel is Barachiel. Uriel means “God is my light” and Barachiel means “God is my blessing.” (Did you know Barach means “blessing”?) According to some Christian tradition, Uriel rescued Saint John the Baptist, and according to Jewish tradition, he is the angel of Sunday, the angel of poetry, and the angel who wiped out the Assyrian Army when Sennacherib surrounded Jerusalem. “The angel of death spread

his wings on the blast and breathed in the face of the foe as he passed." Like Uriel, the Archangel Barchiel is not mentioned in the Bible, however the Archangel Raphael says, "I am Raphael, one of the seven who stand in the presence of God." According to some Christian tradition, Barachiel is one of the seven. The Archangel Barachiel is mentioned in the Book of Enoch, which is not in the Bible but is quoted in the Epistle of Saint Jude.

The saints who have accompanied Mary are Saint John the Baptizer, four Apostles: Saint Peter, Saint Paul, Saint James, and Saint John, three patristic theologians: Saint Basil, Saint Gregory the Theologian, and Saint John Chrysostom, three monks: Saint Zozimus, Saint Savvaty, and Saint Sergei, and fi-

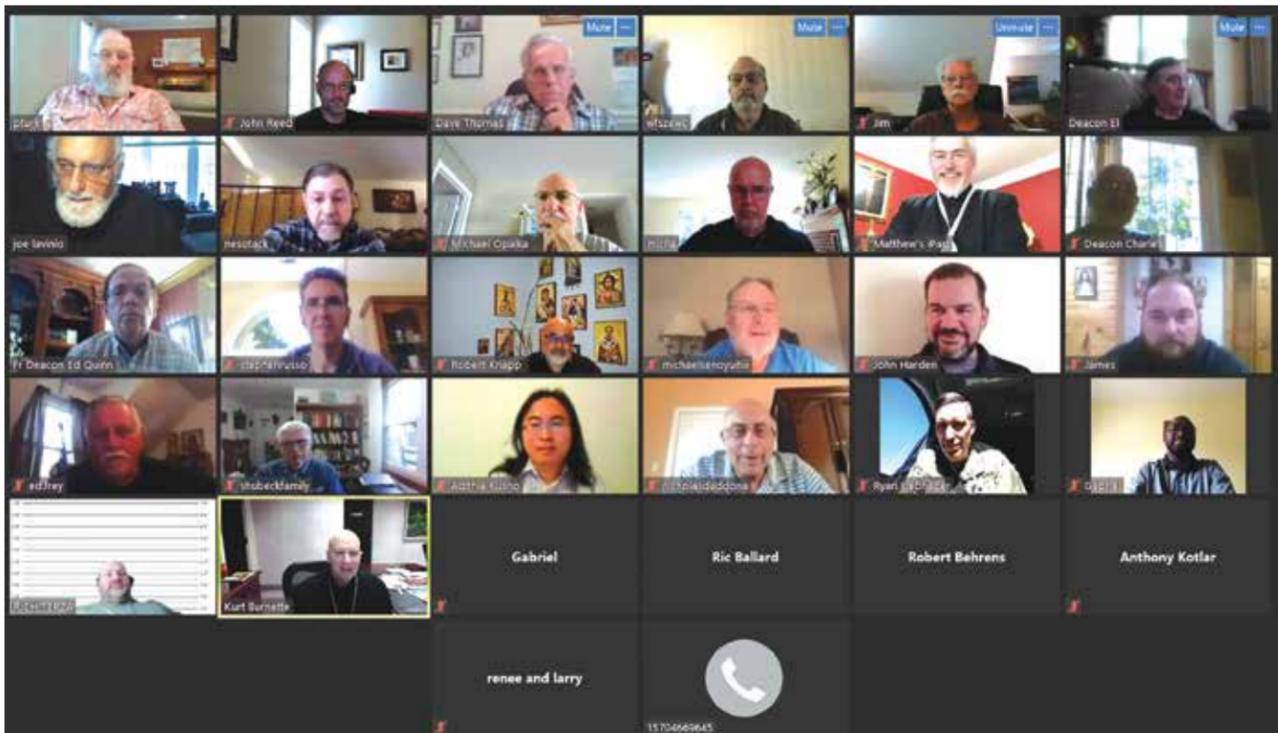
nally the Prophet Elijah. Quite a distinguished entourage indeed!

On the lower part of the icon are more modern participants, at least modern in the time of these events. We can see Saint Andrew the Fool for Christ pointing up at the vision with his arm around his disciple Saint Epiphanius. On the lower left we see the Patriarch Gennadius, and the Emperor Leo the Wise and his wife Zoë. The central contemporary figure is Saint Romanos the Melodist standing in the middle of the church. He is holding a text which is the hymn he composed, "Today, the Virgin gives birth to the one who is above all being. The earth offers a cave to the one whom no one can approach." Romanos wrote it in Greek, but the text in the icon is Slavonic. In the lower

right, we see the miraculous call of Saint Romanos. He was a sacristan in the Church of the Blachernae in the 600's. He had no talent but was loved by the Patriarch because of his humility. On Christmas Eve, he had to be replaced as a reader and was mocked by some of the clergy. He fell asleep, and in a dream the Mother of God appeared to him with a scroll with the instructions to eat the scroll. Upon awakening, he received a blessing from the Patriarch, ascended the ambon, and chanted the Kontakion, "Today the Virgin..." He went on to write many kontakia that we sing today. By the way, there is a high-quality photograph of this icon on the eparchial website, and you can see all these details and many more for yourself.

Every year we remember the Protection of the Mother of God throughout the month of October. This year it seems especially apropos. Every year at this time, we begin the "Bishop Appeal." This year, I know so many people are out of work and facing financial hardship. Even if you are retired, there seems to be so much financial uncertainty. Or perhaps your children or grandchildren are out of work. This year, I only ask for your help if you can afford it in good conscience. If you can help the eparchy with its work, God bless you. If you can't afford it this year, everyone understands, and God bless you too! We join together in praying for the Protection of the Mother of God and ask for a better year next year.

+Kurt Burnett



pressed upon the attendees the importance of devoting time every day in the reading of Sacred Scripture, especially with a healthy dose of the Psalter.

Despite the lack of face-to-face interaction, by all accounts the retreat was well received by those that attended. Deacon John Harden, recently ordained in February, offered the following: "While I missed the face-to-face fellowship, Father Elias Carr's presentations were tremendous. They were informational and inspirational. He is a man filled with the Spirit. Also, our God-loving Bishop shared some excellent insights and kind words for us. We are blessed to have him as our Shepherd."

This sentiment was shared by Deacons Robert Behrens and Larry Worlinksy. Deacon Robert said, "Despite the conditions we were working with, I felt I benefitted from the talks by the retreat master as well as those of Bishop Kurt. I really like Bishop's suggestion that we pray the psalms daily."

Deacon Larry concurs. "I thought it was great. I missed the worship and fellowship, but I'm still grateful to see this come together."

Next year, God willing, the threat of COVID will be over and travel restrictions in the Northeast will be lifted, and the deacons will be able to meet face-to-face once again. The 2021 retreat is scheduled for September 17-19 at Immaculate Conception Seminary in Huntington, NY.

EPARCHIAL DEACON RETREAT GOES VIRTUAL

By Deacon John Reed

Like many other planned events in 2020, the annual eparchial deacon retreat was not excluded from having to make adjustments to its originally planned activities. Not only did the COVID outbreak severely impact face-to-face events, this summer the eparchy was notified that the long-held venue used for the annual deacon retreat, Our Lady of the Villa in Mount Pocono, PA, was closing down. After a quick scramble to secure a new location, an uptick in COVID cases along with travel restrictions imposed to travelers to New York forced yet another change. This year's deacon retreat, like many other conferences would be held virtually, via Zoom internet conferencing. The new Zoom-based format would be 3 virtual conferences held over two days.

On September 18 and 19, Father Nicholas Dadonna, Director of Deacons, along with 23 deacons, 1 tonsured reader, and 3 deacon candidates from the Eparchy of Passaic attended this retreat. The most recent class of deacons were overjoyed to also see that their beloved classmate, Deacon Joe Lavinio, from the Ukrainian Eparchy of Stamford, also attended this year's retreat. While there was some disappointment that we could not meet in person, seeing everyone's smiling faces on camera was a welcome consolation.

The retreat master was Dom Elias Carr. Dom Elias is a Canon Regular of Saint Augustine. Ordained a deacon in 1998 and a priest in 1999, Dom Elias entered the abbey of Klosterneuburg in 2002 and made solemn vows in 2006. After serving parishes in Virginia as well as in Austria and Norway, he now resides at the Canonry of Saint Leopold in Glen Cove, NY, where the canons have care of two parishes, and assist as bi-ritual priests the Ruthenian parishes on Long Island. Father Elias has a MA in Politics from Catholic University, a M.Phil. in Religious Education from the Norwegian Teachers' Academy in Bergen, and a Licentiate in Sacred Theology from the Gregorian University. He is currently finishing a dissertation at the John Paul II Pontifical University in Krakow and will soon be taking on a leading role at Saint Mary's Parish High School and Elementary School. He is grateful to be able to offer the Sacred Liturgy in the ordinary and extraordinary forms of the Roman Rite as well as the Divine Liturgy.

The theme and focus of Dom Elias's talks was *Prayer – The Secret History of Grace*. In his opening words, he remarked that for both new clerics as well as those who have been in ministry for some time, developing a habit for prayer can be one of the easiest things to lose. And, at times, it

may even seem that prayer is useless. But through his talks, Dom Elias guided all of us and encouraged us to find a deeper appreciation of prayer and gave encouragement that God is operative in each of our lives both in good times as well as in bad. He exhorted us to make our prayer and our assistance in the celebration of the sacred mysteries to be a sincere and holy event and not to be simply routine and mechanical.

On Saturday, the cadre of deacons and candidates were also joined by our shepherd, Bishop Kurt. Bishop Kurt joined Dom Elias's comments on prayer and purpose with a very moving personal story of his own. He also im-



Dom Elias Carr, retreat master



PEOPLE YOU KNOW AROUND THE EPARCHY

IN BAYONNE...

Parish Celebrates the Special Service of Miraculous *Mary, Helper of Mothers* Icon.

On Wednesday, September 16, 2020, Saint John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church in Bayonne, NJ, was honored and blessed to have Bishop Kurt preside over an inspirational prayer service for the miraculous *Albazinskaya, Mary the Helper of Mothers* icon at our parish. The *Albazinskaya* icon was at our parish from September 10 to September 24. Prayer services were offered each evening during the dates that the icon was at our parish.

Sister Mary Canavan, Vice Postulator of the Sister Miriam Teresa Demjanovich League of Prayer, along with forty faithful individuals attended the service.

At the conclusion of the prayer service the faithful had the opportunity to venerate the miraculous *Albazinskaya* icon and pray for their own special intentions.



Bishop Kurt, Father Gregory Lozinskyy, Father John Zec, Father Martin Vavrak, Father Michael Kravchuk and Father Vitaliy Pukhaev personally gave a special blessing to each individual. It was a beautiful way to spend an evening together in prayer!

IN WESTBURY...

Damaged Shrine Restored!

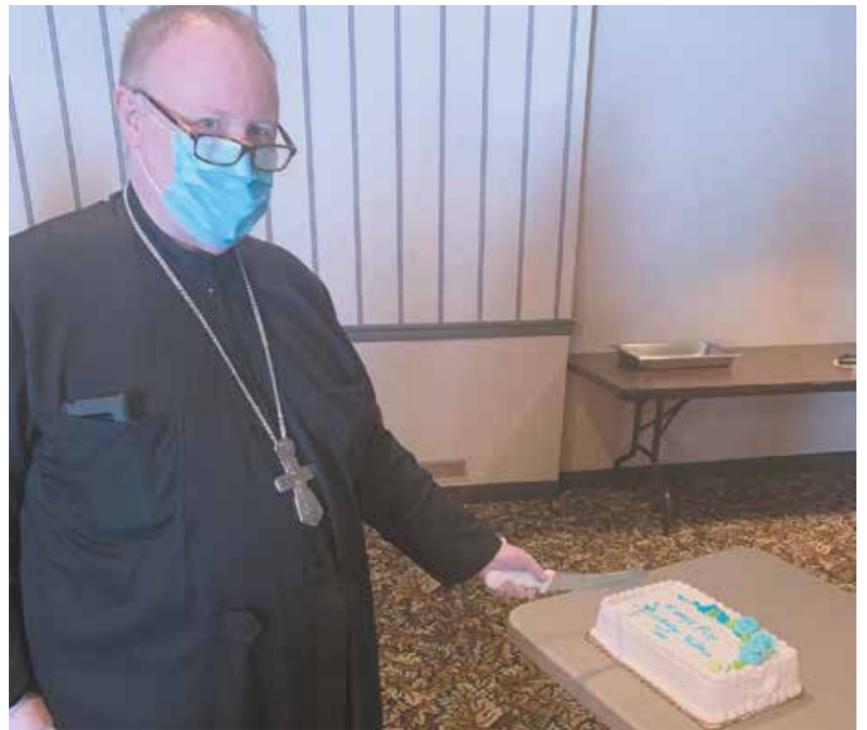
In April, 2020, Father Nicholas Daddona, who serves Saint Andrew Byzantine Catholic Church, received a call from the Nassau County Police Department that the shrine to Saint Andrew, which was in the front of the church, was destroyed by an automobile which had jumped the curb. During the time of the Covid-19 shut down and with vandalism that was occurring to churches in the next-door county of Queens, a decision had to be made whether or not to replace the shrine. After discussion with the parishioners and much prayer, it was decided to go forward with the construction. As Pope Saint John Paul II stated many times, "Do not be afraid!" With a donation from an anonymous donor, the new shrine was completed and blessed on Sunday, August 30. Father Nicholas, his altar servers, his granddaughter, Mia, and the entire parish bless the shrine, thus giving witness to our Eastern Catholic Church here on Long Island.



IN HILLSBOROUGH...

Parishioners Honor Pastor on His 50th Birthday

On Sunday, September 20, 2020, the Sunday after the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, the parishioners of Saint Mary Parish in Hillsborough, NJ, honored their pastor, Father James Badeaux, after the weekend Liturgies, at a socially-distanced cake and coffee social in celebration of his 50th birthday. May God grant to his servant, the Priest James, many blessed years! *Na mnohaja i blahaja l'ita!*



When traveling to the South, please visit our churches

All Saints

10291 Bayshore Road
North Fort Myers, FL 33917
1-239-599-4023

Epiphany of Our Lord

2030 Old Alabama Road
Roswell, GA 30076
1-770-993-0973

Holy Dormition

17 Buckskin Lane
Ormond Beach, FL 32174
1-386-677-8704

Our Lady of the Sign

7311 Lyons Road
Coconut Creek, FL 33073
1-954-429-0056

Saint Therese

4265 13th Avenue North
Saint Petersburg, FL 33713
1-727-323-4022

Saint Anne

7120 Massachusetts Ave.
New Port Richey, FL 34653
1-727-849-1190

Saint Basil the Great

1475 N.E. 199th Street
Miami, FL 33179-5162
1-305-651-0991

Saints Cyril and Methodius

1002 Bahama Avenue
Fort Pierce, FL 34982
1-772-595-1021

Saint Nicholas of Myra

5135 Sand Lake Road
Orlando, FL 32819
1-407-351-0133

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FROM THE OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

TO BE ORDAINED TO THE ORDER OF DEACON

Subdeacon Ryan Liebhaber

Saturday, October 10, 2020, 10:00 AM
Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church,
Trenton, NJ

EPARCHIAL APPOINTMENTS

Monsignor Mark Condon

is relieved of his office as Judicial Vicar of the Eparchy of Passaic, effective October 1. We are happy to report that Monsignor Condon has been appointed vicar general of the Diocese of Paterson, NJ, effective immediately. Congratulations, Monsignor, and thank you for your selfless service to the people of the Eparchy of Passaic.

Father Eduard Shestak

is appointed Judicial Vicar of the Eparchy of Passaic, effective October 1.

BYZANTINE CATHOLIC EPARCHY OF PASSAIC

Statement of Financial Position

As of June 30, 2020

Revenues:

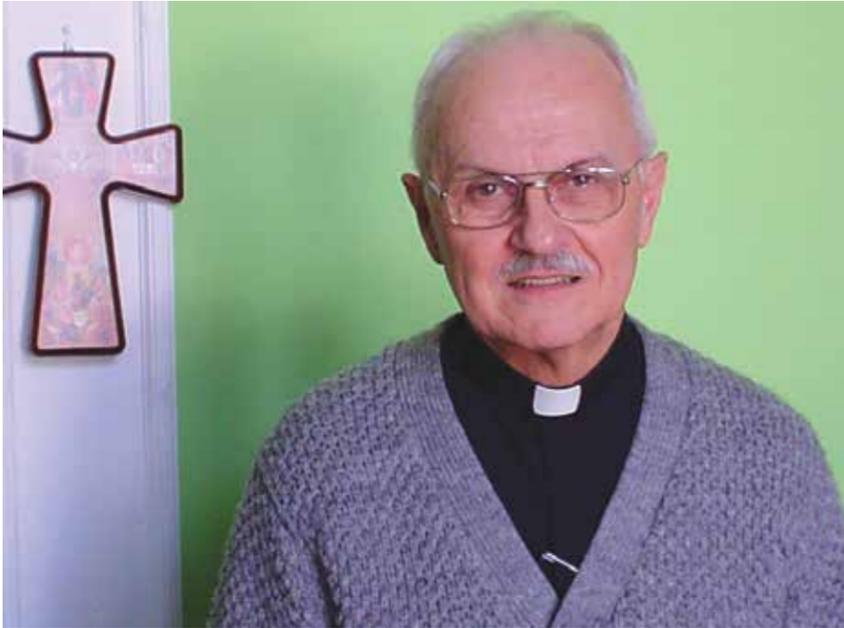
Eparchial assessments:	\$605,154
Eparchial Stewardship Appeal:	410,201
Donations, bequests, and other income:	4,763
ECL Newspaper Revenues:	52,811
Interest and dividend income:	394,350
Realized and unrealized gain on marketable securities:	396,960
Hospitalization assessments and reimbursements:	1,088,525
Insurance proceeds:	<u>274,576</u>
Total Revenue and other support:	<u>\$3,227,340</u>

Expenses:

Property, casualty, Auto and Workmen's Compensation insurance:	\$121,705
Hospitalization:	1,166,649
Other insurance expense:	46,767
Pension and retirement costs:	14,807
Administrative salaries and payroll taxes:	100,203
Clergy salaries:	172,511
Clergy subsistence:	205,046
Stewardship rebates to parishes:	87,974
Stewardship expenses – postage, printing, and office expenses:	5,032
Diaconate program expenses:	3,387
Eastern Catholic Life publication – postage, printing, and office expenses:	66,094
Office administration and supplies – general:	18,883
Office postage and printing – general:	10,885
Legal and immigration fees:	96,248
Accounting fees:	96,000
Safe environment audit fees:	3,068
Celebrations, anniversary, and gifts:	8,089
Consulting fees:	75,720
Moving and relocation expenses – Immigrant Clergy:	12,107
Eparchial transportation and meeting expenses:	95,574
Utilities and telephone:	37,300
Maintenance and repairs – Chancery and Chapel:	59,918
Assessments – NJ, US, and Eastern Catholic Conferences:	16,936
Eparchial Retreat and Presbyteral Days:	1,310
Continued education and well-being of priests:	35,994
ECF Operating expenses – Eastern Christian Formation programs:	23,604
Investment management fees:	55,104
Books, literature, and subscriptions:	1,064
Carpathian Village and Shrine expenses, net of income:	117,376
Heritage Museum and Library:	39
Council of Hierarchs:	5,000
Aid to Eastern Europe:	49,465
Assistance to parishes:	552,553
Depreciation – buildings and equipment:	<u>43,733</u>
Total expenses:	<u>\$3,406,145</u>
Net decrease in assets as of end of year:	<u>\$(178,805)</u>

SALESIANS HONOR 20 JUBILARIANS

by Father Michael Mendl, S.D.B.



The New Rochelle Province of the Salesians of Don Bosco celebrated the profession and ordination anniversaries of 20 jubilarians on Saturday, September 26, at the Marian Shrine in Haverstraw, NY. The jubilarians included fifteen confreres observing 25th, 40th, 50th, 60th, 65th, and even 70th anniversaries of their first religious profession in 2020; four observing 25th, 40th, or 50th anniversaries of priestly ordination; and one observing both priestly and religious anniversaries.

One of the jubilarians was Father Francis Twardzik, S.D.B., who ministered in the Passaic Eparchy for many years. Born in 1940 in Springfield, MA, he is a golden jubilarian of ordination. He was ordained at Saint Anthony Church in Elizabeth, NJ, on March 21, 1970. He has been a member of the community of the Salesian formation house in Orange since 2017. He made his first profession in Newton, NJ, in 1959 and has spent most of his priestly life in parishes of the Byzantine Eparchy of Passaic: assistant pastor at Saints Peter and Paul Church in Minersville, PA (1973-1976), pastor of Saint Nicholas Church in Dunellen, NJ (1978-1989), and pastor of Saint Mary Church in Scranton, PA. (1989-2017). He had brief stints as a teacher in Tampa, FL., and Marrero, LA, and one year as assistant pastor at Saint Rosalie in Harvey, LA. Since the pandemic outbreak, he has resided in Haledon, NJ, as chaplain for the Salesian sisters.

The New Rochelle Province includes Salesian works in the eastern half of the United States and all of Canada: schools, parishes, youth centers, a retreat house, and a Marian shrine.

Distance, health, or Covid-19 restrictions prevented 15 of the jubilarians from being physically present at the shrine for the celebration.



Taking part in the jubilees Mass, in addition to Father Timothy Zak, S.D.B., provincial superior, and 5 jubilarians were another 49 Salesian priests, brothers, and candidates, and almost 30 family members, Salesian Cooperators, and other friends of the jubilarians. The Mass included the renewal of priestly commitment by the men celebrating their presbyteral jubilee, and the re-

newal of Salesian religious profession by those celebrating that anniversary.

Father Zak called the jubilarians “living witnesses” to Salesian pastoral plans and ideals. He stated that the Congregation’s 28th General Chapter, which met earlier this year, calls Salesians to return to Jesus Christ, the center of religious life. The jubilarians have presented Jesus to their confreres in multiple ways: as apostle, high priest, Son of God in human form, carpenter’s son, meek and humble, welcoming the poor, zealous preacher and healer, teacher, good shepherd, unifier in brotherhood, a living rule.

Father Zak continued: All “the jubilarians have found in Christ the happiness for which we were created.... They’re living memorials of our Lord.” With the prophet Isaiah (first reading, Is. 44:1-5), they’ve responded to the Lord’s invitation by saying, “I am the Lord’s.” Their fidelity has brought us the fruit of the Lord’s blessings and reminds all of us that we’re chosen by the Lord. Therefore, we all join the jubilarians in thanking God “for the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus” (second reading, Phil 3:8-14).



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DISCOVER GOD'S GAME PLAN AT "COME AND SEE"

Men 18-35 invited to virtual weekend retreat
Friday, November 6 to Saturday, November 7, 2020

To be a priest ... don't you have to give up everything - your family, your friends, the things you enjoy? Don't you have to be super holy, super smart, or somehow "different?" "Come and see" if this is the case!

Every young man eventually has to make some hard decisions - college, career, marriage, family, religious life. How do I know what's right? Does God care what I decide? If you've ever thought about the priesthood, it's worth taking a weekend, even if virtually, to learn how to listen for God's plans for your future.

The Byzantine Catholic Seminary of Saints Cyril and Methodius is pleased to host the "Come and See" Weekend of Discovery on Friday, November 6, and Saturday, November 7, 2020. This year's retreat will be given virtually online. Invited to register for this online retreat are men, ages 18 to 35, single or married, who may be considering a vocation to the priesthood in the Byzantine Catholic Church. In the interests of facilitating the necessary disconnection from the world, this year's challenge of a virtual weekend includes creating as much as possible an atmosphere that is prayerful, positive, and fraternal. A selection of pre-recorded talks introducing the seminary formation program will be offered as well as a recorded witness talk with the seminarians. A panel discussion will be live-streamed along with at least one liturgical service.

One of last year's participants summed up his experience, saying: "Discerning God's will is important for me; I have been personally praying in front of my icon corner at home and at the Divine Liturgy asking for a clearer understanding of God's will for me for a long time, and attending this weekend was a significant part of my continued discernment."

There is no tuition for this "Come and See" Retreat of Discovery. The application deadline is October 28, 2020. To register, please visit the seminary website at www.bcs.edu

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 September will be broadcast online. Please contact Ron Somich by email at ron.somich@gmail.com for the link and dial in information. <https://carolinabyzantine.com/>

October: 3, 10, 17, 24, 31

ANNUAL CIRCULATION REPORT

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LIFE, LOVE, AND THE HUMAN PERSON

By Ann M. Koshute, MTS

GIVE REAL PEACE A CHANCE

Do not think that I have come to bring peace upon the earth. I have come to bring not peace but the sword. Matthew 10:34

One would have to be living on a desert island with no means of communication to be unaware of the turmoil gripping our world, and specifically our nation. As if the fear, isolation, and death resulting from the Coronavirus pandemic weren't enough, the year 2020 evidently had more chaos to deal out; and the year is not yet over. In the United States the air is thick with racial tension, and there is no disputing that injustices and offences against human dignity have heightened those tensions. But retaliatory violence and destruction is never the answer to injustice; it only further extends the problem and leads us not to understanding and healing, but only more and deeper division. Identifying instances of injustice and expressing our voices in support of reform are necessary and our right as citizens – and our duty as Christians. Contributing to the chaos through violence, rioting and refusal to dialogue respectfully with those with whom we disagree is absolutely opposed to this right and duty. Neither silence nor violence defeat injustice; they perpetuate it.

This chaos and division extends to many of our personal interactions. On top of everything else, a contentious election is upon us, with many families divided along political lines. Arguments in person and online threaten our relationships with those we love and embolden us to pick fights with those whom we don't know. Posts of a political nature on Facebook or Twitter too often cause eruptions of irrational anger and a

competition over who is *right*. Rhetorical dominance is of greatest importance, and one's ability to cleverly and swiftly defeat one's opponent (even the closest family member or friend) is a badge of honor. In such politically charged times as these, civil discourse too often goes out the window in favor of winning the argument. When that happens, there is only one winner: Satan, who successfully adds fuel to the fire of our pride and self-righteousness and draws us further from what is True and Good – and from each other.

Jesus' puzzling words about "peace" and "the sword" may lead us to wrongly conclude that He came into the world to divide us; that the literal and figurative fires presently engulfing us come from Him. The division and peace Jesus spoke of are not part of the current battles on the streets and in media. The division Jesus fosters is between the chaos of the world and the order for which God created us. When He says that "peace" is not His purpose in *the World*, He means a specific *brand* of peace, a false peace; or better, something that *masquerades* as peace. The World beckons us to be so concerned with it that our thoughts are taken up with who we know, how we look, what everyone else is doing, and how best to get (and keep) personal or political power. It's a trap that lures us with honey (after all, as stewards of God's Creation we should be concerned with our temporal needs, the care of ourselves and our families, with safety in our communities and the world, and with advocating on behalf of the poor and marginalized.) But when "the World" becomes our singular focus – when we disregard the call of the *Cherubic Hymn* to "set

aside all earthly cares" for even a moment – we fall into the false peace that Jesus warns against. The "division" Jesus sows is not one that pits us against each other but realigns our priorities so that we are *drawn* to each other, and into forming a more perfect communion with Christ as the head and the love of the Trinity as our exemplar.

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give it to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid. John 14:27

Not as the world gives do I give it to you. If we were somehow confused about Jesus bringing "the sword," we are set right – and set on a new way – when He tells us that *His* is authentic peace, holding no trace of fear. It is what our hearts have yearned for all along. The world will never be a place of perfect peace, regardless of who is president, how much money and possessions we accumulate, or which one of us rhetorically slays the most opponents with our skilled arguments – and our sarcasm. It can be a great good to be involved in politics, to work toward reforms that will bring everyone to a better, safer life that corresponds to human dignity. Vote, peacefully protest, write letters and emails, and engage in respectful conversations with those with whom you disagree. But remember that you are a Christian! You are marked with the sign of the Cross of Christ, grafted into the family of God, and His icon of love on this earth. Christianity is not an ideology, and Jesus has no political affiliation or favorites. In the end, we find no answers in legislation, media dominance, or the kind of one-upmanship that tempts every one of us so easily. The answer to our

current crisis of culture and chaos is Jesus Christ: to know Him, to follow Him, to image Him in how we speak, act – and yes, vote.

Karol Wojtyła (who later became Pope Saint John Paul II) lived under the oppressive Nazi and Communist regimes as a young man in Poland. Both ideologies forcibly stripped the people of their culture and their religion, and sought to take their language by force, since words have the power to communicate Truth. Wojtyła and many more Poles secretly worshiped, studied, and preserved the culture until these ideologies were finally defeated. They (along with others in Europe, including many of our own ancestors) faced cruelty and division like most of us have never (and God-willing *won't* ever) experience. Yet they understood Jesus' words well: that whether it be Hitler or Stalin or any political or otherwise powerful person or regime, nothing can remove the peace of Christ from us unless we allow it.

Right now it feels like the world is burning, and in some of our American cities, God help us, it truly is. Let us not abandon hope! Let us pray for Christ to gift us with true peace, with *His peace*. Let us not rely on the promises of the World or be consumed by its flames of division. Let us instead pray that the Holy Spirit ignite the fire of love, goodness, justice, and peace in each of us. Let us pray that we might be its kindling so that, in Saint Catherine of Siena's words, we might "be who God meant [us] to be," and through Him "set the world on fire." **ECL**

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 17th to the early 20th 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.

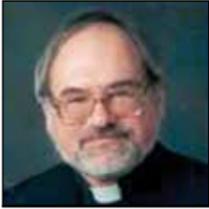
More specific information about service times can be obtained from the individual parishes. *Due to quarantine for coronavirus, this schedule is subject to change.*

- 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

- Cathedral Chapel, Woodland Park.
November 19 - December 3
415 Lackawanna Ave., Woodland
Park, NJ
Wednesday, December 2, 7:00 PM



THE BYZANTINE LITURGY

By Archpriest David Petras, SEOD

THE ANAPHORA: IT IS ALWAYS PASCHA

Saint John Chrysostom once preached about the Divine Liturgy, “It is always Pascha!” Pascha, of course, is the mystery of God’s salvation. It is the revelation of God’s compassion for the people He has created. Today we interpret “compassion” as simply a feeling of mercy and kindness toward another, but its deeper meaning is “to suffer with” another. God loved us so much that He took on our human life, and its limitations, even to the point of dying with us. As Saint Paul put it: “He emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; and found human in appearance, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross” (Philippians 2:7-8). However, He did this not to bring us more suffering, but to bring us the glory that comes from genuine love. When God commands us to “love one another,” He is showing us that by suffering with us and for us, He was raised to glory, so that by loving as He has loved us, we too are raised to glory. That is why the command in the Gospel of John reads, “I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another.” (John 13:34) In the Liturgy we often sing a popular hymn based in this verse of Scripture.

“It is always Pascha,” therefore, means that God’s compassion is with us truly and in all its depth every time we celebrate the Divine Liturgy. When we

pray the Anaphora, it is not only a matter of words recalling some past event, but these very words make the full meaning of what God has done present to us again. Psalm 21:4 says, “You, O God, are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel.” The word “enthroned,” is the way we translate the Hebrew. Other translations of this word are “inhabit,” or “dwell” in the praises of Israel. The reality is that when we praise God in the Liturgy, He is present among us, He is offering today the same sacrifice on the Cross that He suffered “with” us and “for” us so long ago in history. This Cross, of course, was fulfilled and perfected by his glorious Resurrection. That is, His death was a manifestation of his infinite love for us, a powerful love that brought about the fullness of life in resurrection. This is what Saint Paul was saying in the passage from Philippians that I quoted above, the complete verse is, “Because of this, God greatly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (Philippians 2:9-11) This sacrifice is present in every Divine Liturgy in its full reality, but it is no longer bloody, but it is a “sacrifice of praise.” This is what we call it when the deacon asks us to pray, “Let us stand aright; let us stand in awe; let us be attentive to offer the holy

Anaphora in peace,” and we reply that it is “mercy, peace, a sacrifice of praise.”

How can this be? It is because of the power of God. When we say the words of the Anaphora, God is saying the same words with us by way of mystery. Again, Saint Paul explains, “But now (the mystery hidden from the ages) has been manifested to His holy ones, to whom God chose to make known the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; it is Christ in you, the hope for glory. It is He whom we proclaim, admonishing everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone perfect in Christ.” (Colossians 1:27-28) When we say the words of the Anaphora, therefore, it is “Christ in you, the hope for glory,” the glory of life in resurrection. It is the Lord Himself whom we receive in Holy Communion, “for the remission of sins (victory over death both moral and physical) and for life everlasting. Amen.”

Suddenly, therefore, we understand the whole meaning of the Anaphora we pray. We offer bread and wine just as our Lord did at the Last and Mystical Supper in the upper room, and our bread and wine is “Christ in you, the hope for glory.” Then, as we pray the commemoration (anamnesis) everything that God has done for us becomes present in our “sacrifice of praise.” First are the glorious events of the “saving

passion,” the “like-creating cross,” the “three-day burial,” signifying the life-giving descent into Hades to bring to life the human beings taken by death, and to celebrate a new Sabbath rest that brings life, and finally the “resurrection from the dead.” Every Anaphora is the celebration of the Resurrection, as Saint John Chrysostom proclaimed, “It is always Pascha!” We then remember “the ascension into heaven, and the enthronement at the right hand of God,” the reality that exists now and which is present in the Liturgy: Christ is our High Priest and Mediator, He is enthroned in heaven and as He prays to the Father we pray together with Him now and in reality, as the Psalm says, ““You, O God, are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel.” (Psalm 21:4) Finally, and most remarkably, what is still in our linear future is already present here in our sacrifice of praise: “His glorious and fearsome second coming.” Already, we “remember” that in Christ, the firstborn of all creation, “is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He himself might be preeminent. For in Him all the fullness was pleased to dwell, and through Him to reconcile all things for Him, making peace by the blood of His cross through Him, whether those on earth or those in heaven. (Colossians 1:15.18-20)” The celebration of our Divine Liturgy, as a sacrifice of praise, is the past, the present and the future of all our salvation and life in Christ. **BCL**

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Free and Open to the Public. All events are scheduled for 7 p.m. CDT (5 GMT), and will be held online. This series is co-sponsored by the Beatrix Institute, Calvert House, the Catholic Theological Union, the Harvard Catholic Forum, the Institute for Faith and Culture, the Nova Forum, the Orthodox Christian Studies Center at Fordham University, the Saint Benedict Institute, and the St. Paul University Catholic Center.

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| September 3 | Introduction to Liturgical Mystagogy
Daniel Galadza <i>University of Regensburg</i> |
| September 10 | A Theology of Wonder: An Introduction to the Poetry of Ephrem the Syrian
Andrew Hayes <i>University of St. Thomas, Houston</i> |
| September 17 | Christ the Lover of Mankind: Philanthropia, Mystery, and Martyria in Eastern Christianity
Robin Darling Young <i>Catholic University of America</i> |
| September 24 | Eastern Churches, Latin Territories: Ecclesial Catholicity and the Notion of Diaspora
Alexander Laschuk <i>Sheptytsky Institute of Eastern Christian Studies at University of St. Michael's College</i> |
| October 1 | Expanding the Archive: Syriac Literature and the Study of Early Christianity Today
Erin Walsh <i>University of Chicago</i> |
| November 12 | Quo Vadis: the Direction of Eastern Catholic Theology, a Pastoral Perspective for the 21st Century
Archbishop Borys Gudziak <i>Ukrainian Catholic Archeparchy of Philadelphia and Metropolitan of the Ukrainian Catholic Church in the USA</i> |

Distinct in their liturgy, theology, spirituality, and discipline of Church life, 23 Eastern Churches are in communion with the Roman Catholic Church. The Second Vatican Council urged the Eastern Catholic Churches to cultivate and promote their unique share of the tradition. This series responds to that mandate and features leading scholars in the field to offer their theological perspectives drawn from the wisdom of Christian East. In view of broadening our understanding of the Catholic intellectual tradition, this series draws attention to the vantage points of Christians who worship, think, and pray in continuity with the first 1,000 years of the undivided Church.

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“O most-pure Mother of God, you are a mighty defender for those in sorrow. You are a ready help to those in trouble. You are the salvation and confirmation of the world. You are the depth of mercy, the fount of God’s wisdom and the protectress of the world. O faithful, let us sing and praise her glorious protection saying: Rejoice, O Full of Grace, the Lord is with you, and through you He grants great mercy to the world.” – “At Psalm 140,” Vespers for the Feast of the Protection of the Theotokos, October 1.

My seasonal reflection is going to be more of a personal one this time around, but with effects for all of us. October is an especially spiritual time of year for me for a couple of reasons. When I lived in Virginia Beach, VA, back in the day, we had no Byzantine Catholic Church in our area, and did not know of Ascension Parish, one hour away in Williamsburg. One day, my mother saw in the local section of our newspaper that there was going to be a mission at a local Roman Catholic parish on October 1, 1989. Now, October 1 is my birthday, and I thought it was such a treat that we could go to “our own” church as a “birthday present.” And so, Mom, Dad, and I went to the chapel at Saint Gregory the Great Parish that night. We had not been in our church for decades by then. Father Ed Cimbala, pastor of Ascension Parish, Williamsburg, at the time, and Cantor (now Deacon) Nicholas Sotack were there to offer the Divine Liturgy for the first time in Virginia Beach. The Liturgy began, and as it progressed, they began to sing the *Jedinorodinyj Syne*, (“Only-begotten Son”); the melody awoke deep memories in my heart, and I said to myself, “I’m home!” There I

found out that my birthday was the Feast of the Protection of the Mother of God, and I was a bit dumbfounded. This mission eventually became Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish, Virginia Beach, VA. I became the first cantor; my father helped build our first icon screen when we finally found a permanent home. In April of 1991, Father Ed drove me to meet with Bishop Michael, and I entered seminary in autumn of that year.

During the early part of my priesthood, I met a parishioner who introduced me to Saint Thérèse of Lisieux and her “Little Way.” I was intrigued by her life and bought all the books I could find about her, and took her on as a patron saint. I then found out that she had had a mission to priests.

At age 14, Thérèse understood her vocation to pray for priests, to be “an apostle to apostles.” In September 1890, at her canonical examination before she professed her religious vows, she was asked why she had come to Carmel. She answered “I came to save souls, and especially to pray for priests.” Throughout her life she prayed fervently for priests, and she corresponded with and prayed for a young priest, Adolphe Roulland, and a young seminarian, Maurice Bellière. She wrote to her sister, “Our mission as Carmelites is to form evangelical workers who will save thousands of souls whose mothers we shall be.”

SEASONAL REFLECTIONS

Father Ronald Hatton



THE PROTECTION AND THE PRIESTHOOD

In October 1895, a young seminarian and subdeacon of the White Fathers, Abbé Bellière, asked the Carmel of Lisieux for a nun who would support – by prayer and sacrifice – his missionary work, and the souls that were in the future to be entrusted to him. Mother Agnes designated Thérèse. She never met Father Bellière but ten letters passed between them.

A year later Father Adolphe Roulland (1870–1934) of the Society of Foreign Missions requested the same service of the Lisieux Carmel. Once more Thérèse was assigned the duties of *spiritual sister*. “It is quite clear that Thérèse, in spite of all her reverence for the priestly office, in both cases felt herself to be the teacher and the giver. It is she who consoles and warns, encourages and praises, answers questions, offers corroboration, and instructs the priests in the meaning of her *little way*.”

It is interesting to think that the priest, in one aspect of his ministry, mirrors the “ministry” of the Blessed Mother. We see her as the ladder by which God comes to earth, takes on our flesh from her, and gives us Himself to the world. In a similar, although inferior, way, God gives Himself to the world through the priest in the Holy Eucharist. The priest is a ladder between heaven and earth, standing at the altar giving his parish to God and, turning to the people during Liturgy, gives them His blessing

through His priest, and gives His Body and Blood to them in the precious Sacrament. How blessed the priest is to echo the life of the Mother of God in the service he gives to his parish!

My priesthood has always been blessed by the knowledge that Saint Thérèse, a “Western” saint, and the Feast of the Protection of the Theotokos, an “Eastern” feast, were part of who I was as a priest, a child of God, and as a Catholic Christian. Both of these women in my life have been a source of strength to me throughout what, in many ways, has been a bumpy ride through the past 25+ years. Every October 1st, as I celebrate the feast in my parish, I am reminded of how both these feasts have been part of my formation as a priest, how our Blessed Mother has sustained me and covered me with her veil as I fought with human weaknesses and temptations. I am a priest because of a Divine Liturgy that took place on my birthday. I remain a priest because of the protection, prayers, and intercessions of the Blessed Theotokos, and through the prayers and intercessions of our Venerable Mother, Doctor of the Church, and Little Flower, Thérèse of Lisieux. With this, I commend to you, be you priest or layperson, the prayers of these two standards that our Lord has raised up for us during the month of October. **ECL**



PRIESTLY REFLECTIONS

Father Paul Varchola West

‘I’VE GOT TO ADMIT IT’S GETTING BETTER...’

As I settle into being a priest, and as a parochial administrator, I am increasingly noticing something rather strange. It seems as if with the more I learn, the more I discover, the more aspects of ministry in which I become involved, the more difficult things seem to become. Of course, one always hopes that the longer one is doing something, the easier it becomes. In this instance, that is unfortunately not the case. I am very comforted that, in this struggle of growth, I found consolation in a quite surprising place.

Recently, when I was reflecting on my day, I jokingly said to my wife, “You know, the more I do this the more I am realizing that ministry is like an onion; the more layers I peel back, the more it stinks and the more I cry!” We had a good laugh. Of course, what I really meant by saying this was that the more involved I become in the various aspects of priestly ministry, the more complicated things seem to be. While this could become discouraging, I

thought back to other times in my life where I felt that I could not get ahead and remembered a piece of advice I heard a long time ago, back in undergraduate music school.

I sat in on a master class once with a rather well-known string quartet and I remember the cellist imparting the following wisdom upon the audience of fledgling musicians. He told us something to the effect that “the more proficient you become at your instrument, you are going to think you are getting worse.” Sage advice.

This is absolutely true. The more one practices, the more one improves, the more particular one becomes, all the more do the little mistakes become evident. This is a good thing. This means that one’s eyes are being more critical of what is on the page, one’s ears are becoming more attuned to the functioning of music, one’s fingers are moving with more grace, one’s very self is growing more subtle, more receptive,

more in tune with the world. This is applicable not only to music, but to every aspect of life, including spirituality!

The more we grow in prayer, the more attuned we become to our very being. The more our relationship with God grows, perhaps the more readily we are able to notice where this relationship could use some work on our part. This also inevitably leads to that dreaded prayerful “dry spell.” We will undoubtedly reach a point in our prayer life, or perhaps life in general, when we believe our efforts to be fruitless. This could easily cause one to become despondent, or perhaps simply apathetic or a bit lax toward prayer. When this happens, this is a wake-up call for us! This is not the time to plough through and force prayer, but rather, this is the time to step back and adjust our routine.

As we become more proficient at anything, struggles increase because we are getting better; a little better all the time.

What this means is that we need to challenge ourselves to use our newly attained skills to better ourselves, to push ourselves to the next level. Whether it be priestly, ministry, music, a labor trade, teaching, marriage, parenting, or even one’s daily personal life, the more we struggle we must find the opportunities within that struggle to grow. To quote the Beatles: “I’ve got to admit it’s getting better, a little better all the time - it can’t get no worse!” We need to face our struggles not with the tears of an onion, but with the joy of a smile because, after all, things are indeed getting a little better all the time. Christ calls us to better ourselves, not overnight, but a little at a time. Through struggle, let us all grow in prayer, in Christ, and in love for God and one another. It is through prayerful love in Jesus Christ that we grow and make it through, for “it’s getting better since you’ve been mine - getting so much better all the time!” Whatever, it is, take it one day, one practice session, one prayer at a time. **ECL**

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

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



POMPOUS FOOLS, USEFUL TOOLS, AND THE ONLY KING AND LORD

Despite its focus on the people of Israel as the Lord's "chosen" and "treasured possession" (Deuteronomy 7:6), the Old Testament does offer occasional insights into how world events and world leaders fit into God's plan of salvation for all mankind.

We're all familiar with the protracted give-and-take between Moses and Pharaoh. Pharaoh, like every human being, possessed a free will and, unlike most human beings, also had the clout to issue orders. The Lord respected that freedom and, as Pharaoh grew more and more stubborn, he suffered ten plagues, gave up his Hebrew slaves, and lost his army in the Red Sea as the consequence for his "hardness of heart." Pharaoh's pride led to his own downfall and gave glory to God through the wonders of the Exodus (Exodus 14). Without Pharaoh, "The Ten Commandments" would have been a much less exciting film.

In the promised land, the Israelites began to clamor for a king to be like other nations (1 Samuel 8). After the glory days of David and Solomon, Solomon's foolish and arrogant son, Rehoboam, fractured the land into rival kingdoms, with capitals in Samaria and Jerusalem. Despite more than two centuries of

warnings from prophets, the northern kingdom sank deeper and deeper into idolatry and corruption. The predicted consequences came in the person of Tiglath Pileser III and the Assyrian army, which overran the north in the 720's BC (2 Kings 15). In his own mind, the Assyrian king was simply racking up victories and expanding his empire. In the inspired vision of the Scriptures, he is no more than a tool in God's hands, a "rod" with which God punishes His errant children. The pride of the Assyrians would soon bring about their own downfall (Isaiah 10). Meanwhile, Isaiah repeatedly foretold the coming of Christ (Isaiah 7-11).

Things were no better in Judah and Jerusalem, where prophets condemned idolatry and injustice and warned hypocritical tyrants that superficial religion could not buy the Lord's favor (Amos 5:21-27; Jeremiah 14:12). This time, God's instrument of punishment was the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar, who first besieged Jerusalem in 598 and finally destroyed it in 587BC, bringing King David's dynasty to an end (until, of course, the birth of Jesus; Matthew 1-2). The prophet Daniel, one of the exiles in Babylon, describes Nebuchadnezzar's megalomania and cruelty (Daniel 3) and how he was humbled by

the Lord (Daniel 4:28-33). His successor was killed, and his empire gobbled up by the Medes and Persians (Daniel 6:30-6:1). Meanwhile, Daniel saw a vision of Christ as "one like a Son of Man" who appears in heaven to receive "dominion, honor, and ... his authority is an everlasting authority... and his kingdom shall not be destroyed" (Daniel 7:13-14).

The Persian king Cyrus sent the Jewish exiles home from Babylon with money to rebuild the temple. Through Isaiah (45:1), the Lord even calls this fire-worshipper "my anointed" (that is, a "messiah") but makes clear that "For Jacob my servant's sake and Israel my chosen ... I will accept you although you have not known me" (Isaiah 45:4). Cyrus gladly supported any religion that prayed for him. One god was as good as another, so long as Cyrus' throne was secure. His empire was conquered by Alexander the Great in 330BC, who planted the Greek language throughout the Mediterranean world and thus facilitated the spread of the Gospel. Alexander's empire was split up at his death, with the Holy Land going to a general named Seleucus, paving the way for the various Herods who litter the pages of the New Testament.

In the last years of the 1st century BC, the Romans gradually collected the fragments of Alexander's empire. In the fragile "peace" of the Emperor Augustus, Jesus Christ was born (Luke 2:1). Roman citizenship propelled Saint Paul's evangelical mission all the way to Rome (Acts 22: 32-29; 23:11; 25:10-12; 28:16-30).

Sometimes the grandiose plans of the mighty lead them to support God's people; more often they seek to silence or destroy them. Undoubtedly, they imagine they are in control; invariably, their monuments and propaganda paint them as victors. The Psalmist sees human power struggles through God's eyes: "Why do the nations rage and the peoples utter folly? The kings of the earth rise up and the princes conspire together against the Lord and His Christ. ... He who is enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord derides them." To His Son, Jesus Christ, the Father says: "Ask of Me and I will give you the nations for an inheritance." To the mighty, the only sound advice remains: "O kings, give heed; take warning, you rulers of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice before Him; with trembling pay homage to Him ... Happy are all who take refuge in Him" (Psalm 2).

ECL



SCHOOL OF PRAYER

Father G. Scott Boghossian

SURELY THE LORD IS IN THIS PLACE

Jacob dreamt of a ladder going up to Heaven and saw the angels ascending and descending on it. In the dream, the LORD appeared at the top of the ladder. God promised Jacob that through him, all the nations of the earth would be blessed. Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not know it" (Gen. 28:16). May we all come to acknowledge the same truth: God is here with us, and we often do not realize it.

God is present with us right now. God's omnipresence is a fundamental truth of natural theology, as well as divine revelation. "Do I not fill the earth and the heavens says the LORD?" (Jer. 23:24). David prays, "Where shall I go from Your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from Your presence? If I ascend to heaven, You are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, You are there! If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there Your hand shall lead me, and Your right hand shall hold me" (Ps. 139:7-10). Wherever you are, God is there with you.

The reality of God's omnipresence is challenging because it demands holiness of life. "When Abram was ninety-nine years old the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, 'I am God Almighty; walk before Me, and be blameless'" (Gen. 17:1). God's omnipresence is also strengthening and comforting because we know that He will never leave us or forsake us (Heb. 13:5). "Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go." (Josh. 1:9).

God is uncircumscribed. To be circumscribed is to be surrounded, bounded, or limited. The infinite and eternal God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit cannot be contained. When Solomon built the Temple in Jerusalem, he realized that even though God manifested His holy presence in the Temple, He could never be limited to or entirely contained within it. He prayed, "Even heaven, the highest heaven, cannot contain You, much less this temple I have built" (2 Chron. 16:8).

Spirago and Clarke's Commentary on the Catechism states that "the whole Divine essence fills the whole created space and every one of its parts." The Catholic Encyclopedia says that "God Himself, or the Divine Nature, is in immediate contact with, or immanent in, every creature – conserving it in being and enabling it to act." God is here with us, fully present, preserving us in existence. Consider the practical implications of this overwhelming reality.

No one can hide from God. "Can a man hide himself in secret places so that I cannot see him? declares the LORD" (Jer. 23:24). If a man is caught "red-handed" in some sin or crime, how embarrassed and ashamed he feels. But we are not ashamed to commit the most terrible sins in the presence of God. On the other hand, if we remember that God is with us wherever we may be, won't we be more diligent in avoiding sin? Saint Teresa of Avila says, "every evil happens to us because we do not reflect that God is present with us but imagine that He is at a distance." Saint Alphonsus writes, "there is no more efficacious means of subduing the

passions, of resisting temptations, and consequently of avoiding sin, than the remembrance of God's presence."

Be fearless! "For I, the LORD your God, hold your right hand; it is I who say to you, 'Fear not, I am the one who helps you'" (Is. 41:13). When the Empress Eudoxia threatened Saint John Chrysostom with banishment, he answered, "You will not frighten me, unless you are able to send me someplace where God is not."

We don't see the air, yet we know that it surrounds us and that without it, we could not live. Similarly, we don't see God, but we know He is always with us, and that He continually sustains us. A sponge in the sea is saturated with water on every side. In like manner, in God, "we live and move and have our being" and "He is not far from any one of us" (Ac. 17:28, 27).

An essential spiritual discipline is the "practice of the presence of God." One of the many ways to "practice the presence of God" is to call to mind His attribute of omnipresence. Make an act of faith in God's presence by praying, "My God, I firmly believe that You are here present." In light of the dogmatic fact that God is fully present in every place, let's say with the Patriarch Jacob, "Surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not know it" (Gen. 28:16). **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.

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

Theosis in Action 2020 events

Save the dates!

November 15
 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.

[Facebook.com/theosisinaction](https://facebook.com/theosisinaction)

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UPCOMING EPARCHIAL AND PARISH EVENTS

OCTOBER, 2020

- 1 Holy Protection of the Theotokos
Solemn Holy Day • Chancery closed
- 13 Columbus Day
Civic holiday • Chancery closed

NOVEMBER, 2020

- 8 Holy Archangel Michael and All Holy Bodiless Powers of Heaven
Solemn Holy Day
- 14 Christmas Fast begins at sundown
- 21 Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple
Solemn Holy Day
- 26-27 Thanksgiving Holiday
Civic holiday • 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 Jubilarian Celebrations are moved to next year.