



EASTERN CATHOLIC LIFE

Official Publication of the Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Passaic

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CHRIST IS RISEN! INDEED HE IS RISEN!



Icon of The Descent Into Hades, from the Church of Chora, Constantinople

PASCHAL HOMILY OF SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

If any man be devout and love God, let him enjoy this fair and radiant triumphal feast. If any man be a wise servant, let him rejoicing enter into the joy of his Lord. If any have labored long in fasting, let him now receive his recompense. If any have wrought from the first hour, let him today receive his just reward. If any have come at the third hour, let him with thankfulness keep the feast. If any have arrived at the sixth hour, let him have no misgivings; because he shall in nowise be deprived thereof. If any have delayed until the ninth hour, let him draw near, fearing nothing. If any have tarried even until the eleventh hour, let him, also, be not alarmed at his tardiness; for the Lord, who is jealous of his honor, will accept the last even as the first; he gives rest unto him who comes at the eleventh hour,
even as unto him who has wrought from the first hour.

And he shows mercy upon the last, and cares for the first; and to the one he gives, and upon the other he bestows gifts. And he both accepts the deeds, and welcomes the intention, and honors the acts and praises the offering. Wherefore, enter you all into the joy of your Lord; and receive your reward, both the first, and likewise the second. You rich and poor together, hold high festival. You sober and you heedless, honor the day. Rejoice today, both you who have fasted and you who have disregarded the fast. The table is full-laden;
feast ye all sumptuously. The calf is fatted; let no one go hungry away.

Enjoy ye all the feast of faith: Receive ye all the riches of loving-kindness. Let no one bewail his poverty, for the universal kingdom has been revealed. Let no one weep for his iniquities, for pardon has shown forth from the grave. Let no one fear death, for the Savior's death has set us free. He that was held prisoner of it has annihilated it. By descending into Hell, He made Hell captive. He embittered it when it tasted of His flesh. And Isaiah, foretelling this, did cry: Hell, said he, was embittered, when it encountered Thee in the lower regions. It was embittered, for it was abolished. It was embittered, for it was mocked. It was embittered, for it was slain. It was embittered, for it was overthrown. It was embittered, for it was fettered in chains. It took a body, and met God face to face. It took earth, and encountered Heaven.
It took that which was seen, and fell upon the unseen.

O Death, where is your sting? O Hell, where is your victory? Christ is risen, and you are overthrown. Christ is risen, and the demons are fallen. Christ is risen, and the angels rejoice. Christ is risen, and life reigns. Christ is risen, and not one dead remains in the grave. For Christ, being risen from the dead, is become the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.

To Him be glory and dominion unto ages of ages. Amen.



I LIFT UP MY EYES

Pastoral Reflections of Bishop Kurt



THE CARMELITE MARTYRS OF COMPIÈGNE

Reprinted from November of 2018

In 1787, the government of France was financially broke, to some extent from helping to finance the American Revolution. The finance minister attempted necessary reforms, but was stymied by special interests. It was recommended to King Louis XVI that he call a national assembly of the Estates General, a sort of three-house parliament that had not met for 170 years. When the king called this assembly in 1789, France was perhaps the wealthiest, most stable, best educated, and most Catholic country in Europe. Who could have imagined that in the next few years, hundreds of thousands of French men, women, and children would be murdered by other Frenchmen; and that many of the faithful parish priests and even cloistered nuns would be executed in public, or killed in other humiliating ways. Who could have imagined that even the seven-day week would be abolished to wipe out three thousand years of the Sabbath, and two thousand years of witness to the Resurrection of Jesus Christ? Who could have imagined that the Cathedral of Notre Dame, which means *Our Lady*, would be the site of blasphemous mockeries of God and the Blessed Virgin?

The Estates General was a three-part national assembly divided into the First Estate, the Second Estate, and the Third Estate. Elections were held in spring of 1789. The First Estate in France was the clergy, showing their belief that God is higher than any earthly government. The Second Estate was the aristocracy. The Third Estate was everyone else, that is, the common people. The king was not part of the assembly of course, since it existed to assist him. When the Estates General met in 1789, there were 100,000 clergy in France, and they elected 303 delegates to the assembly. The Church owned 6% of the land in France at the time, but two-thirds of the delegates were ordinary parish priests, not the abbots and bishops who collected the revenue from the lands. The Second Estate chose 282 delegates, about a third were nobility. The Third Estate was allowed 578 delegates. About half of these were educated lawyers, many were in trades, and 51 were wealthy landowners. The 578 delegates were far from being “common” people.

The assembly opened with great festivity and high hopes. As it turned out, the assembly was unable to reach any agreement on a way to help the debt problem of the national government. As we would say, it was “deadlocked” in relation to the king. The Third Estate wanted to talk about other things, and when they declared themselves a National Assembly, the king had them locked out on June 20. The National Assembly continued to meet on a tennis court, agreed not to disband until they had written a constitution for France, and when they were locked out of the tennis court, they assembled in the Church of Saint Louis. Most of the clergy joined the commoners, most of the aristocracy left, and the king found himself losing control of the government rapidly.

During the next year, the national assembly, whose name changed several times, began to dismantle the institutional Church in France. All of the lands owned by the Church were confiscated, and all forms of religious orders, monastic life, or religious community were outlawed: so much for liberty, fraternity, and equality! Ironically, in 1791, the Americans approved the Bill of Rights for the United States, and the First Amendment prohibits the Congress from interfering with freedom of religion. Did you know there were originally 12 articles in the Bill of Rights? The first one has never passed, but the second one passed recently. The second article prohibited Congress from giving itself a raise. A change in salary has to be effective for the next Congress. The article never passed, but in 1982 Gregory Watson, a 19-year-old sophomore at the University of Texas, wrote an essay for a class in which he claimed the amendment would still be ratified because it was not written with a sunset provision. The teaching assistant gave him a C on his paper. He protested his grade, and the professor, Sharon Waite, denied his appeal. Rather than accept his grade, he began a national campaign to have the amendment ratified, and it became the 27th amendment to our Constitution, 202 years, 7 months, and 10 days after it was proposed for ratification. In 2017, the University of Texas changed Mr. Watson’s grade from a C to an A.

Returning to France in 1790, within a year of its inception, and after outlawing almost all forms of religious life and monasticism, the national assembly passed a law called the *Civil Constitution of the Clergy* in July of 1790 to reorganize the French

clergy and episcopacy. The Constitution reorganized the dioceses of France to coincide with the new secular divisions of France called “departments,” and provided for the election of bishops and priests. An archbishop suggested, quite reasonably, that the French Church should have a national council to decide these things, as the early Church did. Some of the reforms were good, but the most alarming part of the law was the requirement that new bishops take an oath of loyalty to the laws of France that surpassed the law of God and the Faith. Interestingly enough, one of the opponents of the Constitution was a French priest named Abbé Emmanuel Joseph Sieyès. Father Sieyès was one of the chief theorists of the Revolution. He wrote a famous pamphlet, “What is the Third Estate?,” that was foundational to the Revolution. Recall that the Third Estate was 95% of the population of France, everyone but the clergy and the nobility. He begins with these words, “What is the Third Estate? Everything. What has it been until now in the political order? Nothing. What does it desire to be? To become at least something.” The pamphlet was hugely influential, and argued convincingly that only the common people, who do all the work and pay all the taxes, have the right to determine the future constitution of the government of France.

Despite some of the good reforms in the Constitution of the Clergy, it was also an attack on the Catholicity of the Church, and an attack on the supremacy of God and conscience over the state. The new law was delayed by the king, and many clergy waited to see how the pope would judge the oath, but by November, 1790, the National Assembly required all clergy to sign an oath supporting the law. The following January, about half of the clergy in France took the oath, including seven bishops. The following March, the pope ruled that the oath was unconscionable, and the clergy of France were now severely divided. The ones who took the oath were called “jurors” and the ones who refused were called “non-jurors.” As the government began to punish the non-juror bishops and priests, a much deeper division began in the French Church. The government, which now owned the churches and paid the salaries, denied non-juror priests the right to say Mass in churches. On the other hand, the pious lay people, especially in the countryside, which was most of the people of France at the time, did not respect the juror priests and refused

to allow them to function. The revolutionary government began to find itself at war with the people of France outside of Paris. The pious people in the countryside were distressed to see the more devout priests forbidden to function, not to mention the nuns and other religious turned out of their houses and even unable to feed themselves.

On January 21, 1793, the revolutionary government executed King Louis XVI, and the worst killings began: both massacres around France, and accelerating executions of people, mainly in Paris. One of the eyewitness accounts of the execution is given by a Catholic priest named Henry Essex Edgeworth, who heard the king’s confession and accompanied him to his execution. There was a scuffle when the executioners attempted to tie up the king. After a standoff, the priest told the king that Jesus allowed himself to be tied up. After this advice, the king allowed himself to be tied up. He made a short speech in which he asked God not to hold his blood against the French nation.

One of the most frightening men of the Revolution was Maximilien Robespierre. A very intelligent and articulate lawyer from Arras near Belgium, he was a man of such strict principles that the people called him “the Incorruptible.” He favored the poor, opposed slavery, and believed that everyone should have the right to vote. He left his prestigious job as a prosecutor because he was opposed to the death penalty. Isn’t it ironic that the most principled people seem to become the most bloodthirsty when they get into power? Although he vigorously opposed the death penalty until 1793, he was the most forceful, eloquent, and fanatical advocate for the execution of the king. As the workers and poor people of Paris took control of the Revolution, they favored Robespierre because it was well known that he never accepted bribes and had no desire to get rich. After the execution of the king, the Revolutionaries began executing most of the people in the jails and prisons. They did conduct trials with lawyers and juries. Under the leadership of Robespierre, the more moderate members of the assembly were executed, leaving only the most radical. George Danton, who first promoted Robespierre, was one of those moderates who was executed. On February 5, 1794, Robespierre wrote, “If virtue be the spring of a popular government in times of peace, the spring of that government during a revolution is virtue combined with terror: virtue, without which terror is destructive; terror, without which virtue is impotent. Terror is only justice: prompt, severe and inflexible.” And so, the red horse of slaughter and the pale horse of death from the Apocalypse entered the French Revolution. On June 4, 1794, a law was passed allowing the execution of those accused after a very short trial. Only the accusa-

tion and the words of the accused were heard. There was no defense attorney and no evidence and no witnesses. The true *Reign of Terror* is dated from this law on June 4. The number of executions each day doubled. When someone asked the executioner why he always had the correct number of carriages ready, he said that the prosecutor told him the night before.

Meanwhile, out in the countryside, there was much opposition to the de-Christianization of France and the mistreatment of the faithful priests and nuns. In the northwest of France, the people rose up. In the city of Nantes, the execution of all prisoners was ordered, beginning with the priests. Special boats were made with trapdoors, and there were mass executions carried out by dropping prisoners into the river. On November 16, 1793, the first ninety priests were dropped into the freezing river. Three survived and were revived by nearby sailors with booze and blankets. They were retaken and killed with the next group the following night. That night, 58 priests were stripped naked and drowned using a specially designed barge; there were no survivors. Historians disagree with the total number of executions in the Nantes drownings, from 1,800 to 9,000 victims. When the Revolutionary government ordered the people of the region to conscript 300,000 men as soldiers, many of these men instead formed their own army called *the Catholic Army*. They later renamed it the *Royal Catholic Army*. Their symbol was a Sacred Heart with the slogan, "God and King." The Parisian government swiftly responded with their own army, better equipped and trained. The uprising was suppressed, and the revolutionary forces were ordered to kill everyone: men, women, and children. Women were especially targeted because they would "give birth to counterrevolutionaries."

In Paris, Robespierre was presiding over blasphemous religious ceremonies insulting to the Christian faith, but in another part of France, a community of cloistered Carmelite nuns was clinging to their faith. Although they were outlawed and expelled from their convent; although they had to petition the government for money to purchase secular clothing, the Carmel of Compiègne, under

the courageous leadership of Mother Teresa of Saint Augustine was continuing their community life, and doing something even more remarkable. Each day, they consecrated themselves with an *act of holocaust*. They offered themselves as sacrifices to God to save France. The act of holocaust began in 1792 when the community was outlawed, and the faithful Carmelites made the consecration every day from then on. Mother Teresa of Saint Augustine wrote a Christmas carol for her community for the Christmas of 1792 or perhaps for 1793, their last Christmas. One of the verses is:

*O Infant God, nothing else can fill my desire,
Yes, nothing else can fill my heart!
It's done then, from now on I belong to You.
And of Your love, I've now become a part.
Heal my criminal soul of its shameful sin,
Wound my heart, with pain or love's delight,
Let wounds divine, wounds for my soul most gainful,
Martyr my heart to suffer day and night!*

It's not the usual kind of Christmas carol. As you can see, she is praying for martyrdom while singing about the Christ Child.

Eventually on June 22, 1794, 16 of the Carmelites were arrested by the Revolutionary government, 11 professed nuns, three sisters, and two externs. They were surprised to find in their place of confinement 17 Benedictine nuns as well. These nuns belonged to an English community of Benedictines in northern France which was founded by the granddaughter of Saint Thomas More when the abbeys were outlawed in England. They had been arrested as foreigners. These Benedictine nuns learned that the Carmelites were making a daily consecration as holocausts before God to restore peace in France and stop the executions, and considered them saints. The Reign of Terror was in full force in Paris, and the Carmelite nuns were transported in open carts to Paris on July 12. Confined in a place called the *Conciergerie*, they

were placed on trial on July 17 as enemies of the people. Indeed, the Revolutionary Surveillance Committee had discovered letters proving that the Carmelites had continued to live their communal life of poverty, chastity, and obedience after it had been outlawed in 1792. To quote from the trial documents, "For a long time now, we have suspected that the former Carmelite nuns of this city, though lodged in different houses, were still living as a community and following the rules of their former convent. Our suspicions were not in vain." At the trial, the prosecutor accused the nuns of hiding weapons in their lodgings. The only one to answer during the trial was Mother Teresa of Saint Augustine, and she pulled a crucifix out of her bosom and announced, "The only weapon we've ever had in our convent is this."

The nuns spent their last night singing hymns and the next day were tried as enemies of the people with a total of 54 prisoners. Of the 54, 39 were tried in the Courtroom of Freedom and 19 in the Courtroom of Equality. In all, forty were condemned as enemies of the people, including the 16 Carmelites. Remarkably, the nuns were forced out of their convent on September 14, the Feast of the Holy Cross, and were formally arraigned on July 16, the Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel.

The journey from the courtroom to the gallows by cart was about two hours in the crowded streets. According to witnesses, the Carmelites sang hymns on the journey including the *Veni Creator Spiritus* (Come, Spirit Creator) and also the penitential Psalm 50, "Have mercy on me, O God, in the greatness of your love, in the abundance of your tender mercies blot out my offense." When they arrived at the place of execution, the nuns renewed their monastic vows together at the foot of the stairs. Part of the humiliation at the execution was when the executioner ripped away clothing and cut the hair to expose the neck. Mother Teresa had seen to it that all the nuns already had their collars and hair clipped so that they were saved this last humiliation. Then the first nun began to climb the stairs and began to sing a hymn, the *Salve Regina*. The other nuns began to sing with her. And so all sixteen nuns

were singing, and all continued to sing as each one ascended the stairs, was strapped to the board, and guillotined. The singing continued until the last one was stopped by the guillotine.

The nuns offered themselves as a holocaust for the peace of France and an end to the killing. Did God accept their sacrifice? Ten days later, which is one revolutionary week, Maximilien Robespierre was condemned by his radical friends, and, the following day, the Reign of Terror ended with the execution of Robespierre. He was not singing when he was executed. He attempted suicide the night before during arrest, shooting off part of his jaw. At the guillotine, the executioner ripped off the bandage covering his jaw and, according to witnesses, he howled with pain till the blade fell.

Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain?

The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together,

Against the Lord and against his Christ, saying,

Let us burst our bonds asunder, and cast their cords from us.

He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord has them in derision...

He said to me, You are my Son, today I have begotten you.

Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession...

Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth.

Serve the Lord with fear, with trembling rejoice. -Psalm 2

+Kurt Brunette

**BYZANTINE CATHOLIC EPARCHY OF PASSAIC
2022 BISHOP'S ANNUAL APPEAL**

Please pledge online at eparchyofpassaic.com
or mail check payable to Eparchy of Passaic
in the envelope provided.

**As challenges continue to affect us, please take
care of yourself, your family and your parish first.**

- \$2,500.00 \$1,000.00 \$500.00
- \$250.00 _____ Other \$ _____

- full payment enclosed
- first payment enclosed, bill me for 4 additional payments

The 2022 Bishop's Appeal will run through the end of our fiscal year, June 2023. Contributions received prior to December 31, 2022, will count toward your 2022 tax year. Acknowledgement letter will be mailed prior to January 31, 2023.



New Address or Correction

Name: _____
Street: _____
City, State, Zip: _____
Parish: _____

CANTOR +THEODORE J. "TED" KOWALICK FALLS ASLEEP IN THE LORD

Joyce Covaleski, Holy Ghost Church, Jessup, PA



Theodore J. Kowalick fell asleep in the Lord on Friday, February 24, 2023, at Geisinger Community Medical Center in Scranton, PA. In his 94 years upon this earth, Ted served his church and his community in many ways. At Saint John the Baptist Byz-

antine Catholic Church in Forest City, PA, Ted served as cantor for over 71 years. He was lovingly referred to as "the administrator" of Saint John's and his role became significant when there was no longer a pastor living next door but several towns away. He was also very involved with every fundraiser, dinner, and function at the church, often chairing them. Ted opened the doors each Sunday, turned up the heat or the air conditioning, and turned on the lights in preparation for the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. He was a trustee of the parish, and took care of the parish's mail, deliveries, and service calls. He was always available to serve Saint John's in any way that he could.

Ted's primary place was in the choir loft of Saint John Parish, cantoring from his beautiful cantor's stand. He was training the parish's newest cantor, Ben Terry, at the time of his passing. In the past, Ted had also served as choir director. He was always happy to help out

other parishes to cantor funerals or cover liturgies. He participated in many eparchial events such as the annual Wedding Anniversary Liturgy and the novena at Saint Ann Basilica, Scranton.

Ted was well known in the community of Forest City, as well. He served as the president of Borough Council for many years, and was also mayor of Forest City for several years. He was the local registrar for the Pennsylvania Department of Vital Records, appointed to the position by Representative Carmel Siriani. He was also a former member of the Hillside Fire Company in Forest City.

Family was very important to Ted: he was married for 61 years to the love of his life, the former Rose Gordon, who survives him. Ted loved to cook and enjoyed weekly family dinners in their home. He had a quick wit and always had a story to share. In addition to being survived by his wife, Rose, he is survived by two sons, Ted Kowalick,

Jr., of Clarks Green; Kenneth Kowalick, and wife, Denise, of Vandling; two grandchildren, Nicholas and Kaitlyn Kowalick; and several nieces and nephews. Ted was preceded in death by five brothers and two sisters: Nicholas, Michael, Stephen, Sam, Andy, Anne Levchak, and Helen Popovich.

Ted's funeral was held in his beloved Saint John the Baptist Church in Forest City on Wednesday, March 1, 2023. Father John Cigan, Pastor of Saint John Parish and Holy Ghost Church in Jessup, was the main celebrant; Father Eduard Shestak, pastor of Saint Mary Church, Taylor, and Saint Nicholas Church, Old Forge, PA, concelebrated. Cantors that knew Ted well gathered to cantor his funeral.

Well done, good and faithful servant, Cantor Ted. Eternal memory! *Vičnaja jemu pamjat'!*

CANTOR +EMERY ROSKO ENTERS ETERNAL LIFE

Emery Rosko, Cantor emeritus of Holy Wisdom Byzantine Catholic Church, Flanders NJ, entered eternal life on February 23, at the age of 91. Emery, more commonly known as "Jim," learned *prostopinije* from his father, Emery, a native of Ruskovo near Mukačevo, who sang in Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church in Fords, NJ, under the direction of Professor John Petach, KSG. Emery, Sr., succeeded Prof. Petach and passed his knowledge on to his son and namesake.

Emery, Jr., was named as one of the two original parish cantors, along with Professor Stephen Katchen, at the newly founded Holy Wisdom Parish in

Flanders at its first council meeting on December 2, 1970. He sang regularly until business obligations interfered for a time, and returned as head cantor in 2009. He came out of retirement to lead the responses for the parish's 50th anniversary celebration in June 2021.

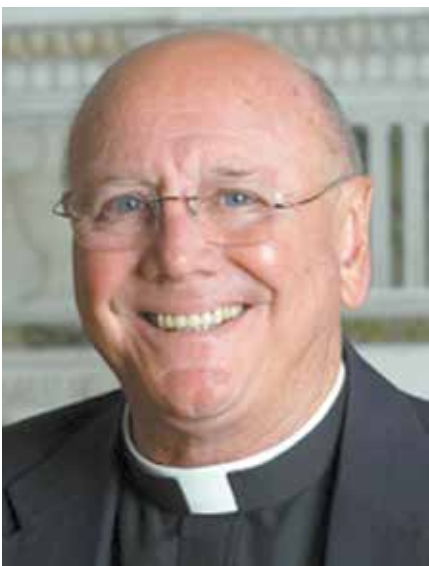
Although never his primary occupation, music was always central to Cantor Rosko's life. He played the keyboard and accordion and for many years fronted a five-piece orchestra well known on the wedding and choir concert circuit for their specialization in Slavic and Hungarian dance music. He is survived by his wife of 64 years, Bernice (nee Cherepon), three children:

David, Thomas, and Susan, and ten grandchildren.

Funeral services were held near Emery's birthplace, at Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church in Perth Amboy, NJ. Father Jack Custer, Syncellus for New Jersey, and Administrator of Holy Wisdom, presided, assisted by Father Martin Vavrak, administrator of Saint Nicholas Parish, and Father John Zec. Father James Spera, who administered Holy Wisdom Parish for 13 years, delivered the homily. Responses were led by Patricia Dietz, cantor at Saint Thomas the Apostle parish in Rahway. Interment was in Saint Michael Parish cemetery in Fords, NJ.



May God grant His newly-departed servant, the Cantor Emery, blessed repose and eternal memory! *Vičnaja jemu pamjat'!*



The Byzantine Catholic Seminary in Pittsburgh, PA, is pleased to announce its 23rd annual academic lecture to be delivered by Father John Baldovin, S.J. at 7 PM on May 10, 2023. This livestreamed lecture, entitled, *Making the City a Church: Liturgical Processions in Constantinople from the Sixth to the Tenth Centuries*, is to study the mobile character of ancient Constantinopolitan Christian worship and the processions of Byzantine stationary liturgy. This will shed light on the liturgy itself,

popular piety, and the relation of liturgy to the surrounding culture.

All are welcome to attend this lecture virtually on Wednesday, May 10, at 7:00 PM via the seminary website (www.bcs.edu). The lecture can also be accessed live or at a later time from archives on the B.C.S. YouTube channel.

Father John F. Baldovin, SJ, is Professor of Historical and Liturgical Theology at the Boston College School of Theology and Ministry. He is a priest of the USA-East Province of the Society of Jesus. He received his B.A. from the College of the Holy Cross; an M.Div. from

Weston School of Theology, and M.A., M.Phil, and PhD from Yale University.

Father Baldovin served on the advisory committee for the Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy of the U.S.C.C.B. (1989-1993). He is past president of the North American Academy of Liturgy as well as the international ecumenical *Societas Liturgica*. He is a member of the Board of Directors of the journal, *Theological Studies*, with his fields of expertise being history and theology of the liturgy, sacramental theology, and the theology of ministry. Among his numerous publications is *The Urban Character of Christian Worship: The Origins,*

Development and Meaning of Stationary Liturgy (Pontifical Institute of Oriental Studies, 1987).

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



"MAKING THE CITY A CHURCH"

Byzantine Catholic Seminary's Saints Cyril and Methodius
Lecture Series to be Livestreamed May 10, 2023

EASTERN CATHOLIC BISHOPS GATHER IN SAINT LOUIS

Text and photo: Bishop Bohdan (Danylo) of the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Saint Josaphat in Parma

Most of the Eastern Catholic Bishops of the United States gathered in St. Louis, Missouri, March 22-23 to discuss issues of common concern including catechesis, evangelization efforts, and temporal issues. Participants included Ukrainian Catholic, Byzantine, Maronite, Melkite, Syro-Malabar, and Chaldean bishops.

Archbishop Borys Gudziak made a presentation to the bishops on the situation in Ukraine and the Metropolia Humanitarian Aid Fund. The bishops present pledged their spiritual solidarity with the suffering people of Ukraine, and their financial support. They issued a joint appeal for peace in Ukraine. A Ukrainian Catholic Divine Liturgy was celebrated in the evening of March 22 in the Cathedral Basilica of St. Louis with Archbishop Borys presiding. St. Louis Archbishop Mitchell Rozanski gave a stirring homily.

Bishop Bohdan Danylo of the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of St. Josaphat in Parma presented the 2030 Pastoral Program of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church 'The Hope to Which the Lord

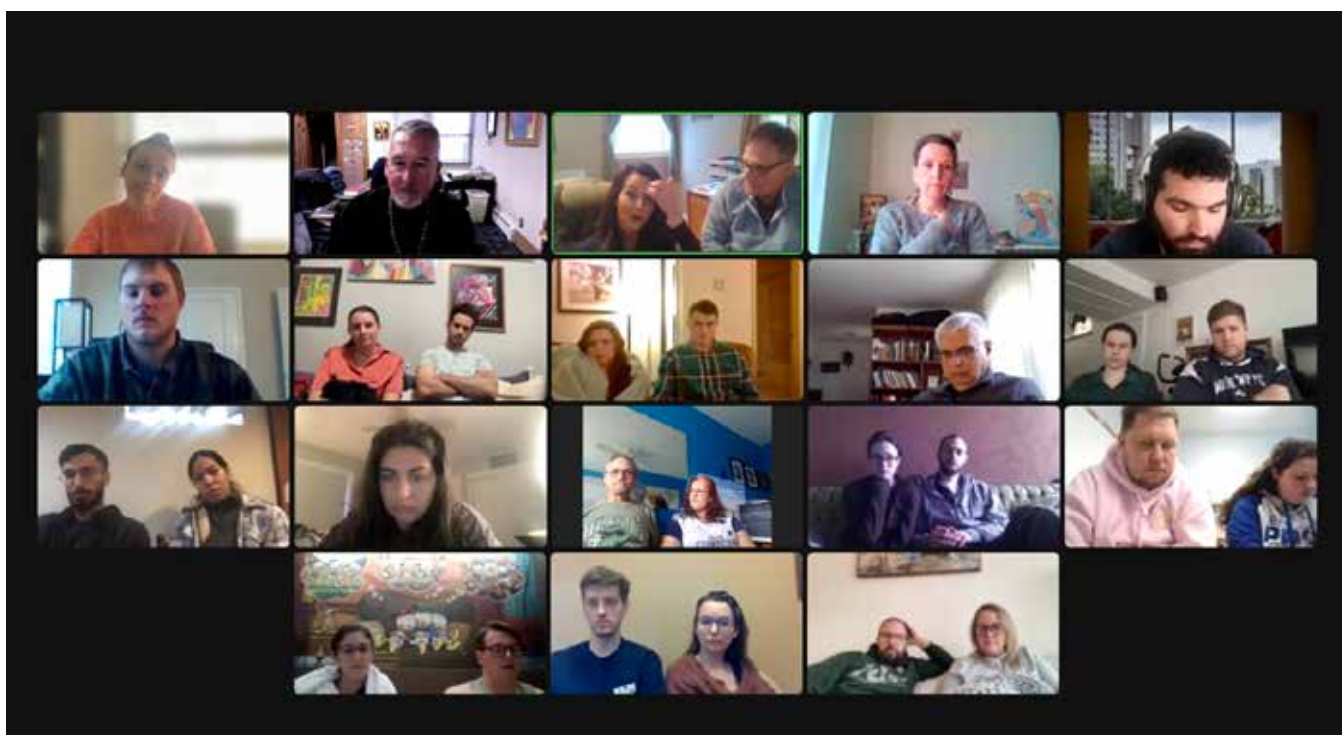
Calls Us' and provided bishops with materials for its implementation. He focused on three points: closeness and practical attention to the poor and marginalized, the path to curing wounds and healing traumas, and the Christian family – a domestic Church.

The group thanked Bishop Kurt Burnette of the Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Passaic, for his leadership during the last six years. At that meeting, the bishops chose a new board. Bishop Bohdan Danylo was elected as the new president of the association of Eastern Catholic Bishops. Vice-president will be Bishop Frank Yohanna Kalabat of the Chaldean Eparchy of St. Thomas in Detroit. Bishop Paul Chomnycky of the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Stamford will serve as secretary, and Bishop Francois Beyrouti of the Melkite Eparchy of Newton – as treasurer. Bishop Kurt Burnette is a trustee of the Eastern Catholic Association.

The Eastern Catholic Bishops will gather as a group in November at the annual meeting of all Catholic Bishops in the United States, and again next March in St. Louis.



Participants of the meeting: Most Rev. Frank Yohanna Kalabat, Bishop of the Chaldean Eparchy of St. Thomas in Detroit; Most Rev. William Skurla, Metropolitan Archbishop of the Byzantine Catholic Archeparchy of Pittsburgh; Most Rev. Kurt Burnette, Bishop of the Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Passaic; Most Rev. Francois Beyrouti, Bishop of the Melkite Eparchy of Newton; Most Rev. Nicholas Samra, Emeritus Bishop of the Melkite Eparchy of Newton; Most Rev. Joy Alappatt, Bishop of the Syro-Malabar Eparchy of St. Thomas; Most Rev. Paul Chomnycky, Bishop of the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Stamford; Most Rev. Borys Gudziak, Metropolitan Archbishop of the Ukrainian Catholic Archeparchy of Philadelphia; Most Rev. Bohdan Danylo, Bishop of the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of St. Josaphat in Parma; Most Rev. Elias Zaidan, Bishop of the Maronite Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon in Saint Louis; Most Rev. Gregory Mansour, Bishop of the Maronite Eparchy of St. Maron in New York.



CROWNED IN LOVE

Twelve couples from around the Eparchy gathered virtually on Saturday, February 25, to participate in "Crowned in Love," a marriage preparation program sponsored by the New

Jersey Synccellate. Father Jack Custer led the couples through a reflection on the Epistle and Gospel passages read as part

of the Rite of Matrimony, highlighting how the sacrament invites them to have their love transformed by participation in Jesus' sacrificial love.

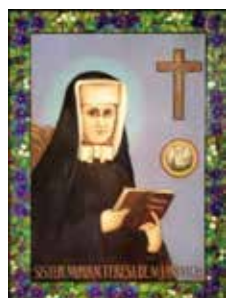
Lisanne and Michael Castagno presented Catholic teaching on marital love as an invitation to bond with each other

and cooperate with God in the creation of new life. They also introduced the couples to the principles of Natural Family Planning. They have ministered to youth and families in the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Philadelphia for many years.

Ann Koshute, a theologian specializing in marriage and family, described how prayer, worship, hospitality, generosity, thanksgiving and contrition can fortify a marriage and create a "domestic Church" that makes a place for God in daily life.

Father Tom Shubeck, a practicing psychologist, offered practical advice for good communication as a basis for a healthy marriage. Prior to the Zoom session, Father Tom also administered a couples' compatibility inventory and discussed the results with each couple individually.

Participants represented parishes in Passaic, Newark, Rahway, and Trenton NJ; New York City and White Plains, NY; Philadelphia and Swoyersville, PA; and Annandale, VA.



First Annual Pilgrimage in Honor Of Blessed Miriam Teresa Demjanovich

Sunday 7 May 2023

Holy Family Chapel of the Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth
The Location of Blessed Miriam Teresa's Shrine
2 Convent Road Morristown, NJ 07960
Google Map Link: <https://maps.google.com/>

- 1:00pm Praying the four mysteries of the Holy Rosary
- Confessions available
- 3:00pm Divine Mercy Chaplet
- 4:00pm Byzantine Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom
- Followed by Moleben (prayer service) Intercessions to Blessed Miriam Teresa
- Anointing with Holy Oil for healing
- Refreshments following

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**DOCTRINAL NOTE ON THE MORAL LIMITS TO
TECHNOLOGICAL MANIPULATION OF THE HUMAN BODY**

*Committee on Doctrine
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops*

1. Modern technology offers an ever-increasing range of means—chemical, surgical, genetic—for intervening in the functioning of the human body, as well as for modifying its appearance. These technological developments have provided the ability to cure many human maladies and promise to cure many more. This has been a great boon to humanity. Modern technology, however, produces possibilities not only for helpful interventions, but also for interventions that are injurious to the true flourishing of the human person. Careful moral discernment is needed to determine which possibilities should be realized and which should not, in order to promote the good of the human person. To do this discernment, it is necessary to employ criteria that respect the created order inscribed in our human nature.

THE NATURAL ORDER

2. A fundamental tenet of the Christian faith is that there is an order in the natural world that was designed by its Creator and that this created order is good (Gen 1:31; Ps 19:1ff.). The Church has always affirmed the essential goodness of the natural order and called on us to respect it. The Second Vatican Council taught: “From the fact of being created, every thing possesses its own stability, truth and goodness, and its own laws and order, which should be respected by us in recognizing the methods which are appropriate to the various sciences and arts.”¹ Pope Benedict XVI explained that the natural world has an “inbuilt order,” a “grammar” that “sets forth ends and

¹ Second Vatican Council, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 36; in *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, ed. Norman P. Tanner, S.J. (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1990).

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criteria for its wise use, not its reckless exploitation.”² Pope Francis has warned against a “technological paradigm” that treats the natural world as “something formless, completely open to manipulation.”³ He observes that human beings have always been intervening in nature,

but for a long time this meant being in tune with and respecting the possibilities offered by the things themselves. It was a matter of receiving what nature itself allowed, as if from its own hand. Now, by contrast, we are the ones to lay our hands on things, attempting to extract everything possible from them while frequently ignoring or forgetting the reality in front of us.⁴

3. What is true of creation as a whole is true of human nature in particular: there is an order in human nature that we are called to respect. In fact, human nature deserves utmost respect since humanity occupies a singular place in the created order, being created in the image of God (Gen 1:27). To find fulfillment as human persons, to find true happiness, we must respect that order. We did not create human nature; it is a gift from a loving Creator. Nor do we “own” our human nature, as if it were something that we are free to make use of in any way we please. Thus, genuine respect for human dignity requires that decisions about the use of technology be guided by genuine respect for this created order.

4. A crucial aspect of the order of nature created by God is the body-soul unity of each human person. Throughout her history, the Church has opposed dualistic conceptions of the human person that do not regard the body as an intrinsic part of the human person, as if the soul were essentially complete in itself and the body were merely an instrument used by the soul.⁵ In opposition to dualisms both ancient and modern, the Church has always maintained that, while

² Pope Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Caritas in Veritate* (2009), no. 48 (https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20090629_caritas-in-veritate.html).

³ Pope Francis, Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'* (2015), no. 106 (https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_encyclica-laudato-si.html).

⁴ Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*, no. 106.

⁵ While in ancient and medieval thought dualism was typically expressed in terms of soul and body, in modern thought it is often expressed in terms of mind and body.

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there is a distinction between the soul and the body, *both* are constitutive of what it means to be human, since spirit and matter, in human beings, “are not two natures united, but rather their union forms a single nature.”⁶ The soul does not come into existence on its own and somehow happen to be in this body, as if it could just as well be in a different body. A soul can never be in another body, much less be in the wrong body. *This* soul only comes into existence together with *this* body. What it means to be a human person necessarily includes bodiliness. “Human beings are physical beings sharing a world with other physical beings.”⁷

5. Human bodiliness is, in turn, intrinsically connected with human sexual differentiation. Just as every human person necessarily has a body, so also human bodies, like those of other mammals, are sexually differentiated as male or female: “Male and female he created them” (Gen 1:27).⁸ Saint John Paul II reminded us that, in the Book of Genesis, we learn that “Man is created ‘from the very beginning’ as male and female: the life of all humanity—whether of small communities or of society as a whole—is marked by this primordial duality.”⁹ The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* affirms: “Man and woman have been *created*, which is to say, *willed* by God: on the one hand, in perfect equality as human persons; on the other, in their respective beings as man and woman. ‘Being man’ or ‘being woman’ is a reality which is good and willed by God.”¹⁰

⁶ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 365 (https://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_PIB.HTM): “The unity of soul and body is so profound that one has to consider the soul to be the ‘form’ of the body: i.e., it is because of its spiritual soul that the body made of matter becomes a living, human body; spirit and matter, in man, are not two natures united, but rather their union forms a single nature.”

⁷ International Theological Commission, *Communion and Stewardship: Human Persons Created in the Image of God* (2002), no. 26 (https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20040723_communion-stewardship_en.html).

⁸ Persons affected by Disorders of Sexual Development do not fall outside the two categories of male and female, but they do exhibit ambiguous or abnormal indicators of sexual difference, so that the sex of their bodies is difficult to determine, though not impossible for modern medical and genetic techniques.

⁹ Saint Pope John Paul II, *Letter to Families* (1994), no. 6 (https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/letters/1994/documents/hf_jp-ii_let_02021994_families.html). Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 2333.

¹⁰ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 369.

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Just as bodiliness is a fundamental aspect of human existence, so is either “being a man” or “being a woman” a fundamental aspect of existence as a human being, expressing a person’s unitive and procreative finality. The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith insists that

the importance and the meaning of sexual difference, as a reality deeply inscribed in man and woman, needs to be noted. “Sexuality characterizes man and woman not only on the physical level, but also on the psychological and spiritual, making its mark on each of their expressions.” It cannot be reduced to a pure and insignificant biological fact, but rather “is a fundamental component of personality, one of its modes of being, of manifestation, of communicating with others, of feeling, of expressing and of living human love.” This capacity to love – reflection and image of God who is Love – is disclosed in the spousal character of the body, in which the masculinity or femininity of the person is expressed.¹¹

6. In our contemporary society there are those who do not share this conception of the human person. Pope Francis has spoken about an ideology that promotes “a personal identity and emotional intimacy radically separated from the biological difference between male and female,” in which “human identity becomes the choice of the individual, one which can also change over time.”¹² In response to this, Pope Francis affirmed:

It needs to be emphasized that “biological sex and the socio-cultural role of sex (gender) can be distinguished but not separated.” ... It is one thing to be understanding of human weakness and the complexities of life, and another to accept ideologies that attempt to sunder what are inseparable aspects of reality. Let us not fall into the sin of trying to replace the Creator. We are creatures, and not omnipotent. Creation is prior to us and must be received as a gift. At the same time, we are called to protect our humanity, and this means, in the first place, accepting it and respecting it as it was created.¹³

¹¹ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Letter on the Collaboration of Men and Woman in the Church and in the World* (2004), no. 8 (https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20040731_collaboration_en.html); quotations from Congregation for Catholic Education, *Educational Guidance in Human Love: Outlines for Sex Education* (1983), no. 5 and no. 4, respectively.

¹² Pope Francis, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* (2016), no. 56; quoting the *Relatio Finalis* of the Synod on the Family (2015), no. 8 (https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20160319_amoris-laetitia.html).

¹³ Pope Francis, *Amoris Laetitia*, no. 56; quoting the *Relatio Finalis*, no. 58.

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TECHNOLOGICAL INTERVENTIONS

7. The human person, body and soul, man or woman, has a fundamental order and finality whose integrity must be respected. Because of this order and finality, neither patients nor physicians nor researchers nor any other persons have unlimited rights over the body; they must respect the order and finality inscribed in the embodied person. Pope Pius XII taught that the patient “is not the absolute master of himself, of his body, of his mind. He cannot dispose of himself just as he pleases.”¹⁴ The Pope went on to affirm that, with regard to the faculties and powers of one’s human nature, a patient “is the user and not the owner” and thus “does not have an unlimited power to effect acts of destruction or of mutilation of a kind that is anatomical or functional.”¹⁵ The body is not an object, a mere tool at the disposal of the soul, one that each person may dispose of according to his or her own will, but it is a constitutive part of the human subject, a gift to be received, respected, and cared for as something intrinsic to the person. As Pope Francis affirmed: “The acceptance of our bodies as God’s gift is vital for welcoming and accepting the entire world as a gift from the Father and our common home, whereas thinking that we enjoy absolute power over our own bodies turns, often subtly, into thinking that we enjoy absolute power over creation.”¹⁶

8. There are essentially two scenarios recognized by the Church’s moral tradition in which technological interventions on the human body may be morally justified: 1) when such

¹⁴ Pope Pius XII, “Discours aux participants au Congrès International d’Histopathologie du Système Nerveux,” 14 September 1952 (https://www.vatican.va/content/pius-xii/fr/speeches/1952/documents/hf_p-xii_spe_19520914_istopatologia.html). See also his “Discours à la VIII^e Assemblée de l’Association Médicale Mondiale,” 30 September 1954 (https://www.vatican.va/content/pius-xii/fr/speeches/1954/documents/hf_p-xii_spe_19540930_viii-assemblea-medica.html).

¹⁵ Pope Pius XII, “Discours,” 14 September 1952.

¹⁶ Pope Francis, *Laudato Si’*, no. 155. In the same paragraph, Pope Francis quotes Pope Benedict XVI, who asserted: “Man too has a nature that he must respect and that he cannot manipulate at will” (Address to the Bundestag, 22 September 2011 (https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2011/september/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20110922_reichstag-berlin.html)).

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interventions aim to repair a defect in the body; 2) when the sacrifice of a part of the body is necessary for the welfare of the whole body. These kinds of technological interventions respect the fundamental order and finality inherent in the human person. However, there are other technological interventions that aim neither to repair some defect in the body nor to sacrifice a part for the sake of the whole but, rather, aim to alter the fundamental order of the body. Such interventions do not respect the order and finality inscribed in the human person.

REPAIRING A DEFECT IN THE BODY

9. Much of the practice of medicine involves using the available technology to repair defects in the body, usually when it has been affected by some injury or ailment.¹⁷ The intention to repair defects in the body shows respect for the fundamental order of the body, which is commendable. In fact, each of us has a duty to care for our bodies. The *Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services* affirm that “every person is obliged to use ordinary means¹⁸ to preserve his or her health.”¹⁹ This obligation no longer holds, however, when the benefits of the intervention are no longer proportionate to the burdens involved.²⁰ Thus, judging whether or not

¹⁷ Sometimes the technology is used not to return the body to a previous state but to compensate for some lack of normal development in the body.

¹⁸ Use of extraordinary means is never morally obligatory. Cf. Pope Pius XII, “Discours du Pape Pie XII en réponse à trois questions de morale médicale sur la réanimation,” 24 November 1957 (https://www.vatican.va/content/pius-xii/fr/speeches/1957/documents/hf_p-xii_spe_19571124_rianimazione.html); Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, “Commentary on the Responses to Certain Questions of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Concerning Artificial Nutrition and Hydration,” 1 August 2007 (https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20070801_nota-commento_en.html).

¹⁹ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services*, Sixth Edition (2018), no. 32 (<https://www.usccb.org/about/doctrine/ethical-and-religious-directives/upload/ethical-religious-directives-catholic-health-service-sixth-edition-2016-06.pdf>); cf. no. 56. See also Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Declaration on Euthanasia* (1980), Pt. IV (https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19800505_euthanasia_en.html).

²⁰ USCCB, *Ethical and Religious Directives*, no. 32: “...no person should be obliged to submit to a health care procedure that the person has judged, with a free and informed conscience, not to provide a reasonable hope of benefit without imposing excessive risks and burdens on the patient or excessive expense to family or community”.

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a reparative medical intervention is morally licit requires a consideration not only of the object of the act and of the intention in undertaking it, but also of the consequences of the action, which would include an evaluation of the likelihood of discernible benefit to the person and a comparison of expected benefits with expected burdens. Sometimes the expected benefits (such as improved health or function) will outweigh the expected burdens (such as cost or physical pain involved in the procedure), but sometimes they will not.

10. A similar analysis is involved in considering the morality of interventions undertaken to improve the body not in terms of its functioning but rather in terms of its appearance, which can involve either restoring appearance or improving it. In this regard, Pope Pius XII acknowledged that the physical beauty of a person “is in itself a good, though subordinated to others that are much higher, and consequently precious and desirable.”²¹ He goes on to point out that physical beauty “does not stand at the summit of the scale of values, for it is a good that is neither spiritual nor essential”; indeed, it is “a good, but a corporal one ... As a good and a gift from God, it must be esteemed and cared for, without, however, requiring recourse to extraordinary means as a duty.”²² Since the moral analysis requires that the expected benefits of a procedure be proportionate to the expected burdens and risks, a higher level of burden and risk can be justified in the case of someone who seeks to repair defects in order to achieve a normal appearance than in the case of someone who already has a normal appearance and who, as Pope Pius XII put it, seeks “the perfection of

²¹ Pope Pius XII, “Discorso ai partecipanti al X Congresso Nazionale della Società Italiana di chirurgia plastica,” 4 Oct. 1958, III (https://www.vatican.va/content/pius-xii/it/speeches/1958/documents/hf_p-xii_spe_19581004_chirurgia-plastica.html).

²² Pope Pius XII, “Discorso,” 4 October 1958, III.

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his or her features.”²³ Still, both of these could be morally licit, if undertaken with the correct intention and in the correct circumstances.²⁴

THE SACRIFICE OF A PART FOR THE SAKE OF THE WHOLE

11. Pope Pius XII’s predecessor, Pope Pius XI, also stressed the need to respect the fundamental order of the body, affirming that, as a rule, one is not allowed “to destroy or mutilate” members of one’s body. At the same time, however, he affirmed that there can be exceptions when the welfare of the body as a whole is at stake.

Christian doctrine establishes, and the light of human reason makes it most clear, that private individuals have no other power over the members of their bodies than that which pertains to their natural ends; and they are not free to destroy or mutilate their members, or in any other way render themselves unfit for their natural functions, *except when no other provision can be made for the good of the whole body.*²⁵

This teaching was further developed by Pope Pius XII, who explained that

each particular organ is subordinated to the body as a whole and must yield to it in case of conflict. Therefore, the one who has been given the use of the whole organism has the right to sacrifice a particular organ, if its retention or its functioning causes significant harm to the whole, harm that cannot possibly be avoided any other way.²⁶

12. Pope Pius XII stipulated three conditions that must be fulfilled for a medical intervention “that involves anatomical or functional mutilation” to be morally permissible:

First, the retention or functioning of a particular organ in the organism as a whole causes serious damage to it or constitutes a threat.

²³ Pope Pius XII, “Discorso,” 4 October 1958, III.

²⁴ Pope Pius XII provides some examples of incorrect intentions, such as increasing one’s power of seduction or protecting a guilty party from justice. He also gives as an example of an illicit cosmetic intervention one “that causes damage to the regular functions of the physical organs” (“Discorso,” 4 October 1958, III).

²⁵ Pope Pius XI, Encyclical Letter *Casti Connubii* (1930), no. 71 (https://www.vatican.va/content/pius-xi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_19301231_casti-connubii.html). Emphasis added.

²⁶ Pope Pius XII, “Discours aux Participants au XXVI^e Congrès Organisé par la Société Italienne d’Urologie,” 8 October 1953, I (https://www.vatican.va/content/pius-xii/fr/speeches/1953/documents/hf_p-xii_spe_19531008_congresso-urologia.html). Cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* II-II, q. 65, a. 1; I-II, q. 90, a. 2.

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Second, this damage cannot be avoided, or at least appreciably diminished, otherwise than by the mutilation in question and the effectiveness of the mutilation is well assured.

Finally, it can reasonably be expected that the negative effect, i.e., the mutilation and its consequences, will be compensated for by the positive effect: removal of the danger for the whole organism, lessening of suffering, etc.²⁷

These conditions ensure proper respect for the fundamental order of the human person in that they establish that the sacrifice of the part of the body is not itself what is sought, that this is truly a last resort that is necessary for the welfare of the body, there being no other options for securing the welfare of the body as a whole.

ATTEMPTS TO ALTER THE FUNDAMENTAL ORDER OF THE HUMAN BODY

13. While the foregoing two types of technological interventions take the basic order of the human person as a given and do not intend to alter it, there is another type of intervention that regards this order as unsatisfactory in some way and proposes a more desirable order, a redesigned order. Some proposals for genetic engineering fit into this category: not those that aim to repair some defect, but those that are non-therapeutic manipulations of human genetic material. The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith has explained that “procedures used on somatic cells for strictly therapeutic purposes are in principle morally licit” since these procedures “seek to restore the normal genetic configuration of the patient or to counter damage caused by genetic anomalies or those related to other pathologies.”²⁸ By contrast, genetic engineering “for purposes other than medical treatment” is not morally permissible.²⁹ Here the intention is to replace the

²⁷ Pope Pius XII, “Discours,” 8 October 1953, I.

²⁸ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Instruction on Certain Bioethical Questions (Dignitas Personae)* (2008), no. 26 (https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20081208_dignitas-personae_en.html). The Congregation adds the qualifications that the patient must not be “exposed to risks to his health or physical integrity which are excessive or disproportionate to the gravity of the pathology for which a cure is sought” and that the patient or his legitimate representative must give informed consent.

²⁹ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Instruction on Certain Bioethical Questions (Dignitas Personae)*, no. 27.

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natural order with what is imagined to be a new and better order. The Congregation warns that “in the attempt to create a new type of human being one can recognize an ideological element in which man tries to take the place of his Creator.”³⁰ In a similar way, some proposals for “cybernetic enhancement” also aim to redesign the fundamental order of the human being and to produce a new type of human being by replacing some or all³¹ bodily organs with artificial devices. These kinds of technological interventions are, in most cases, currently in the developmental stage or are under theoretical consideration.

14. What is widely in practice today, however, and what is of great concern, is the range of technological interventions advocated by many in our society as treatments for what is termed “gender dysphoria” or “gender incongruence.”³² These interventions involve the use of surgical or chemical techniques that aim to exchange the sex characteristics of a patient’s body for those of the opposite sex or for simulations thereof. In the case of children, the exchange of sex characteristics is prepared by the administration of chemical puberty blockers, which arrest the natural course of puberty and prevent the development of some sex characteristics in the first place.

15. These technological interventions are not morally justified either as attempts to repair a defect in the body or as attempts to sacrifice a part of the body for the sake of the whole. First, they do not repair a defect in the body: there is no disorder in the body that needs to be addressed; the bodily organs are normal and healthy. Second, the interventions do not sacrifice one part of

³⁰ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Instruction on Certain Bioethical Questions (Dignitas Personae)*, no. 27.

³¹ Some even envision transferring what they imagine to be the essence of the human person from the brain into a computer, thereby leaving bodily existence behind altogether.

³² The term “gender dysphoria” was introduced in 2013 in the fifth edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (Arlington, VA: American Psychiatric Association, 2013), 452-53. The term “gender incongruence” was introduced in 2022 in the eleventh revision of the *International Classification of Diseases* published by the World Health Organization (<https://icd.who.int/browse11/l-m/en/#/http%3a%2f%2fid.who.int%2fid%2fentity%2f411470068>).

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the body for the good of the whole. When a part of the body is legitimately sacrificed for the sake of the whole body, whether by the entire removal or substantial reconfiguration of a bodily organ, the removal or reconfiguring of the bodily organ is reluctantly tolerated as the only way to address a serious threat to the body. Here, by contrast, the removal or reconfiguring is itself the desired result.³³

16. Instead, rather than to repair some defect in the body or to sacrifice a part for the sake of the whole, these interventions are intended to transform the body so as to make it take on as much as possible the form of the opposite sex, contrary to the natural form of the body. They are attempts to alter the fundamental order and finality of the body and to replace it with something else.

17. There is a wide range of interventions used for this purpose, corresponding to the variety of ways in which sexual differentiation affects various parts of the body. Currently, not all persons who seek this kind of treatment undergo all the interventions available, either because they are unable to do so, or they choose not to do so for some reason; instead, they typically undergo some limited selection of the available interventions. These interventions differ in the magnitude of the changes brought about in the body. They are alike, however, in that they all have the same basic purpose: that of transforming sex characteristics of the body into those of the opposite sex.

18. Such interventions, thus, do not respect the fundamental order of the human person as an intrinsic unity of body and soul, with a body that is sexually differentiated. Bodiliness is a fundamental aspect of human existence, and so is the sexual differentiation of the body. Catholic health care services must not perform interventions, whether surgical or chemical, that aim to

³³ With some procedures of this category, the removal of the organ is directly intended in order to allow for its replacement with a simulation of the corresponding organ of the opposite sex; in other procedures, the removal of the organ is directly intended because the absence of the organ is a characteristic of the opposite sex; in still others, the reconfiguring of the organ is directly intended in order to make the organ resemble as much as possible the corresponding organ of the opposite sex.

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transform the sexual characteristics of a human body into those of the opposite sex or take part in the development of such procedures. They must employ all appropriate resources to mitigate the suffering of those who struggle with gender incongruence, but the means used must respect the fundamental order of the human body. Only by using morally appropriate means do healthcare providers show full respect for the dignity of each human person.

CONCLUSION: MORAL LIMITS TO THE TECHNOLOGICAL MANIPULATION OF THE HUMAN BODY

19. The use of technology in order to manipulate the natural world has a history that goes back to the earliest use of tools. What is different in our day is the greatly expanded capabilities that modern technology offers and the rapid development of ever-new possibilities. As the boundaries of what is technologically possible continue to expand, it is imperative to identify moral criteria to guide our use of technology. As the range of what we *can* do expands, we must ask what we *should* or *should not* do. An indispensable criterion in making such determinations is the fundamental order of the created world. Our use of technology must respect that order.

20. To be sure, many people are sincerely looking for ways to respond to real problems and real suffering.³⁴ Certain approaches that do not respect the fundamental order appear to offer solutions. To rely on such approaches for solutions, however, is a mistake. An approach that does not respect the fundamental order will never truly solve the problem in view; in the end, it will only create further problems. The Hippocratic tradition in medicine calls upon all healthcare providers first and foremost to “do no harm.” Any technological intervention that does not accord with the fundamental order of the human person as a unity of body and soul, including the sexual difference inscribed in the body, ultimately does not help but, rather, harms the human person.

³⁴ With regard to those who identify as transgender or non-binary, there is a range of pastoral issues that need to be addressed, but that cannot be addressed in this document.

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21. Particular care should be taken to protect children and adolescents, who are still maturing and who are not capable of providing informed consent. As Pope Francis has taught, young people in particular

need to be helped to accept their own body as it was created, for "thinking that we enjoy absolute power over our own bodies turns, often subtly, into thinking that we enjoy absolute power over creation... An appreciation of our body as male or female is also necessary for our own self-awareness in an encounter with others different from ourselves. In this way we can joyfully accept the specific gifts of another man or woman, the work of God the Creator, and find mutual enrichment."³⁵

22. The search for solutions to problems of human suffering must continue, but it should be directed toward solutions that truly promote the flourishing of the human person in his or her bodily integrity. As new treatments are developed, they too should be evaluated according to sound moral principles grounded in the good of the human person as a subject with his or her own integrity. Catholic health care services are called to provide a model of promoting the authentic good of the human person. To fulfill this duty, all who collaborate in Catholic health care ministry must make every effort, using all appropriate means at their disposal, to provide the best medical care, as well as Christ's compassionate accompaniment, to all patients, no matter who they may be or from what condition they may be suffering. The mission of Catholic health care services is nothing less than to carry on the healing ministry of Jesus, to provide healing at every level, physical, mental, and spiritual.³⁶

USCCB Committee on Doctrine

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Most Reverend Kevin C. Rhoades
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Most Reverend William E. Lori
Archbishop of Baltimore
Bishop Consultant

Doctrinal Note on the Moral Limits to Technological Manipulation of the Human Body is a statement of the Committee on Doctrine. It was authorized by the USCCB Administrative Committee at its March 2023 meeting. It has been directed for publication by the undersigned.

Rev. Michael J. K. Fuller
General Secretary, USCCB

³⁵ Pope Francis, Encyclical Letter *Amoris Laetitia*, no. 285; quotation from his Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'*, no. 155.

³⁶ See USCCB, *Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services*, General Introduction.

BISHOP KURT PRESENTS NEW STIPEND CAMPAIGN TO AID RUTHENIAN PRIESTS IN UKRAINE



Dear friends,

I pray that you and your family are safe, and I pray that you are experiencing a grace filled Great Lent and we will celebrate the Easter in a beautiful manner together this year.

Bishop Nil Lushchak, the bishop of our mother church in Mukachevo, Uzhhorod, has sent a heartfelt plea for more stipends for priests. The priests are giving away their own food and money to care for refugees and still have families of their own to feed and clothe. They also care for women with families whose husbands have been killed. The cost of heating has skyrocketed because of missile attacks on the utilities. Many priests with families receive no salary, only stipends. I would very much like to continue helping these priests through this difficult time. I believe that stipends for Divine Liturgies have many advantages. Here are some key points:

- 1) A stipend for a Divine Liturgy goes directly to the priest. No one is allowed to take a fee or percentage from the stipend by Church law.
- 2) The Eparchy of Passaic will pay the administrative costs, so that 100% goes to a priest and his family who need the help.
- 3) Your name will not be sent with the stipend. Only the nature of the request and initials of the person to be prayed for.
- 4) People in need are happier if they can do something in return for their assistance.
- 5) Prayers for the dead are an ancient and laudable custom.
- 6) Prayers for a sinner will not be wasted. God hears them and answers them at the best time.
- 7) In other European countries, the government pays the priests, not so in our mother eparchy.
- 8) There is no limit to the number of liturgies you may request, stipend forms are available online or through your pastor.
- 9) NB Stipends are not tax deductible. You will receive a thank you, but not a "tax letter".

If you choose to participate, God will bless you doubly, for the prayers and also for helping those in need. I commend you to the care of the all holy Mother of God.

Your servant,

Most Rev. Kurt Burnette
Bishop of Passaic

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* Beginning January 1, 2023, all U.S. citizens traveling to the 26 Schengen Zone countries will need to register with ETIAS. The information is very new and once we will know details, we will update the information.

RECOMMENDED AGE: 18+ (THOSE BETWEEN 16-18 INTERESTED, PLEASE CONTACT FR. LUKAS MITRO: FRLMITRO@PARMA.ORG)

A REFLECTION ON CREATIVITY

By Sister Seraphim Olsafsky, OSBM

I've always felt the urge to play with colors. The rich hues of God's beauty move my spirit. Dabbling in paints and dipping a brush into a rich gold or sublime magenta is not only a joy but an experience of losing track of everything- time, self, worries and concerns. It's almost like entering another world.

Many people say, "I'm not a creative person." Many believe that creativity belongs only to a group of artists, musicians, writers and architects. This is a fallacy. All of us are called to be creative because we are made in the image and likeness of God, the Ultimate Creator. From the moment we were called into being, this gift has been given to each of us to some degree. We are called to develop it, and to use it in the building of God's kingdom.

Creativity is an essential part of what it means to be human. It is also a difficult concept to define. Countless descriptions and quotes about creativity exist. The very perspective you have on life can be your "creative gold". This gift has to be nurtured. Some of the ways to do this are by cultivating a spirit of play and child-like wonder; living a life that inspires you; and spending time in quiet solitude. Creativity emerges from our deep inner world. Set aside some time to be still, and allow ideas to simply flow.

Try something new, something different- write a brief story, bake something out of the ordinary, take a class at the local library or college, get involved in an activity you would not ordinarily do. Creativity exists in every dimension of life. It may be as simple as arranging wildflowers for the table, creating a new recipe, cutting the lawn in a unique design, or working on a difficult equation or an innovative computer program. Teaching, managing, organizing, decorating, developing projects- all offer multiple opportunities for creativity to flourish. It will take work but your creative spirit will ultimately win.

The author of *The Book Thief* rewrote the first part of his very popular novel 150 to 200 times. It is obvious creativity comes with a price: a great work ethic and dedication. The reward is beyond measure, and holds a deep sense of the power of the Infinite Creator working within you.

The Community requested that I select several of my paintings and create a packet of all occasion greeting cards - birthday, congratulations, sympathy, and wellness. Inside of each card is an inspirational message and a verse from the Bible. VICNAJA PAMJAT! is on the back of the sympathy card and MNOHAJA L'ITA! BLAHAJA L'ITA! is on the back of the wellness card.



These all-occasion cards are sold in a package of ten. Each card is 4 1/4" x 5 1/2". The proceeds from the sale of the cards benefit the Sisters of Saint Basil.

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LIFE, LOVE, AND THE HUMAN PERSON

By Ann M. Koshute, MTS

FASTING TOWARD RESURRECTION

The Great Fast is a gift to us from the Church, inviting us into deeper prayer and encouraging self-denial. While these practices are meant to be penitential, they are not simply exercises in self-flagellation; that is, the Church doesn't put additional requirements on us as punishment, or to make us feel bad. Instead, more prayer, fasting, denying simple pleasures, and sacrificing our time and treasure are all oriented toward preparing us for the coming joy of the Resurrection. Praying a little more doesn't fulfill a requirement; it helps us to deepen our relationship of love with God. Fasting isn't self-denial for its own sake; it is a way of re-orienting us to what is important, good, and necessary in our lives. Giving alms is not checking a box to show we're "good people;" it is a chance to move outside of ourselves and show love and compassion toward others. It can be very tempting to limit ourselves to "fasting toward a goal," that is, toward the end of the Great Fast, indulge in the rich foods and festivities of Pascha, and simply move on with life. Rather than the lessons and practices of the Fast being limited to a routine we follow out of obligation for forty days out of the year, we should embrace the spirit of the Fast as a roadmap toward our own resurrection in Christ.

The Son of God became man to save us from death as a result of sin. He came to us to teach us how to live, to remind us of our identity as *icons of the Trinity*, and to be *the* example of how we must love one another.

All of this was done by Him gratuitously; a gift undeserved, yet freely given out of love. Jesus ultimately suffered mockery and insults, brutal torture, and an undignified death on the Cross. Just as at His birth there was nowhere for Him to lay His head, except in a stranger's stable, His dead body was placed in a stranger's tomb. Jesus *prayed* for our salvation, *denied Himself* any comfort or respite, and *gave the alms* of His very life for the good of all. And after all of it, He was raised on the third day as a sign that sin and death have no power against God. He was raised from the dead so that you and I would one day be raised, too.

Resurrection – like the forty days of the Fast – is not simply an end-goal to be achieved. As we continue on our pilgrimage through this life, we should keep the desire for resurrection and eternal life with God always before us. But the "spirit of resurrection" should live in us every day, in the way we live our lives, do our work, nurture relationships, and commune with God. Each day, in everything we do, we should ask ourselves, "How am I rising with Christ today?" So often we are tempted to give into the cynicism and bad behavior of the world around us. It's easy to complain about everyone and everything. In our particularly divisive cultural and political landscape, we may be easily pulled into arguments with those we love most (or with strangers online) in ways that can become truly hateful. Does such behavior reflect the risen Christ in us?

If we do, indeed, carry the risen Christ within us, we may then ask, "How am I raising up others?" Recall Jesus on His way to minister to Jairus' sick daughter. A woman with a flow of blood lasting for twelve years reached out to Him, quickly and with the hope that no one would notice. The crowd was thick, and there must have been many people bumping into each other, and into Jesus. Yet He stops and says, "Who has touched my clothes?" (Mark 5:30). Jesus saw those who were inconvenient, the people who "got in the way," or whom others simply ignored. He stopped for them, engaged them in conversation, acknowledged not just their need, but their very personhood. Who are the "inconvenient people" in our lives whom we are called to raise up in Christ?

Finally, we might reflect on our relationship with God, with others, and on how we are living day to day, and ask, "Am I asking God to raise me up from where I am right now?" Complacency is a trap we all fall into from time to time, whether in our work life, our vocation, our friendships, and many other situations. It is that forgetfulness of others, taking people and situations for granted, or just being bored and going through the motions. Sometimes it takes a big

event, or a tragedy, to shake us from our lethargy and make us active participants in life once again. The same is true for the Christian life, and our relationship with God. We pray, fast, and give alms for forty days: obligation fulfilled, reward of ham and chocolate granted, now get back to "real life." It may sound shocking, but in all honesty, every bit of extra prayer, denying ourselves every little treat and pleasure, and giving away tons of money is worth absolutely nothing if we aren't changed by it. The Great Fast is worthless if we have not allowed its practices to make space for God to change us; if we have not, as a result of the Fast, resolved to invite Christ to continue raising us up. We are in need of constant conversion of heart, learning and re-learning what it means to belong to Christ, and continually growing into our identity as children of God. We must never stop pleading, "Jesus, raise me up, and give me the grace to keep from falling."

Christ is Risen! May He be risen in us, giving us the grace to see and raise up others. May we have the humility to recognize that we need Him to raise us up, every moment of every day. **ECL**

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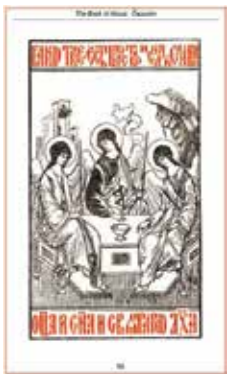
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EASTERN CHRISTIAN PUBLICATIONS ANNOUNCES

The Book of Hours (Časoslov)

This edition of *The Book of the Hours* (Časoslov in Slavonic and *Horologion* in Greek) is an authentic and complete translation of the typical (official) Church Slavonic edition issued in 1950 by the Holy See of Rome for the Ruthenian Churches. The contents, pagination and layout match the original and include:

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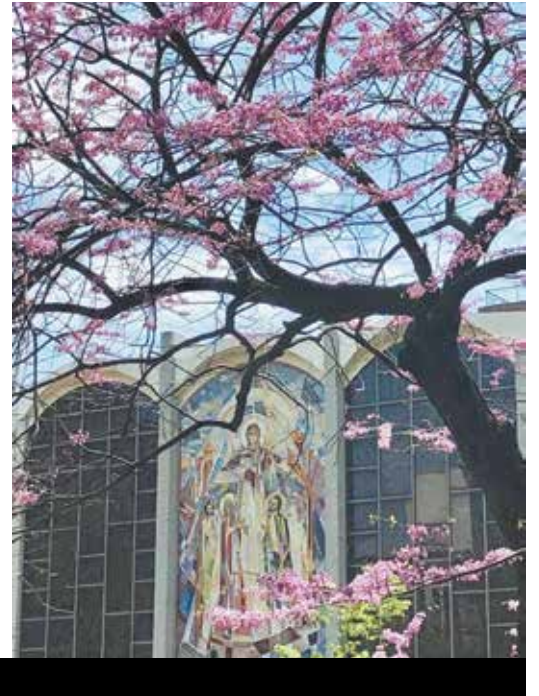
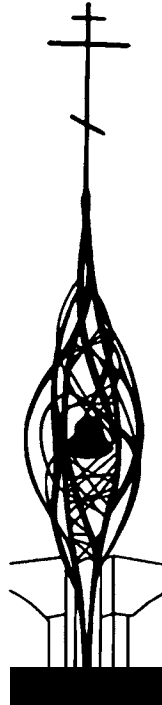
The book is printed in red and black on medium-weight opaque paper, with a black leatherette sewn binding and flexible covers. At 5"x7" and 2" thick, it also matches the original Slavonic edition with approximately 900 pages. The translation has been approved in concordance with the original by Bishop Kurt Burnette of Passaic. Special launch pricing is available at \$60/copy, or \$40/copy for orders of five or more, plus shipping and handling.

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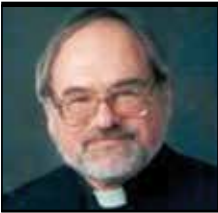


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THE BYZANTINE LITURGY

By Archpriest David Petras, SEOD

BAPTISM: THE SECOND CHANCE FOR SALVATION

Baptism as initiation into faith is conceived as a definite break with sin and a commitment to Christ with one's whole soul, mind and heart. When we make this decision, we are transformed by God's grace to become his children. The act of God likewise is irrevocable and effective, and, as Saint Paul said, "you should put away the old self of your former way of life, corrupted through deceitful desires, and be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and put on the new self, created in God's way in righteousness and holiness of truth." (Ephesians 4:22-24) Children who are as yet unable to make this commitment with their whole being, can still be baptized because of divine grace in the hope that they will grow into the fullness of faith. Saint Maximus the Confessor pointed out that salvation actually is entirely the work of God, our only contribution is our free will as creatures of God.

Because baptism was such a complete decision, in the early Church it was felt that to sin after baptism was a betrayal of God's grace, and the sinner was lost. The Letter to the Hebrews expresses this feeling: "it is impossible in the case of those who have once been enlightened and tasted the heavenly gift and shared in the Holy Spirit and tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, and then have fallen away, to bring them to repentance again." (Hebrews 6:4-6) Certainly, this is not about the many failings of human weakness, but a deliberate and serious sin: a rejection of our baptismal vows. The Church thus incorporated

this revelation into its law and forbids re-baptism.

At the same time, there was another principle of mercy in the gospel of our Lord. There was a constant need for repentance, because we remain sinners before God, as Saint Paul lamented in Romans, "For I do not do the good I want, but I do the evil I do not want." (Romans 7:19) Jesus taught that forgiveness was without limit, for if he told his followers to forgive "seventy times seven," could God be any less generous? The Great Doxology hints at this double struggle: we sing, "Lamb of God, you take away the **sin** of the world, have mercy on us. You take away the **sins** of the world, hear our prayer." The singular sin in the first verse is the state of sin, of rebelliousness against God, destroyed by the obedience we offer to God in baptism, where we are then incorporated into the life of the Trinity by baptism in water and anointing by the Holy Spirit.

The plural sins in the second verse are the acts of iniquity that we actually do, and which can be forgiven only by sincere repentance, confession of sins, and absolution. In fact, in Saint Augustine we can clearly see this distinction of the ways of encountering sin. He distinguishes three kinds of penance: "The first is that of the catechumens desiring to receive baptism ... another penance is daily, that of the Lord's Prayer, 'Forgive us our trespasses ...'" The third is "severe and rich in tears," ... "the state of penitents in the Church, in which they are forbidden to participate in the sac-

rament of the altar by receiving it unworthily, eating and drinking their own condemnation." (Homily 352)

We see in the early fathers that though re-baptism is not possible, that there is a "second plank of salvation after the shipwreck which is the loss of grace." (Catechism of the Catholic Church 1446) The second century father Origen said there is a "hard and laborious remission of sin through penance, which includes a confession of sin and tears which wash one's bed." (*Homily on Leviticus*, 2, 4) The Catechism of the Catholic Church identifies this, "Christ instituted the sacrament of Penance for all sinful members of his Church: above all for those who, since Baptism, have fallen into grave sin, and have thus lost their baptismal grace and wounded ecclesial communion." (§ 1446) We usually call this sacramental mystery "confession," because, for many, the most difficult part of this return to our baptismal grace is to confess our sins to another human being. The official name of this forgiveness of sins committed after baptism is the "sacramental mystery of Penance." It is no longer as severe as it was in the time of Origen. It is not "hard and laborious," but it does require a real change of heart and a humble admission of our failings.

Penance, then, which includes the confession of sins is a second chance for our adoption as children of God after baptism. It is required only for those very serious sins which strip us of our life of Christ and make us unworthy of the family of God. It may be likened to

the parable of the prodigal son, who left his father's house and lived a wasteful life but was yet welcomed back by the Father with great joy. (Luke 15:11-32) God is all-merciful and loving and receives us back. The sins for confession are called in Catholic moral theology, "mortal sins," that is, "deadly sins," from 1 John 5:16-17, for they may bring about the death of the soul. Today, though, there is also a second use of the sacramental mystery of penance. It is for spiritual help and guidance to assist us in living a good life according to our faith. At one time, it was expected that every Christian practice penance and confess their sins, even if only from human weakness before receiving Holy Communion. This is no longer a requirement, for Holy Communion itself is for "the forgiveness of sins and life everlasting," but spiritual direction is an important part of the life in Christ, and many may find it helpful as a grace and support in following Christ. **ECL**



SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

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

HE OPENED THEIR MINDS TO UNDERSTAND THE SCRIPTURES

Twice on the day of His Resurrection, Jesus gave His fearful, doubting disciples a Bible lesson. The first was to Cleopas and Luke, to whom He appeared as they were fleeing Jerusalem on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35). After listening to their distressed retelling of the events of Holy Week, Jesus (whom they did not recognize) exclaimed: "Oh, how foolish you are! How slow of heart to believe all that the prophets spoke! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and enter into his glory? Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, He interpreted to them that what referred to Him in all the scriptures" (24:25-27).

The second lesson was delivered that same night to the eleven Apostles and those gathered with them in the Upper Room (Luke 24:33-47): "He said to them, 'These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and in the Prophets and Psalms must be fulfilled.' And He said to them, 'Thus it is written that the Messiah would suffer and rise from the dead on the third day and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins, would be preached in his name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem'" (24:44-47).

We would love to listen in on the Incarnate Word's explanation of the biblical word, but Saint Luke did not record Jesus' interpretations or even list the

Scripture passages He quoted. Is there a more tantalizing teaser anywhere in the Bible? Fortunately, based on the preaching of the Apostles in the book of Acts and Jesus' own words elsewhere in the Gospels, we can be fairly certain of the main Old Testament clues to the Passion and Resurrection of our Lord. Saint Theophylact of Ohrid assembled just such a list in the 11th century.

The most important text is probably Isaiah 53, which describes a "righteous Servant" of the Lord who is rejected by Israel and killed but whose death serves as an "offering for sin" that "justifies many" and who lives to "see his offspring" (see Acts 8). Psalms 2:7 predicted the collusion of Herod, Pilate, and the Sanhedrin against the Messiah (see Acts 4:25-28). Psalm 16:10 refers to the Lord's three days in the tomb (see Acts 2:31-32) as does Jonah's three days in the belly of the whale, cited by Jesus Himself (Jonah 1:17; Matthew 12:39-40).

Psalm 110 celebrates the trampling of death by the Risen Christ and His exaltation at God's right hand (Matthew 22:44). This Psalm is critical to the Epistle to the Hebrews, which explains Christ's death as the perfect sacrifice for sin offered by Jesus as "a priest according to the order of Melchizedek" (Psalm 110:4; Hebrews 5 and 6).

Psalm 118:22 is one of the most quoted passages in the New Testament (Mat-

thew 21:42; Mark 12:10; Luke 20:17; Acts 4:11; 1 Peter 2:7), predicting Christ's rejection by Jerusalem's leaders and His role as cornerstone of a new Temple, His Body, the Church (Ephesians 2:19-22; I Corinthians 3:16-17;



Icon of the Road to Emmaus

6:19; 2 Corinthians 6:16). The same Psalm is also connected with the Lord's triumphant entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday (118:26-27).

Daniel's vision of "one like a Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven" to receive from God "dominion and glory and a kingdom" that will have no end (Daniel 7:13-14) lies behind Jesus' preferred title, "Son of Man" and was the deciding factor at His trial before the Sanhedrin (Matthew 26:64-65; see also Matthew 24:30 and St Stephen: Acts 7:56).

Two texts in particular from the Law of Moses point to Christ. The first is God's promise to raise up another

"Prophet" like Moses (Deuteronomy 18:15). The other is the account of the bronze serpent raised up on a wooden staff by Moses at God's instructions in order to heal the Israelites of the bite of a poisonous serpent sent by God to

punish their rebelliousness (Numbers 21:4-9). According to the Gospel of Saint John (3:14-15), Jesus cited this text as a prediction of His crucifixion.

Ironically, the two disciples on the road to Emmaus practically quote many of these texts themselves (Deuteronomy 18:15; Psalm 2:1; Jonah 2:1; and Psalm 16:10) but, in their disillusionment, they turn their summary of Jesus' life and death into bad news! They would need to learn how to proclaim Christ Crucified as Good News. The Scriptures remain the only reliable antidote to bad news our media dish out for us daily. Which will we choose? **ECL**



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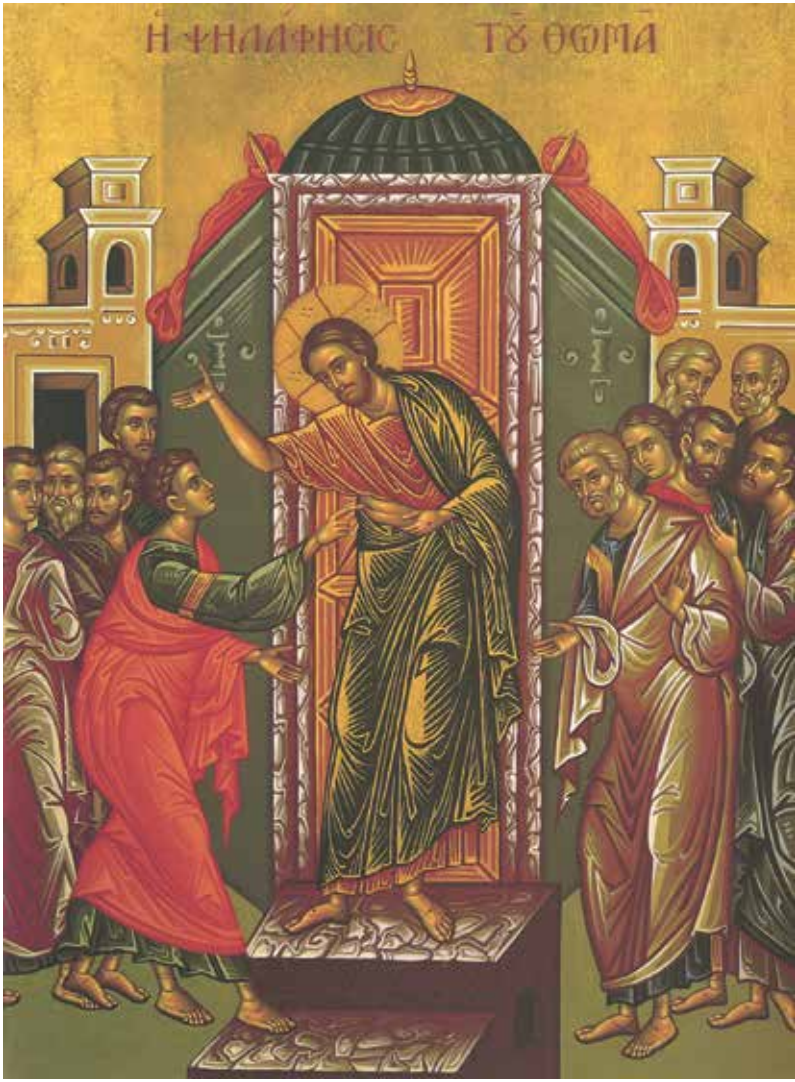
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ICON OF THOMAS SUNDAY
APRIL 16, 2023



ICON OF THE MYRRH BEARING
WOMEN SUNDAY
APRIL 23, 2023

SCHOOL OF PRAYER

Father G. Scott Boghossian



REJOICE

Jesus says, “rejoice and leap for joy” (Lk. 6:23), and “rejoice that your name is written in heaven” (Lk. 10:20). He says, “These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full” (Jn. 15:11). He tells us to pray to the Father in His name, “ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full” (Jn. 16:24).

Saint Paul says, “rejoice always” (1 Thess. 5:16), “rejoice in the Lord always, I will say it again, rejoice” (Phil. 4:4), “rejoice in hope” (Rm. 12:12), and “be glad and rejoice with me” (Phil. 2:18). “The kingdom of God does not mean food and drink, but... joy in the Holy Spirit” (Rom. 14:17), and “the fruit of the Spirit is... joy” (Gal. 5:22).

Saint Peter says Christians “rejoice with unutterable and exalted joy” (1 Pt. 1:8) and directs us to “rejoice in so far as you share Christ’s sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when His glory is revealed.” (1 Pt. 4:13).

Hebrew words related to joy, rejoicing, and gladness are mentioned at least 150 times in the book of Psalms. In the New Testament Beatitudes, the term “blessed” (*makarioi, makarios*) could just as accurately be translated as “happy.”

The early Church drew souls to Christ through miracles, signs, and wonders. One of the most impressive miracles was how the martyrs

went to their death with joy and gladness. Eusebius mentions how the early martyrs “despised terrors, going readily and with joy to death” (EH 5.1.63).

The Martyrs of Compiègne, 16 Discalced Carmelite nuns, were martyred on July 17, 1794, during the French Revolution. They all went to the guillotine and were beheaded, joyfully singing Psalm 117 (116) *Laudate Dominum*, “Praise the Lord, all nations!”

True Christian joy, happiness, and gladness exist independent of all outward circumstances and are demonstrated even during great trials. Saint James tells us, “Count it all joy, my brethren, when you meet various trials...” (Js. 1:2). The happiness found in Jesus is foreseen by the Prophet Habakkuk:

*Though the fig tree do not blossom,
nor fruit be on the vines,
the produce of the olive fail
and the fields yield no food,
the flock be cut off from the fold
and there be no herd in the stalls,
yet I will rejoice in the Lord,
I will joy in the God of my salvation.
(Hab. 3:16-18)*

Joy, gladness, and happiness in the lives of Christians will draw people

to God. God wants us to be joyful. We have a Christian duty before the unbelieving world to demonstrate the joy and happiness that comes from love for Christ and His Church.

Decide to be joyful. There is a well-known book by Christian counselors Frank Minirth and Paul Meier called *Happiness Is a Choice*. I can’t tell you if it’s worth reading because I’ve never read it, but the title says it all. If God (through Saint Paul) commands us to rejoice, and joy is an essential aspect of Christian living, then we can choose to be joyful, glad, happy, and blessed. Happiness is a choice. Joy is a choice. Gladness is a choice, a decision, a firm resolution. Saint Paul commands us with all his apostolic authority: “Rejoice in the Lord always!”

Practice Christian optimism. Scientific research has proven that optimistic people tend to be happier. Look for the bright side in every situation. See the glass as half full. See the best in every person. Remember that God has a reason for everything, and everything “works together for good” (Rm. 8:28).

Practice gratitude. Make a gratitude list, mentally or on paper, every day. Write down all the things you are

grateful for. Remember, the word “eucharist” means thanksgiving. As the Eucharist is the center, source, and summit of the Christian life, so must gratitude be the dominant mindset of every Christian.

Repent, pray, meditate. Have I turned people off to the Faith by my grumpy, overly stern, angry demeanor? When people see me, do I reflect the joy of Christ, or do I complain about my circumstances and lament the problems in the Church and the world? Optimistic, joyful people are great to be around. I want to be that kind of person. I know I will be a good advertisement for the Gospel of Jesus Christ if I am full of joy and gladness.

By His Cross and Resurrection, Jesus empowers us to be joyful in every life circumstance. Take up the challenge of rejoicing always. Decide to be joyful, practice Christian optimism, “for everything give thanks” (Eph. 5:20), repent of past failures, pray for more joy, and meditate on joy-promoting biblical promises and principles.

“The joy of the Lord is your strength” (Neh. 8:10). **ECL**

You annulled the sentence of the tree of disobedience, O Savior, by being nailed willingly to the Tree of the Cross. And by descending into Hades, O Mighty One, as God You destroyed the bonds of death. Wherefore, we worship Your resurrection from the dead, while crying out to You: O Almighty Lord, glory be to You. –Vespers for Bright Tuesday

O Lord, when the grave had been sealed by the lawless ones, You came forth from the tomb in the same manner as You were born of the Theotokos. Your incorporeal angels did not know how You were incarnate; the soldiers who guarded You did not perceive when You arose: for both these things are sealed fast against the inquisitive, but the wonders are made manifest to those who worship the mystery of faith. Grant to us who praise it exceeding joy and great mercy. –Matins for Bright Thursday

We come once again to the season of great mysteries: The Mystery of the Cross and the Mystery of the Resurrection. All those who call themselves Christian contemplate these mysteries to one degree or another, struggling with why Christ had to suffer betrayal, arrest, desertion, public mockery, and condemnation to death, and a horrible death on the cross. They also struggle with how (and even if) the Resurrection occurred and all the attendant mysteries that happened after the Resurrection: the appearance to His disciples although the doors in the Upper Room were locked, His sudden appearance and disappearance to the disciples on the road to Emmaus, and yet the mystery of His appearance being

a physical one. So much for our minds to take in and to process. We are called to belief, but in this day and age, what we are called to believe is, in worldly terms, beyond belief. And so this season is also a time to reaffirm our faith and belief in the One Whom we follow. We must remember that even during His three-year ministry, lesser struggles confronted His disciples: how can this Man give us His flesh to eat (cf. John 6, especially verses 52 and 66)? They all ran away on the night He was arrested, and Peter denied he knew Him, even after professing, even boasting that, even if everyone else fainted away, he would never betray Him.

And so, I have chosen these two hymns for us to ponder. I cannot go too deeply into the mysteries here but maybe I can offer food for serious thought. First is the cross. My favorite “theological” Christmas song is “I Wonder as I Wander.” “How Jesus the Savior did come for to die/For poor on’ry people like you and like I...” The first hymn above answers that for us in that, as one tree, in the Garden of Eden, led to sin and death through the first Adam, so the second tree led to the end of sin and death through the second Adam. As our Anaphora of Saint Basil the Great so beautifully puts it, “For since,

through a man, sin entered the world, and through sin, death, so it pleased Your only-begotten Son...to condemn sin in His flesh, so that those who are dead in Adam might be brought to life in Him, Your Christ.” Why? “For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16).

We also contemplate His resurrection. Nothing is so controversial as the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. How many people do not believe based on this one part of the Christian Faith? And yet it is central to the Faith. The Holy Apostle Paul says, “But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised; if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified of God that He raised Christ, Whom He did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised. If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all men most to be pitied” (I Cor. 15: 13-19).

There are those who believe He never really died on the cross; others hold to the story that His disciples stole His body, in the same manner as is related in Matthew 28: 11-15. But we who believe are offered this mystery as it is presented in the second hymn above: in the same manner as Christ was born of the Virgin Mother without violating her virginity, so too was His rising from the dead. “[B]ut the wonders are made manifest to those who worship the mystery of faith.”

But we do hold to this faith. Again, going back to I Corinthians: “But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive” (vv. 20-22). Paul, and all the apostles, had to constantly re-teach the early Christians this fact, and we must be reminded of this teaching every Easter, every Sunday.

This is the season of the Great Mystery of Christ. This is the season of faith. This is the season of belief. **ECL**

SEASONAL REFLECTIONS

Father Ronald Hatton



THE MYSTERY OF OUR SALVATION



PRIESTLY REFLECTIONS

Father Paul Varchola West

THE RESURRECTION... IT'S NOT JUST FOR EASTER SUNDAY!!!

Christ is Risen! Indeed He is Risen!

Christos Voskrese! Voistinnu Voskrese!

While these words ring aloud for all to hear throughout the Paschal Season, with all the exuberant joy that the Resurrection has to offer, we can never lose sight of a simple, elegant, yet profound truth: Christ is risen... *always!*

In a similar manner to the (shall we say, erroneous) pitfall surrounding the Christmas Season and the *Nativity of Our Lord* in which we are seemingly plagued by the “post-festal let-down” of “all that work for one day, and it’s all over” mentality, *Pascha* too comes with its own “let-down” of sorts. On Easter morning (or perhaps the evening prior) churches are packed with the jubilant cries of “Christ is Risen!” with throngs of faithful waiting with child-like an-

icipation to lob off that first piece of kolbasy and take a large bite. After all, nearly 50 days of fasting takes its toll on even the most ascetic individuals! Families gathered, favorite hymns sung all day long, churches full of incense, homes linger with the aroma of salt cured meats and eggs, children hopped up on sugar... life is good, for after all, Christ is indeed Risen!

But then...

The days go by. We go back to work, kids go back to school, sports start up again, the šunka and hrin supplies in the fridge nearly depleted, remnants of pascha loaves dry and crumbly, we go back to life as normal, perhaps regrettably darkening the church doors only on Sunday mornings. Even in the liturgical life of the Church, as the forty days of *Pascha* wane we find our beloved chants of “Christ is Risen!” once again fading back to “Glory to Jesus

Christ!” With the joy of the festal season fading almost as quickly as it arose, we tend to lose sight of something. Something *extremely* important...

Christ is Risen... *always!*

This literally gets lost in translation, but when we say, “Christ is Risen!” what we are really saying is that “Christ is risen once as an action in the present and as an action happening continuously in the future;” Christ didn’t simply stand up (rise) then sit back down! In a similar vein, Christ commissions His disciples, and thereby us, in the following manner:

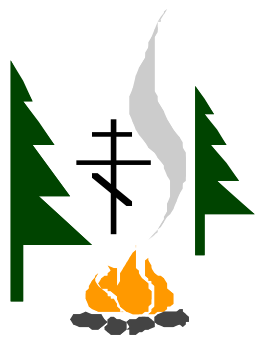
Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And when they saw him they worshiped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore

and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age.” [Mt 28:16-20]

Operative word: *always!*

Christ is indeed with us always, just as we celebrate, commemorate, and live the Resurrection always. As a people of Faith, a people who have been baptized into Christ, who have been clothed with Christ, we must realize that we are, first and foremost, a people of the Resurrection. Taking Christ’s words to heart, we must live the Resurrection always; yes, to the close of the age. Just as Christ never stops being “resurrected,” our joy in the Resurrection must never stop. Our spirit must be as alive with the festal joy of the Resurrection every day as it is on the *Holy and Great Day of Pascha!*

So, as we await His second and glorious coming, know that Christ is with us, sacramentally united in spirit and bound by the joy, exuberance, and hope of the Resurrection...not just on Easter Sunday, but every day. Let us live our lives accordingly, for Christ is Risen! **ECL**



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Father Michael J. Salnick, Director

2023 Eparchial Events

Eparchial Teen Rally 2023

Thursday, June 22, thru Sunday, June 25
Camp Director Father Andrii Dumnych

Altar Server Retreat Congress 2023

Sunday July 16 thru Thursday July 20
Camp Director Deacon Stephen Russo

Carpathian Village is presently taking reservations for group retreats, ski weekends, family vacations, day of recollection weekends, parish or group picnics, and private retreats. To schedule your event or for more information call or email Fr Michael.

*Registration forms for the Congress and Rally can be found at <https://www.eparchyofpassaic.com> under Youth and Young Adult Ministries

Annual Saint Nicholas Pilgrimage 2023

Sunday, August 6
Pilgrimage Co-Ordinator Father Michael Salnick

Family Day 2023

Saturday, August 12
Camp Director/Retreat Master Father Andrii Dumnych

PILGRIMAGE TO THE HOLY LAND & JORDAN 11 DAYS: JANUARY 21 - 31, 2024

VISITING: HAIFA * TIBERIAS * NAZARETH * MT. NEBO * MADABA
AMMAN * PETRA * JERICHO * BETHLEHEM * JERUSALEM



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DON'T MISS THIS TRIP OF A LIFETIME!!



Assembly
Of The
Byzantine (Ruthenian)
Metropolitan Church
2023

LIVING OUR FAITH
Moving Forward
Appreciating Our Past
November 2-5, 2023
Hillsborough, NJ

More Information Coming Soon
Everyone Welcome!
Go to the Eparchy of Passaic Website
Register your email address.
<https://www.eparchyofpassaic.com>

Are you called to the Priesthood? Are you afraid of College Debt?

Is God calling you to be a priest? Are you worried about college debt? Why not study in Europe and avoid college debt? Would you like to study in Vienna in the heart of Europe at the International Theological Institute in your own English Language? You can receive a university degree approved by the Pope. Contact the Director of Vocations for the Eparchy of Passaic, the Very Reverend Michael Kerestes at Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church, 695 N Main Street, Wilkes-Barre, PA 18705, phone: 570-822-6028



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UPCOMING EPARCHIAL AND PARISH EVENTS

APRIL, 2023

- 1 Saturday of Lazarus
- 2 Flowery Sunday
Triumphal Entry of Our Lord
- 3 Great and Holy Monday
- 4 Great and Holy Tuesday
- 5 Great and Holy Wednesday
- 6-10 Chancery closed for Pascha
- 6 Great and Holy Thursday
- 7 Great and Holy Friday
- 8 Great and Holy Saturday
- 9 THE GREAT DAY * PASCHA* THE HOLY RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD, GOD, and SAVIOR, JESUS CHRIST
*Christ is risen! Indeed, He is risen!
There is no fasting this week!*
- 10 Bright Monday
Solemn Holy Day

- 11 Bright Tuesday
Simple Holy Day
- 16 Sunday of the Holy Myrrbearers
- 23 Sunday of the Samaritan Woman
Holy Great Martyr George
- 30 Sunday of the Paralytic

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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