



EASTERN CATHOLIC LIFE

Official Publication of the Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Passaic

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JULY 2024



AXIOS! DEACON TIMOTHY A. KENNEDY ORDAINED TO THE PRIESTHOOD

On May 25, 2024, the Leave-taking of Pentecost, Deacon Timothy A. Kennedy was Ordained to the Order of Presbyter at Saint Thomas the Apostle Byzantine Catholic Church in Rahway, NJ, by Bishop Kurt.

Father Tim served as a deacon for 13 years, first in the Archdiocese of Newark, then in the Eparchy of Passaic, at the invitation of Bishop Kurt, after meeting Father Martin Vavrak, with whom Fr Tim served as a police chaplain in Perth Amboy, NJ. Father Tim and his wife, Pan'i Angela, began attending Divine Liturgy and Father Tim began service as a deacon in the Eparchy of Passaic in 2017.

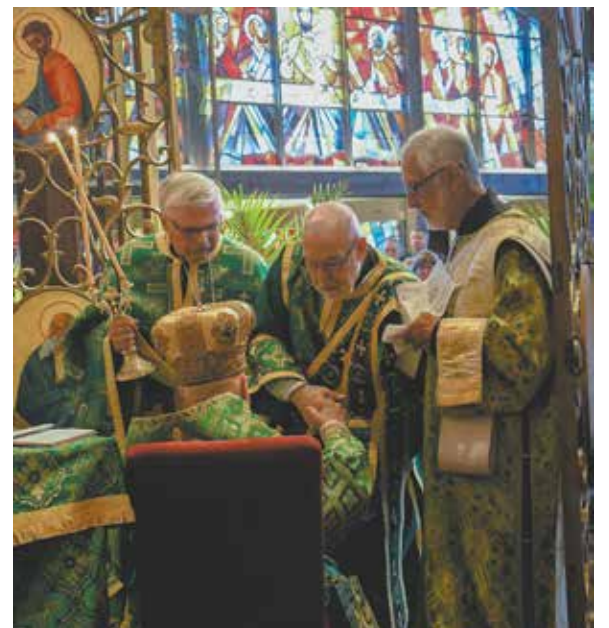
Father Tim was trained by Father Jim Hayer, Father Tom Shubeck, and Deacon Charles Laskowski at Saint Thomas Parish in Rahway, and quickly became part of the parish family. Father Tim responded to Bishop Kurt's invite to study for the priesthood at Byzantine Catholic Seminary in Pittsburgh. Pan'i Angela and he moved to Pittsburgh in 2022 and Father Tim received a Master of Arts in theology on May 8, 2024, graduating *magna cum laude*.

Before entering the seminary, Father Tim served for many years in law enforcement and as a paramedic. He retired as Chief of the New York City Hospital Police and from Emergency Medical Services and Pan'i Angela has worked as a Memorial Services Counselor with Catholic Cemeteries for 17 years.

Father Tim and Pan'i Angela now make their home at Holy Ghost Byzantine Catholic Church in Jessup, PA, where he serves as Parochial Vicar to Father Michael Salnicki, Parochial Administrator.



Bishop Kurt blesses with the Trikerion & Dikerion candles



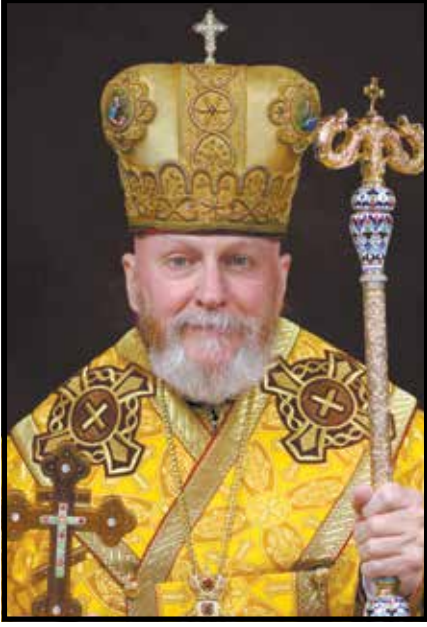
Ordinand Kennedy is led around the altar three times



Bishop Kurt prays the Ordination Prayer as he lays his hands on Ordinand Kennedy



Father Kennedy communes his wife, Pani Angela



I LIFT UP MY EYES

Pastoral Reflections of Bishop Kurt



CALLOUSNESS—THE LOSS OF THE FEAR OF GOD

Reprint from 2017

When I lived in Italy for four years, I watched television over there to learn Italian. Mostly I watched cooking shows and quiz shows. The quiz shows were especially helpful because they would display the possible answers on the screen. When I returned to the United States, I tried to return to watching a little popular television here, but I found it very painful. In the four years that I was gone, the entertainment industry in the United States had become openly blasphemous. I don't remember the popular shows being so openly contemptuous of faith, and so viciously insulting to God and to Jesus Christ. I don't think our country changed that much, but the entertainment industry certainly had stopped hiding its intense hatred for Christianity. Over a period of many years, the culture slid into irreverence, and the population was so desensitized to blasphemy that the top-rated shows in the United States could insult Jesus Christ with no fear of a backlash. The prophetic words of King David were fulfilled again, "Why do the nations rage, and peoples plot vain things? The kings of the earth and the rulers conspire against the Lord and against his anointed One." Why indeed? With so many difficulties, why would cultural leaders mock the Prince of Peace and his sacred death on the cross?

Well, we certainly can't fix other people, but during Lent we do pray, "Lord assist me to know my own faults, and not to judge my brother or sister." If we look at our own sins, the deep sin that is discovered here is what Saint John Climacus or Saint John of the Divine Ascent calls "callousness" or "insensitivity." According to Saint John, the sin of callousness manifests itself when we laugh at the terrible, and feel nothing for the sublime.

Many years ago, I took a walk in a university building and, unprepared, I happened to walk by a room in which a student was working on a corpse; I suppose it was a medical student. I must have turned pretty white, because when I passed by again, the door was closed. Indeed, the experience of seeing someone being dissected for an anatomy lesson, someone like me who lived, breathed, enjoyed life, and suffered pain, who was now refrigerated like lunch meat, that sight was one of deep horror. If a cadaver must be dissected, quite properly it should take place behind closed doors.

In the East, we have a strong sense that the sacred should be hidden from view so that we do not become insensitive to it or callous. That is why we cover the bread and wine as we carry them through the church even when they are yet unconsecrated. That is why we have an icon screen to separate us from the holy mysteries. There is a passage in the Holy Apostle Paul, one which I have never heard preached, in which he says that the most sacred parts of the body are the ones that we cover up. They are treated with more honor because they are more sacred. It is a beautiful passage—we don't cover up those parts of our body because they are ugly or because we are ashamed of them; we cover them up because they are too sacred to be looked upon. Indeed, the callousness of our culture, and the destruction of faith has been accomplished as everything that is holy, whether it is the sacred mysteries of the faith or the sacred flesh of the human body, is exposed to view.

Our guide through this distressing landscape is Saint John of the Divine Ascent. According to him, the first effect of callousness is "benumbed thought", that is, thought that cannot reach right conclusions because the feelings have been cut off from reason or numbed. This phenomenon is what C. S. Lewis called "men without chests" seventy-four years ago in his critique of English education, *The Abolition of Man*. By "men without chests" he meant that the head was not connected to the gut. Sometimes we know that something is right or wrong in our gut, no matter what the head thinks. C. S. Lewis says that when the educational system produces "men without chests", we "laugh at honor and find traitors in our midst".

Saint John says that the next effect of callousness is "the birth of presumption". Presumption is the sin of believing that we will be saved, no matter how we act, no matter what we believe, and whether or not we beg for mercy from the Righteous Judge. In the Western tradition, presumption is considered one of the sins against the Holy Spirit. Presumption was the deadly sin of the Pharisee in the Parable of the Publican and the Pharisee. He cut himself off from God's mercy, not by doing the good works of pharisaism, but by refusing to ask for God's help.

After presumption, callousness is "a snare for zeal". Zeal refers to enthusiasm for good things and good works, even joy. It's easy to see why presumption is a snare for zeal. If we are saved no matter what, then why bother, why go to all that trouble? Good works are begun, but as soon as we hit a rough spot, there is no urgency to continue, and they fall by the wayside.

The next step down, according to our guide, is "the noose of courage". He doesn't mean that courage is a noose, rather Saint John means that callousness kills courage as an executioner hangs a criminal. Imagine soldiers about to rush into combat; it is the warriors with passion who rush in first, while the one who is callous or cynical holds back and allows the others to risk their lives. Much like zeal, courage is what gets us past the rough spots. It takes no courage to start an honorable action, but it takes courage to go past the opposition of critics or the humiliation or ridicule of the weak or scornful. How prophetic when C. S. Lewis said, "We make men without chests and expect of them virtue and enterprise. We laugh at honor and are shocked to find traitors in our midst. We castrate and bid the geldings be fruitful."



The Ladder of Divine Ascent

This descending staircase of insensitivity now leads to "ignorance of compunction". Compunction is sorrow for sin. Saint John warns us that now we are worse off than simply lacking in compunction, we are even ignorant of it. How many are unable to be sorry for their sins, not because of an act of the will, but because they see no point in it? They are truly ignorant of the medicine that will heal their calloused hearts. Each step down is more frightening than the last, and indeed the next is "the door of despair". Evil always contains a self-contradiction, and how astonishing it is that at one stage we are presumptuous, and then soon at the threshold of despair.

Second to the last, callousness is the "mother of forgetfulness". Having passed through all the stages of spiritual death, the mother of forgetfulness encourages us to abandon all of our spiritual practice. We forget to attend liturgy, forget to support the church, forget to control our tongues, forget to study our faith, forget to fast, forget to avoid temptation, forget there is a difference between good and evil, and finally forget to talk to God at all, that is, to pray.

Having reached the basement, or if you prefer, the dungeon, Saint John says that lastly callousness gives birth

to a loss of the fear of God. After we have forgotten our gut feelings, and forgotten heaven and hell, and forgotten the last judgment, what is there to fear? Interestingly enough, all of the Abrahamic religions teach that we will all be judged at the end of time. The Jewish scriptures say (among other things) that all nations will be gathered in the Valley of Jehoshaphat for judgment. Likewise, the Moslems teach that all will be judged after the resurrection of the dead. We Christians read about the Last Judgment in the twenty fifth chapter of the Saint Matthew (and other places). Even pagan religions teach about hell. But in popular culture, there is nothing more offensive to people than any mention of judgment, hell, or especially fear of God.

Saint John warns us that this spiral staircase into spiritual darkness doesn't have a bottom, but as he puts it poetically, finally callousness becomes the daughter of her own daughter, that is, the loss of the fear of God gives birth to further insensitivity or callousness. To lighten the mood with a little humor, he says that he who has lost sensibility is "a brainless philosopher, a self-condemned commentator, a self-contradictory windbag, a blind man who teaches others to see". (I have noticed that even in the most sobering passages, Saint John always takes time to help us laugh at ourselves.)

As he often does, Saint John orders the evil vice to speak in its own voice, and these are its chilling words, "My subjects laugh when they see a corpse, but feel nothing when they see the holy altar, and when they partake of the Gifts, it is as if they eat ordinary bread. They mock the sorrowful sinner. From my father, I learned to kill all good things that are born of courage and love. When exposed, I do not grieve. I walk hand in hand with fake piety."

Is there no cure for this deadly affliction? Saint John gives us hope, but warns that callousness is not easy to overcome. The first step is to find the source, and our divine guide says that the parent is usually a habitual sin. One of my friends used to say, "Whenever someone has a theological problem, there is almost always a moral problem behind it." In other words, bad theology is usually invented to justify sin. Saint John says that if a sinful habit is the cause of callousness, then the only way to cure the callousness and its pervasive syndrome of spiritual putrefaction is to attack the sinful habit. What if I can't get rid of a sinful habit? At least call it for what it is! Call it sin. Call it an offense to God. Apologize to God for it. Confess it regularly. Trust a spiritual director. But for the love of God, don't deny it.

+Kurt Bunette

BYZANTINE RUTHENIAN METROPOLITAN CHURCH TO HOST JUBILEE YEAR OF HOPE PILGRIMAGE

Contact: Fr. Ed Cimbala - 908-872-2928

Archbishop William C. Skurla, Bishop Kurt R. Burnette, and Bishop Robert M. Pipta invite the people of the Byzantine Ruthenian Metropolitan Church of Pittsburgh to join them on a Pilgrimage to Italy from May 5 to 15, 2025, to celebrate the Jubilee Year of Hope.

Pope Francis has declared 2025 a Jubilee Year. A Jubilee year is a holy year. As we read in Leviticus (25:12), 'For it is a Jubilee; it shall be holy to you.' The year will run from the opening of the Holy Door in Rome on 24 December 2024 until the Feast of Epiphany 2026.

The upcoming Jubilee Year, with its powerful motto 'Pilgrims of Hope,' carries immense significance. It represents a year of hope and trust in a world grappling with the aftermath of war, the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, and escalating climate threats. This pilgrimage is a unique opportunity to be part of this significant event, a testament to our unwavering faith and hope in these challenging times.

In the document announcing the Jubilee Year, Pope Francis made a special appeal to the Eastern Catholic Churches to participate in the Jubilee Year. "I would especially like to invite the faithful of the Eastern Churches to this pilgrimage, especially those who are already in full communion with the Successor of Peter." "They have suffered greatly, often even unto death, for their fidelity to Christ and the Church, and so they should feel themselves especially welcome in this City of Rome that is also their Mother and cherishes so many memories of their presence. The Catholic Church, enriched by their ancient liturgies and the theology and spirituality of their Fathers, monks, and theologians, wants to give symbolic expression to its embrace of them and their Orthodox brothers and sisters in these times when they endure their own Way of the Cross, often forced by violence and instability to leave their homelands, their holy lands, for safer places. For them, the hope born of the knowledge that they are loved by the Church, which does not abandon them but follows them wherever they go, will make the symbolism of the Jubilee all the more powerful."

The pilgrimage leaves from Newark Airport, and our first destination is the captivating city of Venice, renowned for its waterways, gondolas, and picturesque bridges. Here, we have the privilege of exploring the Basilica of St. Mark, adorned with breathtaking mosaics that tell the tale of faith, the Doges Palace, and the iconic Bridge of Sighs. Our journey then takes us to Ravenna, where we will be spellbound by some of the world's most stunning Byzantine mosaics! We continue to Florence, the birthplace of Michelangelo's David and

home to the world's finest Renaissance art collection. Our next stop is the tranquil hilltop city of Assisi, the birthplace of St. Francis. Here, we pay our respects at the Basilica of Saint Francis, the Church of Saint Clare, and Santa Maria degli Angeli, with its 'thornless rose bush.' Our tour culminates in the Eternal City of Rome, where we visit Saint Peter's Basilica, the Sistine Chapel, and the many sights of "Ancient" Rome. A highlight of the visit will be an

audience with Our Holy Father, Pope Francis, and have the exclusive opportunity to renew our Christian lives by passing through the Holy Door in St. Peter's Basilica.

Fr. Ed Cimbala will serve as the general tour coordinator, assisted by Very Rev. Andrew Deskevich, Archdiocese of Pittsburgh, Very Rev. Yuriy Oros, Eparchy of Passaic, Very Rev. Brian Eyman, Eparchy of Parma, Very Rev. Stephen Washko, Eparchy of Pheonix, and Very Rev. Marek Novicky, Exarchy of Toronto. Your initial deposit is to be sent to Fr. Ed Cimbala, who will forward your names to the coordinator with your eparchy.

Everyone is invited to come share during this time of prayerful celebration.


With the celebration of the Divine Liturgy and other services, our pilgrimage will be a joyful journey designed to highlight our Byzantine Catholic faith, help us appreciate its historical past, and view the art inspired by the Church.

Use this link to view the brochure for this exciting journey:

<https://stmarybccnyc.org/files/Brochure/Italy-Jubilee-2025-Metropolitan-Church-of-Pittsburgh.pdf>

NAWAS INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL, INC.

ITALY JUBILEE PILGRIMAGE



HOSTED BY:
Archbishop William C. Skurla
 Metropolitan Archbishop of Pittsburgh
Bishop Kurt R. Burnette
 Eparchy of Passaic, Apostolic Administrator of
 Phoenix & Toronto
Bishop Robert M. Pipta
 Eparchy of Parma

With Tour Coordinator:
Fr. Ed Cimbala

**11 Days:
 May 5-15, 2025**

\$4829 from NEWARK


(Air/land tour price is \$4299 plus \$530 government taxes/airline surcharges)


VISITING:
Venice ♦ Padua ♦ Ravenna ♦ Florence
Assisi ♦ Rome ♦ Vatican City
Including
The Opportunity to Pass Through The Holy Doors of the Basilica of St. Peter in Vatican City & the Other Three Major Basilicas


TOUR FEATURES:

- Roundtrip air from Newark
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- First class/select hotels based on 2 persons sharing in twin bedded rooms with private bath
- Most Meals
- Services of a professional English-speaking tour director
- Comprehensive sightseeing

For More Information, Please Contact:
Fr. Ed Cimbala
 Tel: (908) 872-2928
 Email: fredcimbala@gmail.com







FOR THE FULL DETAILED BROCHURE



PEOPLE YOU KNOW AROUND THE EPARCHY

IN WILKES-BARRE TOWNSHIP...

Memorial Day Celebrations 2024

Memorial Day 2024 began with members and friends of American Legion Post 815 parading with colors from the legion Home to Saint John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church, where a Panachida service was celebrated by Father Mykhaylo Prodanets to remember their fallen members and all members of the armed forces.

Following the Panachida, members of American Legion Post 815 presented a new flag for the flagpole in front of our church, Followed by the playing of Taps. The old flag will be disposed of on June 14, Flag Day in a ceremony at the Legion Home.



ONLINE CHURCH SINGING CLASSES OFFERED BY THE METROPOLITAN CANTOR INSTITUTE

The Metropolitan Cantor Institute offers an online, 2-year program in church singing for both new and experienced cantors. Tuition is \$75 for each eight-week class, which includes feedback to help you improve your singing and cantorial skills. Initial classes on liturgy and church singing are free. For details: <https://mci.archpitt.org/classes> or call Deacon Jeffrey Mierzejewski at (412) 735-1676. Classes are offered at no charge to qualified students from any parish with no current cantor.



Father Lewis incenses the faithful

IN ROSWELL...

Father's Day Float Down the River

Many parishioners of Epiphany of Our Lord in Roswell, Georgia celebrated Father's Day with a picnic at Ken & Gina Holewinski's house in the North Georgia hills on Saturday, June 15. This is now the second annual Father's Day event and the parish anticipates continuing this tradition into the future. A fun and relaxing time was had by all as we partook of a pot-luck picnic of barbecue and other scrumptious summer items. Ken & Gina's cabin is on the Cartecay River, a slow flowing body of water whom many locals float down as a natural "lazy river" ride. The picnickers also enjoyed this "lazy river" ride and were picked-up downstream by men of Epiphany. After everyone enjoyed their river float, we all celebrated the Vigil Divine Liturgy on the deck and patio area. Father Lewis Rabayda is Parochial Administrator of Epiphany of Our Lord.



Doctor Gerry & Casey Crete



Parishioners get ready to float



A BISHOP, A RACE, AND A LOT OF FAITH

By *Andréa Kakuk, Fort Mill Byzantine Catholic Mission (Charlotte, NC Metro area)*



Father Petro Oros recently beatified by Pope Francis

On May 29th, 2024, a bishop, clergy, and 30+ faithful walked into a classroom and watched something special unfold. What happened? God helped those people in motion.

Dubbed the “congregation for generations,” parishioners at the Byzantine Catholic Mission of Fort Mill, South Carolina, (Charlotte Metro area) took part in a divine liturgy alongside Bishop Kurt Burnette, Fr. Vasyl Sokolovych and Deacon Ron Volek. Regulars, such as the portable iconostasis, wooden altar and HP laser printer were also in attendance. Once again, the unorthodox background disappeared among the beauty of the liturgy.

The close-knit community’s mantra is

“God helps those in motion.” Yes, the devout Byzantines have faith like anyone else. However, without action, Faith is like a racecar stalled in the pits. It’s not going anywhere fast. That is why Fr. Vasyl, and many others collaborated with Bishop Kurt to experience the mission first-hand. We wished the bishop to see the budding Byzantine Catholic community and advance our journey.

After 8 years of weekly liturgical celebration, that faith and action resulted in a new chapter in the mission’s prayer book. On June 8th, Fr. Vasyl announced that the Fort Mill community will become the *Venerable Petro Oros Mission*.

Recently beatified by Pope Francis, Father Oros was a Ukrainian priest who, [while under the Soviet Regime], was imprisoned multiple times and later martyred in 1953. It is fitting that Bishop Kurt chose this martyr as Father Oros put his faith in motion by holding divine liturgy in secret at a time when the Catholic Church was outlawed. The martyring of Fr. Oros reminds us that celebrating liturgy and partaking in the Eucharistic sacrament, even in relatively modern times, should never be taken for granted. Unrelenting headwinds at work to deter, alter and inhibit our motion thus far have not prevailed. The legacy left behind by Father Oros made a lasting impression, which is why the Byzantine Catholic Community of Fort Mill is honored to be associated with this brave clergy member.

Parishioners came from near and far to attend the Divine Liturgy. For those who’ve moved out of the area, they came home to a loving family. For weekly attendees, it was a milestone anticipated for a long time. Even new parishioners felt God in motion. One of those is Kelly Masson. Kelly, husband Andre and their four children are already putting their faith into action. Their oldest son is a regular altar server and Kelly joined the social committee that coordinates potlucks. Simply put, Kelly says, “Never ever have we felt more welcome at a parish thanks to all the people we’ve encountered. Fr. Vasyl is very welcoming and great with children.”

Traveling a bit farther for liturgy were Melinda and Brian Fitzpatrick. The devoted Byzantines reside in Hilton Head, SC. Melinda came across carolinabyzantine.com and saw that their former priest [Bishop Kurt] from Our Lady of Perpetual Byzantine Catholic Church, Albuquerque, NM was in their backyard. “What divine providence we got to see him. He is still the same down to earth man we remember,” Melinda says. “There is no substitute for the Byzantine Liturgy. We were immediately drawn to this community and will return as often as we can.”

The Faith and action of the Petro Oros Mission is not stalled in the pits but is a fierce competitor with its sights set on winning the Indianapolis 500. (A.k.a. taking the green flag and securing a physical building quickly.) Keep your eye on the rejuvenated Petro Oros mission as it accelerates and eventually wins the race.

Fast Facts

- 50% of congregation under 30 years of age
- Celebrating weekly liturgy for 6 years
- Married priest draws on family experiences
- Mission produced first seminarian candidate in 2022
- Monthly potlucks with ethnic food
- Deacon celebrates Typika as needed
- 25 minutes from downtown Charlotte
- Divine Liturgy celebrated Saturdays
- St. Philip Neri Ministry Center
- 292 Munn Road, Fort Mill, SC 29715
- Visit us at Carolinabyzantine.com or come see us in person!



Great Incensation (Enarxis) with the Fort Mill congregation, May 29th

OUR LADY UNDOER OF KNOTS

By *Andréa Kakuk, Petro Oros Byzantine Catholic Mission (Charlotte, NC Metro area)*

Who do you turn to in a time of need? Family? Friends? How about Our Lady, Undoer of Knots? Are you familiar with her?

She is well known to parishioners at the Petro Oros Byzantine Catholic Mission [of Fort Mill, SC] (Charlotte Metro). When I started writing this article, I reached out to our young parishioners for help. Allison Somich (14) and brother Matthew (13) were anxious for people to know her. The duo’s devotion to the Undoer of Knots is a testament to her novena; “I entrust into your hands the ribbon of my life.”

Andrea: Who is Our Lady Undoer of Knots?

Allison: Simple put, it’s a painting of the Theotokos untying knots in a ribbon. In the painting, angels are standing on either side of the Theotokos. The angels on the left are handing the Theotokos a knotted ribbon. Those on the right are receiving the ribbon untangled and smooth. (When viewing it from Mary’s perspective.)

Andrea: What is the story behind the painting and the knots?

Matthew: The story dates to Saint Irenaeus. (A bishop of Lyon, France martyred in AD 202). His observations were based on a parallel Saint Paul made

between Adam and Christ. Saint Irenaeus wrote: “The knot of Eve’s disobedience was untied by Mary’s obedience; what the virgin Eve bound through disbelief; Mary loosened by her faith.”

The knots refer to problems and struggles in our life. (i.e. family, money troubles, drug addiction) Whoever prays to her in a time of need is said to have their “knots” undone.

Allison: In 17th century Germany, a couple was having marriage troubles and thinking about divorcing. They went to Jakob Rem, a Jesuit priest, for guidance. Father Jakob told them not to do any-

thing until after he prayed. The couple agreed and the wife gave the priest a ribbon that was used to tie the couple together during their wedding ceremony. Every time the couple quarreled; the wife tied a knot in the ribbon. It had many knots.

Father Jakob held the ribbon in his hands while he prayed for the couple. He asked the Theotokos to undo the marriage difficulties. The knots miraculously became undone until the ribbon was smooth. The couple’s struggles were over. They didn’t divorce.

Andrea: Do you believe this story? Have you seen this in action?

Allison: Yes, to both questions. Most recently, the visit from Bishop Kurt back in May. We prayed for many years for him to experience our mission. The “waiting” part was one of the mission’s big knots. The bishop’s visit was the first knot untied. Our second knot, [receiving a distinguished name], was undone almost instantly afterwards. I am proud our mission is associated with Petros Oros, a brave member of the clergy.

Matthew: Allison is right. We prayed, and patiently waited for a long time. I think his visit along with our new name will untie further knots. Another big knot is having our own building. The knots in our mission’s ribbon will continue to unravel if we have faith. My advice to anyone struggling and not knowing where to turn, look to the Undoer of Knots. Some knots might be stubborn to untie but it is worth the effort.

Andrea: Your feedback is terrific. If you don’t know it yet, young parishioners like you are setting our mission up for a successful future. Thank you.

End note: Bishop Kurt brought Our Lady Undoer of Knots medals, blessed by the Pope, to the mission during his recent visit. Everyone is praying for the undoing of further knots.



Original depiction of Our Lady Undoer of Knots painted by Johann Georg Schmidtner



Children of the Fort Mill Community display their Undoer of Knots medals



1924—Centennial—2024

Establishment of the
Byzantine Ruthenian Church Exarchate
in the United States



Most Reverend Basil Takach, D.D.

First Byzantine-Ruthenian Bishop in the United States

Ruthenian Exarchate Established May 8, 1924

Pope Pius XI appointed Father Basil Takach as Bishop for United States May 20, 1924

Bishop Basil Takach Episcopal Ordination, Pentecost Sunday, June 15, 1924,

Saint Athanasius Church, Rome, Italy

Bishop Takach arrived at New York Harbor August 13, 1924, on the liner RMS Mauretania
and offered a Moleben of Thanksgiving at Saint Mary of the Protection Church, New York City

The Dual Anniversaries

1924 — Centennial — 2024

Establishment of the
Byzantine Ruthenian Church Exarchate
in The United States



1974 — Golden Anniversary — 2024

Dedication of the Byzantine Ruthenian Chapel,
Washington, DC

Dedication of the Byzantine Ruthenian Church
in The United States

To The Protection of the Mother of God



Schedule of Events

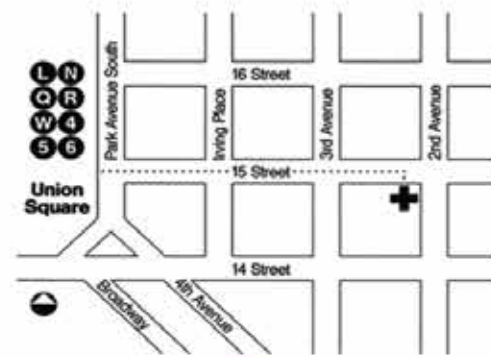
Saturday, October 12, 2024 — Basilica of the National Shrine		3:30 PM	Conclusion of Pilgrimage events at the Basilica
9:00 AM	Welcome of Pilgrims in the Great Upper Church Msgr. Vito Buonanno, Director of Pilgrimages		—Epiphany of Our Lord Byzantine Catholic Church, Annandale, Va
10:30 AM	Hierarchical Divine Liturgy Archbishop Skurla, Bishop Burnette, Bishop Pipta	6:00 PM	Festive Banquet at Epiphany of Our Lord Parish Center
12:00 Noon	Lunch in the Cafeteria Pilgrims may visit the Basilica Gift Shop and Book Store.		Sunday, October 13, 2024 — Epiphany of our Lord, Annandale, VA,
1:15 PM	Moleben to the Theotokos at the Byzantine Ruthenian Chapel Archbishop and Bishops presiding	10:00 AM	Divine Liturgy at Epiphany of our Lord Church Archbishop and Bishops
3:00 PM	Panachida for departed Bishops, Priests, Deacons, Monastics and Religious, and Christ's Faithful	11:30 AM	Brunch at Epiphany Parish Center



1924 CENTENNIAL 2024

100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE BYZANTINE RUTHENIAN EXARCHATE IN THE UNITED STATES

Subway Station:
14th Street–Union Square



You are invited to
St. Mary's Byzantine Catholic
Church for an evening of
celebration

7:00 PM

Symposium on the arrival and ministry of
our first bishop.

Presented by Fr. Christopher Zuger,
historian.

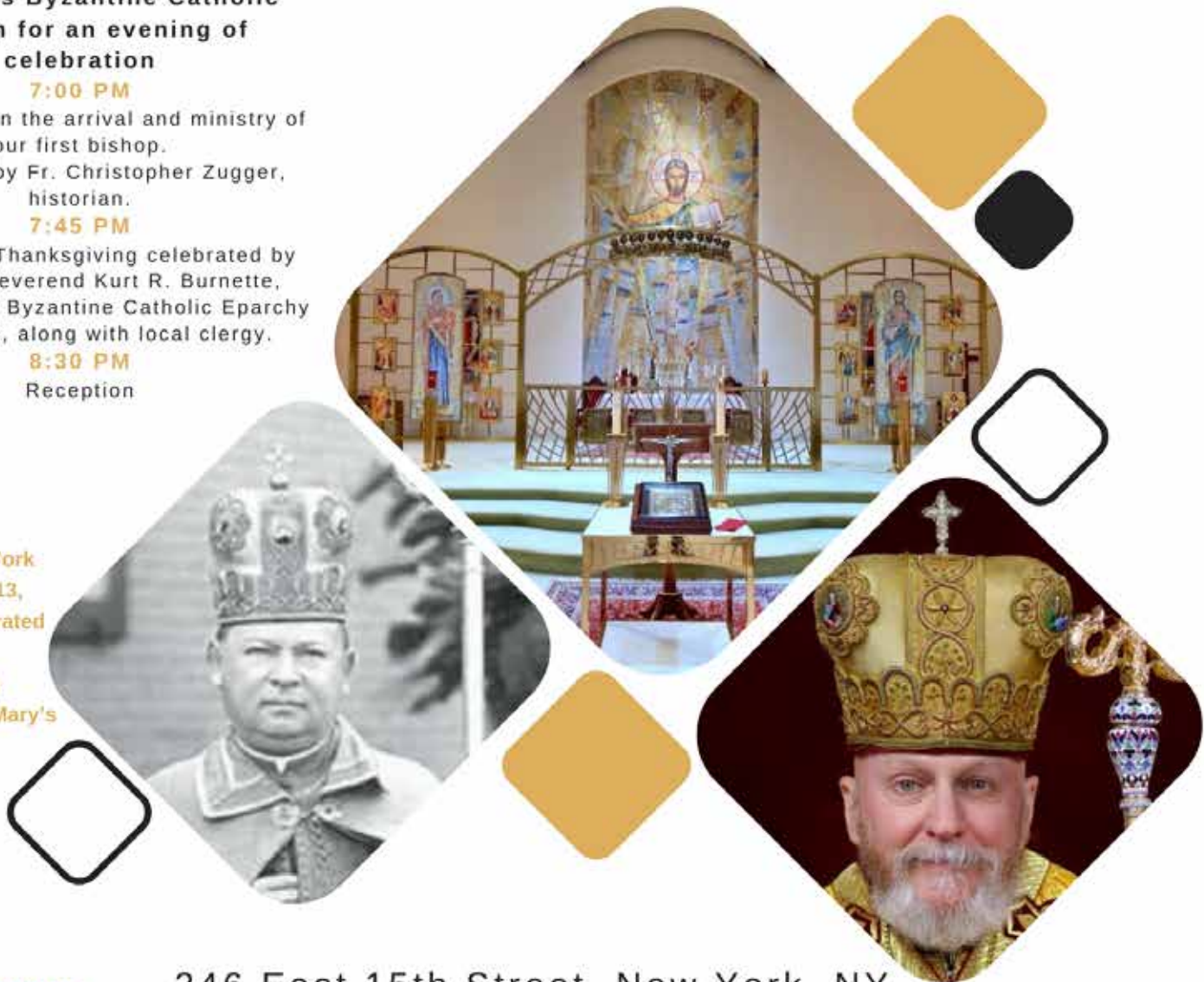
7:45 PM

Moleben of Thanksgiving celebrated by
the Most Reverend Kurt R. Burnette,
Eparch of the Byzantine Catholic Eparchy
of Passaic, along with local clergy.

8:30 PM

Reception

Bishop Takach
arrived in New York
City on August 13,
1924, and celebrated
a Moleben of
Thanksgiving at
the original St. Mary's
Church.



246 East 15th Street, New York, NY

AUG | 13TH | 2024

REGISTRATION



For more information:

212-677-0516 | fredcimbala@gmail.com



Traveling to the Pocono's? Visiting Kalahari Water Park?
Come Worship With Us At:
St Nicholas of Myra Byzantine Catholic Church
2121 Commerce St (Commerce St & Rt 940)
Pocono Summit, Pa
Divine Liturgy Schedule:
Pascha-Oct 31st Sat 5 PM/Sun 10 AM
Nov 1st-Pascha Sat 4 PM/Sun 10 AM
Eve of Holydays 6 PM

Epiphany of our Lord Byzantine Catholic Mission

Serving suburban Washington, DC, northern Montgomery County
and the city of Frederick, MD

Join us for Divine Liturgy: Visit our website for schedule

Epiphany of our Lord Byzantine Catholic Mission
9301 Warfield Road, Gaithersburg, MD 20882

Questions? Contact us at 703-573-3986



www.eolmission.com



LIFE, LOVE, AND THE HUMAN PERSON

By Ann M. Koshute, MTS

THE CHILD AND THE CROSS

We are all doing our best to be faithful: going to church on Sundays and holy days, abstaining and fasting when the Church asks us to, and generally trying to follow Christ. No one does it perfectly, and it's so easy to become complacent, doing what we ought more out of a sense of duty than a desire to grow closer to God. We become busied about with important things – and useless things – saying our prayers as we should, skipping them when we “must,” and too often relating to God as a distant being rather than our loving Father.

One Sunday, trying to focus my attention on the Liturgy but drawn in by distractions every few minutes (tomorrow's errands, what to have for lunch, whether I can sneak in a nap), I noticed a mother tenderly holding her baby. The child was aware, not fussy, looking around at the lights, the icons, the priest. Pulled out of my self-absorbed thoughts, I watched as the child, held securely in her mother's arms, grasped for the cross dangling from a chain around her mama's neck. It took a few tries, but the child finally caught the prize. She didn't pull at it violently or try to yank it from her mother's neck. The child simply moved the cross about playfully in her fingers, holding it, shifting it back and forth gently, letting it go and picking it up again. The most or-

dinary things fascinate babies and small children, especially if they are shiny and within their reach. As I watched (clearly more fascinated by this scene than I was the Liturgy) I thought about how positively ordinary it was for this baby to rest safely in her mother's arms while being focused on the cross. Was the Lord using my tendency toward distraction to teach me something?

A baby or small child doesn't understand the cross just yet. But Jesus Himself directs us repeatedly to attend to the example of children, in their innocence, docility, and trust. The action of this child playing with her mother's necklace was certainly not intended by her to have a spiritual meaning – or any meaning at all, beyond the simple fascination toward a shiny object dangling within reach. Yet I can't help but think that God intended for me to read into it an important spiritual point.

Apart from a saintly few, no one is eager to pick up their cross. Follow Jesus? Sign me up! However, the prerequisite for following Him is to take up our cross (Matthew 16:24). That's the hard part, the uncomfortable recognition that, not only do we all carry crosses of different shapes and weights throughout life, but that these crosses are somehow connected to our life in Christ. It's not only the Cross that gives suffering

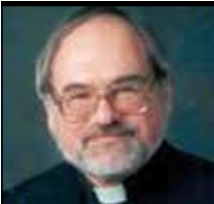
meaning and purpose; it is every suffering we personally carry, too. This is so hard, and the fact that the old Catholic admonishment to “offer it up” gets at something true (that Christ really does invite us to join our suffering to His, for our sanctification and the good of the world), doesn't make it any easier or less painful.

As I watched the sweet baby playfully finger the cross, unaware that she will one day feel the weight of crosses that she'll be unable to easily let go, God reminded me of an important detail in this scene. The child held the cross within the safety of her mother's arms. I wondered: how often do I carry my crosses in isolation, not wanting to burden another with my pain? Are there times when I am crushed by their weight, or when I stubbornly carry them on my own, or avoid them and pretend they don't exist? In that moment it occurred to me that you and I are not meant to carry our crosses apart from the security of our Mother. Our Mother is the Church, whose loving embrace (through Scripture and Tradition, the Commandments, belief in the communion of Saints, and the grace of the Holy Mysteries) keeps us safe. At times that embrace feels too tight, and like a child we want to break free and run away. The Church is a loving yet firm Mother, holding us not in bond-

age, but protecting and nurturing us. Like any good mother, she waits with open arms to scoop us up when we do escape her hold and inevitably fall and get hurt.

The Mother holding us is also Mary. A friend who was burdened by a particularly heavy cross once told me about how angry she was with God. She was unable to understand why she was given this cross, and wondered where He was as she agonized over it. Since she seemed to be getting nowhere with Him, one day she simply said, “Jesus, I'm done with You. I'm going to talk to Your Mother!” All of us, at one time or another, may perceive the Church to be a harsh and restrictive mama, with Her rules and demands of submission. In these times we should turn to Mary. She is the one into whose arms the baby Jesus found comfort, safety, and nourishment. Mary provides the same for us, while always leading us gently back to Christ and to the Church. She is our Mother, too.

I'm not recommending giving into distraction during Liturgy or prayer, but those distractions are often opportune times for the Lord to work in us if we are open to them. Follow the example of the child and take hold of your crosses – but don't try to carry them without your Mother. **ECL**



THE BYZANTINE LITURGY

By Archpriest David Petras, SEOD

WHAT GOD HAS JOINED TOGETHER

In the Gospel of Saint Matthew, Jesus teaches about marriage in very clear words, “from the beginning the Creator ‘made them male and female’ and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, no human being must separate” (Matthew 19:4-6). Our Lord, of course, knew the Scriptures, and his words expand on the story of creation found in the most holy book of Genesis: “Let us make human beings in our image, after our likeness God created mankind in his image; in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them and God said to them: Be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it. (Genesis 1:26-28)” and later adds, “That is why a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife, and the two of them become one body” (Genesis 2:24). From this we see in faith that marriage is essential to the human race, it is part of the charter of its creation.

The bond between a man and a woman in marriage is for the sake of the human race. A mature, stable, and loving relationship enables the couple to participate with God in the work of creation, bringing new life into the world and raising children in a healthy family. As this is the chief goal of marriage, the Church teaches us that matrimony is a loving union of one man and one woman. It is to last for the lifetime of the parties and is broken only by the death of one of the pair. At the rite of marriage, therefore, the Church prays for a long life for the spouses, “grant to your servants (Name) and (Name) a peaceful life and length of days, chastity, love for one another in the bond of peace, a long-lived posterity, happiness in their children, and the unfading crown of glory. Make them worthy to see their children's children.” It is sad when one of the partners dies early. For the sake of the welfare of the remaining partner and for possible aid in raising children, a second marriage may be permitted, though the ideal is that there is a permanent bond of love between one man and one woman.

Saint Paul raises the love of marriage into a new context. It is a form and analogy for the love of God and His people, the Church. The Epistle to the Ephesians, therefore, is read at the wedding, “the husband is head of his wife just as Christ is head of the church, he himself the savior of the body. As the church is subordinate to Christ, so wives should be subordinate to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church and handed Himself over for her to sanctify her, cleansing her by the bath of water with the word For no one hates his own flesh but rather nourishes and cherishes it, even as Christ does the church This is a great mystery, but I speak in reference to Christ and the church. In any case, each one of you should love his wife as himself, and the wife should respect her husband” (Ephesians 5:23-26.29.32-33). While much is made of the “subordination” of women, this must be understood only through the comparison of the Christ and his Church, and that there exists a mutual

love that is the mark of our faith in the loving God of mercy and compassion.

This is the ideal to which the married couple is called by God. We must also face the fact, however, that many times we are unable to achieve the ideal in our human weakness. If the marriage commitment fails, it may become necessary for the man and woman to separate. The Church, while encouraging faithfulness in marriage, is aware of this, and permits separation. The question is: what is the status of a failed marriage? Both the Orthodox and the Catholic Churches have different ways of confronting this reality. The North American Catholic-Orthodox Theological Consultation recognized this is a statement of February 29, 2024: “Although our churches affirm a common teaching on the lifelong nature of marriage, there is fundamental disagreement between us regarding remarriage.” (The Pastoral Care of Mixed Marriages: Neither Yours nor Mine—But Ours, II, 3)

The Catholic Church has an absolute prohibition against divorce and re-marriage. A couple may obtain a civil divorce for separation for the sake of domestic peace, but neither party may re-marry since the union still stands on the basis of Mark 10:9: "what God has joined together, no human being must separate." However, a second marriage with another partner may be permitted if the couple obtains a Church annulment, which can be granted only if it is proved that there was an essential

defect in the marriage from the very beginning. Very often this is the determination that the parties did not have sufficient maturity to make that true commitment required by our human nature.

The Orthodox Church recognizes the problem that people may not be able to live up to the ideal. The statement of the Theological Consultation explains, "Orthodox theological texts contain affirmations that the marriage is lifelong.

Nevertheless, exceptions can be made to this moral norm in the canonical life of the Orthodox Church, grounded in a pastoral recognition of the factors of frailty and error that too often characterize human life and that can result in the spiritual death of a marriage." The real difference between the two approaches is that the Catholics hold that the failed marriage must have a substantial flaw from the beginning, while the Orthodox say that a marriage may suffer a spiritual death. In actual prac-

tice, the same reasons for the failure of a marriage may be recognized by both the Catholic and Orthodox Churches. Both have the same faith that marriage is a divine reality that must be fostered in a life of faith, and both recognize that human beings may fail in their commitments, but may judge failure by different standards. **ECL**



PRIESTLY REFLECTIONS

Father Paul Varchola West

"FOLLOW ME..."

When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Feed my lambs." A second time he said to him, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Tend my sheep." He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" And he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep. [John 21:15-17]

After Jesus Christ Himself reconciles and absolves Peter in John 21 of his three-fold denial at the Crucifixion in John 18, Christ continues:

Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you girded yourself and walked where you would; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish to go." (This he said to show by what death he was to glorify God.) And after this he said to him, "Follow me." [John 21:18-19]

In our desire to love Christ, to follow His Commandments and to do what is pleasing to the Lord, we often encounter a very intriguing stumbling block – ourselves! How many of us ask ourselves "What does God want from my life?" Perhaps, we may ask "How do I know the Will of God – Where is he calling me to be?" These questions are essential to our spiritual growth, but can also be rather dangerous. We desire so intensely to know where God is calling us that we may be paradoxically searching too hard! We read books, seek spiritual guidance, pray...yet many times we feel as if God is ignoring us, as if the answer remains elusive. "Why won't God just answer me?" we exclaim in desperation and frustration...yet the answer eludes us.

Sometimes we may even be jealous of someone like Peter who is directly told "this is going to happen to you" by Jesus Christ himself, wishing that would happen to us! Well, let's examine Peter's reaction to this.

Peter turned and saw following them the disciple whom Jesus loved, who had lain close to his breast at the supper and had said, "Lord, who is it that is going

to betray you?" When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, "Lord, what about this man?" Jesus said to him, "If it is my will that he remains until I come, what is that to you? Follow me!" [John 21:20-22]

Peter, out of genuine concern and love for his fellow man, asks Christ, "what about Him?" to which Christ responds, essentially, "Don't worry about him, I've got him; you...follow me."

As disciples of Christ, we are called to follow Him no differently than Peter, John, or ANY of the disciples called in the Gospels or throughout the ages. This is the answer to "what does God will from my life?" We must follow Him. This is, however, not always an easy task. Even Peter, who knew Christ in the flesh, still had questions. How many of us, if presented with a vision of Christ Himself telling us to do "xyz" would still ask "well...can my wife come along?" "Well...what about the dog???" or something like that! This is only natural; however, Christ's response would assuredly be "Follow me."

What does God will for our lives? He asks that we love him with all our heart, soul, strength, and mind, and to love our neighbor as ourselves [Luke 10:27]. He asks us to pray, keep the fasts, to give selflessly [Mt 6]. These things we can do from anywhere at any time, with our families at our sides. We can do these things from the desk of the job we can't stand, from the couch in the house in which we did not live, as we search for employment, in times of doubt, in times of joy, and as we struggle to find our place in this world. By keeping these precepts, we are living and actualizing the Will of the Lord for our lives. The question is then not, "what is God's will for me?" but rather the statement, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you...guide my steps, teach me to do your will, and have mercy on me, a sinner."

Standing firm in the Lord, keeping hold of the Commandments, and living not for this age, but for the Kingdom to Come, Christ will undoubtedly light our path and we will see that in every moment we are exactly where Christ is calling us to be...following Him. **ECL**

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SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

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

A TAIL OF TWO CITIES

On the Fifth Sunday after Pentecost, we hear of Jesus exorcising two possessed men, sending a herd of pigs over the cliffs into the Sea of Galilee in the process (Matthew 8:28 – 9:1). Reduced to its barest outline, the events unfolded like this: 1. Jesus comes to the Gadarene territory, which is inhabited by non-Jews. 2. He is immediately assailed by the demons in two possessed men and a brief, hostile conversation ensues. 3. Jesus drives the demons out of the men and into the pigs. 4. The swineherds report all this back in the city. 5. The townsfolk come out to see for themselves. 6. They ask Jesus to leave their territory. 7. Jesus departs, and we hear no more of Gadara in the New Testament.

Back on the Fourth Sunday of Pascha, the Gospel (John 4:3-42) described another encounter that follows more or less the same outline. 1. Jesus passes through Samaria, non-Jewish territory. 2. He meets a Samaritan woman. The woman takes a hostile tone for the first few exchanges in her rather long conversation with Jesus. 3. Something Jesus says changes the woman's attitude. 4. She rushes back to the town of Shechem (or Sychar) and invites the people to come see Jesus for themselves. 5. A crowd of townsfolk comes out to Jesus. 6. They invite him to stay

with them. 7. Jesus agrees and stays for two days in this non-Jewish place, leading many to believe in Him. In fact, the Church was established quite early in Samaria (Acts 8).

Jesus' time in Gadara could be called a failure, except for the two men whose lives and health are restored by the exorcism. The Gadarenes are left without their pigs or their potential Savior. His visit to Samaria, on the other hand, was a spectacular success. No less than the possessed men, the Samaritan woman's life was changed by her encounter with Jesus. She lost the shame that brought her to the well at noon, when all the other women came at dawn. No less than the possessed men, Jesus gave her back to her community healthy and potentially holy.

There are really only two differences in these two events. The first has to do with the message. Saint Matthew makes abundantly clear what kind of message the swineherds brought back to their city: it was all about the pigs! The healing of two of their relatives or neighbors was mentioned only as an afterthought. Put another way, Jesus' presence in Gadara was announced as bad news: "Some stranger just ruined our economy!" The message the Samaritan Woman brought back to her

neighbors was: "Come and see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this not be the Messiah?" Difficult as it must have been to have her life laid bare before the Lord, the Samaritan woman had been brought to faith and was excited to share what she considered very good news.

The second difference is the attitude of the townsfolk to Jesus' powerful presence. Driving out unclean demons and animals was too much for the Gadarenes to accept. The restoration of two of their own was insignificant compared to the loss of their pigs. They steadfastly refused the call to change. There is actually something potentially scary in the woman's invitation to "come and see a man who told me everything I ever did." Would Jesus reveal the secret sins and hidden shame of everyone in Shechem? The Samari-

tans took that risk by coming out to see Jesus. They were actually attracted by the changes they saw in the woman: no longer avoiding them, no longer hostile or defensive or ashamed.

John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus by proclaiming repentance, a change of mind, a change of priorities, a change of life (Matthew 3:1-2). The very first message Jesus preached expanded John's call by only a few words: "The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe the good news" (Mark 1:14-15). Where Jesus is, there will be change. That was clear from His very first miracle: transforming water into wine at the wedding in Cana. Whether the divine presence and the transformation He offers will be good news or bad news will be up to us. **ECL**

Eastern Catholic Life New Subscription Rate

Beginning July 1, 2024, the Eastern Catholic Life subscription rate will increase to \$20.00. There has not been a rate increase since March of 2013, and in that time postage rates have increased several times, as has the cost of production.

SEASONAL REFLECTIONS

Father Ronald Hatton



"TAKE HEED LEST YOU FORGET THE LORD..."

"Take heed lest you forget the Lord your God, by not keeping His commandments and His ordinances and His statutes, which I command you this day: lest, when you have eaten and are full, and have built goodly houses and live in them, and when your herds and flocks multiply, and your silver and gold is multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied, then your heart be lifted up, and you forget the Lord your God, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, Who led you through the great and terrible wilderness, with its fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where there was no water, Who brought you water out of the flinty rock, Who fed you in the wilderness with manna which your fathers did not know, that He might humble you and test you, to do you good in the end. Beware lest you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.' You shall remember the Lord your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth; that He may confirm His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as at this day." (Deut. 8:11-19)

I love our liturgical year, in all its richness; how it guides us in all the things of God. We have been led through so much so far this year in the things of the salvation of God given to us: we have witnessed His incarnation at the Feast of the Nativity; we have been brought successfully through the Red Sea of the Great Fast; we have wept at His betrayal, arrest, at the foot of His cross, and as He was laid in His tomb. We have also risen early on the first day of the week and gone out with the Myrrh-bearers and found the huge stone rolled away, and heard the words of the angel, "Why do you seek the living among the dead?" We have seen our Lord risen from the dead; placed our fingers in the nail-prints and our hand in His side and believed. We have watched as He ascended to His Father and our Father. And we have received the heavenly Spirit.

Now, though, we may feel spiritually exhausted, and just want to "get on" to other things in our lives. All the "heavy stuff" is behind us, and it is the traditional time of year for vacations, cook-outs, and just enjoying the warmth of

summer. And yet, we have to remember that, as our Lord's earthly ministry has ended, our ministry as Church has begun. At His ascension, our Lord told us, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has fixed by His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:6-8). We are so wont to set aside all spiritual cares, to paraphrase the words of the Cherubic Hymn, but the Church reminds us at this season that we are to be about our Father's business, and to now put into action all that the Lord has taught us over these past months. We have received our Lord's teachings and are now to put them into practice. It is not enough to have dutifully attended all the services and done all the prostrations and sung all the praises: we must now follow through on our promises to God: "Make vows to the Lord your God, and fulfill them" (Psalm 75 [76]: 11) we sing in the Sunday Prokeimion for Tone 8. At our Baptism, our sponsors made vows in our name, or we made those vows ourselves: "Have

you united yourself to Christ?" "Yes, I have united myself to Christ." "Then worship Him." During this season, we have been given the time to worship Him, and to do all things in His name and to His glory. As much as we want to leave all this aside for the summer, we are obliged to continue along the path on which we started out; we are still to take up our cross daily and follow Christ. "But Jesus answered them, 'My Father is working still, and I am working'" (John 5:17). God does not cease His work during this season, and we, in concert with Jesus, are not to cease doing good, being there for one another, and gathering together in our local parish (or the nearest parish to where we are vacationing) at least every Sunday to worship Him and sing His praises. "Take heed lest you forget the Lord your God, by not keeping His commandments and His ordinances and His statutes, which I command you this day." **ECL**



BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES OF MONEY & POSSESSIONS

By Father Michael J. Salnicky

MORE ON DEBT AND BORROWING

The Bible is clear that borrowing is limited to providing for the things we truly need (food, shelter, etc.) as opposed to things we desire or think we need. The Bible is also clear that when something is borrowed it should be paid back. One thing is sure: borrowing leads to obligations and loss of freedom. If you find yourself in debt, know that God loves you and He cares about your situation. God loves you as you are, but He also calls us to change our ways to better follow Him and not our own desires. This is for two reasons:

1. Debt presumes on the future. James 4:13-15 warns us not to make plans to prosper while ignoring God's will and

purpose. Instead, we should embrace the mindset: "If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that." "The good Lord willing," was a favorite statement of our Slavic baba's and d'ido's. Pursuing "our" will is too often the reason debt is created. We seek to be increased with goods instead of increasing our faith and dependence on God. James takes it one step further. Since we do not know what the future brings, he tells us that acting in ways that presume on the future is boastful, arrogant, and evil. A majority of borrowing today presumes on the future. It's making a pledge or guarantee to repay without having a sure way of doing so. Borrowing without having a sure way to pay

violates another principle, the principle of surety and the Bible strongly warns us against engaging in such acts (Proverbs 6:1+5, 11:15,17:18).

2. Debt denies God the opportunity to provide what we "really" need. God knows what you need, and He's promised to provide. The problem is we choose to define our needs by our and society's standards, rejecting God's provision as not being enough. We then do whatever it takes to get what we want, or society tells us we need, even if it involves borrowing. We fail to realize that sometimes God's way of providing what we need the most is to deny us what we want the most. Jesus wants his

followers to be free from worry. In Mt. 6:32 Jesus tells us: "Your heavenly Father knows that you need all these..." Jesus reassures us that God's knowing is accompanied by His desiring to meet our needs. Jesus is emphasizing that we have a Heavenly Father Who loves us. And this Heavenly Father is greater than any earthly father. The four fasting seasons in the Byzantine Catholic Church are our opportunity to learn to deny our own selfish desires so that we may be generous to those in need.

Glory to Jesus Christ! **ECL**

SCHOOL OF PRAYER

Father G. Scott Boghossian



FRATERNAL CHARITY PROVES OUR PROGRESS

How can we tell if we are progressing in the spiritual life? We have decided to follow Christ and try to keep His commandments, attend the Divine Liturgy and other church services, receive holy communion, go to confession, and spend time every day in prayer and spiritual reading. All of this is very good.

But do these religious activities make any difference in our behavior? Are we any better than an agnostic, unbeliever, or secular humanist? Let's put ourselves to the test.

"Examine yourselves, to see whether you are holding to your faith. Test yourselves. Do you not realize that Jesus Christ is in you? —unless indeed you fail to meet the test!" (2 Cor. 13:5-6).

The best evidence of spiritual growth is the virtue of supernatural fraternal charity. Carmelite author Father Gabriel of Saint Mary Magdalene (1893-1953) writes, 'Fraternal charity is the mark of God's elect. If we do not have this distinctive mark, Jesus does not recognize us as His disciples; our heavenly Father does not love us as His children, nor will He take us into His Kingdom... Fraternal charity of this kind is the surest guarantee of a spiritual life

that is advancing toward sanctity" (Divine Intimacy, 203-204).

The proof that we are making progress, growing in love for God, and developing a genuine Christian character is love of neighbor. And this doesn't mean just loving people who are nice to us. Supernatural fraternal charity means loving, bearing with, forgiving, and helping difficult, irritating, frustrating, and upsetting people. It means loving people we do not like, those we have an aversion to, and those who rub us the wrong way.

Jesus tells us: "If you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you salute only your brethren, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Mt. 5:46-48).

Father Gabriel says, "It is easy to deceive ourselves, thinking we have great charity because we love those who love us, because we are very thoughtful and full of attentions toward those who think as we do, or who are close to us, while, in reality, it is a question of purely natural love into which the love of God hardly enters" (Divine Intimacy, 775).

Practicing fraternal charity is extremely difficult, and it is only to the extent that we practice this supernatural fraternal charity that we can be sure we are heading for heaven. Saint Paul reminds us in 1 Corinthians 13:1-3:

"If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing."

Miracles, signs, wonders, visions, dreams, revelations, prophecy, bilocation, levitation, stigmata, exorcisms, advanced degrees, academic achievements, long hours spent in prayer, fasting, penances, giving substantial donations, and even dying for the Faith are worthless if they lack supernatural fraternal charity.

Saint Paul describes what fraternal charity looks like in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8: "Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but re-

joices in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things."

In Galatians 5:22, Saint Paul says that the "fruit (proof, evidence) of the Spirit is love...."

Jesus says, "A new commandment give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (Jn. 13:34-35).

"Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me" (Mt. 25:40).

Saint Teresa of Avila says, "Ah, if we understood well how important is this virtue of the love of our neighbor, we should give ourselves entirely to the pursuit of it."

Fraternal charity is the real proof of spiritual progress, the greatest evidence that we truly love God above all else. From now on, let us make fraternal charity our greatest priority.

"In the evening of life, we shall be judged on love." – Saint John of the Cross (Spiritual Maxims, 1:57) **ECL**

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Camp Theotokos is an all girls camp open to girls ages 6-17. There will be spiritual talks, games, activities, and an indoor waterpark! The registration fee for this camp is \$175. Deadline to register is Saturday, June 29, 2024.


Altar Server Congress July 21-25, 2024

Altar Server Congress is an all boys camp for current altar servers ages 6-17. The camp will feature spiritual talks aimed at serving God on the altar, lots of fun and games, serving liturgy with Bishop Kurt, and a trip to an indoor waterpark! Deadline to register is Saturday July 6, 2024.

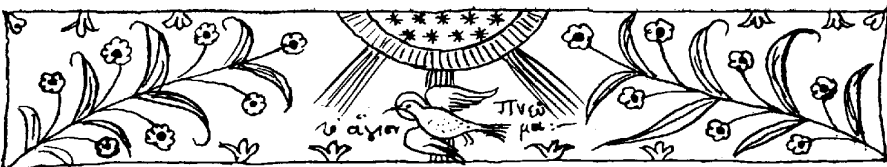


Camp St. Nicholas August 11-15, 2024



Camp St. Nicholas is a preteen coed boys and girls camp for ages 6-12. There will be a trip to an indoor waterpark, spiritual talks aimed at growing closer to God, and plenty of fun and games! The registration fee for this camp is \$175. Deadline to register is Saturday July 27, 2024.



Scan the QR codes to register or visit
www.eparchyofpassaic.com/youthsummercamps
and join us for a summer of fun!



You are invited to the
2nd Annual
**SAINT THERESE
PILGRIMAGE**
on
October 5, 2024
~
Holy Annunciation Monastery
403 West County Road
Sugarloaf, PA 18249

Therese and Maximos

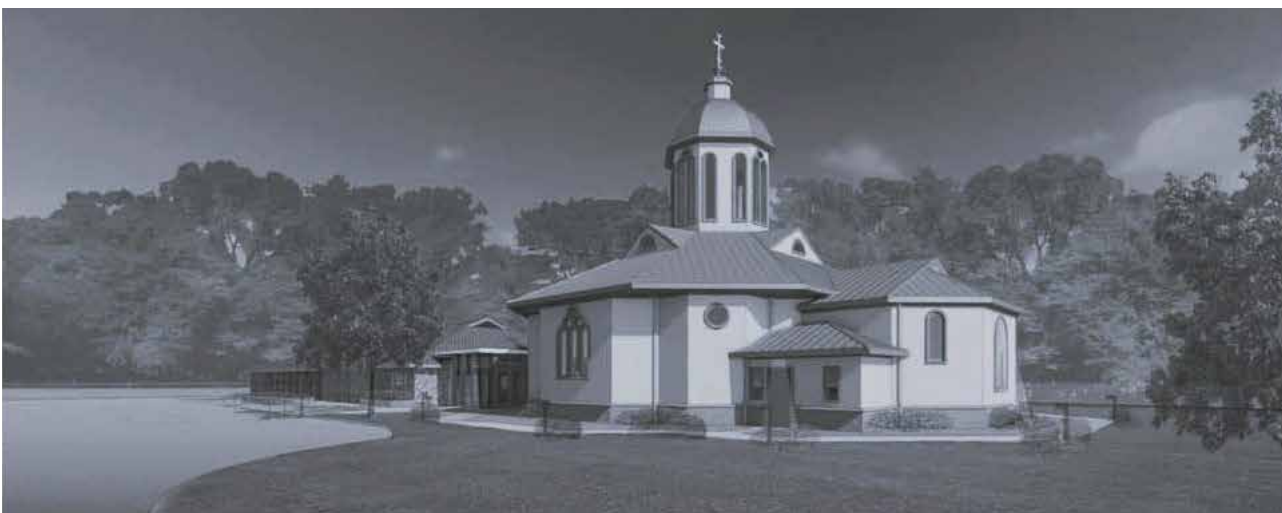
Therese does not mention the great Byzantine Church Father, Maximos the Confessor, but she prayed the Apostles or Nicene Creed daily. Like Therese, even today we pray these same Creeds - The Apostles Creed introduces the Rosary and the Nicene Creed is sung in every Divine Liturgy.

Jesus Christ, Son of God was made Man when born of the Virgin Mary. We pray in peace whereas Maximos' tongue was torn out and his hand severed to disable his preaching or writing the True Faith: Jesus Christ God and Man, with a divine will and a human will.

Is not Maximos a model for our times? A Byzantine monk, scholar, and Church Father whose sole defender was Pope St. Martin I, a martyr for Jesus Christ, True God and True Man.

At our Theresian Pilgrimage, there will be a time and a place where more can be learned about St. Maximos and St. Martin I and their love of Truth as guides to Church unity.

For more information
call: 1-800-882-0028 ~ email: giftfromthenuns@ptd.net
www.byzantinediscalcedcarmelites.com



Your Parish at The Jersey Shore

Our Lady of Perpetual Help 1937 Church Road
Toms River, New Jersey
Home of Eastern Catholic Radio 732-255-6272

New Building arriving in
2024

Sunday Divine Liturgy at 9 a.m.

OLPHTR.ORG

**Visiting The
Myrtle Beach
Area This
Summer?**

**Blessed Basil Hopko
Byzantine Catholic Mission
3059 SC Highway 90
Conway, SC**

All Liturgies will start at 10 AM.
Follow us on Facebook for any
schedule changes.

UPCOMING EPARCHIAL AND PARISH EVENTS

Eastern Catholic Life

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JULY, 2024

- 4 Independence Day
*Civic holiday * chancery closed*
- 21-25 Altar Server Congress
Carpathian Village, Canadensis, PA

AUGUST, 2024

- 1 Dormition Fast begins
- 4 Saint Nicholas Pilgrimage
Carpathian Village, Canadensis, PA
- 6 Holy Transfiguration of Our Lord
Solemn HolyDay
- 11-15 Camp Saint Nicholas
Carpathian Village, Canadensis, PA
- 13 Centennial Celebration 7PM
Saint Mary, Manhattan, NY
- 14 Sisters Servants' Annual Pilgrimage
Sloatsburg, NY

- 15 Holy Dormition of the Virgin Theotokos
Holyday of Obligation Chancery closed*

THE BYZANTINE CATHOLIC EPARCHY OF PASSAIC
subscribes to the
Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People
adopted by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. The Eparchy, within all its parishes, institutions and programs, is committed to assuring a safe environment in ministry for its children and young people that conforms to Charter requirements. For further information regarding the Eparchial Safe Environment Program please contact:

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Safe Environment Program Coordinator • 732-280-2682

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