



EASTERN CATHOLIC LIFE

Official Publication of the Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Passaic

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CHRIST IS RISEN! INDEED HE IS RISEN!

BISHOP KURT'S PASCHAL MESSAGE

The Myrrh-Bearing Women: Trying to Bury Jesus



Icon of the Descent Into Hades

A number of years ago, at least twenty, I was living in a city with one of the world's great bookstores. When I moved there, I couldn't understand why people all told me about the bookstore until I visited it myself. It was five stories high and took up a city block, and that building did not include all the math, science, and technology books. During this time, I decided to read *The City of God* by Saint Augustine. The history of that book is fascinating in itself. The Roman Empire was collapsing – the empire that brought peace and stability to a large part of the world for centuries. Europe, Asia Minor, and North Africa were united by a system of transportation and laws into a single economy. When this empire collapsed and the barbarian invaders inexorably advanced through it, it is difficult for us to imagine the terror ordinary people

felt, people like us who had not had to defend themselves against invaders for centuries. For example, the barbarians demanded that you hand over your treasure. If you said you didn't have one, they assumed that you buried it, so they tortured you until you told them where it was. If you truly didn't have a treasure buried, too bad for you. At the time that Saint Augustine wrote, the barbarians had crossed into North Africa, where he lived, and were slowly advancing east. During this time of terror, the pagans who remained began to blame the Christians for the fall of the empire, claiming that Rome collapsed because they stopped worshipping the old gods. Christian leaders asked Augustine to answer this contemporary challenge to Christian theology, and the Bishop of Hippo took up the challenge. Although the very long treatise

begins with a simple refutation of the patently absurd theology of the syncretic pagan religion of ancient Rome, once he got started, he began to write richly and extensively about most questions of faith and its relationship to the world, government, politics, and so on.

When I began to read *The City of God*, it was humbling in the extreme. Saint Augustine made many references to the history of Rome and to pagan mythology to make his case. I thought I was educated in these subjects, but I had no idea what he was talking about most of the time—not an inkling. Even the stories about the founding of Rome, which I thought I learned in Latin class, were *terra incognita* for me. So I put down *The City of God* and began to read Roman history so I could have some idea of what Saint Augustine was talking about. I decided to start with a writer named Livy, who wrote a complete history of Rome from the beginning up until about the time of Christ. He had access to records, archives, and other authors' histories that we no longer have. His history is remarkably readable because he tells each era and major events in terms of very human stories of the people who made the history. It took me a few years just to get up through Hannibal. I was saddened to learn that there are large gaps in what we have left from Livy. In fact, there were many comprehensive ancient histories that either no longer exist or are missing large sections. We know they existed because of ancient references to them. Trying to read all of the ancient histories left by the Greeks and Romans is the task of lifetime. Since moving to New Jersey, I spend a lot of time on the road, and I have tried to continue my education by listening to ancient histories in my car, for example, I was finally able to “read” Tacitus by listening to audio books in my car. I think the most fascinating thing I learned from Livy, in the big picture, was how similar the Roman Republic was to our own American Republic. I guess human nature never changes.

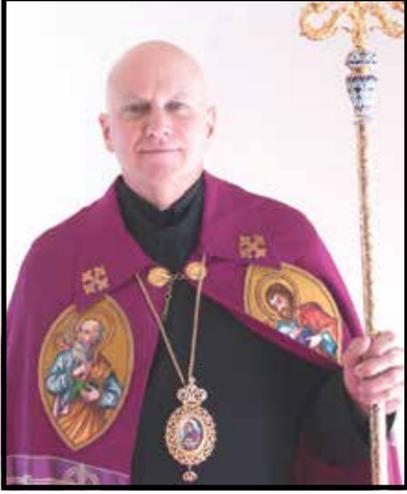
I learned two major points from reading vast amounts of ancient history. The first thing I learned was how utterly

brutal people were! When people imagine that the pre-Christian world was a world of beauty and brotherly love, they could not be more wrong. People were not just savage to others; they were savage to their closest relatives. A few pages of Greek history, as opposed to philosophy or poetry, would open anyone's eyes—wide open! It was the same with the Romans, even after more than three quarters of a millennium of “civilization”. The descriptions of what happened to a city that fell during the “year of three caesars” would give anyone nightmares, and these are Romans mistreating other Romans. I believe everyone should read ancient history, just so that they can see how much the world was changed by the teachings of Jesus Christ and the rise of the Christian civilization.

The second point that I learned, which was a surprise to me, is how much of “history” is not very well-known. I certainly believed that the Roman emperors were well-documented. Indeed, we know they existed often from coins and building inscriptions. However, it is interesting to learn that there are some lengthy periods of time where there is only one surviving source that tells us about some emperors, and most historians agree that that one source is not very trustworthy.

Most educated people today believe that the history of people like Roman emperors are well documented, but that the life of Jesus Christ is something we can choose to believe or not. These widespread opinions are not based on education at all, but rumors and slogans. The fact is that the life of Jesus Christ is better documented in the New Testament than many of the lives of people considered historical figures, even men who ruled enormous territories. When it comes to the life of Jesus Christ, we have four biographies written soon after His earthly life, and many other written documents written by people who knew Him or knew the thousands of eyewitnesses—in total twenty seven documents by a variety of writers—some writers were highly educated and some writers were *ordinary Joes*. All of the writers were from the community that witnessed the life of Jesus firsthand, and were so convinced of what they saw that they were willing to die rather than deny what they saw. Not only do we have

continued on page 2



I LIFT UP MY EYES

Pastoral Reflections of Bishop Kurt



THE MYRRH-BEARING WOMEN: TRYING TO BURY JESUS...continued from page 1

cated Sunday is the second Sunday after Easter. That is probably because they are already mentioned on Easter itself, and then the incident in which Jesus presents Himself to Thomas is specifically described as being one week later in the Gospel of Saint John.

There are some important things we learn from the accounts of these myrrh-bearing women. One thing we learn is that the first witnesses of the Resurrection were women, just as the only people who stayed with Jesus during his crucifixion were women and one young man, perhaps too young to realize the risk. It was women who took care of the needs of Jesus throughout His public life. It was women who stood by the cross. And it was women who remained faithful even after His death and prepared His body for burial. It was women who returned to the tomb on the third day to show compassion and respect for the body after all the authorities had treated Him shamefully.

Something else we learn from these women is this: while doing service, they learned about the Resurrection. The scripture scholars who should have expected the Resurrection were not there. Neither were the men who had been given power by Jesus to heal the sick and cast out demons, the men who witnessed Jesus walk on water and feed the crowds and who saw the Transfiguration. Neither power nor learning brought men to the empty tomb. It was service that brought these women, the first witnesses, to the empty tomb. Not only was it service, but service to a man who was outcast from society and in no wise respected anymore. When Jesus fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, "He was despised and rejected, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," the women in their compassion for the corpse of a condemned man found the portal to the divine, the gateway to eternal life. The women were still the companions of Our Lord in His conquest of sin and death, just as they were his companions during His earthly journeys. Having found Jesus, they went to bring the others to Him.

You might say that the ones who stayed faithful to Jesus until His last breath tried to bury him. Even on the third day, though He told them He would rise on the third day, they went to the tomb to complete the work of burying Him. Today, our culture tries to bury Jesus. Despite the extensive documentation, the world tries to cover history with a burial shroud and roll a rock over the entrance to eternal life. It is up to us to go to the scriptures ourselves, not to take the word of a world that turns its face away from the evidence. It is up to us to find the Resurrection in service to the outcast and disgraced and, after we meet Jesus in the garden of the Holy Sepulcher, to tell others what we saw.

As our sublime hymns from Matins say, "When the tomb was shown to be open and Hades whimpering, Mary Magdalene told the apostles who were hiding: Come forth, workers of the vineyard, and proclaim the news of the Resurrection, for the Lord is risen, granting great mercy to the world."

+Kurt Burnett

twenty-seven such documents, but we have thousands of copies made not too long after they were written. When I say the copies were made "not long after they were written", I mean in comparison to other ancient documents that we call "history". In fact, we have more than the twenty-seven different documents in the New Testament. There are also documents from the first century that the Church considered good, but which were not included in the New Testament. There were also documents that the Church rejected as misleading or false. No doubt they were misleading or false, but they still bear witness to the life of Jesus. None of these other documents suggest he didn't exist. Furthermore, the rejected documents show that the first Christians were not gullible, but extremely critical and careful to guard the authentic eyewitness testimony from adulteration or hijacking.

In the four different Gospel accounts of the life of Jesus Christ, there are some things that are remarkably different. Well, isn't that the mark of eyewitness testimony? If they were fabrications, the fraudsters would have made sure to get their story straight. It says a lot that the earliest Church preserved the writings of those they knew to be the best sources without trying to tamper with the testimony to make it consistent. Sometimes, even in just one Gospel, there seem to be different testimonies compiled, a true sign of historical testimony. There are also things that all four Gospel writers included. Those details must have been considered especially important to the first believers. The feeding of the huge crowds with a few loaves and fishes is recorded in all four Gospels. The Last Supper is recorded in all four Gospels. The betrayal and execution are recorded in all four. And most important of all, the Resurrection on the third day is recorded in all four Gospels. It is the Resurrection that finds the most varied stories in the four Gospels. In my opinion, these variations show how important it was for the early Church to preserve the recollections of eyewitnesses, even when they disagreed on details.

When the space shuttle exploded in the 1980's, there was a psychologist who was studying memory. He interviewed a large number of people about their experience of the event soon after it happened. He interviewed the same people six months later. Their recollections were astonishingly different. After six months, one college student said he was at home with his parents when

he saw it on television, but he was actually at school hundreds of miles away watching it with his roommate. However, none of this testimony said that the space shuttle didn't blow up. They all agreed on the most important fact even after six months or ten years.

When the executed body of Our Lord was placed in the rock tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, a tomb in which no corpse had yet been laid, the basic facts were recorded in all four Gospels, even the name of the owner of the tomb. By the time that the Gospel of Saint John was written, there must have already

after sundown on Saturday, the seventh day of the week. So early on Sunday morning, the first day of the week, they set out for the tomb of Jesus and became some of the most important witnesses of the Resurrection and also the first witnesses. Saint Paul calls Saint Peter (or *Kephas*, meaning "the Rock") the first witness of the Resurrection. But Saint Paul must have meant this in some theological sense, because the eyewitnesses, such as Saint John, tell us that he and Peter only ran to the tomb after Mary Magdalene came to them with the story that the tomb was empty. Saint John tells us that he got to the



Icon of the Myrrh-Bearing Women

been people spreading false stories, and so it even includes a medical description of the piercing with the lance, and the statement, "this testimony was given by an eyewitness, and his testimony is true." Saint John desired that we know with certainty that Jesus really was executed, and He really rose from the dead. It even says further on, this eyewitness testimony was recorded so that you might believe.

Another historical event that is recorded in all four Gospels is that some women made arrangements to care for the body of Jesus with spices and ointments. They were unable to give Jesus a suitable burial on Friday afternoon because the Sabbath began at sundown on Friday evening, just as it does two thousand years later. They honored the Sabbath and were able to buy their supplies

tomb first, because he was a young man and outran the older Saint Peter, but that he waited to go in until Peter arrived. They were astonished to find the body missing; the burial shroud folded up; and the cloth for covering the face folded up separately. By the way, I think this is one of those examples of how an eyewitness would record history. Who else would bother to tell us how the cloths were folded except an eyewitness? Who else would care?

In our tradition, we call these wonderful women "the myrrh-bearing women". There seem to be eight of them mentioned in the different accounts of the Resurrection. One of our Sundays is dedicated to their memory and to one of the Gospel accounts of their special witness. Although they are the first witnesses of the Resurrection, their dedi-

IN BLESSED REPOSE: +FATHER CHARLES H. BROWN, MD, JD

Langhorne, PA



+Father Charles H. Brown, MD, JD, a retired priest of the Eparchy of Passaic, and a resident of Saint Mary's Villa, Langhorne, PA, fell asleep in the Lord on March 27, 2022. Prior to his retirement, he was pastor of Holy Trinity Byzantine Catholic Church in Philadelphia, PA.

Father Charles was born in Philadelphia, PA, on December 28, 1929, to Charles H. Brown and Helen Greenan. He was baptized on March 16, 1930, at Saint Rose of Lima Catholic Church in Philadelphia, and was confirmed on March 28, 1943, at Saint Agatha Catholic Church in Philadelphia.

Following graduation from local schools and service in the US Army from 1953-1955, he graduated from Villanova University near Philadelphia in 1957; and from the Hahnemann Medical School in Philadelphia in 1961. He was certified by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology. He also earned a JD degree in Law from Boston University in Boston, MA, in 1974 and was a member of the Massachusetts Bar.

Some of the positions he held during the course of his professional career included: staff physician at United Mine Workers Memorial Hospital, Turkey Creek, KY; ship's surgeon at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute in MA; staff psychiatrist at the VA Outpatient Clinic, Boston, MA; interim chief medical officer with the Veterans Administration Psychiatry Service; and chief medical officer at the VA Sub Clinic in New Bedford, MA.

Discerning a call to the priesthood, Dr. Brown studied theology at The Pontifical University Saint Thomas Aquinas (The *Angelicum*), Rome, Italy, where he was in residence at the *Collegio Russo (Russicum)*. He received Clerical Tonsure as well as the Sacred Orders of Sub-Deacon and Deacon on September 14, 1986, at Holy Ghost Byzantine Catholic Church in Philadelphia, PA, by Bishop Michael (Dudick). He was ordained to the Priesthood of Jesus Christ by Bishop Michael on June 21,

1987, at Holy Ghost Byzantine Catholic Church in Philadelphia, PA.

Following ordination, he was assigned as assistant pastor to Father Paul Barnyock at Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church in Perth Amboy, NJ, on July 15, 1987. On August 22, 1988, he was appointed pastor of Holy Wisdom Byzantine Catholic Church in Flanders, NJ. Later, he was appointed pastor of Holy Trinity Byzantine Catholic Church in north Philadelphia, PA, where he remained until his retirement in September 2, 1996.

After his retirement from active parish ministry, he relocated to Puebla, Mexico, where he lived at a local Catholic

parish and practiced counseling services. He also taught classes at a local medical college until 2010. After this, he relocated to Houston, TX, then to Saint Petersburg, FL, and ultimately back to Philadelphia, PA, in August, 2021 for reasons of health.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his sisters: +Helen (Tate); +Mary Jane (Rafferty); and +Sally (Magee). He is survived by his nephew, Dave Rafferty, as well as numerous nieces and nephews, and many friends and family.

"Well done, my good and faithful servant ...Come, share your master's joy!" (Mt 23) *May his memory be eternal!*



Pope Saint John Paul II greeting +Father Charles H. Brown

The Carpathian Cookery cookbook for sale

The Carpathian Cookery cookbook, has entered its 19th printing, having sold over 17,500 copies, is available for sale. This cookbook was requested by the Library of Congress to be in their ethnic cooking collection. The 330-page cookbook has a new look and features a protective plastic cover. The book includes sections on Christmas and Easter customs and recipes, traditional Rusyn and Slavic foods, other ethnic dishes, and many other tried-and-true recipes of Saint John's

parishioners. There is a variety of paska bread and kolachi (filled roll) recipes, as well as meatless dishes and Lenten recipes, suitable for the Great Fast, as well as the Pre-Christmas Fast. The cost of the cookbook is \$14.00 plus \$4.00 postage and handling (\$18.00). If ordering from Canada, please send a \$28.00 U.S. Postal money order payable in U.S. dollars to reflect the difference in the exchange rate and postage cost. To order please send a check or money order to: Ethnic Craft Club, Saint John Byzantine Catholic Church, 201 E. Main Street, Uniontown, PA 15401, or call 724-438-6027 (M-F 9AM-3PM – leave message), for more information. You may contact us at: carpathiancookery@gmail.com.

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All courses are offered as live webinars, free of charge. Register at EasternCatholic.org/Events.



O DEATH WHERE IS THY STING?

The Biblical Roots of the Paschal Homily

Rev. Sebastian Carnazzo, Ph.D.

Wednesday, April 27 @ 8 - 9 p.m. ET

St. John Chrysostom's renowned Paschal homily, proclaimed during the celebration of Pascha each year, helps us grasp the great mystery enunciated when we sing: "Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and to those in the tombs, bestowing life!" Join us as we study the rich Biblical background of this powerful text.

HEAVEN ON EARTH

The Beauty & Symbolism of the Divine Liturgy

Rev. David Anderson

Wednesdays, May 4 - 18 @ 8 - 9 p.m. ET

When pagans of Kiev entered Hagia Sophia and first experienced the Divine Liturgy, they famously said: "We knew not whether we were in heaven or on earth, for surely there is no such splendor or beauty anywhere on earth." Join us as Fr. David Anderson guides us to understand what the beauty of the Divine Liturgy reveals to us.



Thank You!

At press time, three quarters of a million refugees have arrived in the Eparchy of Uzhorod/Mukachevo in southwest Ukraine. Most of them have traveled on to countries in the European Union, but over two hundred thousand are currently sheltered in Transcarpathia. Our Church is at the forefront of helping these people, mostly women and children who have left their fathers and husbands behind. Many have arrived without even a change of clothes. Bishop Nil Lushchak thanks the generous people who have sent money so far. The Eparchy of Passaic has already sent about \$100,000.00 from its own Bishop's Appeal and from the donations of individuals and organizations. In addition, Archbishop Skurla ordered a collection for the third Sunday of Lent, and that money has not yet been totalled. There is information on the eparchial website if you wish to send money to help. May God bless you abundantly!



LITURGY FOR UKRAINE

by Ellen Jacko, Parishioner Saint Mary, Trenton, NJ

On Thursday, February 24, at 3:59 AM local time, 8:59 PM EST, February 23, Russian forces began their invasion of Ukraine. By 7:00 AM EST, Thursday, Bishop Kurt called Father Yuriy Oros, Administrator of Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church in Trenton, NJ, to promise his prayers and offer support to Father Yuriy, his family, and the many Ukrainian priests and their families who left their homes in Ukraine to assuage the shortage of priests in the Eparchy of Passaic. Soon after, Father Oros began planning a special Divine Liturgy.

On Friday, February 25, at 11:00 AM EST, faithful gathered at Saint Mary Parish for a Divine Liturgy for Peace in Ukraine. More than forty congregants joined eleven priests, including six from Ukraine, two youth altar servers and cantor, Andrew Skitko, to pray for the people of Ukraine.

The main celebrant was Father Taras Lovska, former rector of Blessed Theodore Romzha Greek-Catholic Theolog-

ical Academy of Uzhorod who is currently serving at Saint Ann Byzantine Catholic Church in Harrisburg, PA. In his homily, Father Lovska acknowledged the range of emotions including horror, a desire to “do something,” anger, and fear that so many were feeling. He then noted that it is imperative to follow the path laid out in the Gospel of Christ. He asked people to pray for God’s mercy and His peace as well as for wisdom for world leaders. He also reinforced the necessity to distinguish between “the little man” and the people of Russia.

Saint Mary parish vocation, Father John Zeyack, who served as spiritual father at our seminary in Uzhorod for three years, made closing remarks. He reminded the congregation of the resilience of the Ukrainian people including their determination to practice their faith during the Soviet era. When they achieved democracy thirty years ago, their worship came out of the shadows, churches flourished, and the number of men studying to be priests grew exponentially.

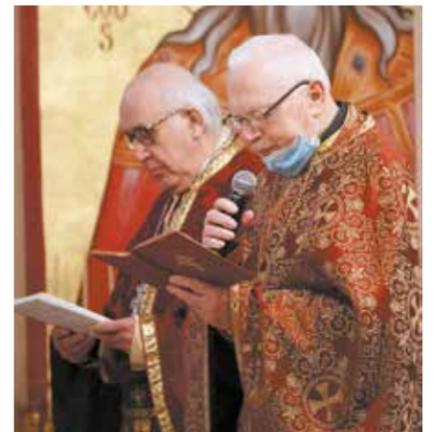
Father Oros thanked the concelebrants: Fathers Vitaliy Pukhayev, Andriy Kovach, Iaroslav Korostil, Mykhaylo Kravchuk, David Baratelli, John Zec, Martin Vavrak, and Fathers Lovska and Zeyack. Father Oros then reminded everyone to pray, speak up, and to help as one can. In that spirit, all knelt and recited the special Prayer for Ukraine and, as they left the church, many with tears in their eyes, the faithful donned blue and yellow ribbons of support that a parishioner made and provided for all.



Father Yuriy Oros



Father Taras Lovska



(l. to. r.) Fathers John Zec and John Zeyack

Walking with Christ: A Desert Pilgrimage



If you struggle with infertility, you may feel like you’re on a lonely, desert pilgrimage. But you are not alone! During the season of Lent, the Springs in the Desert Team invites you to join us as we reflect on those Saints and friends of Christ who walked with Him and witnessed His Passion: from the Blessed Virgin Mary to Mary Magdalene; Simon of Cyrene to Veronica; and the Women of Jerusalem to the Centurion. Each Thursday evening during Lent (from March 10-April 7) we will meet virtually at 8pm Eastern to pray, listen to a brief reflection, and build community through small group sharing. This FREE event for women and couples struggling with infertility is a chance to enter more deeply into the Lenten spirit while gathering in prayer with others on this same path. Visit www.springsinthedesert.org for information and to register. Questions? Email Ann Koshute, ann@springsinthedesert.org



SYNOD 2022

Bishop Kurt has appointed Dr. Joan Grossman, parishioner of Saint Nicholas of Myra Parish, Swoyersville, PA, as our eparchial coordinator for the current synod. A synod is an assembly of bishops and other church officials designed to resolve questions of discipline or to decide an issue of concern. Per the direction of our Holy Father, Pope Francis, he has asked the entire Catholic Church be consulted on the current Synod on Synodality.

Fundamentally, synodality is about journeying together via listening to one another to hear what God is saying

to all of us. It is realizing that the Holy Spirit can speak through anyone to help us walk forward, together on our journey as the People of God. The concept of synodality refers to the involvement and participation of the whole People of God in the life and mission of the Church. This current Synod on Synodality is specific to reaching all of those who have been a part of our church but are no longer active and discerning the future of our church, via an inclusive spirit and way of Jesus.

All parishioners are asked to participate, through listening sessions, which should or may already have taken place

in your parish. This participation is in the form of focused questions you are asked to answer with an open heart so your insight can be heard. The timing is such that this experience should be a part of our Lent journey during The Great Fast. Dr. Grossman prepared an introductory video for this process which can be viewed at: www.eparchyofpassaic.com, under “News and Events”. Again, this request is from our Holy Father and your participation is highly encouraged. Please see your parish priest for further details, if this process has not yet begun within your church.

PRAYER FOR PEACE IN UKRAINE IN ATLANTA, GA

by Michael Laschuk, Parishioner of Epiphany of Our Lord, Roswell, GA



(front left) Father Bohdan Maruszak, Pastor, Saint Andrew Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Cumming, GA, and (front right) Father Volodymyr Petrytsya, Pastor, Mother of God Ukrainian Catholic Church, Conyers, GA. Also pictured: Archbishop Gregory J. Hartmayer, OFM Conv., Archbishop of Atlanta; Bishop Bernard E. Schlesinger, III, Auxiliary Bishop of Atlanta; Father Gerardo Ceballos Gonzalez, priest-secretary to the archbishop, Director of Divine Worship; Father Paul A. Burke, Chairman of Archbishop's Commission for Ecumenism & Interreligious Affairs; Monsignor Edward J. Dillon, Pastor, Holy Spirit Catholic Church, Atlanta, GA; Rabbi Scott Colbert, Rabbi Emeritus, Temple Emanu-El and American Jewish Committee, Atlanta, GA; and Father Lewis M. Rabayda, Parochial Administrator, Epiphany of Our Lord Byzantine Catholic Church, Roswell, GA.

“Blessed are the Peacemakers for they shall be called Children of God”

On Monday, March 28, 2022, the Archdiocese of Atlanta hosted a joint service of prayer for peace in Ukraine for both Ukrainian Orthodox and Catholics, held at Holy Spirit Catholic Church in Atlanta, GA.

Approximately 250 people, including Mike and Irene Laschuk, parishioners of Epiphany of Our Lord Byzantine Catholic Church in Roswell, GA, attended the Moleben. After this, religious leaders from the Atlanta area shared scripture readings, personal stories, and reflections, along with prayers for an end to the war.



The prayer service concluded with the singing of the Ukrainian national anthem.

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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, 11:00AM
HOLIDAYS OF OBLIGATION ON THE HOLYDAY, 12:00 NOON
Served by Father Oleksiy Nebesnyk

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

Location: Christ Lutheran Church 15699 SE 80th Ave, Summerfield, FL 34491
Outreach Contact /Phone: 727-849-1190 email: olexiynebesnyk@gmail.com"

Slavic dinners being planned

MEET, GREET, AND MUNCH FOLLOWING ALL LITURGIES

SCHEDULE FOR THE GREAT FAST 2022

Presanctified Liturgies
Wednesday, April 6, 12 Noon

*FASTING LUNCH (soup/salad/beverage) TO FOLLOW EACH PRESANCTIFIED LITURGY. (Volunteers contact John Chabalko)

*JOURNEY THROUGH THE BIBLE (basics)
35 minute sessions following the Fasting Lunch.
Register before or after Vigil Divine Liturgy.

Priest: Fr. Oleksiy Nebesnyk
Facebook: Byzantine Catholic The Villages FL

SUNDAY VIGIL DIVINE LITURGIES, EVERY SATURDAY, 2:00 P.M.

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
Sunday Divine Liturgy 9:15 AM

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

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

**Patronage at Hagerstown
meeting at:
Saint Ann Catholic Church**

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

Saint Gregory of Nyssa

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

Epiphany Mission

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

**Virginia—
Epiphany of our Lord**

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

Ascension of our Lord

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

Our Lady of Perpetual Help

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

**North Carolina—
Saints Cyril and Methodius**

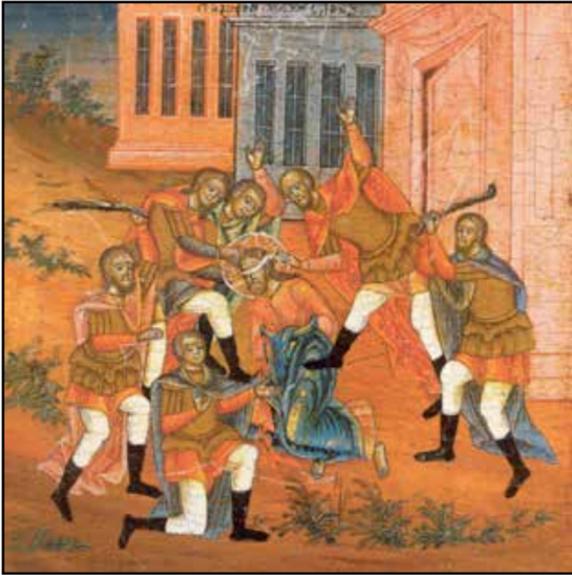
2510 Piney Plains Road
Cary, NC 27518

Phone 919-239-4877
Web www.sscyrilmethodius.org
Sunday Divine Liturgy 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
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.

A JOURNEY FROM HOLY WEEK TO THE RESURRECTION...

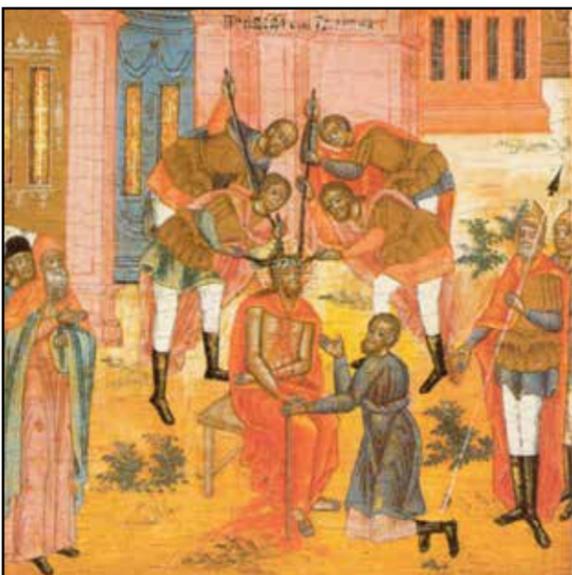


Passion Week or Great Week

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

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

On Holy Thursday, three events are recalled in the liturgy: the institution of the Eucharist, the washing of the feet of the disciples, and the betrayal of Judas. Throughout the liturgy the following idea is repeated over and over again, as expressed in the troparion: "Receive me today, O Son of God, as a partaker of Your Mystical Supper, for I will not reveal the Mystery to Your enemies nor give You a kiss as did Judas, but like the repentant thief I will



confess to You: Remember me, O Lord, in Your kingdom." "Let no one, O believers, fail to join in the Lord's Supper, let no one whatsoever approach the table, like Judas, with deceit."

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

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

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

Good Friday

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

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

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

In the evening, Solemn Vespers are performed. At the end of Vespers, the priest, vested in full priestly vestments, makes a procession around the church

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

As mentioned already, there is no Divine Liturgy on Good Friday. If, however, the feast of the Annunciation should fall on the same day, then the Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom is celebrated before the service just described.

Holy Saturday

Holy Saturday is dedicated to the memory of Our Savior's entombment and to His descent into Hades to save the souls of the just and to open for them

Having suffered for
Jesus Christ,
have mercy

the gates of Heaven. This, too, is a day of mourning. It is numbered among the fast days, although originally in the East, no Saturday was kept as a fast. But the sadness of the day is already lightened by the approaching Resurrection. This anticipation of Christ's victory is already evident in the Liturgy.

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

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

The Resurrection Period

For a long time, by many prayers, liturgical services and ceremonies, the Church has been preparing us for the glorious day of Christ's Resurrection, Pascha. Hoping that during Lent everybody had an opportunity to be cleansed from his personal sins, the Church now celebrates externally and with

beautifully joyous ceremonies the final triumph and life-giving Resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. After the long ages of darkness brought about by the Fall, after the seemingly endless expectation of the prophets, after the thirty hidden years and the three years of public life, after the frightful passion which had seemed to be the end of all hope, after the three days in the depth of the tomb, behold: Christ is risen! The time of weeping is over; now is the time for joy. Christ's resurrection is the greatest miracle. It is the most divine and the least human, for it took place when the Man-Christ was in the grave. We now know that Christ is God and we rejoice.

Resurrection

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

Following the procession, Resurrection Matins begin. Preceded by candle bearers and by bearers of the processional cross, church banners, an icon of the resurrection and the Gospel book, the priest goes to the main church doors and from outside, after incensing the closed doors, he intones: "Glory be to the holy, consubstantial and indivisible Trinity always, now and ever, and forever and ever." After the people answer with "Amen," the priest sings the glorious Paschal troparion: "Christ

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

is risen from the dead, by death He conquered death, and to those in the graves, He granted life. After the celebrant finishes, the whole congregation bursts into a joyous, jubilant singing of the same troparion twice. But all this is only the beginning of the jubilation. The priest sings to the Risen Christ, "Let God arise and let His enemies be scattered, and let those who hate Him flee from before His face." The congregation replies spontaneously: "Christ is risen from the dead - *Christos voskrese!*" "As smoke vanishes so let them vanish, as wax melts before a fire," the priest continues. Again a thundering *Christ is risen!* closes the priest's intonation. "So let the wicked perish at the presence of God and let the righteous ones rejoice," proclaims the celebrant. Another *Christ is risen!* Then, "This is the day which the Lord has made, let us be glad and rejoice in it." Another *Christ is risen!* In conclusion the celebrant again sings, *Christ is risen!* As he reaches the words, "and to those in the graves He granted life," he strikes the doors with the cross. They are then opened and he enters, followed by the entire congregation. The priest in front of the closed doors represents the angel announcing the joyful news of the resurrection. The people represent the myrrh-bearing women. The striking of the doors with the cross and their opening symbolize the fact that Christ by His death on the cross opened for us the gates of Heaven.

The priest then comes to the altar and, after singing the Great Litany, begins the Paschal Canon, the Canon of the Resurrection. This Canon, composed by Saint John Damascene (675-748 AD) is a series of hymns written according to certain rules, hence its name "canon (rule)." It is a type of liturgical poetry, especially interesting because of its specific form and content. Similar hymns appeared in the East already around the middle of the seventh century. It replaced the kontakion, a type of liturgical poetry composed of 24 short odes or strophes with the purpose of conveying to the people a certain religious message.

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

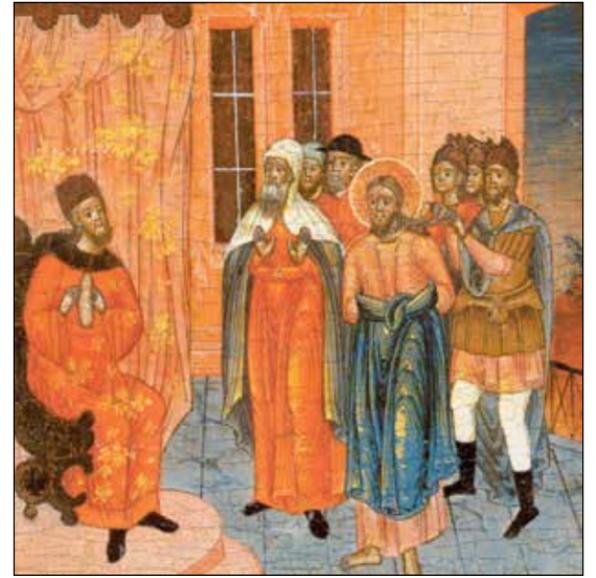
The prototype of the ninth ode is the song of the Mother of God, "My soul magnifies the Lord" and recalls the Angelic Salutation: "The angel exclaimed to her, full of grace: Rejoice, O pure Virgin! And again I say: rejoice! Your Son is risen from the grave on the third day and has raised the dead. O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

The Canon of the Resurrection ends with the hymns of Lauds, which exhort us "to sing hymns to Your (Christ's) saving passion and glorify Your Resurrection." Christ must be glorified on this day for "He has endured crucifixion, overthrown death and risen from the dead." Today, "we praise Your divine condescension and sing hymns to You, O Christ! In order to save the world, You were born



of a virgin without leaving the Father. You suffered as man and willingly endured crucifixion, and You rose from the tomb. O Lord, glory to You."

The Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom has a slight deviation from its ordinary celebration. Immediately after the initial invocation, the celebrant sings the Paschal troparion in order to emphasize the joy and solemn happiness brought by the glorious Resurrection of Christ. The Gospel, taken from John 1:1-17, is divided into twelve verses.



After reading each verse, the celebrant pauses and all the bells are rung. The Gospel is read in various languages, signifying that the redemptive work of Christ applies to all peoples, to the whole world. During the Eucharistic commemorations, instead of the usual hymn in honor of the Mother of God, "It is truly proper to glorify you ..." the Angelic Salutation from the Resurrection Service with the irmos of the ninth ode is sung: "Shine, shine, O new Jerusalem..." After the Communion, all hymns are replaced by the Paschal troparion.

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

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

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

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





LIFE, LOVE, AND THE HUMAN PERSON

By Ann M. Koshute, MTS

EMBRACING HOLY SATURDAY

On Good Friday, our gaze remains fixed on the crucified Christ, but Holy Saturday is the day of the “death of God,” the day which expresses the unparalleled experience of our age, anticipating the fact that God is simply absent, that the grave hides him, that he no longer awakes, no longer speaks.... Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*

We all know people who are patient, laid back, able to control their emotions and let things play out as they will. But I wonder if that’s the fundamental human stance in the face of great suffering, or worries about one’s children, a sick loved one, or the future in general. When push comes to shove, there is a certain desire in all of us to do something – anything – to alleviate pain, solve a problem or change a difficult situation. Even the most outwardly patient among us experience anxiety about the unknown, and whether it’s our own pain and suffering, or (most especially) that of someone we love, we want to act. Sitting by passively feels like not giving our all, like giving up or letting our loved ones down. Just being seems pointless when we could be doing something.

The forty days of the Great Fast are a wonderful “reset” for us, both physically and spiritually. Our whole being is engaged as we pray more, and work to tame our desires by denying ourselves certain foods and conveniences. We sacrifice a bit more (money and

time, for example), and we do more than we might during any other time of the year. We attend Lenten services once or twice a week, perhaps read Scripture more than we usually do, and make more time for silence, especially setting aside our technology for longer stretches. Perhaps along the way we’ve grown a bit weary of fasting, miss our little luxuries, and literally drag ourselves to church on a Wednesday evening. But as the Fast moves forward and we enter Great and Holy Week, our destination and the cause of our joy – Pascha – is within our reach. The Holy Week services are beautiful and inspiring, and Great Friday never ceases to fill me with a sadness that somehow is an expression of the deep gratitude I feel for Jesus’ sacrifice, so undeserved by me, yet so freely given by Him. And then... Saturday. Of course, it is “holy,” but how often does it just seem to us like another day; a placeholder until the Pascha celebration can begin? Holy Saturday feels anticlimactic following the “solemn fanfare” of Great Friday, and the anticipation of what is to come at the Vigil and on Pascha Sunday. The whole of the Fast and the services leading up to Pascha engage us in every way: kneeling, chanting, prostrating, processing, denying ourselves. But Holy Saturday is just... silent. We may busy ourselves preparing our baskets and the food that will be blessed, pressing our Sunday best clothes and finishing up our preparations for the Feast of the Resurrection. How many

times have we truly entered in to the quiet of Holy Saturday? Are even the most patient among us able to be still and allow the full weight of the day, and all that lead up to it, penetrate us – and transform us?

The traditions of East and West have different but complementary views of Holy Saturday. In the East, the emphasis is on Jesus smashing the gates of Hell, rescuing the righteous ones held captive by death until the Messiah comes to release them. Our iconography depicts this so vividly, although we often mislabel it as an icon of the Resurrection. Its proper name is *The Harrowing of Hades* and that is accurate, because Jesus takes Hades by surprise, “fights off” death so that it no longer has a permanent reign, and frees those who have been awaiting the promise of Salvation. For the West, the silence of the Tomb takes the foreground. There is a sense of mystery surrounding the time between Christ’s death and resurrection, a quiet in which the world stands still in sadness, disbelief and uncertainty. Both conceptions of Holy Saturday are true and help us to understand not only the events of the Passion, but how God works in our lives, personally.

When we are in trouble, when we face some challenge or suffering, it is right for us to take initiative and act. But even when we are rightly called upon to do something, God asks us to take a “Holy Saturday stance” toward whatever dif-

ficulty we face. That is, we must not rely only on our own power, our own resources and initiative. Instead, God asks us to enter the quiet of the Tomb, bringing whatever or whomever needs to be healed and restored. God asks for the anxiety, pain, confusion, suffering – all of it – to be placed in the Tomb, because that is the place where Jesus freely allowed Himself to be weighted down by those same emotions and worries. He took all of it to the Cross with Him, and invited abandonment on Himself, accepted the absence of the Father and the Spirit, for our sake. Even now as then, Jesus meets us in the abyss of loneliness, separation and loss so that in our own experience we would always find Him there.

As hard as it is to wait in our own Holy Saturday when we are carrying heavy burdens, we must remember that the quiet of the Tomb is also the place in which Jesus is healing and restoring us. He is both *with us* and sharing in our pain, and *fighting for us*, doing the sometimes-painful work of releasing us from the captivity of fear, hopelessness and loss of faith. Even when He seems absent, when He is quiet and feels far away, He is working deep within us. Let us embrace Holy Saturday throughout the whole of our lives, being patient and still so that Jesus can smash the gates of despair and raise us up with Him. **ECL**



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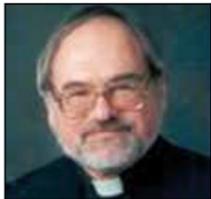
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THE BYZANTINE LITURGY

By Archpriest David Petras, SEOD

BAPTISM: PROCESSION TO THE FONT

Baptism crosses a line. Today, when a candidate for baptism has renounced evil and has committed themselves to Christ, there is a procession from the narthex, representing the world to the baptismal font, the spring of water from which new life pours forth. We leave our old lives and enter a new life in Christ, in the Holy Trinity. The ideal is to have a separate building or place for the font, but most churches are not able to afford this, so a portable font is set up in the front part of the nave, where the tetrapod is. This procession indicates a new phase in the process of baptism. When we enter, the font is censed three times. This is the usual purificatory incensation at the beginning of a service.

Just before the procession, the priest prays in a petition to God explaining what is about to happen. His words are, “call your servant (*name*) to your holy enlightenment and count him (her) worthy of this great grace of your holy baptism. Wash away his (her) old self (Ephesians 4:22; Colossians 3:9), and renew him (her) for everlasting life. (John 3:3) Fill him (her) with the power of your Holy Spirit (Romans 15:13), that he (she) may be united with your Christ (Romans 12:5; 1 Corinthians 12:12); and that he (she) may no longer be a child of the flesh, but rather a child of your kingdom.” (Romans 12:5; 1 Corinthians 12:12) It is clear, therefore, that this prayer is a proclamation of faith taken from the

letters of Saint Paul and the Gospel of Saint John, and that the person about to be baptized is truly “crossing a line,” and entering the Kingdom of God.

Processions are always a real profession of faith representing our journey to life in God. This first procession in baptism is like the Good Friday procession with the burial shroud of Jesus to the tomb. Our baptism surely partakes in the crucifixion of our Lord. Saint Paul writes: “Are you unaware that we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were indeed buried with him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the death by the glory of the Father, we too might live in newness of life.” (Romans 6:3-4)

Baptism is a spiritual dying and rising in Christ, a laying down of our lives in obedience to God, concomitant with the will to even lay down our bodily lives for the faith if necessary. Baptism is a radical rejection of what is evil and the commitment to following the way of Christ, even to the point of death. Saint Paul concludes, “Consequently, you too must think of yourselves as being dead to sin and living for God in Christ Jesus.” (Romans 6:11) Baptism is worship of God, as Saint Paul later says in Romans: “I urge you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, your spiritual worship. Do not conform yourself to this

age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect.” (Romans 12:1-2) Christ’s descent into the tomb was not the victory of death, but its defeat. In baptism, we share in that victory over death and sin.

The baptismal font not only signifies a tomb, but also a womb bringing forth new life. In the Gospel of John, baptism is seen as the beginning of a new life. Jesus tells Nicodemus: “Amen, amen, I say to you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.” (John 3:3) The baptismal font is an image of a womb from which we come forth into a new life. Nicodemus understands this immediately, “How can a person grown old be born again? Surely he cannot enter his mother’s womb and be born again, can he?” (John 3:4) Jesus, of course, is speaking of a spiritual rebirth. John, being of the Jewish culture, would not have understood the human reality as a mingling of soul and body, but as one reality that is both material and spiritual. The will belongs to the spirit. We have no will in natural birth; we do not choose to come into life; we do not give ourselves existence; but, by our wills, we do accept a spiritual birth, that is, we take responsibility for the gift of life given to us, and we offer it into harmony with God’s will for us. We do not cease “being body” by making this choice, but now our being is sound and whole, with the gifts of

the spirit, wisdom, faith, love, understanding, will, intellect, mind, guiding us and enlivening us through the power of the Spirit of God. This is why Jesus immediately connects baptism and the Spirit: “You must be born from above. The wind blows where it wills, and you can hear the sound it makes, but you cannot know where it comes from or where it goes; so it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.” (John 3:8)

Life in the Spirit, then, is freedom. We are accepted completely into the life of God, which we cannot know through human reason, or express by human words. Saint Paul wrote: “You are not in the flesh; on the contrary, you are in the spirit, if only the Spirit of God dwells in you. Whoever does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him ... If the Spirit of the one who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, the one who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also, through his Spirit that dwells in you ... the Spirit too comes to the aid of our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit itself intercedes with inexpressible groanings.” (Romans 8:9.11.26) Baptism is what it means to be “born again,” now not from the womb of our physical mother, but from the womb of water and the Spirit. One who is baptized must live an entirely new way of life. **ECL**

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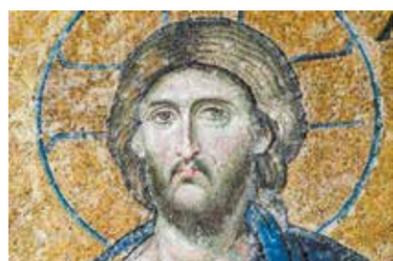
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SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

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

THE SONG OF HANNAH: THE THIRD BIBLICAL ODE

It's striking how many prominent men in Scripture were born to mothers who had been written off as barren: Isaac from Sarah (Genesis 18), Joseph from Rachel (Genesis 30), Samson (Judges 13 does not name his mother; Jewish tradition identifies her as the Hazlelponi of 1 Chronicles 4:3; the name means "seeing God's face" and refers to Judges 13:22), Samuel from Hannah (1 Samuel 1), and John the Baptist from Saint Elizabeth (Luke 1). In different ways, all these miraculous births prepare us for the virginal birth of God's Son as man: Jesus Christ (Luke 1-2). Like Mary, whose song of praise (Luke 1:46-55) is the ninth biblical Ode of Matins, Hannah also burst into song at the miraculous birth of her son. Her song is the third biblical Ode once sung at Matins and now the inspiration behind the third Ode of the liturgical hymns called Canons.

At the turn of the 11th century BC, an angelic vision assured Hannah that she would bear a son in response to a vow she made to God while on pilgrimage in Shiloh, where the Ark of the Covenant

was housed (there would be no Temple in Jerusalem for another century). In fulfillment of that vow, Samuel served at that shrine under the priest Eli from the age of three (much like the Theotokos in the Temple). Samuel received his first prophetic revelation while still a boy, and the Bible's description of him makes him a perfect role model for the young men who serve at the altar today (1 Samuel 2:18-20; 3:1-21).

Hannah's song of praise begins by rebuking the arrogance of those who had judged her and placing God's answer to her prayer in a wider context (1 Samuel 2:3). The Lord alone controls life and death, poverty and prosperity for everyone (1 Samuel 2:4-9). She celebrates the Lord's tendency to make the first last and the last first (1 Samuel 2:4-5; Matthew 20:16). Hannah's vision expands still further to celebrate God's lordship over all creation (1 Samuel 2:8-9) and His final judgment (1 Samuel 2:9-10). Might we do the same? How are biblical truths such as God's mercy, forgiveness, providence or grace personally true for me? Where

does the story of my relationship with the Lord fit into the wider history of God's care for His Church and, indeed, the whole world? When we answer those questions, we are doing what the Bible calls "bearing witness." Many of the Psalms do just that: they describe a problem and then proclaim how the Lord delivered the person from it.

Just as Moses did in the second Ode (Deuteronomy 32:4.15.18.30.31), Hannah addresses the Lord as "Rock" (1 Samuel 2:2); she has relied on the Lord and the Lord has proved reliable. The poetic Canons composed on the basis of the biblical Odes sometimes seize on this title (for example, Ode 3 of the Canons of Palm Sunday and of Pascha). More often they quote another image Hannah uses twice. She thanks the Lord for "exalting her horn" and predicts that He will "exalt the horn of His anointed" (1 Samuel 2:1 and 10). This common Old Testament expression means to give strength or glory to someone, often by raising them up out of difficulty (see Psalm 75; some Bible translations actually replace the word

"horn" with "strength"). Psalm 18:2 uses both these images of salvation, Rock and horn, together just as Hannah does. The natural source of this image is the horns of a wild animal (Psalm 92:10), and it can point specifically to the power and glory of a king (Revelation 17:12).

In fact, Hannah's song does look forward to a king. 1 Samuel 2:10 is the first biblical text to apply the word "Anointed" (*mashiah* in Hebrew, *christos* in Greek) to a royal figure. Her son, Samuel, would anoint Israel's first two kings, Saul and then David (1 Samuel 9 and 10; 1 Samuel 16). But Hannah's prayer ultimately points to the Messiah who would be called Son of David (2 Samuel 7; Matthew 21:9; 22:41-46; Mark 11:10; 12:35-37; Luke 20:41-44). Only Christ could fulfill Hannah's vision of "bringing up from the grave" (1 Samuel 2:6). He alone could enable us to "inherit the throne of glory" (1 Samuel 2:8). **ECL**

SCHOOL OF PRAYER

Father G. Scott Boghossian



RENEW YOUR MIND

"Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind" (Romans 12:2).

When we think the right way, we will live the right way. How we think is how we live. Being born into a fallen world, and having a fallen nature, we think in ways not based on Divine Revelation. Divine Revelation is God's Word, as presented to us in Sacred Scripture, Sacred Tradition, and the teaching of the Church.

What is the solution? Saint Paul tells us it is "the renewal of the mind." "Be transformed by the renewal of your mind." The Greek word for "transformed" is related to our English word metamorphosis and literally means a change of form (meta – change, morph – form). The same Greek word is used to describe the Transfiguration of Our Lord on Mount Tabor. Be transfigured, says Saint Paul to the Romans.

This is our goal and our destiny: to become like Jesus Christ. All of us want to be transfigured, deified, more like Christ, conformed to the image of God's Son, changed into His likeness (Rm. 8:29, Phil. 3:10, 2 Cor. 3:18).

This will happen to us physically and bodily when Jesus Christ returns on Judgment Day (1 Thess. 4:16, 1 Cor. 15:52, 1 Jn. 3:2).

But this transformation must happen to us now, in our hearts and minds, as we internalize the Word of God. We internalize the Word by mulling it over, thinking about it, reflecting on it, and immersing ourselves in it in every way possible. We are "renewed in the spirit of our minds" (Eph. 4:23).

The LORD tells Joshua: "This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you shall make your way prosperous, and then you shall have good success" (Josh 1:8). In Psalm 1, we read of the "Blessed Man," whose "delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law, he meditates day and night" (Ps. 1:2).

The word translated as "meditate" is the Hebrew word "hagah" and can also be translated as "to moan, growl, utter, speak, muse." True biblical meditation has nothing to do with "Eastern" meditation or New Age meditation, or some technique of blanking out the mind or

focusing on one's breathing. Christian meditation is to mull over, think about, speak to oneself about, visualize, ponder, and concentrate on the Word of God until we are saturated with it, impregnated with it, and living it out.

Material for meditation is found in Holy Scripture, the liturgical texts, the writings of the Fathers and Saints, and the renowned spiritual authors of the past. Reading, memorizing, and listening to the Word is the first step. Still, it is necessary to slow down, chew, savor, and digest the truths that we encounter. Yes, read and listen, but then reflect and consider it, again and again. And talk to God about it in prayer.

"Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks" (Mt. 12:34). What we talk about reveals what is in our hearts. Isn't it sad that we naturally speak about mundane or worldly things but find spiritual conversation unnatural? Despite all our reading, listening, and reciting, the Word is not yet penetrating and transforming. Read more, say more prayers, hear more sermons? Perhaps. But it is more critical to attentively consider, meditate on, and mull over the books, prayers, and sermons that we are already exposed to regularly.

"Meditation is above all a quest. The mind seeks to understand the why and how of the Christian life, in order to adhere and respond to what the Lord is asking. The required attentiveness is difficult to sustain. We are usually helped by books, and Christians do not want for them: the Sacred Scriptures, particularly the Gospels, holy icons, liturgical texts of the day or season, writings of the spiritual fathers, works of spirituality, the great book of creation, and that of history the page on which the "today" of God is written" (CCC 2705).

Be transformed by the renewal of your mind and meditate on the Word of God. **ECL**



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

With Holy and Great Friday, come a number of our traditional services: “Strasti” (Matins of the Passion) with its twelve gospel readings; the Royal Hours; and, finally, Burial Vespers. The tone of all these services is somber, with dark vestments and low lighting. Although the tones for the stichera, etc., are the usual ones for the particular services, they sound more somber. At Burial Vespers, in imitation of Joseph of Arimathea, the priest takes the burial shroud of Christ on his shoulders and processes, together with all present, around the church and places the shroud in the tomb. Saturday continues the tone of heaviness of heart as we pray the “Lamentation” Matins, and the Hours. With the Vespers with the Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil, we see the shroud in the tomb, but a subtle change can be noted, especially with the clergy changing from dark vestments to bright, and singing hymns promising the Resurrection.

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

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

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

What a difference three days can make: from darkness into light; from sin to forgiveness; from death to life! The Church, through her services, hymns, prayers, and readings, leads us from sin to salvation, and from death to eternal life in Christ. She shows us God’s ultimate plan for us, and if we take all this for granted, it can lose all significance for us. Instead of The Pasch being “the Lord’s Passover, since Christ our God has brought us from death to life and from earth to heaven,” it becomes merely Easter, with eggs, chocolates, jelly beans, and over-eating. The Church gives us Lent, Holy Week, Good Friday, and the Feast of Feasts to help us attain the salvation that she proclaims all year long. Lent teaches us to give the spirit power over the body in fasting; to give alms “to the least of My brethren,”



Icon of the Descent Into Hades, Church of the Holy Savior in Chora, Istanbul

to pray, not only in the words given to us in prayer books and formal services, but in a way that opens a conduit between us and God, that we may know and do His will for us. Through these services, we spiritually join with the disciples as Christ enters into Jerusalem to the cries of the Hebrew children; to break bread with Him and ponder the words, “Take; eat; this is My Body;” to see His betrayal, not only by Judas, but also by the other disciples as they flee at

His arrest, and Peter when he denies he knows his best friend. We stand with John and the Blessed Mother at the foot of the cross. We endure the silence of His burial. But then? We stand with the Ointment-bearers in front of the empty tomb. We cry out with joy at the words of the angel. Indeed, what a difference three days make, not only for us, but for all Mankind. **ECL**

The Department of Catholic Studies at Seton Hall University is pleased to announce a symposium:

The Ukrainian Icon: A Piece of Heaven on Earth

Thursday, April 28, 2022, from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

The two distinguished scholars at this symposium, Andriy Demyanchuk, PhD, and Borys Gudziak, PhD, Archbishop-Metropolitan of Philadelphia for Ukrainian Catholics in the United States, will present two fine papers on icons, new and old. In this time of war between Ukraine and Russia, this event highlighting icons will do much to defuse tension. Knowledge and veneration of icons are vehicles for promoting peace. The symposium will include presentations on

- The history and creation of traditional icons in Ukraine, especially of the Divine Cult to Our Mother of Perpetual Help
- The newest iconography in Ukraine: icons, written by soldiers, veterans, and invalids of the ongoing war in Ukraine, on discarded boxes that had contained war supplies



Andriy Demyanchuk is Associate Professor of the Department of Stage Direction and Choreography, Ivan Franko National University of Lviv, Ukraine. Maestro Demyanchuk himself is an iconographer extraordinaire, as well as a scholar of icons.



Borys Gudziak is Archbishop-Metropolitan of Philadelphia for Ukrainian Catholics in the United States; Head, Department of External Church Relations, Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church; and President, Ukrainian Catholic University, Lviv.



Join us for this event on the South Orange campus of Seton Hall University in Bethany Hall

-or-

Join us for this event on Zoom: <https://bit.ly/314kqkx>

For more information, please contact: Gloria Aroneo, MBA, at Gloria.Aroneo@shu.edu or (973) 275-2808

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EPARCHIAL PARISHES LIVE-STREAM THE DIVINE SERVICES

Below are just a few examples from our eparchy

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

CONNECTICUT

Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church—Danbury, CT
 Saint John the Baptist—Trumbull, CT

NEW JERSEY

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

NEW YORK

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

PENNSYLVANIA

Saint Michael Byzantine 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 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

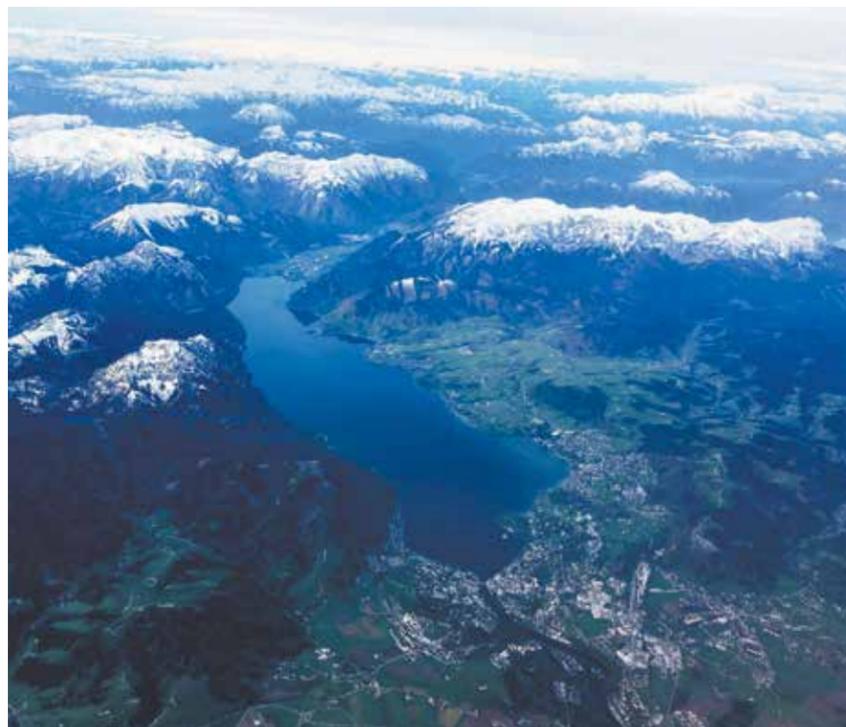
Charlotte, NC, Byzantine Catholic Mission at Fort Mill, SC

MARYLAND

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

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UPCOMING EPARCHIAL AND PARISH EVENTS

APRIL, 2022

- 9 Lazarus Saturday
- 10 Flowery Sunday
Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem
- 11 Holy and Great Monday
- 12 Holy and Great Tuesday
- 13 Holy and Great Wednesday
- 14 Holy and Great Thursday
Chancery closed
- 15 Holy and Great Friday
Chancery closed
- 16 Holy and Great Saturday
- 17 PASCHA * THE GREAT DAY
The Holy Resurrection of Our Lord
- 18 Bright Monday
Chancery closed Solemn Holy Day*
- 19 Bright Tuesday
Simple Holy Day

- 23 Bright Saturday * Holy Great Martyr George
- 24 Sunday of Saint Thomas
Second Paschal Sunday

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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