



# EASTERN CATHOLIC LIFE

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## +FATHER JODY JOHN BARANIS LAID TO ETERNAL REST

August 13, 1963 – July 31, 2021



+Father Jody John Baran

**P**ASSAIC, NJ — +Father Jody John Baran, 57, Parochial Vicar of Saint Michael Cathedral in Passaic, NJ, fell asleep in the Lord at Valley Hospital in Ridgewood, NJ, on Saturday, July 31, 2021. He received all the sacraments of the Church in the days before his death.

The son of John and Amelia (Schmeer) Baran, Father Jody was born on August 13, 1963, in Hazleton, PA. He was baptized and chrismated at Saints Peter and Paul Byzantine Catholic Church, Beaver Meadows, PA, on August 27, 1963.

Following primary and secondary education in Beaver Meadows and Hazleton, he entered Saints Cyril and Methodius Byzantine Catholic Seminary in Pittsburgh, PA, to begin stud-

ies for the priesthood. He received a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Philosophy from Duquesne University in 1985. After graduation, he continued his theological studies at Saints Cyril and Methodius Byzantine Catholic Seminary. He received the Order of Reader in the seminary chapel on March 21, 1987, by +Metropolitan Archbishop Stephen (Kocisko), who also ordained him to the Order of Subdeacon on December 12, 1987, at the seminary chapel. +Bishop George (Kuzma) ordained him to the Order of Deacon at the Eparchial Retreat Center and Saint Nicholas Shrine at Carpathian Village, Canadensis, PA, on May 29, 1988. On May 14, 1989, he was ordained to the Priesthood of Jesus Christ at Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church in Wilkes-Barre, PA, by +Bishop Michael (Dudick).

After ordination, Father Jody was appointed Parochial Vicar at Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church in New York, NY. He also served as parochial vicar in the parish communities of Saint John Byzantine Catholic Church, Hazleton, PA; Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church, Wilkes-Barre, PA; and as administrator of Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church, Swoyersville, PA. His most recent assignment was as Parochial Vicar at Saint Michael Cathedral in Passaic, NJ, and the cathedral chapel in Woodland Park. In this capacity, he also served the faithful of Holy Spirit Byzantine Catholic Church in Mah-



Bishop Kurt seals the grave until the Second Coming of Christ

wah, NJ, and Holy Wisdom Byzantine Catholic Church in Flanders, NJ.

In addition to his pastoral responsibilities at the cathedral, Father Jody taught for several years at Saint Nicholas Ukrainian Greek Catholic Parochial School in Passaic, NJ. He was also very active in the Knights of Columbus. He currently was Chaplain of the Juan Perez Council #262 of Passaic, NJ, where he also had the distinction of being Past Grand Knight. Additionally, he was currently serving as Friar of the Monsignor Stein Fourth Degree Assembly, Paterson, NJ; the Assistant Friar of the First NJ District of the Fourth Degree; and the Chaplain of the Paterson Federation.

Father Jody was predeceased by his parents, John and Amelia, as well as by his brothers, Darius and Michael. He is survived by his sister, Carol Lee Shell- ick, and his brother, Charles, and fifteen nieces and nephews: Stephen, LoraLee, Kimberly, Charlie, John, Brian, Amelia, Paulie, Benjamin, Melissa, Lauren, Leigh, Vincent, Patrick, and Paul.

Father Jody's remains were received at Saint Michael Cathedral Chapel, Woodland Park, NJ, on Thursday, August 5, by Father Jack Custer, Rector, and an honor guard of the Knights of Columbus. Local clergy served the Panachida, and cathedral parishioners chanted the Psalter throughout the four hours of visitation. Bishop Kurt and local clergy served the Parastas at 7 PM with a eulogy by Father David Shortt, a seminary classmate of the deceased.

On Friday evening, August 6th, the Feast of the Transfiguration of Our Lord, the Funeral for a Priest (Part 2) was celebrated by Bishop Kurt and area clergy at Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church, Hazleton, PA, with a Divine Liturgy being celebrated the following morning at Saint Mary Parish. Interment followed at Saints Peter and Paul Byzantine Catholic Cemetery in Beaver Meadows, PA.

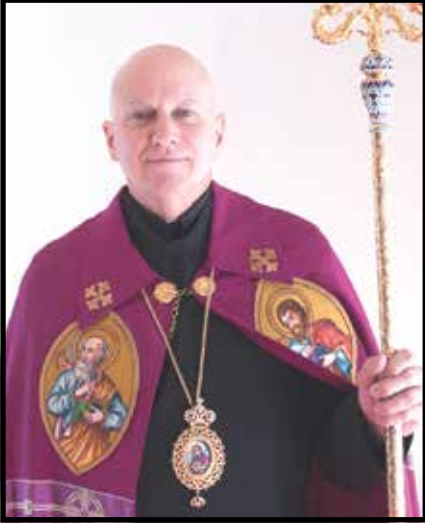
"Well done, good and faithful servant ... Enter into the joy of your Lord." (Matthew 25:23).

May his memory be eternal! *Vičnaja jemu pamjat'!*

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L to R: Archpriest James G. Hayer, Bishop Kurt, Father Edward Higgins (Master of Ceremonies), and Father Gregory Noga place the aer (chalice veil) over +Father Jody's face.



# I LIFT UP MY EYES...

Pastoral Reflections of Bishop Kurt



## NEW WINE IN NEW WINESKINS

In 1960, there was a popular musical comedy that poked fun at the teen mania surrounding popular singers in the 1950's. To some adults at the time, it seemed that young people were going off the rails, and in a musical comedy of 1960, older adults sing a song, "Kids! What's the matter with kids today?" The chorus asks the ironic question, "Why can't they be like we were: perfect in every way?" The reaction of adults in 1960 to the popularity of Elvis Presley seems mild compared to the upheaval later in the 60's. As a matter of fact, Americans have always been a bumptious lot to govern; after all, our foundation was a revolution. While each generation of adults believe they are witnessing historic rebellion of the youth, most periods in American history saw the same thing.

In 1920, the world was a sober place after World War I, called "the war to end all wars," followed by the Spanish Flu which killed even more people—mostly young people—wiping out five percent of the world population. Well, perhaps the adults were sober. Malcolm Muggeridge turned 17 in 1920. As he described it, the adults explained the enormous burden placed on the young by this new era of peace, scientific progress, universal education, and world cooperation. Muggeridge says, "we" responded with irresponsible abandon by having a ten-year party, the "Roaring Twenties." After our two years of quarantine and lock down and sanctimonious social responsibility, I wouldn't be surprised if our younger generation responds in a similar manner during the 20's of this century.

It isn't God's plan that we mature and grow perfect indefinitely for the benefit of the future. Rather it is God's plan that each generation grows old and is replaced by the next generation that makes its own choices. Despite the best efforts of adults to educate or coerce or coax the youth, despite the best efforts of adults to control the future, the young make their own lives. Despite our labor and good intentions, we cannot save the world. So, in every generation of youth, God raises up saints, young saints to remind us that we do not save ourselves, to remind us that it is God who sanctifies, and to remind us that He has not abandoned us.

If the twenty-first century seems like an unlikely time for young Catholic saints, the heart of Calvinist Scotland, seems like the most unlikely place. Not only did Scotland embrace the joyless prac-

tice of Calvinism, but, in modern times, the majority has slipped into secularism, agnosticism, or materialism and atheism. Just as in our own country, Calvinism has split the Body of Christ into countless pieces, giving the Good News of Jesus Christ a bad name. If I were raised in such a joyless religion, I might have abandoned the faith as well.

One of the ancient doctrines most despised by Calvin's disciples is honoring the Mother of God. If you try to talk about our faith to non-Catholic, non-Orthodox friends in the United States, asking Mary for prayers is usually the most difficult obstacle to get past. Ironically, in the heart of Scotland is a town called Motherwell. You might guess it

There are only two archdioceses and five dioceses of the Roman Catholic Church located in this country of five million people, and one of those dioceses is Motherwell. On the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe in 1994, a boy was born in Carfin, a village only a couple thousand feet from Motherwell and from the Lady Well. Joseph "Joe" Wilson was born on December 12, 1994, and died a little over seventeen years later on December 20, 2011, before finishing high school. Joe seemed the most normal of high school students, who loved parties, dancing, sports, and his friends. Soon after his seventeenth birthday, Joe collapsed from an undiagnosed cardiac anomaly, and died four days later in the intensive care unit of Wishaw General Hospital, while

calming spirituality during difficult times, and a desire to meet Joe in heaven, or even to ask for his assistance in daily life.

Throughout his diary, we read Joe's belief and commitment to service, but in the interviews and other sources, we realize that his commitment was not just on paper. He started a table tennis club at his school for young people, and, if you look on the internet, the Joe Wilson Table Tennis Club is still operational, welcoming beginners as well as advanced of all ages. In his diary for July 27, 2010, is the entry: "I need to forgive and forget...except when playing table tennis." His parents note that they included that to show his sense of humor.

As a child, as soon as he was old enough, he would go to the grotto in Carfin to pray by himself. Much of his diary is about prayer. "If you find yourself struggling in life, pray to God. Pray with sincerity and belief. Take as long as you need to. And you will find hope." In the same month he wrote: "The only way you can have any true hope to do God's will is by praying fervently. God gives wisdom or any other quality to anyone who asks." The month before he wrote, "I have prayed fervently and have been rewarded. I will always stay close to God because he is the most important thing in my life." And also in the same month, "I asked for guidance, and I got it. The strength of the holy rosary is ineffable." From the diary, it appears that 2009 was an important year for Joe in the growth of his prayer life. It seems natural for children to pray, but not so much for a fourteen-year-old. A year later, as a fifteen-year-old, he wrote, "Over the past week I have increased my prayer habit. It is working and making me happier."

Joe loved his Catholic faith. Just before his sixteenth birthday he wrote, "Faith teaches you to be calm, humble, and gentle." Despite the ghastly persecution of the Catholic faith in the British Isles by Henry VIII and his successors, there were pockets of underground believers that persisted to this day in England and even smaller groups in Scotland. In recent years, the number of Catholics increased dramatically with immigration to the UK from Poland and Ukraine among others. In England and Scotland, most Catholics are Irish immigrants or second or third generation Irish. Nevertheless, Joe was ethnically a Scot.

His diary shows the excitement he felt when the Pope of Rome was scheduled to visit Scotland for only the second time in history. In September of 2010, on the feast of the Holy Cross, Joe wrote, "Pope Benedict is coming to Glasgow on Thursday and I'm going to see him. I cannot wait. We will be sitting in zone 1, right in front of the altar.



has to do with the Virgin Mary, and, in this case, your guess would be correct. There is a well dedicated to the Virgin Mary called Lady Well, now marked by a plaque on Ladywell Road. The form "Moderwell" is attested since at least 1600. The town of Motherwell grew up around the site. The modern history of the town would be a familiar story to many in our Church, as Motherwell became a major site in the steel industry. The industry collapsed in the 1980's for reasons similar to our own. Although small, Motherwell is home to a professional soccer team that competes in the top division Scottish soccer. I don't know whether they wear kilts in competition.

in a medically-induced coma. While he was in the coma, hundreds of people went to the grotto in Carfin for prayer and processions by candlelight. I was told by a participant that, during these vigils, many of the people praying said they felt Joe's presence. After his death, his father, Alan, found a diary that Joe had been keeping for the last three years. The diary includes short observations on his spiritual aspirations or realizations.

With the blessing of Bishop Joseph Toal, the Bishop of Motherwell, I was able to interview young people who knew Joe Wilson. With the interview and his diary, I found an uplifting and



It will be a wonderful spiritual occasion and bring so much joy to Scotland.” A day later he wrote, “I am ecstatic about Pope Benedict coming to visit Bellahouston Park tomorrow. I had said a rosary on Sunday that all goes well and there are many conversions. It will be Jesus at the altar! Or at least, as close to Jesus as we can be on earth at the altar.” The next day he wrote, “Our gentle and humble Pope Benedict was a model of Jesus...” and “...my faith is growing, and I’ve experienced so much joy today.”

In his diary, Joe’s love for God and prayer led him in the direction of service to others and love for God’s beautiful creation. When I interviewed sources, his service for others was the main thing they talked about. Joe loved to dance. At a party, if there was someone who felt left out, or didn’t know how to dance, Joe would cajole them into getting up and then show them how to dance. There was a high school trip to a beach city in the south of England, something pretty exciting if you live in central Scotland! He had just learned that a young lady in his class was diagnosed with a severe disease. While the other students were enjoying the beach, he was in the bookstore and

library trying to learn about the disease so that he would reach out to her in her fear and misery.

The interviews showed that his diary entries were not unfulfilled aspirations, but reflect his true life of service, and especially to other students who were left of the group for some reason. When he was fourteen, he wrote in his diary, “Don’t ever think you are better than your neighbor, because God has set a path for everyone in life, and you are not the judge of him. I know this is genuine wisdom because God told me.” Earlier that year he wrote, “think of ways in my life where I can reduce how much I criticize—criticism can be mentally destroying.” Around the same time, “stop thinking about ourselves for a while...this is how we can give honest, sincere appreciation: by thinking about other people’s good points.” And also, “Think more of others and less of myself which I’ve discovered is humility, after going to Mass there.” A year later, as a fifteen-year-old, he wrote, “If you’re struggling with your faith or you’re confused by it, simply do this: Think good of others. This is humility. Beware! It is often very challenging, but everything stems from it.”

Although he talks about service and avoiding criticism, Joe was no push-over. His friends described him several times as “straightforward.” They said, you shouldn’t ask his opinion on something if you didn’t want to hear the answer. They laughed when they said, if you asked for an opinion, you would get a straightforward answer.

When Joe was sixteen, nine months before he died, he wrote this in his diary, “I’ve been thinking of a few ways I can improve my Christian life. As a Christian, it is good to make yourself a ‘nobody.’ Hang around with those who are ignored or left out or quiet and gently

he asked me to pray it with him at certain times of the day—no matter what I was doing—which often led to some burnt dinners!” During his visit to the Basilica of Saint Therese of Lisieux, he picked out a rosary with different color beads for each decade. Towards the end of his fifteenth year, he wrote in his diary, “I shall pray more. I shall pray a rosary and the Saint Bridget’s prayers. I will increase my daily prayer life using the little pieta book.” In July of his fifteenth year he wrote, “I have been thinking...I will say a rosary... and strive to be as nice as possible to everyone I meet...I said a rosary...it worked. I prayed for assistance to be



console them. This can be very challenging as it damages your image, but it is an excellent way of ‘proclaiming the good news,’ i.e., setting an example of Christian living.” We know from his friends, he really lived this way in high school, and did not just write it in his diary. Prayer and service were intimately linked for him.

nice as I could to everyone. I wasn’t perfect but I feel as though it was good achievement.” During his final illness, it was at Carfin grotto that hundreds of people gathered to pray for his recovery. People continue to gather there, or pray in solitude, and say that they feel his presence. The book of quotes from his diary is available there, and the family receives letters from people all over the world who report spiritual healing or signs.

Joe really loved his friends and enjoyed life. People described him as always smiling. He wrote in his diary, “I thought about how valuable all my friends (each individually) are to me.” A year later he wrote, “How lovely are my friends.” A month after that he wrote, “Tomorrow I will think of everyone’s positive points.” We might naturally believe that he had good friends because he cultivated their friendship in a healthy way. On the other hand, Joe saw them as a gift from God. In his sixteenth year, he wrote, “I often take a look at my life and realize that God has given me terrific friends. Simply terrific.” His attitude towards his family was similar. On his sixteenth birthday, his entry read, “...had a terrific day...went to Mass...it was peaceful and enjoyable...the family were round...Thanks, Lord, for my loving family.”

Some people might claim that it is easier to be positive and even to be a saint if you live in a positive environment and have everything you need. My experience is different from that—people who have everything complain just as much or even more than people who grow up with hardship. Nevertheless, here is Joe’s answer to cynics: “I know the world ain’t gonna be perfect and that’s why I love having faith. Just think of all the people who were starving, in wars, in famines, were excluded, were tortured, were not loved in the world. All these people who were unfortunate on Earth are, I am certain, sitting on the highest thrones of Heaven — how reassuring is that?” By the way, this is Joe’s last entry in his diary, written on December 3, 2011, about a week before his death. What a beautiful reflection on the virtue of faith!

Joe’s spiritual journey began when his mother took him a small child to the Lourdes grotto in his hometown of Carfin. Carfin is not very big, and, as soon as he was old enough, he would get permission to go there by himself to pray. The Virgin Mary played an important role in his prayer life from then on. His mother says, “One of Joe’s favorite prayers was The Angelus—sometimes

His friends told a reporter that Joe was always smiling. In every photo of him that I have seen, he is indeed smiling. Some people imagine a saint is always serious or avoids all pleasure. Joe Wilson is being considered for

*continued on page 6*

### Joe’s Words

‘...when I pray, I know that I am truly loved and cherished and that God has given me a unique personality which I can use to work my skills and talents. True success comes when you try your best.’  
**20 November 2011**

‘I often take a look at my life and realise that God has given me terrific friends. Simply terrific.’  
**1 February 2011**

‘I shall pray more. I shall pray a rosary and St Bridget’s prayers. I will increase my daily prayer life using the little pieta book.’  
**14 November 2010**

**WE ARE ALL HUMAN!!**  
God made all of us.

- Follow his rules
- Work hard and toil at the tasks he gives you without getting distracted.

Spread his love to others through your example – show patience and perseverance, gratitude and praise to others, commitment, reliability, compassion, generosity.’  
**10 October 2011**

‘everything you pray to God for, try to DO it yourself.’  
**24 April 2011**

‘consider it pure joy when I face trials of many kinds because it strengthens my faith through perseverance’  
**5 May 2011**



Bishop Kurt Celebrates the Office of Christian Burial for a Priest at the Cathedral Chapel in Woodland Park, NJ

## FUNERAL HOMILY BY DEACON RYAN LIEBHABER



Deacon Ryan Liebhaber offers the homily

When Father Paul Scalia, son of the late Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia, gave the homily at his father's funeral, he started it with the following statement:

Deacon Ryan Liebhaber offers the homily

"We are gathered here because of one man. A man known personally to many of us, known only by reputation to even more. A man loved by many, scorned by others. A man known for great controversy, and for great compassion. That man, of course, is Jesus of Nazareth."

These words also ring true for us today during our Eucharistic celebration in remembrance of our Lord Jesus Christ, with the special intention for the repose of the soul of His priest, Father Jody John Baran. It is an honor for me to be able to give this homily today because Father Jody Baran was a dear friend to me and my family, and he had a profound impact upon us. We met Father Jody almost exactly 10 years ago when we joined Holy Spirit Parish in Mahwah, NJ, so while I did not know him nearly as long as many of you here today, I believe I came to know and understand him in a profound way. Today, I'd like to reflect with you on Father Jody's life, and how the life he lived

gives us hope that, as we prayed a few minutes ago, "that his every transgression, voluntary and involuntary, will be forgiven," and that he will "stand uncondemned before the fearsome judgment seat of Christ."

Father Jody was truly a unique individual. I've known no one else like him in my life. Father Jody's humanity was always on full display for everyone to see – he was who he was, regardless of whose presence or what environment he was in. Father Jody did not put on his priest side while in public or functioning as a priest, and then another side when in private; he was pretty much always the same person. Getting to know Father Jody was transformative to the way I viewed clergy, and knowing him nurtured my eventual vocation to the diaconate. From what I had experienced with my parish priests growing up in large Roman Catholic communities, Father Jody represented almost the complete opposite, and it was very refreshing. Rather than having limited access to my priest, literally needing an appointment to see him as I had experienced, Father Jody always made himself available, he would always answer the phone or call you back – or many times be the one to call you. You knew that he really enjoyed spending time with parishioners and lay people. Father Jody loved coffee hour after Liturgy, not only for the desserts, which he most certainly enjoyed, but for the ability to socialize and catch up with parishioners. Of course, Father Jody's disposition and nonchalant attitude with his own health triggered the motherly instinct in the women of the parish, who always felt the need to care for him. When he started having diabetic-related issues in his feet, I remember the ladies who ran coffee hour brought sugar-free cookies, and then proceeded to place them as the very first dessert on the table, along with a large sign next to them with "sugar free" written on it. As Father Jody went through the dessert line, he flattered them by putting one sugar-free cookie on his plate and proceeded to take a full assortment of regular "full sugar" desserts. Although Father Jody certainly had a penchant for desserts,

I'm certain that wasn't his main attraction to coffee hours: it was the people, and he often stayed long after all the desserts had been eaten, socializing with parishioners. Pope Francis was once asked by a father how he could transmit the Faith to his children, and the Holy Pontiff replied by saying to "waste time with them every day." Well, as a priestly father, Father Jody was willing to waste time with his parishioners, and that in itself sent the message that he was not too busy or preoccupied to spend time with his people. Father Jody also especially loved the Knights of Columbus and the fraternity his brother knights provided him. He would never miss a Knights of Columbus event if he could make it. I think he especially loved being able to expose Roman Catholics to the Byzantine Rite and sharing the faith that he knew and loved with others. Father Jody also developed a strong devotion to Father McGivney, the founder of the Knights of Columbus.

In addition to his love for spending time with the laity, Father Jody's tremendous sense of humor, often self-deprecating, was incredibly humanizing. He would often poke fun at himself or the friends that he held most dear – if Father joked about someone, you know he loved them and that they were important to him. One of his favorite stories to tell was about his own ordination to the priesthood. He would say that Bishop Michael (Dudick) forgot his name during the ordination, and, while saying the prayer of ordination, he said that he "ordained the pious deacon 'what's his name,' to the presbyterate," with Father claiming, in jest, that this had left him to question the validity of his own ordination. For me, interacting with a priest in this close and intimate manner made me realize that clergy were not perfect men, as other members of the laity and I sometimes saw them or perhaps even expected them to be; rather, they were regular men, flawed in the same way that all men are flawed, but who had heard the calling of God and followed that calling.

Another way Father Jody humanized the priesthood was through his *earthly*

love for our Church, both our particular Byzantine Catholic Church, and the Universal Church. When I first met Father Jody, his sense of humor could at times come off as irreverent, but as I grew to know him better, I came to realize that he could do this only because of his deep love for Christ and His Church. Early on in our friendship I realized that while my internal calendar was the secular calendar, and I struggled to transpose the liturgical calendar upon it, for Father Jody's his internal calendar was the liturgical calendar, and he truly saw life through the Church's cycle of feast days and periods of fasting. Several years ago, Father Jody and I were able to take a trip to Chicago together, a city to which Father had never been. Father Jody had somehow known that the biggest monstrosity in the world was at the ethnically-Polish church of Saint Stanislaus Kostka in Chicago (a monstrosity being the sacred vessel that holds a consecrated host for Eucharistic adoration in the Roman Rite). This was the #1 stop on Father's list of places to visit, and we went there at the first opportunity and prayed in front of the Blessed Sacrament.

As we left the church, Father Jody was completely giddy from the experience, and the thought occurred to me that for years people had wanted to visit Chicago to see the tallest building in



Bishop Kurt gives a blessing

the world, but for Father Jody, this monsternance was his “Sears Tower” experience. The individuals he admired the most in life were our bishops and his brother priests, both from within our eparchy, and the Roman Catholic priests throughout the North Jersey area with whom he had developed close friendships. Father seemed to have had a keen awareness of the talents and abilities of his fellow priests, and perhaps for some of his own limitations. Father would joke that he didn’t want the responsibilities of being a bishop, but wouldn’t mind having the “bling.” One of the reoccurring things

Father would talk about these last few years that he was hospitalized and in care was how he just wanted to be able to return to ministry and celebrate the Divine Liturgy. It was a true blessing for me that he was able to concelebrate at my ordination last October 10th.

These countless small anecdotes demonstrated the deeper belief in our Faith that could sometimes be masked by Father’s sense of humor, stubbornness, and unbridled humanity. I was greatly comforted, but not surprised, when I learned that two Wednesday’s ago, he called and asked a priest friend

of his to come to the hospital to hear his confession, give him the Eucharist, and to anoint him. This turned out to be the day before he suffered the massive heart attack from which he would never recover. Father Jody knew the hour was near, and he prepared himself for his departure from this earthly life. I was also very comforted to know that Bishop Kurt, his seminary classmate, whom I know he greatly admired, not only as his bishop but as his friend, was by his side during his final moments on earth. Our prayers for the dead are meaningful, and we should all pray for Father Jody’s soul – I will for the re-

mainder of my earthly life. But we also must maintain Christian hope, inspired by Christ’s words in today’s Gospel reading that “whoever hears my word and believes in the one who sent me has eternal life, and will not come to condemnation, but has passed from death to life.” We pray that this promise will be extended to Father Jody, and that in heaven the Lord will perfect what his right hand had planted on this earth. Glory to Jesus Christ!



## BASILIAN SISTERS CELEBRATE ANNIVERSARIES OF RELIGIOUS LIFE

The Sisters of Saint Basil the Great in Uniontown, PA, gather annually for community meetings and celebrations in July. As is customary during this time, the Sisters commemorate the Jubilarians of the community. This year, Sister Euphemia Kopa celebrated 75 years of religious life and Sister Margaret Kapusnak, 70 years.

The Jubilee Divine Liturgy was held Tuesday, July 20, at the monastery with the chaplain, Father Jerome Botsko, officiating. The Sisters renewed their vows in a spirit of thanksgiving amidst the prayers of all the community. A celebratory dinner followed with a program of remarks and reminiscences.

Sister Euphemia Kopa entered religious life from Assumption of the Mother of God Byzantine Catholic Church in Weirton, WV. Sister Euphemia first served at the newly-established Saint Basil Home for Aged Women for two years and then dedicated her teaching years to the youngest children, kindergarten through second grade. Sister Euphemia was also a principal, the Administrator of the former Saint Basil Home for Aged Women, and also served in the bishop’s residence. Of late Sister has assisted in the monastery baking department and the *medovniki* project for the pilgrimage, as well as with hospitality.

Sister Margaret Kapusnak arrived from Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church in Johnstown, PA. Sister Margaret served as a teacher in the elementary and high school level for several years

and was also the editor of *The Voice* magazine and Novice Directress before she began ministry in the Passaic Office of Religious Education. Later, Sister Margaret served for six years in the General Administration of the Order in Rome. After her return, she was elected Provincial Superior in Uniontown in 1990. Following her term in leadership, Sister Margaret taught English in Trebisov, Slovakia, in the newly-established high school of the Greek Catholic Eparchy. From 1997 to 2001, she was the Development Director for the Province, and since then, Sister Margaret has served as the Province Secretary at the monastery.

In his homily, Father Jerome referred to a statement of Pope Francis regarding women religious: “As Sisters you have been a leaven in this society that is irreplaceable and you have carried the People of God forward.” In congratulating the Sisters, Father also noted that it is possible to be faithful to a vocation for many years not so much because of us, but because the grace of God calls and sustains us.

At the festive dinner, Sister Susan Sisko, Provincial Superior, acknowledged the faithful service of these Sisters for a combined 145 years, as well as their diversity of talents offered joyfully to the Lord.



Sister Susan Sisko, Father Jerome Botsko, Sister Euphemia Kopa, and Sister Margaret Kapusnak



### FROM THE OFFICE OF THE BISHOP CLERGY APPOINTMENTS

**Very Rev. Peter Hosak:** is granted a leave of absence at his own request.

**Very Rev. Edward Higgins:** is appointed pastor of Saints Peter and Paul Byzantine Catholic Church in Bethlehem, PA, and Administrator of Saints Peter and Paul Byzantine Catholic Church in Philipsburg, NJ, while retaining his other assignments.

## I LIFT UP MY EYES...

### NEW WINE IN NEW WINESKINS

*Continued from page 3*

canonization, and the evidence shows consistently that he was a very happy teenager; he sought out happiness by turning to God for help; he loved his friends; he loved God's creation; and he loved life.

Gilbert Keith Chesterton grew up in an agnostic household in England, a very secularized country even one hundred years ago. As a teenager, he began to search out the truth in various philosophies and religions. He says that he considered Christianity last because his society was already so very anti-Christian. He summarizes his search for the truth in his book *Orthodoxy*. The first

paragraph is humorous—he says that an important journalist wrote that it is easy to criticize what others believe. Perhaps Mr. Chesterton wouldn't mind telling us what he believes. As Chesterton points out, if you challenge a man who writes for a living, he is likely to take up the challenge, and Chesterton goes on to lay out in a book that is both profound and entertaining how he made the journey from agnosticism to Christianity in a secularized country. His analysis of the difference between Buddhism and Christianity is both unusual and insightful. He says that the deep difference is visible in their art. "No two ideals could be more opposite

than a Christian saint in a Gothic cathedral and a Buddhist saint in a Chinese temple. The opposition exists at every point; but perhaps the shortest statement of it is that the Buddhist saint always has his eyes shut, while the Christian saint always has them very wide open. The Buddhist saint has a sleek and harmonious body, but his eyes are heavy and sealed with sleep. The mediæval saint's body is wasted to its crazy bones, but his eyes are frightfully alive." (*Orthodoxy* chapter 6) In every photo I have seen of Joe Wilson, not only is he smiling, but his eyes are wide open, looking out on God's beautiful creation with joy and delight. G.K. Chesterton would be pleased.

In every age, God raises up holy men and women, for our sanctification and for our hope. He reminds us that He is

just as alive and active today as in the times of the Bible. And remarkably, God makes young saints, to confound the wise and remind their elders that we don't make ourselves perfect, no matter how long we live. As Bishop Fulton Sheen said, "It does not take great time to make a saint, only great love."

So far, there are two possible miracles linked to Joe Wilson being investigated by the local diocese. If you receive any grace, favor, or cure through Joe's intercession, please write to Joe's Faith, 32 Carroll Cres, Newarthill, Motherwell, Scotland ML1 SAT

+Kurt Bennette

## PRAYER AND FRIENDSHIP, GOD'S WILL AND BREAD

### Reflection on Father Walter Ciszek

Prayer and friendship are close relatives – sisters or first-degree cousins. In prayer, the One I address is my Friend. "You are my friends if you do what I tell you..." Prayer is a gift from my Friend, my Maker and Redeemer, who Himself taught us how to pray: to ask for bread, and that God's Will be done. In the 6th Chapter of Saint John's Gospel, Jesus tells us more: "Moses did not give you bread. My heavenly Father gives you the true Bread of God for the life of the world," the Eucharist. Jesus, our Maker and God also tells us about ourselves: "Man does not live by bread alone but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."

To us, the community of Holy Annunciation Monastery, Father Walter Ciszek tells us a lot about faith, friendship, prayer, adherence to the Will of God and bread – divine and human.

He was a friend, our community's friend, my friend and always God's special friend, always intent on DOING (and helping us) do God's will. In 1966, he wrote, "In me you have a faithful friend." He was a sure guide. For him, learning to do the Will of God meant years of suffering.

Early on, Father Walter learned that his greatest suffering came from his own self-will. He wanted to fight for God: "Stand back, Lord, I'll take care of this for you" - Recall the Russian soldiers gathered in the church "and his angry words of welcome that did so much damage: "The fool says in his heart there is no God" (*With God in Russia*, p. 15).

The school of submission was long and painful, but when Father Ciszek returned to the USA, he was truly a model of our Lord's teaching: "Learn of Me for I am meek and humble of heart, and you will find rest [peace] for your soul." The Word of God found a home in Father Ciszek's heart. He retained a sparkle in his eyes and humor in his speech. Always present to the present moment and person, his conversation was packed with Gospel wisdom – He

spoke of blessings but never of injury. His mere survival, and mental acumen were miraculous. And he survived on bread; ordinary bread kept him alive. He loved our bread. Very unobtrusively, he would tear a small piece, set it aside, rather solemnly, to be eaten last, in gratitude for Russian bread that saved his life. He enjoyed our bread as "the best" but there was a God-given Russian bread he would never forget. - Mother Marija

*Memories from Holy Annunciation Monastery Nuns*

#### Mother Marie Helen

I learned about Father Walter when I was just a little girl. My teacher, Sister Conrad, asked me to pray for her brother, who was a priest in Russia. Many years later, after his return to America, Father Walter came to the monastery where he was to thank me personally for those prayers.

#### Sister Mary

Father Walter emphasized always being faithful to mental prayer, saying that God would sustain us in all our trials. He himself used the Scriptures for prayer, calling love for the Scripture, "an infused virus," and saying that praying with the Scripture allows the Holy Spirit to mold our personalities. He mentioned that during his time in Russia, surrounded by atheism, he always prayed that he would never lose the gift of faith. Only later was he able to look back at those times and see God's presence in his struggles.

#### Sister Andreja

When I asked him once if my vocation was only my will and not God's will, Father Walter said immediately, "It is impossible for you or anyone to desire anything good without God." The words he spoke were simple, but his own faith and conviction gave them a power that I could rely on, and I left the conversation with him convinced that everything was going to be alright. He often emphasized the need to accept difficult things from God's will with as much generosity as the good

things. When times are really tough, and it feels as though even God is pushing you away, "you have to hang on like you're hanging on to his big toe," because, in another of his favorite sayings: "It's never impossible and it's never too late."

#### Sister Bohdana

I only met Father Walter once, and my overwhelming impression of him was of joy, seen especially in his bright blue eyes. He had done God's will, he was the person God wanted him to be, he lived what he preached, and it filled him with joy. I and some other sisters were only with him for an afternoon, but we went home singing and laughing, because his own joy was so contagious.

#### Sister Kristina

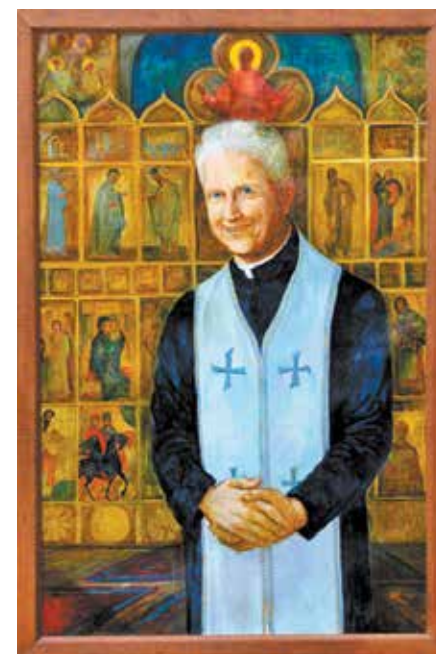
The statement that best encapsulates Father Walter's emphasis on surrender to the will of God is, "What can ultimately trouble the soul that accepts every moment of every day as a gift from the hand of God and strives always to do His will?"

#### Sister Johnine

A quotation from Father Walter that best sums up what I have heard about him from Mother and other sisters is, "What can ultimately trouble the soul that accepts every moment of every day as a gift from the hand of God and strives always to do His will?" In reading Father Walter's books, I was so impressed by his endurance during his time in Lubianka, that when I encountered hard times in my own life, I prayed to him for courage and strength to keep going and he always helped me.

#### Sister Marija Tereska

I have often heard sisters relate how Father Walter would bless and kiss bread before eating it, in gratitude for it having saved his life in the concentration camp. He said to Mother Marija shortly before his death, "Do not fight evil; stay away from evil." From hearing stories about Father Walter, my impression of him is of a man of prayer to whom the will of God was everything.



#### Sister Christiana

The main element of Father Walter's teaching that remains in my mind from hearing other sisters talk about him is his emphasis on learning to do God's will and doing it with cheerfulness.

#### Sister Katherine

From hearing Mother Marija talk about Father Walter, I most remember his statement that our worst enemy is ourselves, as well as his insistence that the will of God is found in the events of everyday life: "The things that are of God are all the joys and works and suffering of each day, however burdensome and boring, routine and insignificant they may seem."

#### Sister Theodosia

Father Walter blesses the mundane work of this house. Every time sisters turn on the big Hobart mixers to make the pastry rolls for the Christmas and Easter bakery sales, they say the usual prayers for help and protection: "Most Holy Mother of God, pray for us! All the angels and saints, pray for us and protect us!" and then add at the end, every single time: "Father Walter, pray for us!" Father Walter is still here, helping us earn our daily bread.

# BISHOP'S APPEAL 2020 – FINAL REPORT

*Highlighted parishes reached their goal and received a 40% refund*

Parish	Location	Goal	Received
Saint John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church	Trumbull, CT	\$15,400.00	\$5,770.00
Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church	Danbury, CT	\$7,000.00	\$2,155.00
Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church	Meriden, CT	\$800.00	\$800.00
Holy Trinity Byzantine Catholic Church	New Britain, CT	\$4,800.00	\$1,160.00
Saint Gregory of Nyssa Byzantine Catholic Church	Beltsville, MD	\$5,400.00	\$11,625.00
Saint Therese Byzantine Catholic Church	Saint Petersburg, FL	\$10,600.00	\$6,070.00
Saint John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church	Bayonne, NJ	\$3,000.00	\$1,685.00
Saint Elias Byzantine Catholic Church	Carteret, NJ	\$4,400.00	\$3,675.00
Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church	Dunellen, NJ	\$4,000.00	\$1,425.00
Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church	Jersey City, NJ	\$3,000.00	\$1,450.00
Saint George Byzantine Catholic Church	Linden, NJ	\$8,000.00	\$1,625.00
Holy Spirit Byzantine Catholic Church	Mahwah, NJ	\$2,600.00	\$1,750.00
Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church	Hillsborough, NJ	\$30,000.00	\$9,023.00
Saint George Byzantine Catholic Church	Newark, NJ	\$2,400.00	\$1,525.00
Saint Joseph Byzantine Catholic Church	New Brunswick, NJ	\$3,400.00	\$220.00
Saints Peter & Paul Byzantine Catholic Church	Somerset, NJ	\$2,600.00	\$0.00
Cathedral of St. Michael the Archangel	Passaic, NJ	\$25,200.00	\$29,870.00
Saint Michael Byzantine Catholic Church	Perth Amboy, NJ	\$4,000.00	\$4,000.00
Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church	Perth Amboy, NJ	\$4,000.00	\$4,000.00
Saints Peter & Paul Byzantine Catholic Church	Phillipsburg, NJ	\$3,000.00	\$4,145.00
Saint Thomas the Apostle Byzantine Catholic Church	Rahway, NJ	\$12,400.00	\$12,942.00
Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church	Roebing, NJ	\$3,000.00	\$3,750.00
Assumption of the Virgin Mary Byzantine Catholic Church	Trenton, NJ	\$10,000.00	\$10,500.00
Holy Spirit Byzantine Catholic Church	Binghamton, NY	\$12,000.00	\$2,990.00
Saints Peter & Paul Byzantine Catholic Church	Endicott, NY	\$4,000.00	\$2,625.00
Saints Peter & Paul Byzantine Catholic Church	Granville, NY	\$800.00	\$250.00
Holy Cross Byzantine Catholic Church	New York, NY	\$1,000.00	\$450.00
Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church	New York, NY	\$5,000.00	\$1,875.00
Saints Peter & Paul Byzantine Catholic Church	Peekskill, NY	\$3,400.00	\$7,425.00
Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church	White Plains, NY	\$5,000.00	\$1,675.00
Saints Peter & Paul Byzantine Catholic Church	Beaver Meadows, PA	\$16,000.00	\$10,400.00
Saints Peter & Paul Byzantine Catholic Church	Bethlehem, PA	\$17,000.00	\$19,865.00
Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church	Brockton, PA	\$2,000.00	\$225.00
Blessed Virgin Mary Byzantine Catholic Church	Coatesville, PA	\$4,000.00	\$360.00
Saint Michael Byzantine Catholic Church	Dunmore, PA	\$12,000.00	\$7,235.00
Saint John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church	Forest City, PA	\$4,000.00	\$1,895.00
Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church	Freeland, PA	\$15,000.00	\$8,390.00
Saint Ann Byzantine Catholic Church	Harrisburg, PA	\$16,000.00	\$10,975.00
Saint John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church	Hazleton, PA	\$18,400.00	\$6,690.00
Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church	Hazleton, PA	\$12,000.00	\$6,643.00
Holy Ghost Byzantine Catholic Church	Jessup, PA	\$13,000.00	\$5,065.00
Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church	Kingston, PA	\$8,800.00	\$4,185.00
Saint John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church	Lansford, PA	\$5,000.00	\$2,490.00
Our Lady of Perpetual Help Byzantine Catholic Church	Levittown, PA	\$7,800.00	\$2,725.00
Saint Michael Byzantine Catholic Church	McAdoo, PA	\$10,200.00	\$1,760.00
Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church	Mahanoy City, PA	\$10,000.00	\$2,385.00
Saints Peter & Paul Byzantine Catholic Church	Minersville, PA	\$14,000.00	\$4,580.00
Saint Michael Byzantine Catholic Church	Mont Clare, PA	\$8,000.00	\$8,000.00
Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church	Nesquehoning, PA	\$3,000.00	\$3,380.00
Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church	Old Forge, PA	\$8,200.00	\$3,730.00
Holy Ghost Byzantine Catholic Church	Philadelphia, PA	\$7,800.00	\$8,135.00
Holy Trinity Byzantine Catholic Church	Philadelphia, PA	\$3,000.00	\$2,462.47
Saint Michael Byzantine Catholic Church	Pittston, PA	\$8,200.00	\$1,365.00
Saint John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church	Pottstown, PA	\$13,800.00	\$3,311.00
Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church	Saint Clair, PA	\$3,200.00	\$3,720.00
Saint John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church	Scranton, PA	\$3,200.00	\$70.00
Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church	Scranton, PA	\$6,600.00	\$2,070.00
Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church	Sheppton, PA	\$2,000.00	\$1,280.00
Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church	Swoyersville, PA	\$7,400.00	\$3,110.00
Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church	Taylor, PA	\$3,400.00	\$1,000.00
Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church	Wilkes-Barre, PA	\$19,800.00	\$8,015.00
Saint John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church	Wilkes-Barre Tw., PA	\$5,800.00	\$1,890.00
Saint Basil Byzantine Catholic Church	Miami, FL	\$6,800.00	\$525.00
Resurrection Byzantine Catholic Church	Smithtown, NY	\$8,800.00	\$10,770.00
Nativity of Our Lord Byzantine Catholic Church	East Brunswick, NJ	\$4,200.00	\$375.00
Holy Wisdom Byzantine Catholic Church	Flanders, NJ	\$1,600.00	\$3,337.00
Patronage of the Mother of God Byzantine Catholic Church	Arbutus, MD	\$9,800.00	\$6,750.00
Epiphany of Our Lord Byzantine Catholic Church	Annandale, VA	\$19,800.00	\$22,575.00
Our Lady of Perpetual Help Byzantine Catholic Church	Toms River, NJ	\$9,800.00	\$9,831.00
Saint Nicholas of Myra Byzantine Catholic Church	Orlando, FL	\$8,600.00	\$9,350.00
Saint Andrew the Apostle Byzantine Catholic Church	Westbury, NY	\$3,200.00	\$4,170.00
Saint Nicholas Chapel	Pocono Summit, PA	\$3,600.00	\$1,980.00
Epiphany of Our Lord Byzantine Catholic Church	Roswell, GA	\$10,800.00	\$11,970.00
All Saints Byzantine Catholic Church	North Fort Myers, FL	\$3,000.00	\$1,925.00
Holy Dormition Byzantine Catholic Church	Ormond Beach, FL	\$3,800.00	\$2,960.00
Saint Anne Byzantine Catholic Church	New Port Richey, FL	\$4,200.00	\$4,200.00
Ascension of Our Lord Church Byzantine Catholic Church	Williamsburg, VA	\$6,800.00	\$8,490.00
Our Lady of the Sign Church Byzantine Catholic Church	Coconut Creek, FL	\$6,200.00	\$6,200.00
Our Lady of Perpetual Help Byzantine Catholic Church	Virginia Beach, VA	\$3,200.00	\$975.00
Saints Cyril & Methodius Byzantine Catholic Church	Fort Pierce, FL	\$6,000.00	\$1,025.00
Saints Cyril & Methodius Byzantine Catholic Church	Cary, NC	\$10,000.00	\$2,375.00
Epiphany of Our Lord Byzantine Catholic Mission	Gaithersburg, MD	\$6,000.00	\$4,225.00
Blessed Basil Hopko Byzantine Catholic Mission	Conway, SC	\$600.00	\$1,770.00
Miscellaneous Donors			\$11,015.14
<b>TOTAL GOAL:</b>		<b>\$621,800</b>	<b>\$410,654.61</b>



# PEOPLE YOU KNOW AROUND THE EPARCHY

## IN JESSUP...

### Celebrating God's Blessings This Summer

The parish family of Holy Ghost Byzantine Catholic Church in Jessup, PA, is celebrating God's blessings this summer! We are grateful for the good health of our parishioners and our pastor, Father John Cigan. We celebrated the feast of the Transfiguration with the blessing of fruit and the Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos with the beautiful blessing of flowers. Father John Cigan is the pastor of Holy Ghost Parish.



## IN MIAMI...

### Deacon Michael Opalka, a first responder



Deacon Michael Opalka, serving at Saint Basil the Great Byzantine Catholic Church, Miami, FL, was one of the first responders at the Champlain Towers South building collapse in Surfside, Florida.

Deacon Michael retired from the Miami Dade Fire Rescue Department in 2008 after 33 years of service. Since his retirement, Chief Opalka has continued to serve the Miami Dade Fire Rescue Department as a member of the Critical Incident Stress Management Response Team. He serves in this capacity as a Fire Department Chaplain and Peer Support team member.

As a chaplain and Peer Support team member, Deacon Michael responds to critical incidents that involve severe injuries, death, and other catastrophic events. He was also part of the critical incident team that responded to the school shootings at Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, FL.

The Administrator of Saint Basil the Great Parish is Father Salvatore Pignato.

## Byzantine Catholic Outreach The Villages, Florida

Served from Saint Anne Byzantine Catholic Church, New Port Richey, Florida.

“A loving, praying community giving Glory to Jesus Christ!”

**VIGIL DIVINE LITURGY EVERY SATURDAY, 2:00 P.M.**

**HOLYDAYS OF OBLIGATION ON THE HOLYDAY, 12:00 NOON**

**Served by Father Oleksiy Nebesnyk**

Location:

Saint Alban Church, 625 W. Lady Lake Blvd, Lady Lake, FL

Next to the American Legion, CR 466 & Rolling Acres Road  
**MEET, GREET, AND MUNCH FOLLOWING ALL LITURGIES**

Slavic dinners being planned

Join with Saint Alban's in donating food to the Food Banks in Lady Lake and Fruitland Park on the first Sunday of each month.

Outreach Contact /Phone: 352-530-9631

Dr. Barbara Yastishock-Lutz, Lay Representative, drbylutz@comcast.net

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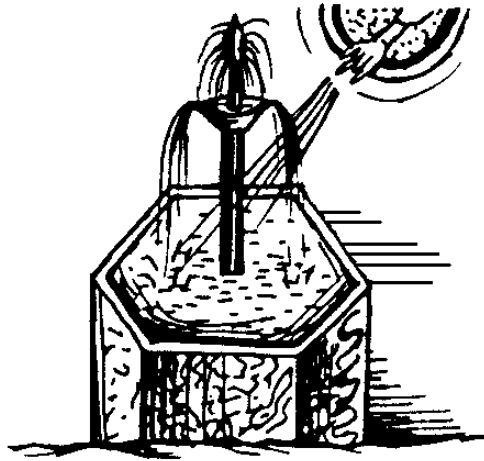
Eparchial Website:  
**www.EparchyofPassaic.com**

# IN MONT CLARE...

## Deacon's Son Baptized

On June 11, at Saint Michael Parish, in Mont Clare, PA, Bishop Kurt baptized, chrismated, and administered the Holy Eucharist to Mark Matthias Harden, newborn son of Deacon John and Pan'i Meghann Harden. Concelebrating the Liturgy with Bishop Kurt was Father Andriy Kovach, administrator of Saint Michael Parish. Deacons John Reed (Epiphany of Our Lord, Roswell, GA) and Rich Terza (Saint Mary, Wilkes Barre, PA) were also in attendance.

As the Liturgy concluded, Bishop Kurt imparted a special blessing on Mark Matthias at the royal doors of the church. The Harden family is grateful to the bishop for this honor, and the community of Saint Michael Parish enjoyed having the bishop celebrate the occasion.



# IN SMITHTOWN...

## Feast of the Dormition

On August 14, on the eve of the Feast of The Dormition of The Theotokos, Resurrection Parish in Smithtown, NY, made a pilgrimage to the Shrine of the Blessed Virgin Mary – the Monastery of The Dormition of the Virgin Mary in Sloatsburg, NY. A group of pilgrims, with Father Vlad Budash, parish administrator, and Deacon Robert Knapp, departed Smithtown by bus along with two other families who traveled by car.

For Eastern Christians, The Villa of Saint Mary is a special place of veneration of the Mother of God, where each year everyone can come to meet his or her heavenly Spiritual Mother and, through her intercession, become closer to her Son.



The prayer meeting with The Virgin Mary began in the bus with a common rosary and the singing of hymns and continued in the monastery itself. There, pilgrims from different parishes joined to pray the Akathist to the Mother of God; attended spiritual conferences; received the Holy Mystery of the Anointing of the Sick; and participated in the consecration of water. The priests present received the confessions of all who wished to take advantage of the opportunity to receive the Holy Mystery of Penance. The culmination was the Vigil Liturgy in honor of the Dormition of The Theotokos. The pilgrimage ended with a Panachida and a Moleben.

In addition to an incredible spiritual experience, the pilgrimage to Saint Mary's Villa brought wonderful communication with Christians from different states and a sense of the unity of The Church as children of their one Spiritual Mother.



# The Sisters of Saint Basil the Great

## 87th Pilgrimage in Honor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help

Sunday, September 5th, 2021



Schedule as of 6.21.2021  
(Subject to change)

### Sunday, September 5

- 9:30am Confessions
- 9:30am Matins (TBD)
- 11:00am Divine Liturgy for Vocations
- 1:30pm Children's Procession
- 2:30pm Bereavement Session
- 4:00pm Hierarchical Divine Liturgy
- 7:00pm Parastas

### Monday September 6

9:30 Divine Liturgy (TBD)

### Services to be Streamed Live

The following services will take place Sunday, September 5 at the Shrine Altar, weather permitting, and live streamed on our website: [www.sistersofstbasil.org](http://www.sistersofstbasil.org).  
11:00am Divine Liturgy for Vocations  
1:30pm Children's Procession  
4:00pm Hierarchical Divine Liturgy  
7:00pm Parastas

The Sisters of Saint Basil the Great are pleased to announce that on Sunday, September 5, 2021, the 87th Annual Pilgrimage in honor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help will be held at Mount Saint Macrina. With the theme, "Mother of Perpetual Help, Our Gentle Protectress", the Pilgrimage will be an in-person event and will also be streamed live. Weather permitting, liturgical services will be broadcast at [www.sistersofstbasil.org](http://www.sistersofstbasil.org).

Out of an abundance of caution, and in consultation with local county CDC/health department officials, this year's Pilgrimage will have the following guidelines and limitations:

All liturgical services will take place at the Shrine Altar. Due to the inability to accommodate large numbers indoors, the potential for postponement or cancellation of a liturgical service exists with the presence of severe weather conditions.

Boxed lunches/snacks will be available for purchase during this year's Pilgrimage. Pilgrims wishing to enjoy a warm meal are encouraged to support the local restaurants on Route 40 directly across from the Mount.

Please see the list of local motels and hotels on our website if you wish overnight accommodations. There will be no overnight accommodations on the grounds of Mount Saint Macrina this year, which includes campers. A limited number of self-contained RVs are permitted by appointment only (contact Sr. Carol at 724-438-7149).

Pilgrims will be asked to wear masks when entering indoor shrines, as well as buildings such as the Religious Gift Shop, House of Prayer, restroom facilities, etc.

Visitors to the Monastery (Motherhouse) will be limited this year to Sisters' family. There will be no shuttle service on the property.

The Sisters are very happy to welcome our beloved pilgrims back to the grounds of Mount Saint Macrina this year. We encourage you to make the best, most prudent decision for yourself and your family members regarding traveling to Pilgrimage this year. For Pilgrims unable to attend in person, please participate via the livestream: [www.sistersofstbasil.org](http://www.sistersofstbasil.org)



## When traveling to the Mid-Atlantic, please visit our churches

### Maryland— Patronage of the Mother of God

1265 Linden Avenue  
Baltimore, MD 21227  
Phone 410-247-4936  
Web [www.patronagechurch.org](http://www.patronagechurch.org)  
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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://www.sscyrilmethodius.org)  
Sunday Divine Liturgy 9 and 11 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](http://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.

SAINT ANN NOVENA, SCRANTON 2021



**IN PERSON EVENT**

**ASSEMBLY OF THE BYZANTINE CATHOLIC (RUTHENIAN) METROPOLITAN CHURCH**

**November 5 & 6, 2021**

St. John the Baptist Cathedral  
Munhall, PA

**“One Body in Christ:  
Re-emerging from the Pandemic”**



**Topics**

***Looking Back: Looking Ahead with a Hopeful Heart***  
Deacon Tom Shubeck

***Our Worship Post Pandemic***  
Fr. Valerian Michlik & Fr. Andrew Summerson

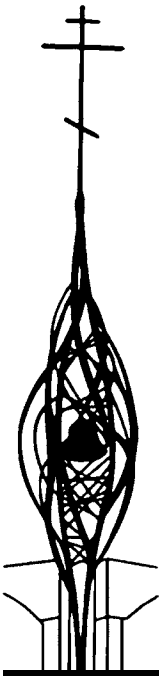
***The Eucharist: Holy Gifts to Holy People***  
Most Rev. Bishop Kurt Burnette

***Growing Parishes Post Pandemic***  
Deacon Basil Balke

**Plus Breakout Sessions & Vendors**

**Registration: [archpitt.org](http://archpitt.org) or  
your eparchial website**





## Visiting New York City?

Come Worship With Us!

Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church

Father Edward G. Cimbala, D.Min.—Pastor

246 East 15th Street, Manhattan, New York  
212-677-0516

Sunday Divine Liturgy

10:00 AM

FOR A BROCHURE WITH FULL DETAILS, CONTACT OR DETACH & MAIL TO:

Fr. Edward G. Cimbala St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church 246 E. 15th Street New York, NY 10003 Tel: (908) 872-2928 Email: fredcimbala@gmail.com	Name: _____ Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____ Tel: _____ Email: _____
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NAWAS INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL, INC.

### ALPINE EUROPE PILGRIMAGE Featuring the Passion Play of Oberammergau 11 DAYS: AUGUST 29 - SEPTEMBER 8, 2022

HEIDELBERG • RHINE VALLEY • LUCERNE • INNSBRUCK  
SALZBURG • ALTÖTTING • MARKTL AM INN • MUNICH • ROTHENBURG



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FR. JAMES SPERA**

**\$4291 FROM NEWARK\***

\*Air/land tour price is \$3701 plus \$590 gov't taxes/airline surcharges

For More Information, Please Contact:

**Fr. Cimbala**  
Tel: (908) 872-2928  
Email: fredcimbala@gmail.com

SPACE IS LIMITED - SIGN UP TODAY!!!



## BYZANTINE CATHOLIC SEMINARY TO HOST “COME AND SEE” RETREAT OF DISCOVERY



The Byzantine Catholic Seminary of Saints Cyril and Methodius is pleased to host the “Come and See” Weekend of Discovery from Friday, November 5 to Sunday, November 7, 2021.

Invited to this retreat are men, ages 18 to 35, single or married, who may be considering a vocation to the priesthood in the Byzantine Catholic Church. The atmosphere will be prayerful, positive, and fraternal.

A past retreatant noted about his experience that the weekend was helpful for his “seeing both the difficulties and joys of seminary and ordained life.” It was also noted that “watching the seminarians look out for one another and serve parish communities was a great witness to the gospel.”

“Come and See” is a retreat weekend that takes place at the Byzantine Catholic Seminary in Pittsburgh, PA. The retreat includes sharing liturgical services and meals with the seminary community and an introduction to the seminary formation program. It will also include a tour of the seminary, gatherings with the seminarians, and witness talks.

There is no tuition for this “Come and See” Retreat of Discovery. The retreat, meals, and lodging are free. The application deadline is October 13, 2021. For more information and to apply, please see the seminary’s website [www.bcs.edu](http://www.bcs.edu). Only those who are fully COVID vaccinated will be permitted to register this year.

The Byzantine Catholic Seminary is 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 graduate degrees by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and accredited by the Commission on Accrediting of the Association of Theological Schools. The Seminary operates as a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization incorporated in Pennsylvania and is governed by a Board of Directors under the leadership of the Metropolitan Archbishop of Pittsburgh.

## PRIESTLY REFLECTIONS

Father Paul Varchola West



Back in July, I was afforded the opportunity to do something I haven’t been able to do in over five years. Believe it or not, we were able to go on a legitimate, for real, true-to-reality, family vacation! The four of us packed into the car, fishing gear and junk food in tow, and headed to the mountain lake that I’ve written about before to meet my parents for an entire week’s respite spent among God’s grandeur. I could muse for hours about how wonderful this trip was, and how very much needed it was, not only for my own mental and spiritual health, as well as for our entire family, but, alas, I will not. While we were on this trip, I learned a very valuable spiritual lesson from one of the least likely of occurrences.

About four days into the trip, we all took a break from fishing to go swimming in the lake (you know you are vacationing right when you need a break from fishing!). My dad stayed on the dock, presumably to take pictures. As he sat down and slid comfortably into one of the weather-worn Adirondack chairs, we heard that dreaded sound—“bloop.” My mom’s phone was in his pocket and

had fallen out, right through the slats in the dock and directly into the water. Immediately, my dad’s face dropped, and he turned as white as a sheet. I jumped out of the water onto the dock to be at his side for no other reason than to stand next to him as we stared into the black abyss of this pristine mountain lake. What else could we do?

My mom, quiet as usual, just kept saying to my dad, “It’s OK. It’s just a phone. It’s just pictures.” My dad was clearly beating himself up over this. Meanwhile, my wife sprang into action. I looked over and there she was, decked out in my mom’s water shoes, a child’s swimming mask, and a fishing net... off the dock and into the lake she jumped! I would say this image surprised me, but it doesn’t. That’s her, the woman I married, always ready to take on the world! I will forever hold that ridiculous image of her lovingly in my heart.

Anyway, she dives in and starts looking around. She cannot see a thing. So, she starts scooping. The first scoop

### “FISHING FOR A MIRACLE”

brought with it all the muck one would think would be at the bottom of a lake, plus the smell to go along with it. With each scoop, the death and decay of the cycle of life was brought from the depths but yielded little more than the reminder that we were engaging in a nearly impossible task.

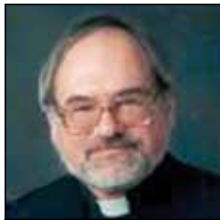
At a loss for what to do, I simply stood there watching and thinking, “Wow... she’s braver than I am!”

Then, on scoop number four, without so much as an old fishing hook being stuck in the muck, I desperately turned toward the beautiful blue sky punctuated with the austere shading of silvery-white clouds, saying to myself, “Come on, Saint Anthony...” As the words finished passing through my mind, my wife jumped out of the water and exclaimed, “I GOT IT!!!”

Well...that was fast! *Thank you, Saint Anthony!*

In disbelief, with the dock swaying from everyone jumping with excitement, I pulled the phone out of the sack full of decaying matter it now called home, and lo and behold, it was still functioning.

There are times, undoubtedly, when our faith-life might very well seem like that phone; buried among the sludge and decay of this world simply waiting to be found. In order to rescue our faith from loss and utter ruin, there are times where all one can do is suit up, brave the muck, dig, and pray. Eventually, through effort and prayer, we too can exclaim with the joy of a renewed sense of faith. This joy, however, is not the joy of a rescued phone, but rather, it is the joy of the Resurrection and a renewed life in Christ, Jesus. The trick is, when a part of us is lost, we *must* go looking for it. Thankfully, we are not alone in the search. We *must* rely on the Church, the saints, and one another so that, even in the murkiest waters of life, the Light of Christ will never cease. **ECL**



# THE BYZANTINE LITURGY

By Archpriest David Petras, SEOD

## THE ANAPHORA: HUMAN SOLIDARITY

The Anaphora, the “Prayer of Offering,” which is also called the Eucharistic Prayer, the “Prayer of Thanksgiving” by the Western Church, is the center of our worship at the Divine Liturgy. In this prayer, we recall the wondrous works of salvation that God has done for us, all of which come together in the Mystical Supper – the last supper that our Lord had with His followers. In this supper, He joined the sacrifice of love on the Cross and His resurrection, that we might have life in fullness, with a ritual meal making Himself ever present and enable us to unite with Him in His ultimate act of salvation, as we “offer to You Yours of Your own.” The Son of God is with us physically in the bread and wine transformed into His body and blood, so that the promise of the incarnation – the birth of Immanuel, “God is with us” – is fulfilled in the assembly of the Church, the “synaxis,” the “gathering together,” as the community of faith, making all of God’s love active – uniting us, transforming us, giving us life, making us like God by offering our lives for one another.

In the Anaphora, God is present among us who “mystically represent the Cherubim,” and proclaim His holiness. A very early Father of the Church, Saint Irenaeus, explained, “For as the bread, which is produced from the earth,

when it receives the invocation of God, is no longer common bread, but the Eucharist, consisting of two realities, earthly and heavenly; so also, our bodies, when they receive the Eucharist, are no longer corruptible, having the hope of the resurrection to eternity.” It is clear, then, that when we have prayed the Anaphora, the next step is obvious, we must partake of these heavenly realities, we must share in the Body and Blood of Christ in a holy union that, as the priest says when distributing Communion, forgives us our sins and brings us into life everlasting. This is true human solidarity, for we are made one in Christ, as Saint Paul wrote, “The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because the loaf of bread is one, we, though many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.” (1 Corinthians 10:16-17).

Between the consecration of the offering and our reception of it in Holy Communion, we express our human solidarity in praying for one another. By prayer we are led into a spiritual union with one another in which we become aware of the needs of each and ask God that we might become the people that God has created us to be, and that we might fulfill our human

existence in God’s grace and in God’s blessing. In the Anaphora of Saint John Chrysostom, this is done in a simpler way. We pray specifically for the church authorities, the civil authorities and for those who live a monastic life, all so that “we may lead a calm and quiet life in all piety and holiness.” (1 Timothy 2:2) Then, after we pray for the church authorities by name, we add two petitions from the Litany of Peace for every city or community, and for those who travel, for those who are sick or suffering and for those who are deprived of freedom in captivity. There is then a third petition from a litany of mercy. We pray for those who bring offerings (bread for the Liturgy, from the Rite of Preparation) and perform good deeds (from the Liturgy of Fervent Supplication) and for those who remember the poor. It was a common practice at Liturgies to not only celebrate the banquet of our Lord, but to offer food and alms for those who were poor. Therefore, we see clearly here the Christian option for those who are deprived and underprivileged.

The remembrance of community needs is much more extensive in the Anaphora of Saint Basil. One of the reasons for this is that in the early centuries of the church the Anaphora of Saint Basil was the ordinary Sunday prayer of the community. As this was the main gathering of all the people, their very many needs became the subject of prayer. As in the Anaphora of Saint John Chrysostom, we pray for those who bring offerings, serve in the church, and remember the poor. We ask that they receive in return “rich and heavenly gifts.” We pray for deliverance from troubles beyond our power – “plague, famine, earthquake (Constantinople is in an earthquake zone), flood, fire, violence, foreign invasion and civil war.” We pray for the needs of all – families, the youth, the

aged, the weak and the homeless, and then for those possessed, for travelers, widows, orphans, captives, the sick, the captive, and anyone in need or distress. This request is made universal: “You know each of them and their requests, each home and its needs.” We pray for God’s grace and assistance in what we can affect by our behavior: “preserve the virtuous in Your virtue and, in Your kindness, make those who are evil good.”

In the second part of our petitions, we also pray for the environment, “Grant us a healthful and agreeable climate and gentle showers upon the earth that it may be fruitful, and crown the cycle of the seasons with Your kindness” (a phrase borrowed from Psalm 64). This part of the prayer is long because we struggle to remember the needs of all people and declare explicitly, “O God, remember those who we have not remembered whether through ignorance or forgetfulness or multitude of names, for You know the age and name of each, You know each of them even from their mother’s womb.” As Christians, we are asked to love all, even our enemies, and so we pray for “those who love us and for those who hate us.” Because God “knows each (person) and their requests, each home and its needs,” we beg him to “be all things to all people.” Indeed, this whole prayer challenges us also to be like God, to be merciful and loving to all, and to imitate Saint Paul, who said, “To the weak I became weak, to win over the weak. I have become all things to all, to save at least some.” (1 Corinthians 9:22) **ECL**

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## SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

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

### CHRIST, THE LOVER OF MANKIND

*F*ilanthropia (from which we get the English “philanthropy”) was a virtue associated with rulers in the ancient Greek world. Through building projects, public works, and beneficial laws, kings and rulers showed their benevolence. Such a ruler might be called “*filanthropos*”—a friend or lover of mankind (at least of the people under their rule).

That same concept appears again and again in every liturgical service of the Byzantine Church (in our current translation it’s hiding behind phrases like “loves us all”). God is the benefactor who built a beautiful world and provides all of its creatures with a habitat, food and a purpose (Psalm 104). God is the wise lawgiver of Sinai (Exodus 20ff). God continues to provide and to intervene for individuals and for His people Israel throughout the pages of the Old Testament. Nevertheless, the Byzantine Tradition usually points to something else when speaking of God’s love for mankind.

As common as the notion of God’s love for mankind is in our Liturgy, the actual Greek term occurs only twice in the whole Bible, once in the Old Testament

and once in the New.

In the Wisdom of Solomon, God’s Wisdom is described in twenty-one qualities, one of which is *filanthropos* (Wisdom 7:23; the adjective form of the noun *filanthropia*). This Wisdom, which is understood to be pure spirit, becomes embodied in the person of Solomon (Wisdom 7:7; 8:19-21).

Saint Paul wrote from prison to Titus, the first bishop of Crete: “But when God our Savior’s kindness and love for mankind (*filanthropia*) appeared... according to His mercy He saved us through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior” (Titus 3:4-6). Notice, first of all, that we experience God’s love for us through the sacraments. Notice too that all three persons of the Holy Trinity are involved.

Nevertheless, our liturgy consistently credits *filanthropia* to the Son of God, Jesus Christ (whom Paul also emphasized by naming Him last and out of order). The “Wisdom” that the Old Testament merely personified as phil-

anthropic is clearly revealed in the New Testament as a divine Person: The Son of God: “Christ, the Power of God and the Wisdom of God” (1 Corinthians 1:24). But notice where exactly Saint Paul finds God’s philanthropic Wisdom most clearly: in the Cross (1 Corinthians 1:18-25)!

God’s love for mankind takes flesh in Jesus Christ: “God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son” (John 3:16). Saint Paul describes this gift from the Son’s point of view: “Although He was in the form of God, He did not deem equality with God something to be tenaciously held. Rather, He emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient even to death, death on the cross” (Philippians 2:5-8). This is the extent of God’s philanthropy: “Greater love than this no man has than to lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13).

All this is totally contrary to the wisdom of the world, which says “save yourself” (Mark 8:35-36) and “lord it over others” (Matthew 20:25). Saint Paul sees here “the mystery which from the be-

ginning of the ages has been hidden in God, who created all things through Jesus Christ so that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the Church . . . according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Ephesians 3:9-11).

From our point of view, the mystery is this: It’s obvious that we should love God—He possesses everything we need and want. But why should He love us? He has put something lovable in us: His own image and likeness (Genesis 1:27). The Incarnation proves that this image is never so tarnished or distorted that God will not desire to redeem and restore it. We might think of a king who remains concerned for his image, stamped on the coins he issues. But God’s love for mankind has little in common with even the most benevolent human despot. The mystery of God’s love for mankind shines brightest in the dark hour of the Cross, and God is never more powerful than when His Son comes among us as a servant (Matthew 20:28; Mark 10:45; Luke 22:27; John 13:1-17). **ECL**



Icon of the Nativity of the Theotokos

**W**e are living in fearful times. You may have heard that the Bible tells us not to be afraid, to “fear not!” about three hundred sixty-five times, once for every day of the year. That isn’t true, but the idea is a good one. In the Bible, God does, in fact, urge us many times not to be afraid. The Fathers and the great saints also tell us not to fear. If you watch enough news on television or the internet, you are sure to be afraid about something. But if you keep your eyes on Jesus and meditate on the Word of God, you can overcome fear and anxiety.

About a million things are going on in the world today that provoke anxiety, fear, and dread. We have fears about our health, finances, jobs, parents or children, our parish, and our future. Many of us have a real fear of dying,

even though we shouldn’t in the light of the Faith we profess. Maybe we have to deal with difficult people, or we are just anxious about the possibility of facing rejection, ridicule, and mockery from people who disagree with us. Our fears play on us at night and rob us of sleep. Fear interrupts our attempts to pray and read. Fear distracts us in church during the Divine Liturgy and other services.

One way to deal with fear, in light of recent discoveries in cognitive-behavioral psychology and the ancient ways of the Desert Fathers, is to meditate on the Word of God. With phrases and passages from the scriptures and saints, we can wage “noetic warfare” (from the Greek word *nous* meaning mind, i.e., mental warfare) against the thought-attacks of the enemy. The devil attempts to implant fearful thoughts. Here are some verses and quotations worth writing down, memorizing, and mulling over when fear comes knocking.

The Psalms dispel fear. “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me” (Ps. 23:4). “I sought the LORD, and He answered me and deliv-

ered me from all my fears” (Ps. 34:4). “The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?” (Ps. 27:1). “The LORD is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me?” (Ps. 118:6). See all of Psalm 91.

Our Lord tells us, “Do not be anxious about your life” (Mt. 6:25), “do not be anxious about tomorrow” (Mt. 6:34). Of persecutors, He says, “have no fear of them” (Mt. 10:26), and “do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul” (Mt. 10:28). “Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom” (Lk. 12:32). “Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid” (Jn. 14:27). “Do not fear, only believe” (Mk. 5:36).

Saint Paul tells Timothy: “God did not give us a spirit of fear but a spirit of power and love and self-control” (2 Tim. 1:7). To the Philippians, Saint Paul writes: “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpass-

es all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:6-7). Saint Peter tells us to “Cast all your anxieties on Him, for He cares about you” (1 Pt. 5:7).

Saint John Chrysostom says, “Let us not, therefore, be anxious, for we shall gain nothing by it, and only torment ourselves.” In the *Philokalia*, Saint Hesychios the Priest advises, “Let your soul, then, trust in Christ, let it call on Him and never fear; for it fights, not alone, but with the aid of a mighty King, Jesus Christ, Creator of all that is, both bodiless and embodied, visible and invisible.”

The next time all those fears and anxieties crowd into your mind, fight! Look to Jesus, “the author and perfecter of our faith” (Heb. 12:2), and “meditate on the law of the Lord day and night” (Ps. 1:2) by mulling over the scriptures and teachings of the Fathers and saints. May the presence of Jesus and the power of His Word free us from all fear. Fear not! **ECL**

## SCHOOL OF PRAYER

Father G. Scott Boghossian



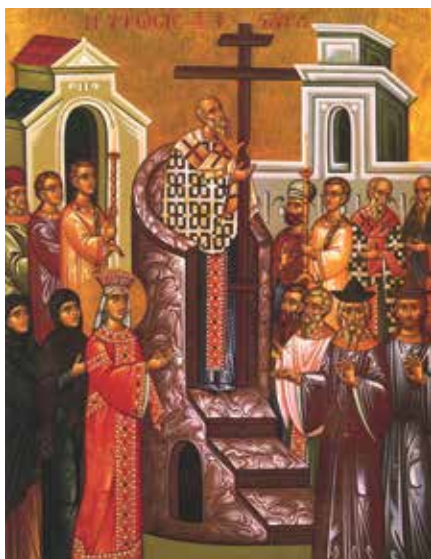
### FEAR NOT!

# SEASONAL REFLECTIONS

Father Ronald Hatton



## THE POWER OF THE LIFE-GIVING CROSS



Icon of the Elevation of the Cross

In September of 2003, I was stationed at our parish in Williamsburg, VA. Our annual priest retreat was taking place at San Alfonso Retreat Center at the Jersey Shore, as usual, but the threat of Hurricane Isabel was greatly on my mind. The hurricane was heading for the Tidewater, VA, area, and threatened that area, changing constantly from a Category 4 to 5, then back again, as it headed our way. I had my Dachshund boarded at the veterinary clinic down the street, and I was imagining what would happen if the hurricane hit and no one was there to look after the boarded animals. Needless to say, my mind was *not* on the retreat that year!

I called one of my parishioners, who was a captain in the US Coast Guard, to get any information on what was going to happen back home. He quite succinctly told me if I didn't leave by Wednesday, not to come home until at least Friday. As "captain" of our "ship,"

I felt that I should be back in Williamsburg when we got hit—not that there was anything I could do except have my dog with me! So, Wednesday, September 17, I headed from the safety of the retreat center to brave the storm at home. I got my dog back home with me, and I awaited whatever was to come.

For more background, the subdivision where our parish rectory is located is called Baron Woods, and true to its name, it was lots cut out of a forest of Loblolly Pines. These pines have a shallow root base apparently, and we had a history of whole trees just falling over, roots and all, so it was a tense time when the Isabel finally hit our area. Since (as you may have guessed!) we were still in the time of the Feast of the Exaltation of the Precious Cross of the Lord, and since we often refer to it as the Tree of the Cross, or speak of the Wood of the Cross, it felt natural, as long as I had light to see, that I take down my Book of Akathists and pray the Akathist to The Cross. Isabel came through as a Category 2 storm, but that was enough to make for a harrowing night.

The next morning, I went out to see the results of the storm. Most of the houses had trees down. The house across the street had been hit and moved off its foundation. Parishioners down the street had a tree fall right across a practically-new car. Trees had fallen in the streets. Our little subdivision was devastated, yet not one tree on our property came down!

As I wandered around, talking to folks and assessing the damage, one neigh-

bor asked me how I could be so lucky as to not have a single tree fall. I simply said, "I don't know what you were doing, but I was praying!"

Two things can be taken out of this story, as we once again enter the time of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross: one, that prayer *does* work; two, that even though praying before a crucifix, or even more, to pray *to* the Cross, may feel like a superstitious act in this day and time, there is power in it. Yes, there is that tendency to anthropomorphize the Cross by "speaking" to it, but we must realize the power of the Tree of Life that bore on its branches the Author of Life, Who was crucified on it to destroy Death and to grant us everlasting life.

Some hymns from the Matins of the Feast:

*Formerly, the tree in Paradise made me naked. In the temptation, the enemy brought death. He, the Tree of Life, Who became man and lived on earth, carried the Cross. Now the whole world is full of joy. Seeing the Cross raised up to God in faith, O people, let us cry aloud: Your Church is full of glory!*

*O famous Wood, you are blessed in song for being the Cross on which Christ was crucified. The fiery revolving sword by which Eden was guarded feared you, [cf. Gen. 3:22-24] and the awesome Cherubim bowed down to Christ Who was crucified upon you in the flesh. Through this mystery, peace has been granted to our souls.*

And, finally:

*Let all the trees of the forest exult, for they are made holy by Christ Who planted them in the beginning and Who was stretched out upon the Tree. On this day of its exaltation, we worship Him and extol you, O Cross.*

Kind of wants you to pray the Matins, doesn't it?

Our liturgical life is so rich in the Eastern Church, and so much has fallen by the wayside as time has gone on. But we still have such feast days as the Exaltation of the Precious Cross to remind us of God's love and care for us. We are constantly reminded of all that has been done for us by Him that the chains of Death be loosened and that we attain everlasting life with Him.

May we ever stand in the shadow of the Tree of the Cross, looking upon Him Who died there for our salvation. May we always wear that Symbol of Symbols, around our necks, on our clothing, on our chotki and rosaries. May we never be ashamed of the Cross, or ashamed to venerate it with our kisses. May we always make the Sign of the Cross on ourselves, on our children.

"The Cross is the guardian of the universe; the Cross is the beauty of the Church. It is the power of kings, and it sustains the strength of our faith. It is the glory of the angels and the slayer of demons." **ECL**

## INFERTILITY MINISTRY COMPETING AS CATHOLIC INNOVATORS

Springs in the Desert is a Catholic community formed to accompany those carrying the cross of infertility and loss, to discover how God is transforming this desert path into fruitfulness. Now, this apostolate is competing in Our Sunday Visitor Institute's OSV Challenge 2021 for Catholic innovators. Founded by Kimberly Henkel, PhD, and Ann Koshute, MTS (parishioner of Saint Ann Byzantine Catholic Church in Harrisburg, PA) Springs in the Desert offers resources, support and accompaniment for women and couples experiencing the isolation and unique suffering of infertility. They entered the OSV Challenge as a way to benefit from the business mentoring offered, as well as the prize money awarded to semi-finalists and winners of the Challenge. Six hundred-fifty ministries applied to the Challenge, and one hundred-eighty two made it to the second round. Now Springs in the Desert joins just twenty-four other ministries to move on to the semifinal round. "We are humbled and honored to be among

such innovative and beautiful ministries, all working to serve others and build up the Kingdom," said Ann Koshute. "As semi-finalists we will receive \$10,000 to fortify our programs and provide even more resources and support to women and couples." The Springs in the Desert Team will also enter a six-week accelerator program where they will receive mentoring to hone their business model, and spiritual formation. If they reach the finals they will be among eleven other ministries to pitch their programs at a showcase in Houston, TX, this September. Finalists will compete for one of three grand prizes of \$100,000 and a year of coaching. We pray for their success in the Challenge and that God will bless their ministry! Springs in the Desert is served by their Spiritual Father, Father Paul Varchola West, Administrator of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Byzantine Catholic Church, Levittown, PA. Find out more at [www.springsinthedesert.org](http://www.springsinthedesert.org)

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Miami, FL 33179-5162  
1-305-651-0991

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**Saints Cyril and Methodius**  
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Fort Pierce, FL 34982  
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**Our Lady of the Sign**  
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**Saint Nicholas of Myra**  
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Saint Petersburg, FL 33713  
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Address: 625 W. Lady Lake Blvd.  
Lady Lake, FL 32159 (at St. Alban's)  
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Below is a list of many of the Parishes of the Eparchy of Passaic which are Live streaming Divine Liturgy on Saturday, Sunday, and Holy Days. You may access the links to their streaming sites (Facebook, Youtube, etc.) on our website: [www.eparchyofpassaic.com](http://www.eparchyofpassaic.com).

CONNECTICUT

Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church—Danbury, CT  
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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 Catholic Church—Mont Clare, PA  
 Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church—Wilkes-Barre, PA  
 Saint Mary Pokrova Byzantine Catholic Church—Kingston, PA

Saint John Byzantine Church—Wilkes-Barre Twp., 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

# SLAVONIC FESTIVAL

## AT RAHWAY'S

# ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE

Set to Resume This September—By David Brighthouse

Parishioners at Saint Thomas the Apostle Byzantine Catholic Church in Rahway couldn't be readier to resume their regular seasonal events and routine activities after a year and a half that has been anything but regular or routine. Along with everything else beginning to pick up again—well-attended liturgies being, of course, the most important—preparations are already underway for Saint Thomas's much-anticipated Slavonic Festival, scheduled to take place for two days, Friday and Saturday, September 24-25.

The Slavonic Festival has been an annual and beloved affair for over 30 years now at Saint Thomas. Featuring live, traditional Eastern European music, games for all ages, raffles, church tours, and ethnic foods such as pirohi, haluski, halupki, potato pancakes, beef goulash, desserts, and more, the festival is an opportunity to celebrate community and fellowship and to share with neighbors and friends the faith and culture of Byzantine Catholics.

Join us this September at Saint Thomas Byzantine Catholic Church at 1407 Saint Georges Ave., Rahway, NJ 07065. Stay connected with us by visiting our website: <https://saintthomastheapostle.org/> and checking out our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/saintthomastheapostlebyz>

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

## UPCOMING EPARCHIAL AND PARISH EVENTS

Eastern Catholic Life

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SEPTEMBER, 2021

- 5 Annual Uniontown Pilgrimage  
*Uniontown, PA*
- 6 Labor Day  
*Civic holiday \* Chancery closed*
- 8 Nativity of the Virgin Theotokos  
*Solemn Holy Day*
- 14 Exaltation of the Holy Cross  
*Solemn Holy Day*
- 26 Wedding Jubilarians' celebration with Bishop Kurt (2020 and 2021)  
*Saint Mary Parish, Hillsborough, NJ, 3 PM*
- 27-30 Eparchial priests' retreat  
*San Alfonso Retreat Center, Long Branch, NJ*

OCTOBER, 2021

- 1 Holy Protection of the Theotokos  
*Solemn Holy Day \* Chancery closed*

- 11 Columbus 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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