



EASTERN CATHOLIC LIFE

Official Publication of the Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Passaic

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MAY 2021

NEW PRIEST, FATHER JAMES FRASER, IV ORDAINED FOR THE EPARCHY



On Bright Saturday morning, April 10, 2021, at Saint Gregory of Nyssa Byzantine Catholic Church in Beltsville, MD, Deacon James Fraser, IV, was ordained to the sacred order of presbyter by Bishop Kurt, who celebrated the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy, and closed out Bright Week with the blessing and distribution of the *Artos*. Father James' family in attendance included his wife, Katie, and their eight children, James V, Peter, Thomas, Mary, Andrew, Elizabeth, Nicholas, and Margaret; as well as his parents, James and Kay; his sister, Dana; cousin, Jodi; and Aunt Susan. His uncle, Father Mark Lewis, a priest of the Personal Or-

dinarate of the Chair of Saint Peter, attended and also concelebrated his first Byzantine Divine Liturgy. Clergy also concelebrating were Father Serhii Deiak, the pastor of Saint Gregory of Nyssa and Patronage Mother of God BCC, Arbutus, MD; Father John Basarab, the pastor of Epiphany BCC, Annandale, VA, and local syncellus; and Deacon Bill Szewczyk, also of Saint Gregory of Nyssa Parish. Father Ed Higgins, pastor of Holy Ghost Byzantine Catholic Church, Philadelphia, PA, served as master of ceremonies. Subdeacon Tim Fariss, of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Byzantine Catholic Church, Levittown, PA, assisted, as did the sons of Father

James and Deacon Bill. Father James celebrated his first Divine Liturgy the following day, Thomas Sunday, at Patronage Mother of God.

Father James originally studied for ministry in the Episcopal Church at Nashotah House Seminary and the Dominican House of Studies in Washington, DC, eventually earning a Master of Divinity. After serving in parishes in MD and MI, Father James entered the Catholic Church, via the Roman Rite, in 2008, and returned home to western MD. There, he was introduced to the Byzantine Catholic Church by Father Conan Timoney, of blessed memory, at

the mission Liturgy held at Saint Ann Roman Catholic Church, Hagerstown, MD. The first time Father James heard the Cherubic Hymn sung, he knew he had found his permanent home. Father James' path to ordination with the Eparchy of Passaic began in 2016, when Father Conan urged him to call Bishop Kurt. Already having a degree, Bishop Kurt assigned Father James to supplement his formal education by studying the Eastern tradition under Father Michael Kerestes, of pastor of Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church, Wilkes-Barre, PA. In April 2018, Bishop Kurt ordained then-Subdeacon James to the diaconate at Saint Stephen Byzantine Catholic Church, Allen Park, MI, where Father James and his family lived due to his secular employment. Now that Father James has been ordained to the priesthood, he and his family will be moving into the Archeparchy of Pittsburgh, where he plans to continue with his secular employment and serve as the priest at a small parish.

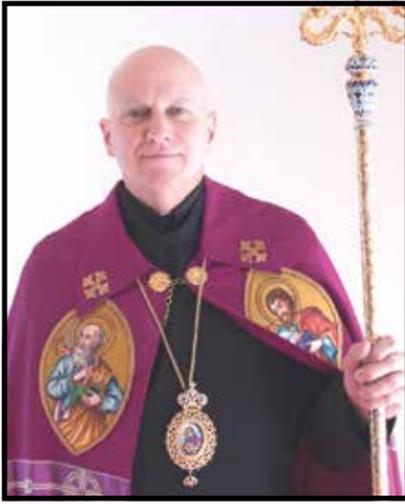
Father James is extremely grateful to Bishop Kurt, Katie, all of his family, and everyone who has been supportive and have sacrificed for this opportunity to serve as a priest in Christ's Church. He is excited to move into this next phase of his life and begin sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ in his new assignment.



Bishop Kurt lays his hands on Deacon James and recites the prayer of ordination



Bishop Kurt with the newly-ordained Father James and his wife, Pan'i Katie



I LIFT UP MY EYES...

Pastoral Reflections of Bishop Kurt



SAINT JOSEPH, MAN OF GOD

Reprinted from the January, 2015, issue of the Eastern Catholic Life, to commemorate the Year of Saint Joseph

Many people say that we live in an era without good role models for males. If you read enough history, you will find out that they have always been hard to find, starting with Adam. The Sunday after Christmas we find two admirable men, King David and Saint Joseph. I've heard it said that Saint Joseph was neglected in the East compared to the West, but it seems to me that we honor him even more since he is celebrated on a Sunday.

In the beautiful poetry of our Liturgy, Saint Joseph and King David are linked in the Good News. The hymns say to Joseph, "Tell David what you saw." The hymn is saying that when Saint Joseph died and arrived in the underworld, he could tell David, "Isaiah's prophecy was fulfilled. The Virgin has given birth. Your throne will last forever. The universal Shepherd is now on the earth." A few years later, Jesus Himself arrived to liberate the underworld, or as we say, to despoil Hades, and to conquer Death.

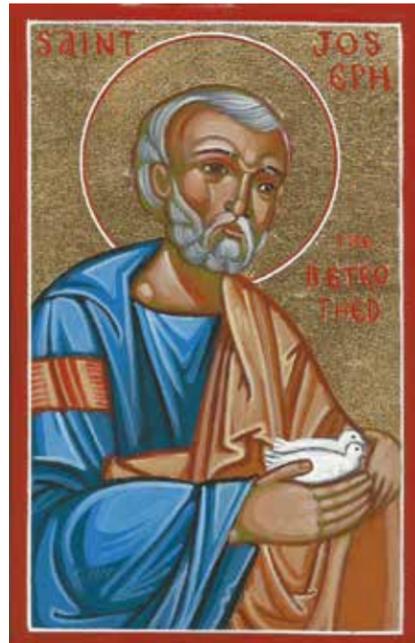
What can we learn about Saint Joseph from the scriptures? Although he is named in Saint Luke's Gospel, almost everything we know comes from the first two chapters of Saint Matthew's Gospel. In fact, Saint Joseph really

dominates the action in those passages. He is truly a man of action, the great protector. By listening to the Word of God, he acts as God's agent in protecting the Messiah and his mother from the forces of evil.

In the first event, Saint Joseph is a just man who tries to follow the law of God, as he understands it. He learns that Mary is pregnant, and so cannot go through with his marriage knowing that he is not the father. But while respecting marriage and chastity, he does not desire to add to her burden by publicly denouncing her. He tries to follow the law but also practice charity. At this point he receives his first visit from an angel. In fact, there are five special revelations by God in this passage, three of them mention an angel. Four of these revelations are to Joseph, including all three of the angelic ones.

In this first revelation, the angel says, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit; she will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." From this revelation, we learn several things about a good man. The first is that even the best men have fear. **Courage does not mean a lack of fear; courage means acting despite fear. Joseph is able to be courageous because he trusts the word of God.** The angel tells Joseph to name the child, an act of a father. We learn that a good man must act like a good father, even when a child is not his own child.

The second revelation is to the three magi, but the third revelation is again to Saint Joseph. In this one an angel speaks to him and says, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there till I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child to destroy him." From this revelation we learn that a good man will sacrifice his own comfort, time, and even career to protect those entrusted to him. How often, when I was counseling a young man against fornication, I have said, "God



Icon of Saint Joseph, the Betrothed

made men to protect women, not to use them for our own pleasure." What a delight it is to see a young man straighten his posture and relax his shoulders and look thoughtful, when moments earlier

he looked ashamed, or cocky, or jocular! What a contrast Saint Joseph is to King Herod. Herod's idea of manliness is to constantly increase his own power and wealth. Like so many men today who are deluded by materialism, Herod killed the very children that God gave him to protect.

In the fourth revelation, the angel says to Saint Joseph, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead." Notice how the messages from the angel are full of activity. Saint Joseph didn't hideout or use subterfuge or clever words, but he took action, and swift action to protect his family. In fact, Saint Joseph is one of the most important men in history, and he never utters a word in the Scriptures.

Finally, on the way back to Judea, Saint Joseph receives his last revelation and moves to Nazareth. No doubt he was looking forward to returning to his original home, his relatives, his friends, and his business contacts. However, in his final sacrifice, Saint Joseph starts a new life in a different country to protect his family and to obey the word of God. We don't all have the best role model in this life, but God shows us a good man in the Scriptures. Saint Joseph follows God's law, practices charity, trusts God, acts decisively, keeps his mouth shut, and protects those whom God has entrusted to him.

+Kurt Bunette



CARPATHO-RUSYN SOCIETY

MANIFESTING CARPATHO-RUSYN CULTURE AND HISTORY

"Who are the Rusyns?" is a DVD presented by John Righetti, President emeritus of C-RS. It was released in 2019 for the 25th Anniversary of the Carpatho-Rusyn Society. This professional presentation clarifies the confusion and complicated

history of the Rusyns and how they almost became extinct. Not only will it be watched more than once, it is great to share with family and friends. The DVD can be ordered by making a check payable to: Carpatho-Rusyn Society for \$25, which includes postage and handling. Please mail with name of recipient(s) to Bonnie Burke, 1101 Tanner Crossing Lane, Indian Land, SC 29707. Orders will be processed immediately upon receipt. The information can also be found on www.c-rs.org at the bottom of the homepage. Visit Carpatho-Rusyn Society YouTube for our most recent educational videos.



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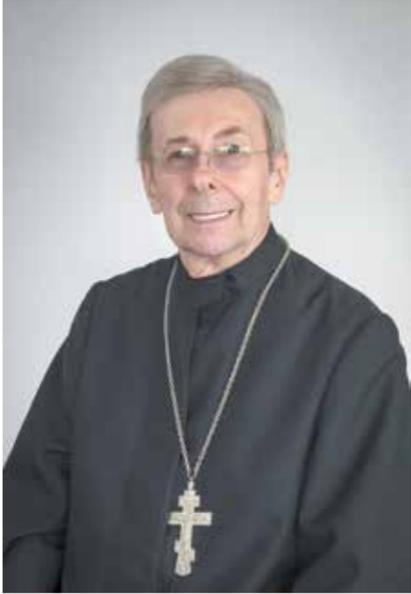
Session 1: June 1 to July 16, 2021

- Theosis: East and West
- Desert Monastics in Context
- Research Methods

Session 2: July 5 to August 20, 2021

- Ecumenism
- History of the Melkite Greek Catholic Church of Antioch

+FATHER MICHAEL YURISTA ENTERS INTO ETERNAL REST



Father Michael Yurista, 79, retired priest of the Eparchy of Passaic and pastor *emeritus* of Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church in Dunellen, NJ, fell asleep in the Lord on April 23, 2021, at Sunrise Retirement Community in Jackson, NJ, where he was a guest. Shortly before his death, Father Michael received Holy Communion and Absolution from Bishop Kurt.

Father Michael was born on May 24, 1941, to Michael Yurista and Mary Hress of Oneida, PA. He was baptized and chrismated at Saint Michael the Archangel Byzantine Catholic Church in McAdoo, PA, on June 1, 1941.

After graduation from high school, he entered Saints Cyril and Methodius Byzantine Catholic Seminary in Pittsburgh, PA, to begin studies for the priesthood. Later, he attended Saint Basil Seminary in Methuen, MA, where he completed his studies. He was ordained to the Priesthood of Jesus Christ on June 4, 1967, at the Cathedral of Saint Michael the Archangel in Passaic, NJ, by Bishop Michael (Dudick). After his priestly ordination, Father Michael served as assistant pastor at Saint Mary Church in Wilkes-Barre, PA, and later as assistant pastor of Saint John the Baptist Church in Lansford, PA, where he was also appointed temporary administrator. He then served as assistant pastor at Saint Michael Cathedral in 1969, where he was also ap-

pointed Director of the CYO. In 1970, he was appointed administrator of the Dover-area, NJ, mission, which later became Holy Wisdom Byzantine Catholic Church in Flanders, NJ.

In 1974, he was appointed assistant pastor at Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church in Manhattan, NY. He was later appointed administrator of Saint John Byzantine Catholic Church, Wilkes-Barre Township, PA in 1975.

Other assignments included temporary administrator of Saint Michael Byzantine Catholic Church in South Hadley, MA; assistant pastor of Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church Yonkers, NY; pastor of Saint Stephen Byzantine Catholic Church, Amherst, NY; administrator of Saint Mary Church, Olean, NY; pastor of Holy Spirit Byzantine Catholic Church, Binghamton NY; pastor of Saint John Byzantine Catholic Church, Scranton, PA and administrator of Transfiguration Byzantine Catholic Church, Clarks Summit, PA; and assistant pastor, Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church, Wilkes-Barre, PA; and assistant pastor of Saint John Byzantine Catholic Church, Hazleton, PA.

In 1997, he was appointed pastor of Saint John Byzantine Catholic Church, in Bayonne, NJ, and administrator of Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church in Jersey City, NJ, where he served until 2014. Moreover, he had the distinction of serving twice as pastor of Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church in Dunellen, NJ. First in 1993, and later in 2014 until his retirement from active ministry and appointment as pastor *emeritus* in 2018.

In addition to other family members and friends, he is survived by his cousin and care-giver, Beverly Stack.

The Funeral Liturgy for a Priest was celebrated on Friday, April 30, 2021, at Saint Michael Byzantine Catholic Church in McAdoo, PA. There was a viewing the afternoon and evening before in Toms River, NJ.

+ELIZABETH BASARAB, MOTHER OF EPARCHIAL PRIEST, FALLS ASLEEP IN THE LORD



Elizabeth Basarab passed away Friday, January 29, 2021, at the Heart and Vascular Institute of INOVA Fairfax Hospital in Fairfax, VA. She was ninety-seven.

Betty was born June 7, 1923, to George Lichvarcik and Elizabeth Luyber Lichvarcik in the private company town of Roebing, NJ. She was baptized and chrismated by Father Gabriel Ivancho on June 17, 1923, at Saint Nicholas Church, Roebing, NJ, the very parish that was begun ten years earlier at an organizational meeting held in her grandparents' house. She and her younger brother, Jack, were raised by their parents in a close, loving family, among a large extended family of grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins, and within an active and dedicated church family in the town's Byzantine Catholic parish. The residents of the company town were a close-knit group of families of employees who were jointly engaged in the Roebing family's suspension bridge building projects and other enterprises.

After graduation from high school, she was employed by the John A. Roebing Company in the office of the wire mill and soon promoted to headquarters and the plant supervisor's office.

While she was a secretary at the supervisor's office, Hedy Lamar and Walter Abell visited from Hollywood September 2, 1942, to sell War Bonds. She escorted Walter Abell from the office to the stage. The photograph for this occasion was used as a cover for *Images of America: Roebing* book, and she appears as the third young woman from the left of the photograph posed in front of the outdoor stage.

At church, she was a member of the church choir, of which she was elected secretary. In this position, she had occasion to work on choir business

with the president of the choir, John Basarab, and they began dating.

Elizabeth and John Basarab were married at Saint Nicholas Church, Roebing on December 20, 1942. At the time John Basarab was stationed at Fort Lewis, WA, for his Ranger training and was given leave to return to Roebing for his wedding.

While her husband was in US Army combat operations in New Guinea and the Philippines, Elizabeth was hired in February 1943, to work at Fort Dix, NJ, for the US Army in the Department of Civilian Personnel. She was promoted to be the head mail clerk, a position that required her to take an oath for strict secrecy because of the war's correspondence. In this position, she knew many of the war's movements but never revealed any secrets. Elizabeth received the Meritorious Service Commendation from Major General W.W. Eagles, commanding general at Fort Dix for "outstanding work in the Civilian Personnel Branch".

In 1972, she briefly worked part-time for National Automobile Dealer Exchange, Bordentown, NJ. She was then hired by McGraw-Hill Publishing in the *Business Week* magazine division. She retired from McGraw-Hill.

She was elected to two terms as Ladies Guild president at Saint Nicholas Church in Roebing.

Elizabeth and John were married for forty-eight years until his passing in 1990.

Betty was predeceased by her loving husband, John; her son, David; her brother, John (Florence) Lihvarcik; and a great-niece, Emma Brey. She is survived by her beloved son, Father John Basarab, pastor of Epiphany of our Lord Byzantine Catholic Church, Annandale, VA; by her nephews and nieces, John (Jack) Lihvarcik (Margaret) and Michael Lihvarcik (Nancy); Jenna Brey (Devon); Julie Gray (Jeremy); Lauren McDonald (Jon); Sarah Harris (Kyle); and Gabriel Lihvarcik (Michelle), along with great-nephews and niece, Jack Brey, and Declan and Charlotte Harris.

She has two godchildren, George T. Bolton, MD, and Regina Knowlton. She is also survived by numerous cousins.

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 April 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/>

May: 8, 15, 22, 29

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PEOPLE YOU KNOW AROUND THE EPARCHY

IN PASSAIC...

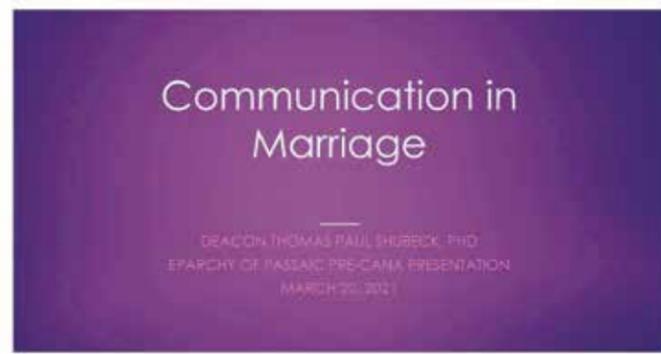
EPARCHIAL COUPLES ZOOM THROUGH PRE-CANA

It's been a very hard year to plan, much less celebrate, a wedding. Along with limited church seating and closed reception venues, couples need to manage the Church's requirement of pre-marital instruction, often called "Pre-Cana."

The Syncellate for New Jersey, which normally hosts an in-person Pre-Cana program, resorted this year to a virtual format. Ten couples from parishes in Pennsylvania and Florida, as well as New Jersey, gathered via Zoom on Saturday, March 20, 2021, for the *Crowned in Love* program. Ann Koshute, a Byzantine Catholic lay theologian with a specialization in marriage and family and ECL columnist; Michael and Lisann Castagno, a Roman Catholic couple with years of experience in natural family planning education; and Deacon Thomas Shubeck, a practicing psychologist and counselor serving at Saint Thomas the Apostle parish in Rahway, NJ, joined Father Jack Custer, Syncellus for New Jersey and Rector of Saint Michael Cathedral, who moderated the event. Topics included the sacramental dimension of marriage, communication and problem-solving, marital intimacy and fertility, spiritual life in the home, and reflections on the wedding Epistle and Gospel.

Each couple had previously completed an online premarital assessment which identified areas for growth. Deacon Thomas Shubeck met with each couple individually (again online!) to help them process their results.

The virtual format seemed not to interfere with lively interaction. Participants and presenters alike were pleasantly surprised by just how well this first—and hopefully last!—virtual Pre-Cana unfolded. All that was missing was the wonderful luncheon normally provided by volunteers from Saint Michael Cathedral.



Palm Crosses

IN RAHWAY...

SPIRIT OF CHARITY ALIVE AT RAHWAY'S SAINT THOMAS DURING GREAT LENT

By David Brighthouse

For the Lenten season, the parishioners of Saint Thomas the Apostle Byzantine Catholic Church found themselves busy with a number of worthwhile activities and events in order to provide for those in need.

In the weeks before Pascha, parishioners sold beautiful palm crosses, a project spearheaded by parishioner Patty Ciko. These crosses, in a variety of colors, were perfect to adorn the front of one's home or to decorate the grave of a loved one. A number of crosses were also placed outside the front of the church, creating a festive ambiance and a reminder that Easter was upon us. The proceeds from the sale will be used to assist priests in need in Eastern Europe.

Saint Thomas also chose this Easter season to contribute to the local food pantries, as an act of altruistic giving, specifically the pantry run by Rahway's other Catholic church, Divine Mercy Roman Catholic Church. Divine Mercy provides food for the hungry and homeless every single Sunday, without exception, and has done so continuously for the past 11 years.

This year, due to the pandemic and the need to take additional precautions, Saint Thomas ran what it called a "food-less food drive." From February 14 through March 28, under the direction of parishioner Sandy Yelenovsky, a monetary collection of over \$1500 was raised. The money was then used to purchase food, gift cards, and other essential items for those in need.

Just a partial list of items purchased from the money raised included over 500 canned items (fruit, vegetables, soups), hundreds of sandwiches, cases of water and juice, granola bars, hundreds of hand warmers and face masks, cans of tuna, and several gift cards for members of Saint Thomas adversely affected by the pandemic. Saint Thomas also provided additional food items for 40-50 individuals on a weekly basis to Divine Mercy, consisting of sandwiches, beverages, fruit cups, cookies, cheese sticks, and crackers.

Sandy Yelenovsky was very pleased with the effort and proud of the generosity of her fellow parishioners. She said, "Many thanks to the parishioners of Saint Thomas. God bless you all for your generosity of spirit."

Saint Thomas Church is served by Archpriest James Hayer with the ministry of Deacon Charles Laskowski and Deacon Thomas Shubeck.



A few of the many sandwiches Saint Thomas Church made for neighboring food pantries.

IN RAHWAY...

PYSANKY TRADITION CONTINUES AT SAINT THOMAS PARISH IN RAHWAY

By David Brighthouse

On Sunday, March 21, on the initiative of the head of Saint Thomas' Eastern Catholic Formation (ECF) program, Colleen Horniacek, the church organized a pysanky (Slavic Easter eggs) making class. Almost two dozen members of the church, parents and their children, participated, observing safe social distancing and taking other routine precautions, and had a great time learning how to make authentic pysanky with dye, wax, and real eggs.

Assisting Colleen was parishioner Laura Rayner, who manned the dying station, and showed the children how to dye their eggs gradually, in stages, in order to achieve the best, most beautiful finished product.

It is hard to put into words the feeling of joyful community that was palpable in the large banquet hall, after a year of quarantining and isolation, as the children worked on their eggs, ate pizza for lunch, and called out to each other from table to table.

One parent said, "It was a wonderful event. We're so glad we could be here together again and learn about a tradition our grandparents and great-grandparents brought with them on their journey to America."

That same parent's eight-year-old son said it even more simply, "It was fun and great. It was different than making just Easter eggs the regular way. It was even better."

Saint Thomas Church is served by Archpriest James Hayer with the ministry of Deacon Charles Laskowski and Deacon Thomas Shubeck.



Families, friends, and other parishioners came out for a great afternoon of making traditional Ukrainian Easter eggs.



Colleen Horniacek working on pysanky with her daughter, Kiera.



Parishioner David Brighthouse and his son David, Jr., melt the wax to begin making pysanky.

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Schedule: (note due to Covid Virus, Divine Liturgy every two weeks)

In-Person and LIVE at Facebook:
Byzantine Catholic Mission The Villages FL
Local Contact: call or text: 352-530-9631

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Sunday Divine Liturgy 9:15 am

Patronage at Abingdon meeting at: Stone Chapel at Saint Francis de Sales Church

1450 Abingdon Road
Abingdon, MD 21009
Sunday Divine Liturgy 5:30 pm

Patronage at Hagerstown meeting at: Saint Ann Catholic Church

1525 Oak Hill Avenue
Hagerstown, MD 21742
Saturday Vigil Liturgy 6:45 pm 2 per month
Call Baltimore for schedule

Saint Gregory of Nyssa

12420 Old Gunpowder Road Spur
Beltsville, MD 20705
Phone 301-953-9323
Web www.stgregoryofnyssa.net
Sunday Divine Liturgies
Church Slavonic 8:00 am
Sunday Matins 9:30 am
English Liturgy 10:30 am

Epiphany Mission

9301 Warfield Road
Gaithersburg, MD
Web www.eolmission.org
Sunday Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am

Virginia— Epiphany of our Lord

3410 Woodburn Road
Annandale, VA 22003
Phone: 703-573-3986
Web www.eolbcc.org
Sunday Divine Liturgies 8:00 am & 10:30 am

Ascension of our Lord

114 Palace Lane
Williamsburg, VA 23185
Phone 757-585-2878 (rectory)
Web www.ascensionva.org
Sunday Divine Liturgy 11:00 am

Our Lady of Perpetual Help

216 Parliament Drive
Virginia Beach, VA 23462
Phone 757-456-0809
Web www.olphvb.org
Sunday Divine Liturgy 8:00 am

North Carolina— Saints Cyril and Methodius

2510 Piney Plains Road
Cary, NC 27518

Phone 919-239-4877
Web www.sscyrilmethodius.org
Sunday Divine Liturgy 10:00 am

District of Columbia— Byzantine Ruthenian Chapel Basilica of the National Shrine

400 Michigan Avenue, NE
Washington, DC 20017
Phone 202-526-8300
Web www.nationalshrine.org
No regularly scheduled Sunday Liturgy.
To reserve a date and time, priests must call the Liturgy Office and submit a current letter from their eparchy's Safe Environment Office.

PROFESSION OF VOWS AT HOLY ANNUNCIATION MONASTERY

Sugarloaf, PA

On the Sunday of the Holy Myrrhbearers, April 18, Sister Theodosia (Friedline), a Rasophore of Holy Annunciation Monastery, made monastic profession of vows, thus entering the Little Schema as a Stavrophore.

Father Scott Boghossian was celebrant and Father Eduard Shestak was homilist. While completely closed to the public due to Covid safety concerns, the ceremony and Divine Liturgy were live-streamed and viewed by many. (Cf. Sugarloaf Nuns on Facebook)

Mother Theodosia obtained her BA *summa cum laude* from Indiana University in 2017.



Tonsure (cutting of hair)



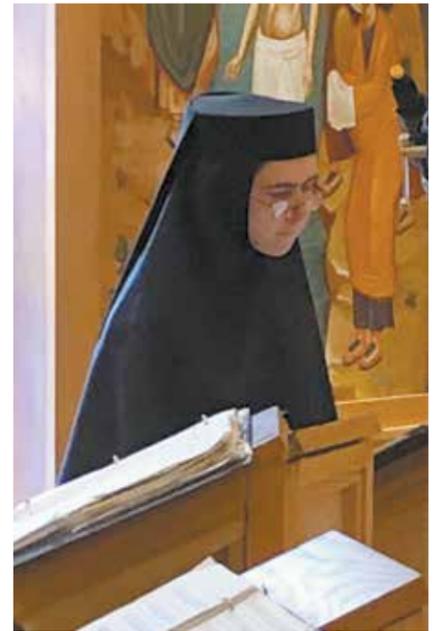
The Hegumena Marija presents scissors, asking Sister's willingness to sacrifice her hair in monastic tonsure. Sister Theodosia pronounces her vows; Mother Hegumena prays for Sister. (this takes place before tonsure)



The cincture is blessed and sister is girded with the symbol of poverty.



Klobuk (monastic head-covering) is given.



Stavrophore Mother Theodosia.

Oriente Lumen XXV Continues as a Virtual Conference

With the continuing health pandemic, we will hold the Oriente Lumen XXV Conference as an online virtual event on **June 22, 2021 from 1:00 to 4:00 pm EDT**.

The topic this year will be:

"Liturgy and Scripture: Praying the Word of God"

The success of last year indicates our modified approach can be effective: we had 100 participants from 8 countries for a lively 2-hour discussion among the speakers including an historic video connection with St. Catherine's Monastery on Mt. Sinai, the first ever of its kind.

Confirmed plenary speakers for this year will include:

- Archbishop Job of Telmessos**
Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, Geneva, Switzerland
- Father Andrew Summerson**
Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Parma, Whiting, IN
- Father Ted Pulcini**
Antiochian Orthodox Church, Chambersburg, PA
- Dr. Sr. Vassa Larin**
Host of "Coffee with Sister Vassa", Russian Orthodox Church, Vienna, Austria
- Father Marco Benini**
The Catholic University of America, Washington, DC
- Dr. Daniel Stevens, Director of the Scholars Initiative**
Brian Hyland, Curator of Latin and Greek Manuscripts
Museum of the Bible, Washington, DC
- Additional videos about Liturgy from the OLTV library by**
Metropolitan Kallistos of Diokleia
Archimandrite Robert Taft, SJ
- Bishop John Michael Botean, Moderator**
Romanian Catholic Diocese of St. George, Canton, OH

The speakers will pre-record their plenary talks on video which we will make available to registered participants through our YouTube channel in early June. Some additional videos will be made available about the Divine Liturgy by Metropolitan Kallistos and Archimandrite Robert Taft, SJ (of blessed memory) from the OLTV library. We also hope to have a first-time ever video walking tour of the display of scripture holdings at the Museum of the Bible in Washington, DC.

On Tuesday, June 22 from 1:00 to 4:00 pm, we will hold an interactive, live panel video discussion among the speakers with Bishop John Michael Botean as moderator. We will collect questions in advance and the speakers will also review each other's presentations beforehand to discuss. The interactive conference will be recorded and made available to registered participants after the conference in case you cannot view the live event.

You can register online at our website:

<https://olfoundation.net/conferences/ol-xxv/>

Registration and advance access to the online videos and live conference is \$50/person before June 1st, and \$75 after June 1st. All registrations are due by June 20th. The videos of last year can be viewed on YouTube here:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLAVUj2N7KxM7S_EjCir34E5K2aU10I16



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21ST ANNUAL SAINTS CYRIL AND METHODIUS LECTURE

Sponsored by the Byzantine Catholic Seminary to be delivered through livestream on May 18

The Byzantine Catholic Seminary's plans for a hybrid annual lecture experience have been altered. There will be no lecture delivered from the Cathedral Center as originally planned. Father Deacon Daniel Galadza will deliver only through livestream the 21st annual Ss. Cyril and Methodius Lecture entitled "The Liturgy of Jerusalem: History, Theology, and Lessons for Today."

The Church of Jerusalem was the cradle of Christianity, influencing when and how Christendom celebrated the conception, birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ and the memorials of the Theotokos, apostles, and martyrs. For the Byzantine Catholic Seminary's annual Cyril and Methodius Lecture, the Reverend Deacon Daniel Galadza presents Jerusalem's liturgical year, its historical sources, and theology. His lecture will illustrate connections between the "Byzantinization" of the Eastern Patriarchates at the end of the first millennium and the Latinization of the Eastern Catholic Churches from the middle of the second millennium onward.

Father Deacon Daniel Galadza completed studies at the University of Toronto and the Sheptytsky Institute before defending his doctorate in Byzantine liturgy at the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome in 2013. He has been a junior fellow at the Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection in Washington, D.C., assistant professor at the University of Vienna, visiting professor at the Pontifical Oriental Institute, and is currently a research fellow at the Centre of Advanced Studies of the University of Regensburg, Germany. In February of 2018, Oxford University Press published his *Liturgy and Byzantinization in Jerusalem*: the first study dedicated to the question of the Byzantinization of Jerusalem's liturgy, providing English translations of many liturgical texts and hymns for the first time.

The public is welcome to attend this lecture virtually on Tuesday, May 18 at 7:00 PM via our website (www.bcs.edu). The lecture can also be accessed live as well as in the future on the Seminary's YouTube archive.

The annual lecture series is sponsored by the Byzantine Catholic Seminary of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, a community of mentors, teachers, and students living and working in an ecumenical environment of Christian unity, integrity, and missionary spirit.

Founded in 1950, the Byzantine Catholic Seminary is a free-standing, English speaking theological seminary, welcoming all those seeking the knowledge possessed by the Eastern ecclesial traditions. The Seminary is authorized to grant the Master of Arts in Theology and Master of Divinity degrees by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and is accredited by the Commission on Accrediting of the Association of Theological Schools.

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*Today the Virgin is present in the Church and, with the choirs of saints, invisibly prays to God for us.
The angels worship with the hierarchs; The apostles rejoice with the prophets
because the Theotokos prays for us to the eternal God.*

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.

Description of this Pokrov 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 are Saint Gabriel the Archangel, Saint John the Theologian (the Evangelist and Beloved Disciple), Saint James the Apostle, and the Holy Prophet Elijah. Above Saint Gabriel is Saint Barachiel the Archangel, then the Monks Saint Zosimus, Saint Savvaty, and Saint Sergei.

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 Saint Romanos while he sleeps, bringing him healing and his vocation as a songwriter.



**How grateful we are for the Protection of the Mother of God
of our families and loved ones this year!**

PRIESTLY REFLECTIONS

Father Paul Varchola West



DANGER AT THE DOOR

As of late, I have been hit with a rather sobering fact: I am approaching the one year mark since my priestly ordination. This fact smacked me in the face so hard about two weeks ago that it made my head spin! How on earth could it be almost a year already?

Of course, since this glorious realization I have been reflecting on the past year of my life, all that has occurred, and, perhaps more significantly, what lies ahead. I will freely admit that moving the family from Pittsburgh to Levittown and settling into priestly ministry in the middle of a pandemic was not easy at all! Further, I can assure you that the typical worries of a new priest are greatly multiplied when factoring in all the necessary adjustments to parish life in order to make public worship a safe and inviting experience for the faithful given the current global situation.

I think of all the struggles of the past months, and the struggles to loom in my near future, and I become a bit defeated that things are not getting any easier. As a self-professed perfectionist and problem solver, I strive for everything to be done correctly and properly,

to look effortless, and to be crossed off the list, not to be revisited. Lately, however, this is not the case. I feel as if every success brings about two more challenges with an increasing risk for failure. This certainly weighs on me and affects my ministry internally. Facing one challenge after another without any sense of relief makes me feel as if I am failing as a priest. Clearly, this is not a comforting feeling.

This, without fail, makes me think of a song! I've been on a Grateful Dead "kick" lately and the song, "Uncle John's Band", has been on heavy rotation in my mental jukebox. The opening lyrics put everything into perspective:

*Well, the first days are the hardest days,
don't you worry any more*

*'Cause when life looks like easy street,
there is danger at your door*

And there you have it. Life is full of challenges, full of seemingly insur-

mountable tasks. So much so that God Himself addresses this issue with Cain in Genesis 4 just prior to murder of Abel.

The LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry, and why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is couching at the door; its desire is for you, but you must master it." (Gen 4:6-7)

There is danger at your door. God is clear about this. There is always a danger, but not necessarily an external threat. The danger at our door is our very self, our very person. The danger is our ego, our pride, our need for success. We desire life to look like easy street because, after all, who wants to deal with problems? However, when things are looking good, danger is lurking, for "pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall" (Prov 16:18).

With these first days behind me, I need to keep in mind that yes, the first days are the hardest and that I shouldn't worry anymore. Why? Simply put, worry breeds all sorts of negative emotions that lead to increasingly greater sin. As is evident from Cain, his worry of success and acceptance led to some pretty awful things. Challenges exist in our lives simply because that is life, but, as it is put in the next lines of "Uncle John's Band":

*Think this through with me, let me know
your mind*

*Woah-oh, what I want to know, is are you
kind?*

Sin is couching; danger lurking at the door. Do well, be kind, and the dangers of the sins of ego, pride, and vain-glory most certainly can be mastered. The true challenge is recognizing them when they come knocking. **ECL**



LIFE, LOVE, AND THE HUMAN PERSON

By Ann M. Koshute, MTS

THE HEART OF A MOTHER

May is traditionally held to be *the month of Mary*. This seems fitting since it is in May that the fullness of spring comes to fruition. After a long, cold and dark winter, April rains and more sunlight bring out brilliant colors as trees bud, flowers begin to bloom, and green overtakes the dull landscape. Sometimes winter fools us – and our gardens – dropping by with a late frost, or even a surprise snow (what, as a kid, we called "onion snow"). As much beauty and coziness as winter brings us, after relentless cold and a dormant earth that contributes to a feeling of emptiness (perhaps even hopelessness for some), spring is a time of promise, of possibilities and of joy. How well this description fits our Holy Mother, who herself experienced the highs and lows of life, with unexpected gifts and responsibilities, being called and filled with grace by the Holy Spirit. We know that Mary experienced the darkness of sorrow, watching her only Son arrested, tortured and put to death. But like the May flowers after the rain, He rose from the dead! And Mary's joy, and her motherhood, took full bloom. Those May flowers should remind us of Mary, who is always pointing us to Christ, reminding us that in our baptism we entered a *new springtime* that promised no matter how dark and cold life becomes, Jesus has brought us new life. Mary is a testament to that new life, and if Mother Nature is a mythical character who controls the weather, *Mother Mary* is

a real person to whom Jesus entrusted each of us from the Cross. Mary is the Mother of us all.

This picture of flowers, sunshine and springtime is well and good, but may sound like something out of a fairytale, especially in light of the suffering and burdens we each carry. Certainly, a column about flowers and Mary cannot magically relieve us of our pain, and it may even be difficult for some of us to think about Mary as a mother – *our* mother. Some of us have a difficult or perhaps non-existent relationship with our own mothers, so that it is hard to imagine a true motherly presence in our lives, much less in the spiritual sense that Mary offers herself. Others have lost their mothers, some long years passed, and some very recently. Memories can both comfort and hurt us, as we long for our mothers' embrace. Many of us have children, one or two, of perhaps many more. Children are a gift and a joy! But they are also not easy to raise, to keep safe and bring up as godly people and responsible citizens. Being a mother (and a father) is a gift, but it's also hard, and mothers can easily be taken for granted, or held up to an ideal they cannot possibly meet. There are those of us reading this who long for children, perhaps as newlyweds, or in the midst of several years of trying, treatments and prayers. Some have never conceived, and others have lost children to miscarriage, still-

birth, or sometime in their childhood. Those who are beyond child-bearing years may still feel those pangs of loss, the question "What if?" ringing in their ears so many years later. There are countless other circumstances in which we might feel sadness, grief, even anger over our mothers, or women who experience a complex of emotions over their own motherhood – or its loss. Spring flowers do not erase this pain, the sad memories, the longing. Jesus did not come to wipe our minds clean of sadness or delete unhappy thoughts and make suffering go away permanently in this life. But He did come to *transform* our experience of suffering, and in so doing to *transform us*. Whatever our experience of motherhood this side of heaven, Jesus gave us His Mother to comfort, to guide and to nurture us. Mary, of all people, shows us by her own life how it is possible for suffering to bring about new life, hope and the conversion of our hearts.

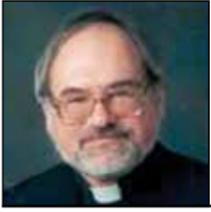
Mary is the Mother of us all, as she was given to us by Jesus from His Cross. Her motherhood was received in pain and suffering, and in the blood and water that flowed from the pierced side of her Son. She knows the pain of loss, of rejection and of isolation. Mary understands what it is like to be given great gifts and have them taken away. She knows what it's like to have expectations for life turned on their head, both for the better and – at least in the short

term – what feels like for worse. Mary knows, and she is a witness to the power of trusting that God will bestow His saving grace and protection on us.

To you men who may find Mother's Day difficult because you lost your mom, or you don't get along; if you've lost a child or you feel helpless watching your wife experience the hard parts of raising children or comforting her as she mourns the cross of infertility – go to your Mother, Mary, and ask her intercession and guidance.

For all you women who struggle with Mother's Day because of your relationship with your mom, because she is gone, in the difficulty you experience with raising your children, or with the sadness you feel in that deep longing to be a mother – go to Mary. Ask her to hold your hand and lead you to Jesus, to the healing He longs to give you, and to discovering the multitude of ways that your own "mother's heart" brings life and peace to others in ways you may not realize.

If you are struggling with infertility and loss, you are not alone! Visit www.springsinthedesert.org and join a community of others who walk this path. We see you, we understand, and we want you to know that you live in Mary's heart, and you are God's beloved daughter. **ECL**



THE BYZANTINE LITURGY

By Archpriest David Petras, SEOD

THE ANAPHORA: THE MOTHER OF GOD

After the priest says the prayers for the transformation of our gifts of bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ, in the presence of our Lord we pray for the needs of the whole community of the people of God. This is because life and all the gifts of life “[are] from above, coming down from the Father of lights.” (James 1:17) Our intercession for all is an act of worship, of our humble dependence of God, the Giver of every good and perfect gift. The Liturgy likewise is an act done together by the whole community throughout all space and time, those both present in the church, those absent “for honorable reasons (Anaphora of Saint Basil), all the churches throughout the world, and all the gatherings of the faithful past, present and to come. We pray, in fact, first for those “departed in faith,” who “have fallen asleep before us in the hope of resurrection to eternal life.” Together we form that unity that Christ prayed for at the Mystical Supper in the Upper Room, “they may all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in You, that they also may be in us.” (John 17:21). The Divine Liturgy itself is the act of God, but it is by that very reason the act of all created by God and alive in the Holy Trinity.

When we pray for the departed, we pray for the salvation of all in the everlasting life promised by God. We pray first for those who have been certainly saved, remembering by name, first, the Mother of God, then John the Baptist, the holy apostles as a group and the saint remembered by name on the day the liturgy is being celebrated. In the Anaphora, we pray “for” these saints, and some have found this odd, because they have already been saved and have no need of our further intercession on their behalf. However, the prayer says: “we offer you this spiritual sacrifice for those departed in faith.” The Divine Liturgy that we celebrate is one with the sacrifice of our Lord offered on the cross, and it is through this sacrifice in which we are united and in which we are all saved. By His death, the Lord trampled upon death, and brought all to life, both those departed and saved and those who are yet in need of salvation. The sacrifice of our Lord goes beyond all the limits of time, it is eternally present and active, even to the point of bringing us the future kingdom. Therefore, it is offered “for” even the saints in heaven, who are saved eternally by this sacrifice and who intercede on our behalf as the Mystical Body of Christ. The Anaphora of Saint Basil makes this same point in another way, by praying “may we obtain mercy and grace together with all the saints who have pleased You since time began (eternally).”

The greatest of all saints is, of course, is the mother of Jesus, Mary. Her relationship to the incarnation of God is privileged above all other human beings,

since she bore the Word of God, the Son of the Father, in her womb which became therefore, “a room more spacious than the heavens.” (Anaphora of Saint Basil) For this reason, she is kept completely free from sin and is given the title “Theotokos,” Greek for “birth-giver of God,” or “Mother of God,” not that she gave birth to the divine nature, but to the divine person of the Son of God. Clearly, though, she was saved as an individual person by her role in the incarnation, and the purpose of the incarnation was so that Jesus could die in the flesh to give life to the human race. Therefore, his death on the cross was ultimately “for” Mary and in her obedience to the will of God, we all find our salvation. At the end of her life, Mary also shared in the mystery of human death that she would find life in Christ, for Christ’s sacrifice on the cross is fulfilled for every one of us.

Because of the pre-eminence of Mary, when she is remembered in the Anaphora, the prayer is interrupted by a hymn sung by the faithful in honor of the Mother of God, “It is truly proper to

glorify you...” This practice appeared in the tenth century, first before the commemoration of the Virgin, then after it, first silently by the deacon or concelebrating clergy, then aloud by the faithful. The first hymn used was the “Hail, Mary...,” in the Byzantine Liturgy, “Rejoice, Virgin Theotokos ...” Since 1380, the hymn “It is truly proper...” or the Irmos of the ninth ode of the Matins canon for the feast have been used. “It is truly proper...” and “More honorable...” are actually two separate hymns. “More honorable...” is the Irmos of the ninth ode of Good Friday Matins. It is based on an ancient hymn of Saint Ephrem the Syrian, “More honorable than the Cherubim, and incomparably [so] than all the heavenly armies.” Through her role in the divine incarnation, Mary became greater than the angels.

As time went on, this response in honor of the Theotokos became more varied. The Anaphora of Saint Basil appropriated the Sessional Hymn Theotokion of Tone 8 from Sunday Matins. This hymn was quite solemn and was sung to an elaborate melody to com-

plete the Sessional Hymns of the eight tones sung at Psalm 118 (“Amomos,” in Greek, “Neporochni,” in Slavonic). This hymn proclaims that in the Virgin, “all creation rejoices,” and that her womb in which she bore God was, for that very reason “more spacious than the heavens.” “More spacious” in Greek is “platytera,” and this became the title for the icon of the Theotokos in the altar.

“More honorable than the Cherubim,” is, as mentioned above, the Irmos sung at the Ninth Ode of Good Friday Matins. The ninth canticle is the Hymn of Mary from the Gospel of Saint Luke, called the “Magnificat,” in the Latin tradition, and for this reason a further development took place. On the great feasts of our Lord and of the Theotokos, the Irmos of the Ninth Ode for the feast was substituted for the usual “More honorable.” In this way, a full theology of the Mother of God is revealed to us throughout the Church Year in the hymns we sing in the Anaphora. **ECL**

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SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

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

SPIRITUAL ADOLESCENCE

There's no reason why there couldn't be an icon depicting Jesus preaching in the Temple at the feast of Booths exactly as Saint John (7-8) describes it. But that is not the traditional image connected for the feast of Mid-Pentecost, which falls on the fourth Wednesday after Pascha, exactly midway between Pascha and Pentecost. Instead, the icon depicts Jesus as a twelve-year old boy in the Temple after the feast of Passover (Luke 2:41-52). He has separated from His parents and returned to the Temple, where they find Him "sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions, and all who heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answers" (Luke 2:46-47). The only obvious connections between this scene and the Gospel of Mid-Pentecost is that, on both occasions, we find Jesus in the Temple with the authorities marvel at his teaching (John 7:14). Here we have our only glimpse of the adolescent Jesus. At 12, he stands at the brink of being a man according to Jewish law – what Jews today would call a *bar mitzvah*, a "son" obligated to keep for Himself the commandments of God's covenant with His people.

We can measure the three years of Jesus' public ministry by the three successive Passovers Saint John's Gospel mentions (John 2:13; 6:4; 12:1). So Jesus was in the middle year of his three-year ministry when He went up to Jerusalem at the middle of the feast of Booths as described in the Gospel read on Mid-Pentecost (John 7:14-30). The liturgical hymns of this day also insist on the theme of being "in the middle."

The Church presents us an adolescent Jesus on Mid-Pentecost for our sake. It takes a lifetime (and more!) to grow into everything promised to us at our baptism. So it is probably fair to say that right now most of us are still spiritually adolescents. We have a basic faith, a basic relationship with the Holy Trinity through the sacramental life of the Church, we pray more or less, in one form or another, and we keep the commandments, mostly. This adolescent Jesus, the Christ we put on in Baptism, suggests where we are and how far we have to go, if we choose to continue the journey.

Adolescence is notoriously a time of rebellion. Just look at those baby-adults, Adam and Eve (Genesis 3). They

know what God has said and what God wants. But they are easily tempted to a more immediate gratification on their own. And so, they rebel. Then they try to be sneaky. Then they blame others. It's hard to deny that just about every sin we have ever committed follows the same script of adolescent rebellion. Every time we find the Christian life constricting and start to ask, "How come I can't do X Y Z? Everyone else is doing it! It's not fair!" we are struggling with spiritual adolescence, just like Israel worshipping a golden calf or demanding a king "like other nations" (Exodus 32; 1 Samuel 8). We can tune out the word of God or try to negotiate. We can be self-centered, moody, grumpy, or lazy in our spiritual lives. We may keep the commandments simply for fear of being punished. These are all symptoms of spiritual adolescence. The prodigal son's older brother was a spiritual adolescent (Luke 15:25-32). So was the rich young man who asked, "just which commandment do I have to keep and exactly which neighbor do I have to love in order to get into heaven?" (Matthew 19:16-22).

Adolescents struggle for autonomy while also desiring to know and do what

is right as their own free choice. Even Jesus separated Himself from Mary and Joseph to "be in my Father's house" (Luke 2:49). Yet nothing matters more to an adolescent than relationships: friends can seem to be more important than family. The prophetic selections read at vespers of Mid-Pentecost speak to both of these issues. The prophet Micah teaches: "He has shown you, O man, what is good, and what does the Lord requires of you? Only to act justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8). This is an invitation to internalize the spirit as well as the letter of the commandments and to recognize in them the parameters of maintaining a living relationship with the Lord. Isaiah (55:6-7) meanwhile reminds us that this awkward adolescence is actually a moment of grace: "Seek the Lord while He may be found. Call to Him while He is still near." **BCL**

SCHOOL OF PRAYER

Father G. Scott Boghossian



BE ATTENTIVE IN PRAYER

It is possible to say a lot of prayers, and not really get anywhere. If we pray without attention, or pray too fast, simply to get the prayers over with, our prayers won't accomplish much and might even offend God. "Haste is the death of devotion," says Saint Francis De Sales (1567-1622). We have all, at one time or another, fallen into this bad habit. Today is a good day to start again, slow down, and concentrate on what we are praying.

If we pray our prayers reverently and attentively, they will make a big difference in our lives. Rather than saying more prayers, let us stick with the ones we are praying now, but pray them better.

Saint John Cassian (360-435) relates that the monks of Egypt taught that it was better to pray ten verses from a psalm deliberately and devoutly than an entire psalm with a distracted mind. We might think we are doing great things when we rattle through a multitude of prayers. We say our morning and evening prayers, some of the Divine Office, some prayers on our prayer rope or prayer beads, we pray the responses in the daily or Sunday Divine Liturgy,

we recite some prayers we've memorized, and maybe say some psalms from memory or out of the Bible. It's a lot of praying, good job!

But, after so many years, we still find ourselves so impatient, irritable, short-tempered, hyper-critical, full of dirty thoughts, gossip, detraction, and a multitude of other failings. Why aren't we making any progress? We are praying a lot but not really praying well, and perhaps not praying at all.

It is essential to pay close attention to what you are praying. You caught yourself checking your cell phone, e-mail, or text message? If at all possible, get away from your phone or turn it off during prayer time. To pray well, we have to avoid distractions. Theophan the Recluse (1815-1894) advises that during prayer, "you must not allow the thoughts to wander voluntarily, but when they stray involuntarily, you must immediately turn them back, reproaching yourself, regretting and grieving over your weakness."

In Step 28, Number 17 of the Ladder of Divine Ascent, Saint John Climacus (525-605) tells us to "try to lift up, or

rather, to enclose your mind within the words of your prayer." Another translation of the same passage reads, "Try to lift up, or rather, to shut off your thought within the words of your prayer." You have to be focused and concentrate. But if you are rushing, you won't be attentive to what you are praying.

The Russian monk, bishop, and theologian Ignatius Brianchaninov (1807-1867) writes, "Specially helpful in holding the attention during prayer is an extremely unhurried pronunciation of the words of the prayer. Pronounce the words without hurrying so that the mind may quite easily stay enclosed in the words of the prayer, and not slip away from a single word." Pray slowly. If you are used to saying many vocal prayers, you might have to cut back a bit to concentrate, slow down, and make them count.

When you pray alone, say the words of the prayer out loud and in an audible voice. This will also help you pay attention, says Brianchaninov. You might also try memorizing prayers, as that helps you pay attention as well, according to Theophan the Recluse.

Still, another practice that some have found helpful is to gesticulate or make gestures as you say your prayers, as you would while talking to your friend or neighbor during a passionate discussion or heartfelt conversation. You wouldn't want to try this in church during the Divine Liturgy. You'll get some strange looks.

Pay attention to the punctuation in written prayers, i.e., the periods, commas, and semicolons, and make the appropriate pauses as you read. Doing this will slow you down and help you absorb what you are praying.

Prayer is hard work. But if we put in the time and effort to pay close attention, we will experience the difference. Our faith will come alive, our lives will change for the better, and our prayers will be answered. You will see this slower, more attentive prayer method is worth it when you experience a greater closeness to God and make more progress in holiness as a result. Be attentive in prayer. **BCL**

SEASONAL REFLECTIONS

Father Ronald Hatton



HEAVENLY KING, COMFORTER

“We celebrate Pentecost and the coming of the Spirit, and the time appointed for the promise, and the fulfillment of hope. How great is this mystery? It is both exceedingly great and most venerable. Wherefore, we cry out to You: O Creator of all, glory be to You!”

“The Holy Spirit provides all things; He gushes forth prophecy; He perfects the priesthood; He has taught wisdom to the illiterate. He has shown forth the fishermen as theologians. He holds together the whole institution of the Church. Wherefore, O Comforter, one in essence and throne with the Father and the Son, glory be to You!”

These are a couple of hymns for the Vespers of the Feast of the Pentecost, which we celebrate this month. They celebrate the role of the Holy Spirit in the world and in our lives. In our Eastern Church, all who are baptized are also sealed with the Holy Spirit in our Chrismation, and thus have the third Person of the Holy Trinity living within us. This is no small thing to be ignored or neglected. With our Chrismation, we become, once again, the children of God. And as children of God, we can attain to all things that He has prepared for us in His Kingdom. There is now a unity between us that was not there before. The Holy Apostle Paul tells the Corinthians: “But he who is united to

the Lord becomes one spirit with Him” (I Cor. 6:17). And again, “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit” (I Cor. 12: 13).

These verses tell us something deeply profound. First, by our sealing in the Holy Spirit, we become one spirit with God. In a mystical way, we find union with God. We are, somehow, one with Him. I am sure theologians can tell you how this exists in our lives, but for this reflection, let us suffice with seeing that we are one with Him, and through our abiding in Him, we become His children by grace. John’s gospel is replete with verses about how we must abide in Him. “He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him” (6: 56). “Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. If a man does not abide in me, he is cast forth as a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire and burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples. As the

Father has loved Me, so have I loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full” (15: 4-11).

The second fact is that, as a result of the first, there is now a unity between each of us who have been sealed in the Holy Spirit. We abide with Christ because He is the vine and we are the branches. Though individuals in the Church we are one in the Body, and as a result, we live and share our life in the Church, in the parish, and we should take heed of what Jesus tells us about having life—being one of the branches—only as long as we abide in Him, and we should heed the words of Saint Paul who says in his first letter to the Corinthians: “As it is, there are many parts, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I have no need of you,’ nor again the head to the feet, ‘I have no need of you.’ On the contrary, the parts of the body which seem to be weaker are indispensable, and those parts of the body which we think less honorable we invest with the greater honor, and our unrepresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior part, that there may be no

discord in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it” (I Cor. 12-20-27).

We celebrate the Feast of the Pentecost by dressing the church with greenery, and clothing the priests, servers, and altars in green, symbolizing this new life with the coming of the Holy Spirit into our lives. But even more, we should celebrate this feast with the realization that we now can attain union with God and with one another! We should make it a priority to live our lives as sons and daughters of God, and to make our relationship to one another more than just a coincidence of parish membership but instead a bonding in the Holy Spirit that abides in us. **ECL**

CROATIA WITH A SEVEN DAY CROATIAN ISLAND CRUISE

with Fr. Ed Cimbala
and Fr. James Spera

12 DAYS
October 5-16, 2021



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NEW EVENT

Passaic Eparchial
Byzantine Rally 2021

**BE NOT AFFRAID:
CHRIST NOT COVID**

When: Monday July 30 - Monday August 2, 2021

Where: Carpathian Village/St. Nicholas Shrine
(Cresco/Pocono Summit PA)

This event will be limited to 20 girls and 20 boys, ages 13-17.

Covid regulations and protocols will be adhered to.

Register at: www.eparchyofpassaic.com

**THE BYZAN-TEEN YOUTH RALLY 2021
HAS BEEN POST-PONED**

Due to Covid 19 concerns and restrictions on out-of-state travel the Byzan-Teen Youth Rally has been forced to reschedule to June 30th through July 3rd 2022. The location of the Rally will remain the same – Mt. St. Mary University in Emmitsburg, MD.

The exciting news is that a virtual Rally will be held on Saturday, July 3rd, 2021 A brand new website for the Rally is presently under construction and should soon be finished. The next update will include the link to the new Rally site with more information on the virtual Rally.

The Intereparchial Youth Commission appreciates your patience and understanding during these difficult times, but we are very excited about the programs and events being planned that will allow all our teens throughout our Metropolia to participate without the worry and concerns of travel this year.

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
 Saint John the Baptist—Trumbull, 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

Holy Dormition Byzantine Catholic Church—Ormond Beach, FL
 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

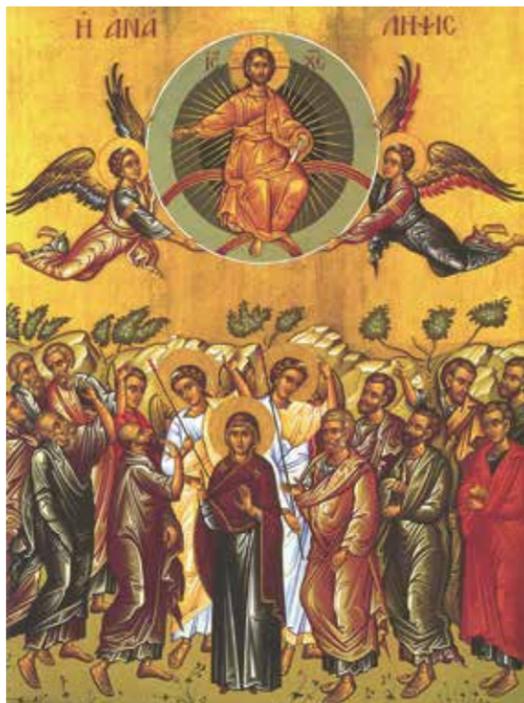
Saints Cyril & Methodius Byzantine Catholic Church—Cary, NC
 The Outreach Community of Greater Charlotte

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



UPCOMING EPARCHIAL AND PARISH EVENTS

Eastern Catholic Life

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MAY, 2021

- 2 Sunday of the Samaritan Woman
Fifth Paschal Sunday
- 9 Sunday of the Man Born Blind
Sixth Paschal Sunday Mother's Day*
- 13 Holy Ascension of Our Lord
*Solemn Holyday *Chancery closed*
- 16 Sunday of the Fathers of the Six Ecumenical Councils
Seventh Paschal Sunday
- 22 Fifth All Souls' Saturday
- 23 PENTECOST The Descent of the Holy Spirit
Solemn Holyday
- 24 Pentecost Monday
Simple Holyday
- 30 Sunday of All Saints
- 31 Memorial Day
*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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