



EASTERN CATHOLIC LIFE

Official Publication of the Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Passaic

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AUGUST 2024

FIRST PASTORAL LETTER OF BISHOP BASIL TAKACH

Uniontown, PA, September 30, 1924



WITH THE everlasting love for your immortal soul, I greet you with my First Episcopal words, my beloved Fathers and dear Faithful.

Love gave me strength and solidity to leave our beloved native land: "PODKARPATSKA RUS" with a deciding spirit to cross the Ocean, to fulfill the order of Christ promptly, "Go into the world and preach the Gospel to all nations." ..Mk. 71-16.

The living spirit in Christ's Church always was, is and will be: LOVE. This love moved the heart of Peter's successor, the Holy Roman See. With kind love towards our Eastern Greek Catholic Rite, and towards the salvation of the treasured souls of our faithful who are living in the United States of North America, he consented and appointed me bishop. Because love and vision became real through obedience, I humbly bowed my head before His Holiness Pope Pius XI, and took upon my shoulders the gentle burden of a Bishop's obligation.

The obligation of a bishop is not an easy task, against t [words omitted, typewritten text not clear] three stubborn fierce enemies of the salvation of souls, i.e. against temptations, to save the souls of thousands and thousands of people.

Even though my problems appear to over-power the strength of man, I am not dejected in spirit. I am placing all my hope in the grace of Almighty God and in the living faith of my clergy and faithful.

I trust in God, that the fountain of grace, the Holy Spirit, will not leave me, in such a great and important work, without a special help. At the same time I hope and trust in the cooperation of my Christ-loving clergy and faithful.

My dearly beloved Brothers and Sons in Christ: You waited for a long time, for 8 years expecting and petitioning for a bishop of your own blood and flesh, your nationality. Your request is fulfilled. Your Bishop is among you, sent by the Holy Father of Rome. A bishop, not a stranger in spirit and blood, a sincere son of "PODKARPATSKA-RUS", who with one soul, one heart is with his people, who are overwhelmed with the spirit of his blood, to lift up the people in religion, morality, culture and nationality to the highest degree to the most educated people.

Do you wish to make success in a short time? Follow me, work with me. As my message here in the land of free America, which comes to life in the union of good deeds, love and obedience will be a fruitful success on your part only through your good deeded love and obedience can be accomplished.

Love and obedience are the vivifying essential elements of building the Kingdom of God in the Church of Christ upon earth.

Without deeds of love, faith is dead, and without the deeds of obedience it is not fertile.

God requests from us a sincere and blessed supernatural love. With such a love you are to love your Church authority, your appointed ones, as the Holy Scripture says: "They care for your souls". Love your religion, faith and do not permit the dishonest salesman to mislead you away from your forefathers' heritage. Love our beautiful Eastern Rite, do not change it, or leave it light-mindedly through your weakness or some earthly reasons. Love your people, your beautiful language. Do not be ashamed of it, do not deny it before strangers, but love one another with real love, because we all are brothers, all the commandments of Christ unite us: "This command I give you, that you love one another". J. XV. 17. "For he that loveth his neighbor hath fulfilled the law" Rom. XIII, 8.

Dearly beloved Faithful, the virtue of love is not less important than the love of the virtue of obedience, because these two virtues are the golden characters of the New Testament. Mankind through his disobedience lost his blessedness and through the obedience of Christ was saved. "For as by the disobedience of one man, many were made sinners; so also by the obedience of one, many shall be made just". Rom. V. 19. "Christ saved us with His humility, being obedient unto death on the cross" (Phil. II. 8) He with His divine OBEDIENCE TAUGHT US TO OBEY: "not my will, but Thy will be done." (L. 22, 42). With His divine teaching and death, has proven His obedience.

Our salvation depends upon us, if we follow Christ, because Obedience is an Angelical act. Disobedience is a diabolical act.

Where there is no obedience, there begins the misunderstanding dissention, heresy, sin.

In obedience is great knowledge, firm strength, and deifying peace.

The spirit of this world is the spirit of disobedience and pride. The spirit of Christ is kindness and child-like meekness. Without obedience there is no order, no salvation, no strength in building up and spreading ideas, only chaos, hatred, sin, evil and despair.

I am convinced Rev. Fathers and dear Faithful, that no one of you wish to see such a dark picture in the future. For such a reason I dare to ask you in my first greetings that you show your love and obedience to me, because with the virtue you can secure your soul's salvation.

I am sending my episcopal blessing to the clergy and all of my faithful.

In firm hope that on the foundation of the will of our Saviour and the spirit of the Holy Mother Church, with cooperating work it will be possible for us to build up our Greek Rite Catholic Eparchy, in the free land of the United States of America, for the glory of Almighty God and the salvation of all our dear faithful.

These are the last words of an article by Father Stephen Gulovich, S.T.D, PhD, Bishop Takach's chancellor, in his article in Eastern Churches Quarterly, as he surveyed the controversies of celibacy, the court cases, the many defections of clergy and people, endured by Bishop Takach and the exarchate:

We must admit that the story of the Slavonic-Byzantine church in America does not present a very edifying picture.

We personally have been impressed by one thought which should offer some consolation to those who place little hope in the continuance of that church in America. It is this: Beyond any shadow of a doubt the establishment, growth and survival of the Catholic-Slav Byzantine church in America is due to divine intervention and has the characteristics of the miraculous. One need only survey the chronological events to realize that were it not for divine intervention those who allegedly were trying to establish and preserve the Catholic Byzantine church would have succeeded in destroying it. Hence, we feel justified in concluding that it is God's will that the Byzantine church should thrive in America for a definite purpose; and if the clergy and faithful of the exarchate of Pittsburgh will prove themselves equal to the sublime call, they need not fear the future.[Emphasis added]

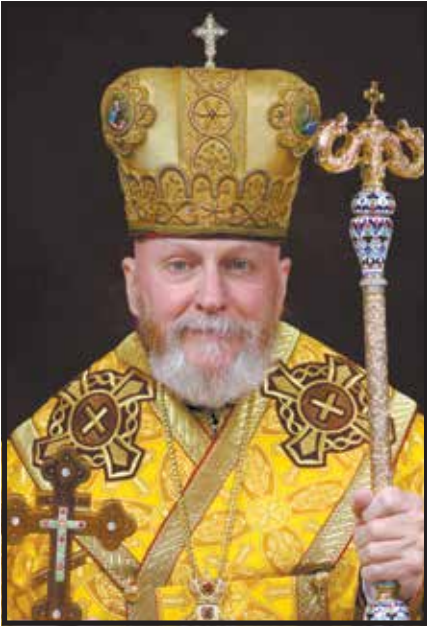
"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all."

Your humble Father in Christ.

+ Basil Takach, Bishop.

Uniontown, Pa. September 30, 1924.

(Translation to English by Father John Slivka, The Historical Mirror: Sources of the Rusin and Hungarian Greek Rite Catholics in the United States of America 1884-1963, Brooklyn, N.Y.)



I LIFT UP MY EYES

Pastoral Reflections of Bishop Kurt



MIRACULOUS REBIRTH

Reprint from the September, 2014 issue of the Eastern Catholic Life

At the end of June [2014], Father John Zeyack and I had the honor of flying to Europe to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the relegalization of our Church in the former Soviet Union. Although we talk about miraculous icons, the astounding miracle of recent times is the rebirth of the Church. In the Eparchy of Mukachevo, our mother church, they call it the “emergence from the catacombs”. This colorful term refers to the practice of the early Christians of holding their meetings in the underground cemeteries near Rome called “catacombs”. And indeed, there is much similarity. Our Church did continue its life as much as possible in secrecy under the Soviet rule, but the cruel tor-

tures by the Soviet government probably exceeded those of the Romans. It is true that the Roman government killed Christians in spectacularly cruel ways. Ancient secular historians describe these events. In some ways though, the communists were far worse. The Romans, who were not atheists, conducted open trials, and the executions were carried out in public. The Romans had no fear of the truth. The communists, on the other hand, who claim to be following modern science, had secret proceedings, secret arrests, and then tortured their victims for years in distant hidden places. The Nazis, who also claimed to be the modern scientific future of the human race, also arrested people in the middle of the night, held secret trials and executions. It’s ironic that both of these groups, claiming to be scientific, used secrecy and lies as their chief weapons for advancement. Modern science, on the other hand, is

the organized search for truth based on evidence.

The rebirth of our Church is truly miraculous. Driving around Transcarpathia and seeing all the new churches, and the fervor of the people is like being converted all over again to the Christian faith. In only eleven years, Bishop Milan Šašik has built 154 churches and ordained 164 priests. Bishop Šašik keeps a handwritten diary that he carries with him around the Eparchy, and he had to look in the book to tell me how many priests he had ordained. He numbers each ordination so he doesn’t lose track. Like all of our bishops in Ukraine, he has more applications for the seminary than he can accept, and more young men who have completed seminary than he can ordain. A married man can’t be ordained until there is a position open, otherwise he can’t support his family. As a result, there are a great many seminarians from Ukraine who are getting advanced degrees in Rome or other places while they await ordination. I think the Ukrainian churches must have the largest number of priests in the world with advanced degrees. In another generation, they may take over all the Catholic universities in the world. As we drove out of a parking lot, with the young children of the parish priest waving at us, Bishop Šašik commented that there must over 1000 priest children in his Eparchy. When our seminary was reopened in Uzhhorod, Bishop Michael Dudick began the practice of paying for the food for the seminary. I am happy to report that the practice became a tradition, continued by Bishop Pataki, Archbishop Skurla, Father Edward Cimbala, and continues to this day. Our own seminarians in Pittsburgh are mighty few, but you can proudly say that you are feeding about one hundred seminarians in our mother Church in Uzhhorod!

On the first day in Ukraine, Bishop Šašik asked me if I would like to see our miraculous icon of the Mother of God in Transcarpathia. The great icon of Mariapoc was the icon of our whole church for centuries when we were only one eparchy, and all of our territory was under the Emperor in Vienna. At the end of World War I, our Church found itself divided up by a series of treaties when the Austrian Empire was divided.

Realizing that the icons of Mariapoc, both the original in Vienna and the copy in Mariapoc were irretrievably outside the new borders, Bishop Petro Gebey asked Pope Pius XI, the Holy Father in Rome, for help. The Pope responded to the Bishop by presenting the Eparchy of Mukachevo with an ancient icon from the Vatican treasury, a Greek icon of the Theotokos with the date 1453 written on the bottom. On June 27, 1926, in the presence of 30,000 faithful, Bishop Gebey (also written Hebey in the west) entrusted the entire Greek Catholic Eparchy of Mukachevo to the protection of Our Lady of Mukachevo, and deposited the icon with the Basilian Fathers on Mount Chernecha. When our monastery was “liquidated” by the communists, this icon was hidden and passed from one secret hiding place to another one step ahead of the police. The last family to hold the icon presented it to our bishop in 1998, but the Basilian monastery on Mount Chernecha remains with the Orthodox. So, Bishop Sasik built a new monastery for our church at Malij Berezniy, and the icon is in that church where I was able to visit it. Our new monastery is a rather simple place compared to the great stone buildings of the ancient monasteries, but we know that God prefers the humble and I think the Theotokos is happy with the new home of her icon and even more happy with her home in the living hearts of the Greek Catholic people.

When Bishop Šašik visited our Eparchy last December, he presented us with a hand painted copy of Our Lady of Mukachevo. Things certainly have changed over there. At the banquet on June 28 celebrating the emergence of our church from the catacombs, the Governor and Vice-governor of Transcarpathia were present and are both Greek Catholic, and Bishop Šašik presented the Governor with a hand painted copy, the very icon his government was searching for only a few decades ago. I guess you could say the government finally found the icon, but not the way they expected. The Governor made a moving speech saying that in our churches we need no longer have fear of men, but only righteous fear of God.

+Kurt Burnett



Icon of Our Lady of Mukachevo

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:

Father David J. Baratelli, Ed.S., M.Div.
Safe Environment Program Coordinator • 732-280-2682

Dr. Maureen Daddona, Ph.D.
Victim’s Assistance Coordinator • 516-623-6456



Photo Highlights of the 100th Anniversary Celebration of the Arrival of Bishop Basil Takach



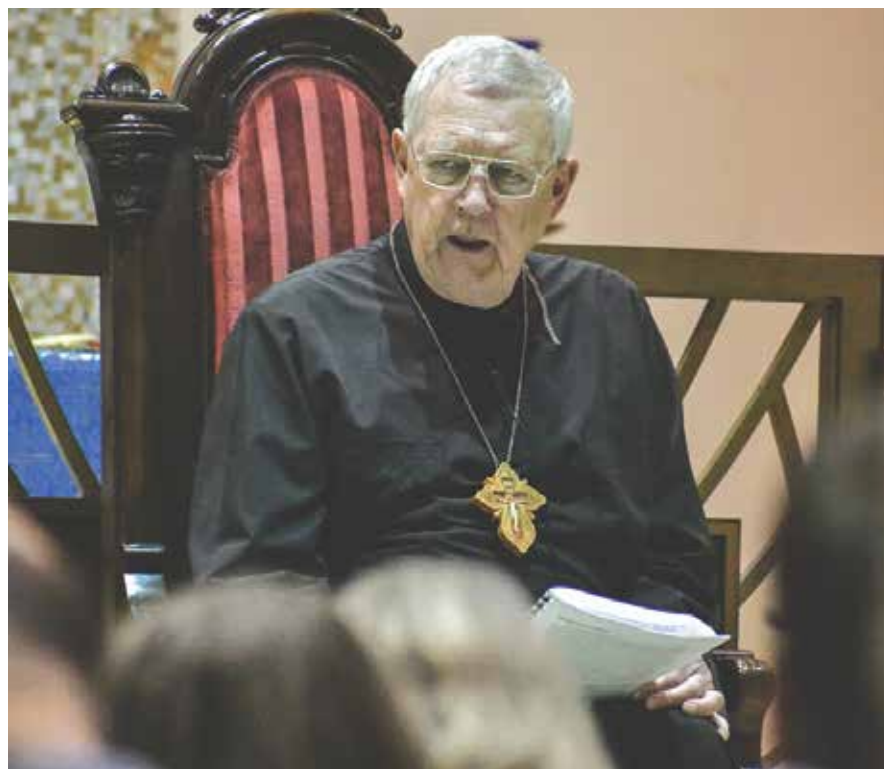
Bishop Kurt gives the dismissal to the Moleben of Thanksgiving



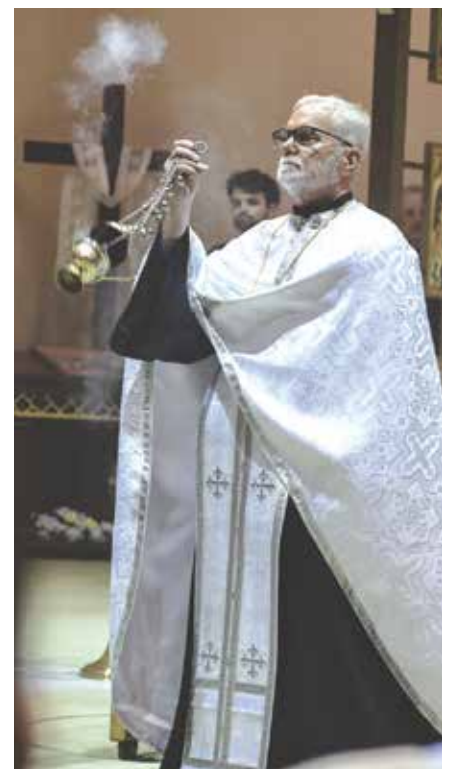
Approximately 225 Byzantine Catholic faithful and guests assembled for the Centennial Celebration of Bishop Takach's arrival



The faithful exuberantly raise their voices with the choir in praise of Almighty God.



Father Christopher Zuger, retired priest of the Eparchy of Phoenix, explains the importance of Bishop Basil Takach's arrival and the challenges he faced.



Father Ed Cimbala, pastor of Saint Mary Parish and host/organizer of the event, incenses at the beginning of the Moleben.



Above: Some of the approximately 225 attendees listen attentively to Father Christopher Zuger's presentation.



Left: Parishioners of Saint Mary Parish extend their hospitality to the assembled faithful at the repast following the event.



Left: Father Jim Badeaux, pastor of Saint Mary Parish in Hillsborough, talks with some of the young adults present at the celebration.



Below: Saint Mary's Parish Choir leads the responses



PEOPLE YOU KNOW

IN HARRISBURG...

30th Anniversary of Father Taras Lovska's ordination to the Priesthood



Mitred Archpriest Taras Lovska celebrated his thirtieth anniversary of ordination to the priesthood on April 3. On Sunday, April 7, a celebration of the event began with Divine Liturgy celebrated by Bishop Kurt. Upon his arrival, Bishop Kurt was greeted at the door by the children and the traditional bread presented by Andrew Nehilla, Father Taras, and George Merenich. Also in attendance were Father Ronald C. Barusefski, rector of the Byzantine Catholic Seminary, Father Roman Isaysky, and Deacon Lucas Crawford.



Following the Divine Liturgy, Bishop Kurt, the clergy, and the Saint Ann Church family and friends went to the parish center to continue the celebration. Lunch included homemade *Chlebicky* (an open-face sandwich with ham, cheese, and horseradish) and cake. Father Taras Lovska is the Parochial Administrator at Saint Ann Byzantine Catholic Church in Harrisburg, PA.



IN HARRISBURG...

End-of-the-Year Group Picture of ECF Teachers and Students

The final day of ECF classes ended with a group picture at Saint Ann Byzantine Catholic Church in Harrisburg, PA. On the last day of class, parents were invited for an Open House and refreshments. Father Taras Lovska thanked the students, teachers, and parents for their active participation throughout the year, and he reminded everyone that our children are the flowers of our church.

IN TRUMBULL...

Parish Holds Vacation Bible School

On June 24-27, 2024, Saint John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church in Trumbull, CT held its religious camp for children ages 4 to 14. Father Hryhoriy Lozinskyy, ordained in 2017, and parochial administrator, is the organizer of the camp. Together with catechists Marian Bayusik, Marta Markiw, and



two helpers, Peter and Evan, Father Hryhoriy instructed two groups with a total of 11 children. Throughout the four days, the campers were able to learn about the Feasts of The Nativity, Encounter of Our Lord, with Simeon, the Nativity of John the Baptist, and the Feast of The Transfiguration of Our Lord. Each morning and afternoon, the kids gathered to pray with Father Hryhoriy and catechists. Other activities included art, outdoor play, and lunch at the conclusion of the camp. The children had a fun time playing together on the spacious lawn of the church grounds, which lies on 11 acres of secluded park-like territory. At no cost and with big enthusiasm, the camp was a great success. Thank you to everyone who was a part of it and hoping to see you next year. Saint John Church is delighted to welcome you to its parish in Trumbull. Please join them for Divine Services when in the area!

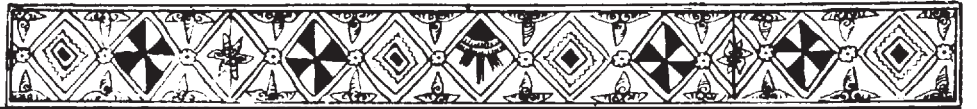
Eastern Catholic Life New Subscription Rate

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.

ONLINE CHURCH SINGING CLASSES BY 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.

AROUND THE EPARCHY



IN WILLIAMSBURG...

Parish Enjoys A Day of Spiritual Retreat

Ascension of Our Lord Byzantine Catholic parish in Williamsburg VA, was honored and privileged to host Maria Ivaniv Lonchyna as guest speaker for a spiritual retreat entitled, *Receive and Give The Gift That You Are* on May 11, 2024. Through sharing her own personal experiences and theological background she enabled reflection and inspiration on all those present.



Maria is a Ph.D. candidate at Regis Saint Michael's Faculty of Theology in Toronto School of Theology (Canada). She has earned multiple degrees in theology at the Catholic University of Leuven (Belgium), and the Ukrainian Catholic University (Ukraine). Maria was a lecturer at the Three Holy Hierarchs Kyiv Theological Seminary (Kyiv, Ukraine) and a teaching assistant



in the Theology Department at the Ukrainian Catholic University (Lviv, Ukraine).

The retreat was divided into four sessions: (1) Receive the gift you are; (2) Realize the gifts you have been given; (3) Give the gift only you can give; (4) Women in the Church: mission and gifts. These unique sessions provided attendees the opportunity to stop, listen, reflect, and pray so that we can look honestly at ourselves as a gift, in relation to God and the world around us. Father Alex Shuter is the pastor of Ascension of Our Lord Parish.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

Join us for our **52nd**
SLAVIC AMERICAN FESTIVAL
Sunday, September 8, 2024
12 Noon til' 6:00 P.M.
 Epiphany of Our Lord Byzantine Catholic Church
www.slavicamericanfestival.com

TRADITIONAL SLAVIC-AMERICAN Festival

SATURDAY, AUGUST 24, 2024
11 AM-7 PM
ST. ANN BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH
 5408 Locust Lane, Harrisburg • (717) 652-1415 • StAnnByz.org
CELEBRATING: LITURGY @ 10 AM & VESPERS @ 5 PM
PUBLIC INVITED!

CONTINUOUS ENTERTAINMENT
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Complete the order form below. Enclose this form in an envelope with the amount due. Please note that only CHECKS OR MONEY ORDERS in U.S. funds will be accepted for payment.

Questions? Please call 724-439-8644.

Please mail your completed form & check to:
 Sisters of St. Basil the Great Card Shop
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 Name: _____
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 City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____
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\$6 for orders of \$15.00 or less
 \$7.50 for orders \$15.01-\$35.00
 \$8.50 for orders \$35.01-\$49.99
 \$10.50 for orders \$50.00-\$99.99
 Orders of \$100 or more, add 9%. Additional postage may apply.

CHECKS/MONEY ORDERS IN US FUNDS ONLY.

PA Residents add 6% _____
 Subtotal _____
 Shipping/Handling _____
 Total Amount Due _____

Quantity	Cost /Item	Shipping & Taxes (See chart above)	Total Cost
	\$14.50		

SISTERS OF SAINT BASIL TO CELEBRATE 90TH ANNUAL PILGRIMAGE
IN HONOR OF OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP

THEOTOKOS: OUR ROCK, OUR REFUGE, AND OUR STRENGTH CELEBRATING 90 YEARS OF GRACE



Sisters of the Order of St. Basil the Great

500 West Main Street – P.O. Box 878
Uniontown, PA 15401 – Telephone 724-438-8644

August 8, 2024

Glory to Jesus Christ!

Very Reverend and dear Reverend Fathers,

In thanksgiving to God, and with great enthusiasm and joy, we Sisters invite you to our 90th Annual Pilgrimage in honor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help.

For this 90th Pilgrimage, we chose the theme “Theotokos: Our Rock, Our Refuge and Our Strength: Celebrating 90 Years of Grace.” Indeed, Our Gracious Mother has been the Rock, Refuge, and Strength of our Province for 103 years and has been the very foundation upon which our Pilgrimage has been built these 90 years.

Mt. St. Macrina has received so many blessings throughout its history, and our Pilgrimage allows us to share these blessings with all of you, our faithful Pilgrims. Ninety years of prayer, 90 years of blessings, 90 years of relationships, 90 years of grace. It doesn’t get much better than this, and we know it.

We are grateful to you for your participation in our history, and we know that you share in our joy as we celebrate our 90th Pilgrimage. May Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Our Rock, Our Refuge, and Our Strength guide and protect you in your priestly ministry.

Gratefully in the Lord,

Sister Susan Sisko, OSBM
Provincial

Friday, August 30

6:30 PM COMPLINE and BLESSING OF WATER
Lourdes Grotto

Saturday, August 31

7:30 AM – 12 NOON MYSTERY OF RECONCILIATION (Confessions)
House of Prayer Patio

OPENING OF PILGRIMAGE

9:00 AM GROUNDBREAKING CEREMONY
For the new Monastery Building

9:45 AM Procession with icon of Our Lady of Perpetual Help
from House of Prayer to Shrine Altar

10:15 AM DIVINE LITURGY
Welcome: Sister Susan Sisko, OSBM

1:00 – 5:00 PM MYSTERY OF RECONCILIATION (Confessions)
House of Prayer Patio

1:00 PM AKATHIST *at Shrine Altar*

2:00 PM CHILDREN’S PILGRIMAGE *at Children’s Tent*

ORIENTATION for TEENS *at Prayer Garden*

MYSTERY OF ANOINTING *at Shrine Altar*

YOUNG ADULT GATHERING *at Lourdes Tent*

3:00 PM TEEN PILGRIMAGE *at Prayer Garden*

4:00 PM VESPERS with DIVINE LITURGY
Shrine Altar

7:00 PM Procession from House of Prayer to Cemetery
PARASTAS & Procession to Shrine Altar
Teen Social

Sunday, September 1

7:00 AM DIVINE LITURGY *at House of Prayer Chapel*

7:30 AM MATINS *at Shrine Altar*

7:30 AM – 12 NOON MYSTERY OF RECONCILIATION (Confessions)
House of Prayer Patio

9:00 AM DIVINE LITURGY – Slavonic *at Shrine Altar*

11:00 AM DIVINE LITURGY – Vocations *at Shrine Altar*

12:00 – 5:00 PM MYSTERY OF RECONCILIATION (Confessions)
House of Prayer Patio

1:00 PM CHILDREN’S PROCESSION
with Special Blessing for Youth & Young Adults
from House of Prayer to the Shrine Altar

2:00 PM ENRICHMENT SESSION *at Trinity Center*

BEREAVEMENT SESSION *at Mausoleum*

CHILDREN’S PILGRIMAGE *at Children’s Tent*

TEEN PILGRIMAGE *at Prayer Garden*

YOUNG ADULT *at Lourdes Tent*

MYSTERY OF ANOINTING *at Shrine Altar*

3:45 PM Procession from House of Prayer to Shrine Altar

4:00 PM DIVINE LITURGY *at Shrine Altar*

Words of Gratitude: Sister Susan Sisko, O.S.B.M.

7:00 PM CANDLELIGHT PROCESSION
(Beginning and ending at the House of Prayer)

CLOSING OF THE PILGRIMAGE

Following the Candlelight Procession:

TEEN SOCIAL *at Prayer Garden Area*

YOUNG ADULT GATHERING *at Lourdes Tent*

Monday, September 2

9:30 AM DIVINE LITURGY *at Shrine Altar*

Although casual attire is acceptable, Pilgrims are asked to be mindful of the religious nature of services and activities and to dress appropriately. Thank you!

BISHOP'S APPEAL 2023 – FINAL REPORT

Highlighted parishes reached their goal and received a 40% refund

Parish	Location	Goal	Received
Saint John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church	Trumbull, CT	\$15,400.00	\$7,033.00
Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church	Danbury, CT	\$7,000.00	\$2,494.00
Holy Trinity Byzantine Catholic Church	New Britain, CT	\$4,800.00	\$300.00
Saint Gregory of Nyssa Byzantine Catholic Church	Beltsville, MD	\$5,400.00	\$9,010.00
Saint Therese Byzantine Catholic Church	Saint Petersburg, FL	\$10,600.00	\$6,700.00
Saint John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church	Bayonne, NJ	\$3,000.00	\$1,860.00
Saint Elias Byzantine Catholic Church	Carteret, NJ	\$4,400.00	\$2,389.00
Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church	Dunellen, NJ	\$4,000.00	\$1,150.00
Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church	Jersey City, NJ	\$3,000.00	\$2,450.00
Saint George Byzantine Catholic Church	Linden, NJ	\$8,000.00	\$1,830.00
Holy Spirit Byzantine Catholic Church	Mahwah, NJ	\$2,600.00	\$450.00
Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church	Hillsborough, NJ	\$30,000.00	\$8,176.00
Saint George Byzantine Catholic Church	Newark, NJ	\$2,400.00	\$1,485.00
Saint Joseph Byzantine Catholic Church	New Brunswick, NJ	\$3,400.00	\$0.00
Saints Peter & Paul Byzantine Catholic Church	Somerset, NJ	\$2,600.00	\$0.00
Cathedral of St. Michael the Archangel	Passaic, NJ	\$25,200.00	\$26,194.00
Saint Michael Byzantine Catholic Church	Perth Amboy, NJ	\$4,000.00	\$1,127.00
Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church	Perth Amboy, NJ	\$4,000.00	\$1,686.00
Saints Peter & Paul Byzantine Catholic Church	Phillipsburg, NJ	\$3,000.00	\$3,839.00
Saint Thomas the Apostle Byzantine Catholic Church	Rahway, NJ	\$12,400.00	\$13,250.00
Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church	Roebing, NJ	\$3,000.00	\$3,300.00
Assumption of the Virgin Mary Byzantine Catholic Church	Trenton, NJ	\$10,000.00	\$10,050.00
Holy Spirit Byzantine Catholic Church	Binghamton, NY	\$12,000.00	\$2,597.00
Saints Peter & Paul Byzantine Catholic Church	Endicott, NY	\$4,000.00	\$2,066.00
Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church	New York, NY	\$5,000.00	\$2,650.00
Saints Peter & Paul Byzantine Catholic Church	Peekskill, NY	\$3,400.00	\$5,655.00
Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church	White Plains, NY	\$5,000.00	\$1,725.00
Saints Peter & Paul Byzantine Catholic Church	Beaver Meadows, PA	\$16,000.00	\$7,383.00
Saints Peter & Paul Byzantine Catholic Church	Bethlehem, PA	\$17,000.00	\$18,328.00
Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church	Brockton, PA	\$2,000.00	\$100.00
Blessed Virgin Mary Byzantine Catholic Church	Coatesville, PA	\$1,800.00	\$399.00
Saint Michael Byzantine Catholic Church	Dunmore, PA	\$12,000.00	\$5,390.00
Saint John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church	Forest City, PA	\$4,000.00	\$1,838.00
Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church	Freeland, PA	\$15,000.00	\$6,763.00
Saint Ann Byzantine Catholic Church	Harrisburg, PA	\$16,000.00	\$8,925.00
Saint John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church	Hazleton, PA	\$18,400.00	\$5,430.00
Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church	Hazleton, PA	\$12,000.00	\$5,540.00
Holy Ghost Byzantine Catholic Church	Jessup, PA	\$13,000.00	\$2,862.00
Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church	Kingston, PA	\$8,880.00	\$4,430.00
Saint John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church	Lansford, PA	\$5,000.00	\$1,975.00
Our Lady of Perpetual Help Byzantine Catholic Church	Levittown, PA	\$7,800.00	\$2,572.00
Saint Michael Byzantine Catholic Church	McAdoo, PA	\$10,200.00	\$1,420.00
Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church	Mahanoy City, PA	\$10,000.00	\$2,150.00
Saints Peter & Paul Byzantine Catholic Church	Minersville, PA	\$14,000.00	\$3,424.00
Saint Michael Byzantine Catholic Church	Mont Clare, PA	\$8,000.00	\$8,659.00
Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church	Nesquehoning, PA	\$3,000.00	\$3,057.00
Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church	Old Forge, PA	\$8,200.00	\$3,847.00
Holy Ghost Byzantine Catholic Church	Philadelphia, PA	\$7,800.00	\$2,600.00
Holy Trinity Byzantine Catholic Church	Philadelphia, PA	\$3,000.00	\$1,176.00
Saint Michael Byzantine Catholic Church	Pittston, PA	\$8,200.00	\$1,162.00
Saint John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church	Pottstown, PA	\$13,800.00	\$3,626.00
Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church	Saint Clair, PA	\$3,200.00	\$298.00
Saint John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church	Scranton, PA	\$3,200.00	\$70.00
Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church	Scranton, PA	\$6,600.00	\$1,190.00
Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church	Sheppton, PA	\$2,000.00	\$1,030.00
Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church	Swoyersville, PA	\$7,400.00	\$2,700.00
Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church	Taylor, PA	\$3,400.00	\$1,229.00
Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church	Wilkes-Barre, PA	\$19,800.00	\$7,530.00
Saint John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church	Wilkes-Barre Tw., PA	\$5,800.00	\$1,885.00
Saint Basil Byzantine Catholic Church	Miami, FL	\$3,000.00	\$375.00
Resurrection Byzantine Catholic Church	Smithtown, NY	\$8,800.00	\$8,976.00
Nativity of Our Lord Byzantine Catholic Church	East Brunswick, NJ	\$4,200.00	\$407.00
Holy Wisdom Byzantine Catholic Church	Flanders, NJ	\$1,600.00	\$3,284.00
Patronage of the Mother of God Byzantine Catholic Church	Arbutus, MD	\$9,800.00	\$2,000.00
Epiphany of Our Lord Byzantine Catholic Church	Annandale, VA	\$19,800.00	\$25,629.00
Our Lady of Perpetual Help Byzantine Catholic Church	Toms River, NJ	\$9,800.00	\$10,291.00
Saint Nicholas of Myra Byzantine Catholic Church	Orlando, FL	\$8,600.00	\$2,000.00
Saint Andrew the Apostle Byzantine Catholic Church	Westbury, NY	\$3,200.00	\$4,244.00
Saint Nicholas Chapel	Pocono Summit, PA	\$3,600.00	\$1,250.00
Epiphany of Our Lord Byzantine Catholic Church	Roswell, GA	\$10,800.00	\$12,597.00
All Saints Byzantine Catholic Church	North Fort Myers, FL	\$3,000.00	\$675.00
Holy Dormition Byzantine Catholic Church	Ormond Beach, FL	\$3,800.00	\$1,385.00
Saint Anne Byzantine Catholic Church	New Port Richey, FL	\$4,200.00	\$4,300.00
Ascension of Our Lord Church Byzantine Catholic Church	Williamsburg, VA	\$6,800.00	\$7,136.00
Our Lady of the Sign Church Byzantine Catholic Church	Coconut Creek, FL	\$6,200.00	\$1,150.00
Our Lady of Perpetual Help Byzantine Catholic Church	Virginia Beach, VA	\$3,200.00	\$3,350.00
Saints Cyril & Methodius Byzantine Catholic Church	Fort Pierce, FL	\$6,000.00	\$400.00
Saints Cyril & Methodius Byzantine Catholic Church	Cary, NC	\$10,000.00	\$3,617.00
Epiphany of Our Lord Byzantine Catholic Mission	Gaithersburg, MD	\$6,000.00	\$6,841.00
Blessed Basil Hopko Byzantine Catholic Mission	Conway, SC	\$600.00	\$1,350.00
Non-Parish Affiliated Donors			\$10,455.00
TOTAL GOAL:		\$613,080.00	\$350,166.00



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



The Byzantine Catholic
Metropolitan Archeparchy of Pittsburgh

Office of the Archbishop
 66 Riverview Avenue Pittsburgh PA 15214
 (412)231-4000 Phone (412)231-1697 Fax

Assembly 2025 – Byzantine Catholic Metropolitan Church of Pittsburgh

July, 10, 2024

Preparations are underway for our Church – Bishops, Clergy, Monastics, Religious, and Laity - to come together in Assembly next year - from July 16-20, 2025. The gathering will convene at St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church in Whiting, Indiana under the name and calling, "Come let us worship and bow before Christ"

Worship of the Lord includes our personal prayer and our liturgical prayer life. It is reflected in our relationships with each other and in the ways we live our faith as Byzantine Catholics of the Metropolitan Church of Pittsburgh.

The goal of the Assembly is to together discern ways to live our worship of Christ today in a real and practical manner while learning from the past and looking to the future. The Assembly will include formal presentations, interviews, panel discussion and round table exercises.

Special emphasis will be given to the distinctive contributions Byzantine Catholic have made to their Metropolitan Church.

The Assembly is a time to celebrate the unique contributions of each region and Eparchy while at the same time acknowledging the unity of the Byzantine Catholic Church in North America.

More information will appear in your parish bulletins and online at the Assembly website: byzantineassembly.org

Sincerely Yours in Christ,

Most Reverend William C. Skurla, D. D.

Metropolitan Archbishop of Pittsburgh

EASTERN CATHOLIC LIFE
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SEASONAL REFLECTIONS

Father Ronald Hatton



END OF YEAR CELEBRATIONS

T.S. Eliot ends his poem, *The Hollow Men*, with: “This is the way the world ends, not with a bang, but a whimper.” At the height of Summer, our Liturgical Year draws to its close, but it does not end with a whimper, but a bang! And, by extension, the redemption of the world by the power of God is seen in two great feasts of our Church, The Transfiguration of Our Lord and The Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos. In the first, we see our Lord revealing as much of [His] glory to [His] disciples as they could behold (Troparion for the Transfiguration), revealing His divinity to Peter, James, and John. In the second, we see the fulfillment of Christ’s promise to us, that ... he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has eternal life; he does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life (John 5:24).

The Transfiguration is a *theophany*—a manifestation of God—that shows us the divinity of Christ. ... His face shone like the sun, and His garments became white as light (Matthew 17:2). It is also a theophany in that, as with His baptism by John the Forerunner, ... a voice from the cloud said, ‘This is my beloved Son, with Whom I am well pleased; listen to Him’ (v. 5). This took place just before His entry into Jerusalem, That

when they would see [Him] crucified, they would understand that [He] suffered willingly (Kontakion for the Feast). There are many hymns that we sing at Vespers and Matins for the Feast, but I will pass on to you one of these gems:

Showing the change that mortals will undergo, O Lord, when they enter Your glory at Your second and awesome coming, You were transfigured on Mount Tabor.

Elijah and Moses conversed with You; and seeing Your glory, the three disciples Whom You had chosen were struck with Your splendor, O Lord.

As You covered them with Your brightness, confirming the mystery of Your incarnation; also send Your light upon our souls.
—Sessional Hymn I for Matins of the Transfiguration

In this feast, we are assured that Jesus is fully Man and fully God, and worship Him as such. It brings to life all that we confess in the Nicene Creed, not only in the Truth of the Unitarian and Trinitarian nature of God, but also the fruits of our union with Him in this world and the one to come.

True, you won’t find any mention in Holy Scripture of the Dormition of the Theotokos and her Assumption into heaven, but it is firmly ingrained in the Holy Tradition of the Church. The feast has been acknowledged since at least the 5th century, with formal celebrations beginning around the 7th century. Writings about her death and assumption can be found as early as the 1st century, so it has always been a part of the Tradition. So important is this feast that it is anticipated in the Eastern Churches with a two-week period of fasting, and is a holy day of obligation. In the universal Catholic Church, on November 1, 1950, Pope Pius XII proclaimed this as dogma in the Apostolic Constitution *Munificentissimus Deus*, stating: *By the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, of the Blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, and by our own authority, we pronounce, declare, and define it to be a divinely revealed dogma: that the Immaculate Mother of God, the ever Virgin Mary, having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory.*

The hymns for this feast are replete with the teachings of the Church, as they speak to the fact that God the Word took His flesh from the holy Theotokos, and that, as a result, her flesh was not to suffer from the cor-

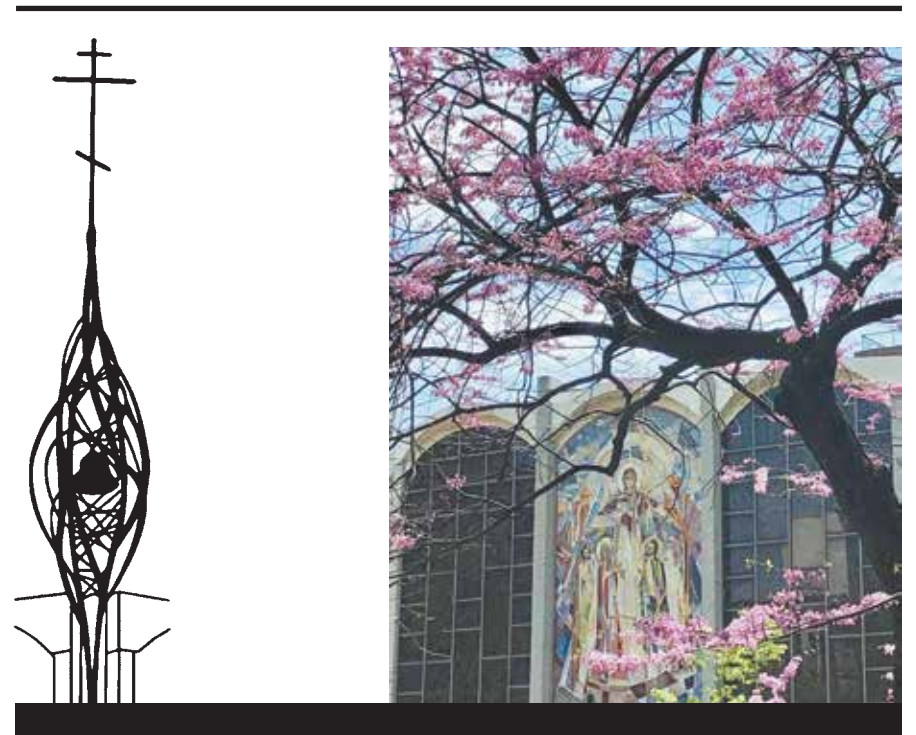
ruption of death. *You have gained victory over nature by giving birth to God, O pure Virgin; yet, like your Son and Creator, you have followed the laws of nature while being above it. Therefore, through your death, you have risen to eternal life with your Son. Just as He preserved your virginity in childbirth, He saved your body from suffering corruption in the tomb* (Odes 1 & 6, Matins of the Dormition). But we should not overlook this fact as well, that as Christ “is the first-born of the dead” (cf. Col. 1:18), and that He raised His Mother after her death, we can also see in her the first-fruits of the resurrection of *all the dead* on the last day. Again, we see the fulfillment of God’s promises to us (John 5:24, I Thess. 4:13-18).

The Church gives the world two great proclamations during this season: Christ is True God and True Man, was born in the flesh from the Virgin Mary for our salvation, and that, through His death, resurrection and ascension, we are freed from the power of death, and will be raised on the Last Day, “... and so we shall always be with the Lord” (I Thess. 4:17). **ECL**



Icon of the Dormition of the Theotokos

August 15, Holyday of Obligation



Visiting New York City?

Come Worship With Us!

Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church
Father Edward G. Cimbala, D.Min.—Pastor

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

Sunday Divine Liturgy
10:00 AM

BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES OF MONEY & POSSESSIONS

By Father Michael J. Salnicky



THE CORPORAL WORKS OF MERCY

Remember “hungry, thirsty, naked, homeless captives are sick and dead”? This mantra helps us to remember the Seven Corporal Works of Mercy:

- Feed the Hungry
- Give Drink to the Thirsty
- Clothe the Naked
- Provide Shelter to the Homeless
- Ransom the Captives
- Visit the Sick
- Bury the Dead

These Corporal Works of Mercy have their foundation in Holy Scripture. Here are a just a few of the passages:

Psalm 146:7 *He upholds the cause of the oppressed and gives food to the hungry.*

Isaiah 58:10-14 *Feed the hungry, and help those in trouble. Then your light will shine out from the darkness, and the darkness around you will be as bright as noon.*

Luke 3:11 *John answered, ‘Anyone who has two shirts should share with the one who has none, and anyone who has food should do the same.’*

Matthew 14:16 *But Jesus said, ‘They need not go away; you give them something to eat.’*

Matthew 25:35-37 *For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat; I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink; I was a stranger and you invited me in; I needed clothes and you clothed me; I was sick and you looked after me; I was in prison and you came to visit me.*

Romans 12:20 *If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink.*

Caring for the poor and vulnerable, even our enemies, is not only following Jesus’ lead, but also the same as caring for Jesus Himself. In doing so, we become free, peaceful, and content.

We become that loving, forgiving, and generous person God wants us to be.

Glory to Jesus Christ. (Seventh Installment) **ECL**



LIFE, LOVE, AND THE HUMAN PERSON

By Ann M. Koshute, MTS

TIME FOR A REVIVAL INSIDE

There’s something going on. If you aren’t plugged into Catholic media (on the web, radio and television, or news outlets) you may not know about it – but it’s big. Largely driven by a 2019 Pew survey that revealed an alarming number of Catholics do not believe in the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist; the trauma of being separated from Liturgy and parish community during the pandemic; and the political division that plagues us, the bishops of the United States saw a need for action. More than the kind of action that produces programs and strategies, however, the bishops proposed a full-scale revival, something that those of us who are cradle Catholics may not be at all used to seeing.

The National Eucharistic Revival is a three-year initiative of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and each phase is designed to educate, encourage, and enliven Catholics in our relationship with Christ. This is key, because although the catalyst for the revival was negative, the desired outcome is not simply positive for the Church and the faithful – but life-changing. The *crown jewel* of this revival is a massive meeting just weeks ago that brought together tens of thousands of faithful, many having been part of pilgrimage routes that originated all over the country and met at the National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis. Apart from World Youth Day (which I had the blessing to experience twice in my life), this is one of, if not the largest Catholic

event in the United States. If you haven’t heard about it, though, don’t worry. Awareness campaigns and large events – especially the kind that bring together people from different parts of the country, with diverse backgrounds and experiences – can be powerful nudges from the Holy Spirit that help us reconnect with Him. But no dynamic preacher, beautifully written materials, or well-produced events mean anything without our personal connection to the God-made-man who offered His life for us and remains present to us in flesh and spirit. In other words, the bishops were right in identifying that a revival was needed – and that revival must start right now in you and me.

That Pew survey that found a general lack of belief – or at least understanding – of Jesus’ presence in the Eucharist among many Catholics may feel jarring to us. How can one be Catholic (or Orthodox) and not believe in the Real Presence? This is a good question, but rather than turning it on the many anonymous survey respondents, it’s much more important for each of us to ask that question of ourselves. I will grant that it’s difficult to understand how Jesus is present in the Eucharist, how bread and wine really and truly become His Body and Blood, given so that we might be more intimately connected to Him than is humanly possible. There are great theological works addressing this core belief, written by much smarter and holier people than I. Yet even they can-

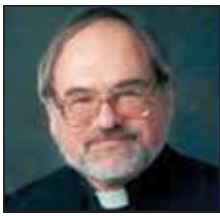
not fully grasp, cannot possibly put their arms around a concept that is far beyond our finite human intellect. Perhaps even harder to grasp is the “why?” of the Eucharist: “Why would God become man, suffer and die, and make of Himself a truly physical and spiritual gift for us?” From this question follows one that goes even deeper, and may require much personal prayer and reflection: “Knowing that the Eucharist is Jesus’ personal self-gift, given to me so that I can be healed, strengthened, and intimately bound to Him – why do I so often take this gift for granted?”

A Eucharistic revival is a wonderful way to bring Catholics together for a spiritual “booster shot,” but it’s also a powerful witness to the rest of the world. Years ago, I joined the Corpus Christi procession from the Roman Catholic parish just a few blocks from where I lived in the Overbrook section of Philadelphia. As we processed through the neighborhood, led by a priest holding the monstrance that contained a consecrated Host, people driving or sitting on their porches watched us with puzzled looks. But the most powerful moment came when we neared a Baptist church, every woman and man dressed in their absolute Sunday best, making their way to services. A small crowd of them waited outside the church doors, watching as the procession neared and keeping eyes on us as we passed them by. I found it fascinating that they didn’t look confused or regard

us with self-righteousness or mockery. They didn’t understand what – rather Who – was passing by them, and they certainly didn’t share our theology. But those people, in love with Jesus and worshipping Him in their own way, could see that something was going on – and it was big. They may not have recognized Jesus in that monstrance, but they did recognize Him in those of us who walked in procession with Him.

Our liturgical expression is different from Roman Catholics, as is how we partake of Christ in the Eucharist: there is no monstrance, perpetual Adoration, or benediction in our Tradition. That’s okay, because through our Eastern Liturgy, homemade prosphora (communion bread), and gold-plated spoons, Jesus come to us! He is made present to us through an action that is not humanly possible, but which He makes possible through the human cooperation of the priest and those of us who receive Him.

A Eucharistic revival is needed, and it’s here, but not on a website, or in a stadium, or in an amazing homily. The setting for the revival is in the heart – yours and mine. The next time you’re at Divine Liturgy and make your way into the communion line, remind yourself that something is going on – and it’s so big that only Jesus could make Himself small enough for you to take it in. **ECL**



THE BYZANTINE LITURGY

By Archpriest David Petras, SEOD

MARRIAGE: THE RITE OF CROWNING

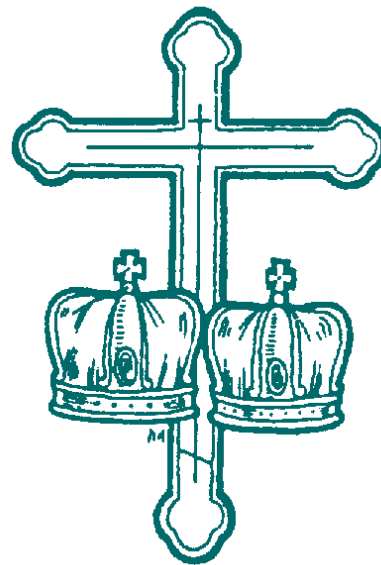
Byzantine marriage rites differ greatly from the Western Church. The distinctive feature of the Byzantine marriage ceremony is the crowning. The Slav Churches generally use metal crowns in the imperial form, possibly from the prokeimenon, *You have set upon their heads crowns of precious stones.* The Greek and Melkite Churches use the more original crowns of flowers. There are various traditions about which kind of flowers. The crowns came from the pagan practice of garlanding with wreaths of greens and flowers, in the early centuries, of olive and myrtle.

The early Christian writers first opposed the use of crowns, due to their pagan connotations. Flowers were an offering to the gods. Saint Justin Martyr wrote in the second century, *Neither do we honor with many sacrifices and garlands of flowers such deities as men have formed.* None of the early Christian writers clearly explains what the pagan symbolism is. After all, they would not engage in pagan propaganda. However, after the decline of paganism, Christians enthusiastically accepted the use of crowns. Crowns were probably first used in Cappadocia, and from there spread to Armenia, the first Christian kingdom. Crowns must have been used

in the West also, because Tertullian argued so vehemently against them. Note there was no unique Christian rite of marriage; they borrowed customs from other peoples. However, they never became popular in the West.

Saint John Chrysostom was to give a Christian interpretation to the use of crowns: *Garlands are wont to be worn on the heads of bridegrooms, as a symbol of victory, that they approach the marriage bed unconquered by pleasure.* (Homily 9 on 1 Timothy) Until the sixth century, crowning was not required for all Christians, probably only the most prominent. From the ninth century crowning became accepted Christian practice. The first orders of marriage were much simpler than today: The priest said the prayer, *O holy God, you formed man out of the dust of the earth... crowned the couple, and then said the prayer, O Lord our God, according to Your saving providence...* Crowning has become the distinctive feature of Byzantine marriages. While the Western Church put the accent on the exchange of vows, the Eastern Church simply presumed that the man and woman had exchanged their consent and were not blessed by God. Crowns are a very clear expression of the dignity given to marriage. Psalm 8 proclaims, *Yet*

you have made [human beings] little less than the angels; with glory and honor you crowned him, gave him power over the works of your hands, put all things under his feet. By the crowns, the husband and wife are shown to share with God dominion over the world, by the power of their mutual love in union with God's love, working for the creation of God's kingdom and the creation of new life, crowned with glory and honor.



The formula that we use now first appears in the thirteenth century. It was not too popular at first, but as the system of seven sacraments became formalized, it became to be preferred. In its first form, it was modeled on the baptismal formula, *The servant of God (name) is crowned in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.* Later, the formula was elaborated to the present, *The servant of God (name) is crowned for the servant of God (name) in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.* However, a translation is hard to pinpoint. The theologian Constantine Andronikof explains, "In Greek, the passive verb "is crowned" is followed by a simple accusative" which cannot be untranslatable without putting a preposition in: "by" "for" or "unto", as in Slavonic. Perhaps the best version proposed is: "The servant N. receives as a crown the servant N. ..." and vice versa. In this way, there is no doubt of its meaning in faith: the "crown" of witness is mutual and assumed jointly by the partners." Andronikof is arguing for marriage as a covenant for the two in the grace of God.

Prayers said with the crowning began to be used in the tenth century. The oldest is the verse from Psalm 20, now used as the prokeimenon, *You have placed upon their heads crowns of precious stones.* Other formulas were also used, for example: "Christ crowns," (Ms. Panteleimon 162, 10-11th cent.) or *O Lord our God, crown them with glory and honor.* (Psalm 8:6b, now the blessing after crowning) or *The Father blesses, the Son crowns, the Holy Spirit sanctifies.* or *The Father crowns, the Son blesses, the Holy Spirit visits.* Sometimes a prayer serves as the formula of crowning, sometimes there are different formulas for the man and the woman.

Crowning is not the only way Christian marriages are celebrated. However, it has become the way that our union with God, and the dignity of the human love of a man and woman is expressed in our Eastern tradition. Marriage, then, is holy and sacred, and it is a way in which we are deified to live in God, becoming co-creators with him of new life. There is, perhaps, no greater blessing and the crowns are a sign that God has raised us up to live in him, and to be the crowns of his creation. **ECL**



Carpathian Village Saint Nicholas Shrine

802 Snow Hill Road, Cresco, PA 18326-7810
Tel (570) 595-3265 - Cell (570) 650-3252
Email: carpathianvillage@earthlink.net
Father Michael J. Salnicko, Director

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.




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

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Questions? Contact us at 703-573-3986



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PRIESTLY REFLECTIONS

Father Paul Varchola West

"LAKE REFLECTIONS"

It brings me great joy to share another installment of *Lake Reflections* with you, because that means we were away on our annual family vacation at the lake to get some much-needed rest and time spent together! Regrettably, the fishing was slow this year, although I was able to snag a large mouth weighing in at 4.25lbs on the last morning we were there. While the fish were lacking, their hesitancy to bite did afford me a good deal of time to think while looking at the surrounding landscape.

As is my custom, I would wake early in the morning, before the sun would break over the mountaintop in which the natural lake is nestled, and make my way down to the dock, fishing pole and coffee cup in hand, to spend some much-needed time with God. As the sun would crest over this ancient Appalachian peak each morning, its rays would illuminate the lush expanse of woodland blanketing the sloping terrain worn down by countless eons of wind and rain. As the birds praised the Creator of All with their songs, and the resident bald eagle mocked my feeble attempt at fishing by gracefully and effortlessly scooping fish out of the water for her breakfast, I would listen to the dew on the trees dripping into the water as the coolness of night faded from the lake in ephemeral swaths of steam, now only a memory of what was, making way for the day that was to come.

As the air around me warmed, so too did my heart, and with that my awareness would expand with the growing day. I'm sure the coffee played a part in this as well. With the dock slowly bobbing with the movement of the water at the behest of the cool breeze, I found my attention continually drawn to the bare, gnarled ash trees with their twisted, finger-like branches reaching high into the air almost as if they were begging the Lord to release them from the prison that the soil which fed them for so long had become. These dead trees that punctuated the otherwise uninterrupted green expanse of the mountain were victims of an invasive species of beetles that had decimated the ash population of the entire region and serve as a reminder that the littlest thing, if left unchecked, can destroy even the most fortified among us.

One such tree remains on the neighboring property, right at the end of the dock, reaching out of the ground at about a thirty-or-so degree angle to the shoreline and hangs over the water. Since its demise, part of this

tree has fallen into the water creating a perfect hiding spot for some really nice bass. Needless to say, I've spent a lot of time looking at this tree over the years while attempting to remove the denizens of the water below it because of the aforementioned hideout. This tree continues to cling to the earth below it, still standing, although its life was laid down long ago. The lifeless roots of this tree are exposed and cling to a receding shoreline worn away by the incessant pounding of waves created by the roaring of outboard motors of watercraft far too large for the 67-acre lake, a living testament to the saying, *just because you can, doesn't mean you should*. An old wooden ladder is secured to this tree by a faded green ratchet strap leading to a thick branch extending far out over the water. From this sturdy limb hangs an old rope of a sizable diameter that dangles down to the water's edge, gently caressing the top of the lake as it sways in the breeze. This ramshackle rope-swing harkens back to an era of innocence, when children would swing from it and landing not so gently in the lake. Now, the children have all but gone, trading in rope-swings for screens and innocence for the more intense neurochemical high of social media. The tree, with no one left to swing from its branches, sits alone; however, much like Shel Silverstein's *Giving Tree*, an old tree is good for something!

As I gazed upon this tree, dead inside yet paradoxically clinging to an existence of (potential) usefulness, my mind was drawn to the Mother of God at the foot of the Cross as she clung to her Son's feet. To say that the pain she endured watching her Son be crucified must have been an all-encompassing and completely numbing pain is probably the greatest understatement in all of human history. Seemingly dead inside and helpless, there was nothing else for her to do but to cling to the Life-Giving Wood of the Tree upon which her Son innocently hung, His blood running down her cheeks, mingling with her tears. In what can only be thought of as her most agonizing moments, Mary found support by literally leaning on, and clinging to, the Cross. She, as the Mother of God and Protectress of Christians, is an example to us all.

In our most painful, dark, desperate moments, even when we feel dead inside and think that nothing can make the situation better, we *must* cling to the Cross, even if this means leaning our head against a wall barely uttering the words, *Lord Jesus*

Christ, have mercy on me. Clinging to the Life-Giving Wood of the Cross supports us, just as it did for Mary, and united us with Christ's suffering. Just as the roots of the lifeless tree at the lake cling to the soil that support it, we too receive support from the soil of the Cross in prayer so that we may continue to stand when we decidedly cannot stand of our own accord. Just as that tree, waiting for the day a child will once again give it life by swinging in its branches, we too cling to the hope of renewed life and purpose in the Age to Come, through to power of the Precious and Life-Giving Wood of the Tree upon which our Lord, God, and Savior was crucified.

My brothers and sisters, let us all be reminded that the Cross, planted in the middle of the earth, gives us strength and life both in this age, and in the Age to Come. When our words fail, when all seems lost, look to the Cross and weep – for ourselves and for the world – for, as the Psalmist David prayed, sacrifice to God is a broken spirit and a broken and humbled heart He will not despise. **ECL**



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SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

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

UNLESS YOU CHANGE AND BECOME LIKE LITTLE CHILDREN

Children make a few appearances in the daily selections from Scripture around this time of year. On Monday of the 9th Week after Pentecost we read Matthew 18:1-11. In response to the disciples' misguided question about who is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven, Jesus called a little child to Him, stood him in their midst and said, *Assuredly unless you change and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven* (vv. 1-4).

Jesus seems to be drawing a connection here between children and humility.

On Tuesday of the 9th week after Pentecost, we hear Matthew 19:13-15. Once again, the disciples get it wrong, shooing away the parents who had brought their little children to Jesus so that He might lay His hands on their heads in and bless them, a custom Jewish parents continue to this day. Jesus in turn reprimanded the disciples and said, *Let the little children come to me and do not forbid them for of such is the kingdom of heaven*. It's hard to avoid seeing a contrast between the errant apostles whom the Lord rebukes and the little children whom He blesses. But we are never told exactly why these children are especially close to the kingdom of heaven.

Saint Paul explores childhood from an entirely different perspective in the Epistle selection for Wednesday of the 9th week after Pentecost (1 Corinthians 13). Speaking about progress in the spiritual life, Paul says that now *we know partially. But when the perfect comes, that which is partial will be done away. When I was I child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. Now we see in a mirror dimly; but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known* (1 Corinthians 13:9-12).

Growing out of childhood is also implied in Saint Paul's description of the goal of Christian life in Ephesians 4:13-14: *until we all come to the unity of faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and from and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting*.

So, it would appear that there is something about childhood that Jesus challenges us to imitate, but we are also challenged against remaining immature. How can we reconcile these two different teachings? There are at least two things to consider.

Children rely on others for so much in their everyday lives, although they can

also show a strong, stubborn, independent streak very early on. That struggle that begins with the "terrible twos" and intensifies in "teen rebellion" is just a fact of human nature after original sin. The pride that says "I can do it myself" was at the heart of the temptation to Adam and Eve: you can become your own gods! (Genesis 3:5). The humility required to ask for help is natural to children and unfortunately often unlearned as we reach adulthood. That humility is

one childlike quality we need to cultivate if we are going to accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior.

Children also believe in growth. They know they can get smarter, taller, wiser, stronger. They delight in showing off their progress and (as those pencil marks somewhere in your home prove) they love to measure their growth. That desire for growth—even the belief that it is possible!—is another quality we can

lose as we age. But the daily prayer of the Church that "we may spend the rest of our lives in peace and repentance" reminds us that we must continue to grow and become "strong in spirit, filled with wisdom and the grace of God" just as the child Jesus did (Luke 2:40 and 52). **ECL**

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MOUNTAIN MOVING FAITH

Faith that God will hear, and answer is the missing ingredient in our prayers. Christ and the Apostles promise that God will answer us if we have faith.

“Whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith” (Mt. 21:22).

Jesus attributes many of His miracles in the Gospels to the faith of the person who received the miracle.

To the Woman with the Hemorrhage, Blind Bartimaeus, and the Samaritan Leper, Jesus says: “Your faith has made you well” (Mt. 9:22, Mk. 10:52, Lk. 17:19).

Jesus teaches us that God responds to faith: *“Have faith in God. Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and cast into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him. Therefore, I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours”* (Mark 11:22-24, see also: Mt. 17:20, Mt. 21:21-22, Lk. 17:6).

Lack of faith will deprive us of answers to prayer. When Jesus went to his own hometown of Nazareth, we read: *He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid*

His hands upon a few sick people and healed them. And He marveled because of their unbelief” (Mk. 6:5-6, see Mt. 13:58).

Saint Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) says, “Prayer draws its merits from charity; but its imperative efficacy comes from faith and confidence.”

The German dogmatic theologian Christian Pesch, SJ (1835-1925) writes, *In view of such great confidence, God grants us graces that, without this, He would not have given. For this reason, a singular confidence that we will obtain this or that blessing is a kind of special promise that God makes to us that He will grant it to us.*

Saint Gertrude Great (1256-1302) once asked Jesus what she had to do to make her prayers more effective. Jesus replied, “Confidence alone easily obtains all things!”

In other words, faith (confidence) makes our prayer effective.

According to the Flemish exegete, Cornelius a Lapide, SJ (1567-1637): *“This faith and confidence are in our own will and*

power, with the grace of God which He is wont to give, so also there is to some extent in our power the faculty of working miracles; and the more anyone increases in faith and confidence, the more does he increase in this faculty [of working miracles].”

Imagine that! You have the power to work miracles. “According to your faith be it done to you” (Mt. 9:29).

The Venerable Leo Dupont (1797-1885) witnessed thousands of healings and miracles in his home chapel, which was dedicated to the veneration of the image of the Holy Face of Jesus. In his biography by Pierre Janvier (translated into English by Edward Healy Thompson), we read of the bold and uncompromising faith Leo Dupont taught was necessary to receive a miracle from God.

His biographer relates, “A young girl from the parish of Notre-Dame-la-Riche was suffering much from an injury to one of her feet, which had been crushed; the swelling was enormous. As she was unable to walk, she had herself carried and placed before the Holy Face. All began to pray, and the young lady herself thus expressed her request aloud: “My God, if it is Thy good pleasure and Thy will, I pray Thee grant me my cure.” To most persons this would have appeared to be a very good and proper prayer; but M. Dupont, who overheard it, was not satisfied, and gently found fault with her. “That is not the way to pray,” he said; “you have not got faith. Say straightforwardly to God, ‘Lord, cure me.’ If you want to be cured, you must command the good God.” “O, that is too much!” exclaimed the poor girl; “I cannot command God.” “Ah you have not got faith,” repeated M. Dupont; “you must say, ‘I want to be cured! Cure me!’ When we pray, we must have a boundless confidence, and never hesitate.”

Eventually, the girl understood the nature of faith and was entirely healed.

You may not be completely comfortable with “commanding God,” but aren’t many of our prayers made without faith? Do we really believe that God hears us? Do we really believe that He will answer?

Pray believing that God hears you and that He is sending the answer. As Jesus says, “Believe that you have received it, and it will be yours” (Mt. 11:24).

“Only believe” (Lk. 8:50).

“All things are possible to him who believes” (Mt. 9:23). **ECL**



Sunday 6 October 2024

Commemoration of the 10th Anniversary of the Beatification of Blessed Miriam Teresa Demjanovich, SC

+++++

Saint John the Baptist Byzantine Ruthenian Catholic Church
15 E 26 St Bayonne, NJ 07002

2:00 pm: Holy Rosary, Divine Mercy Chaplet, Confessions

3:00 pm: Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom
Celebrant His Grace Bishop Kurt Burnette, Bishop of the Eparchy of Passaic

Short Prayer Service Moleben

Veneration of Blessed Miriam Teresa’s relics

Anointing with Holy Oil for healing

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SLAVIC AMERICAN FESTIVAL
Sunday, September 8, 2024
12 Noon til' 6:00 P.M.
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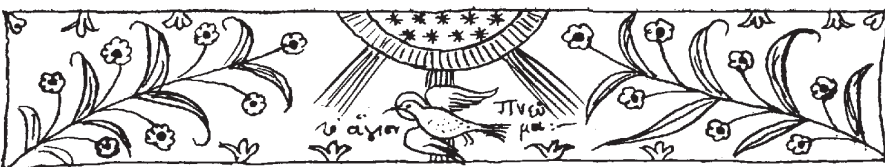
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Therese and Maximos

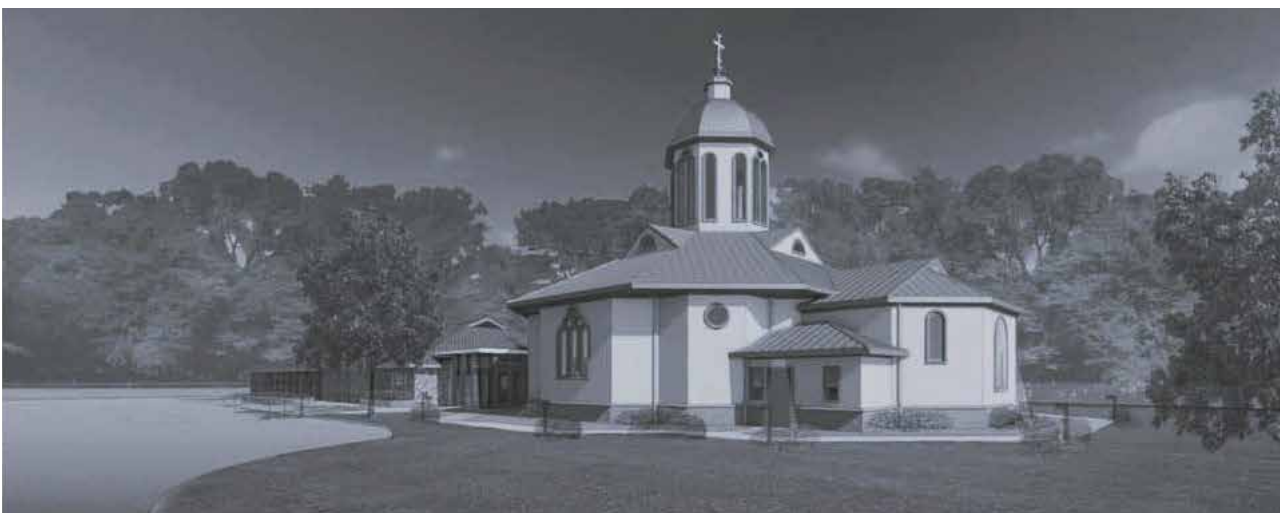
Therese does not mention the great Byzantine Church Father, Maximos the Confessor, but she prayed the Apostles or Nicene Creed daily. Like Therese, even today we pray these same Creeds - The Apostles Creed introduces the Rosary and the Nicene Creed is sung in every Divine Liturgy.

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.

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AUGUST, 2024

29 Beheading of John the Baptist
Ordination to the Priesthood of Deacon Ryan Liebhaber, Saint John Chryostom Church, Columbus, OH, 12 NOON

30-31 Uniontown Pilgrimage

SEPTEMBER, 2024

1-2 Uniontown Pilgrimage
 2 Labor Day
Chancery Closed
 8 Nativity of the Virgin Theotokos
Solemn HolyDay
 11 September 11 Commemoration
Divine Liturgy 7:30 PM, Epiphany of Our Lord Parish, Annandale, VA
 14 Exaltation of the Holy Cross
Solemn HolyDay

22 125th Anniversary Celebration
Saint Michael Parish, Mont Clare, PA, 3 PM
 23-26 Eparchial Priests' Retreat
 26 March for Life
Trenton, NJ
 28 "Beefsteak"
Saint Michael Cathedral Chapel, Woodland Park, NJ

OCTOBER, 2024

1 Holy Protection of the Virgin Theotokos
Simple HolyDay
 5 Saint Therese Pilgrimage
Sugarloaf, PA
 6 Tenth Anniversary of beatification of Blessed Miriam Teresa
Bayonne, NJ—2 PM Holy Rosary 3 PM Divine Liturgy
 12-13 Metropolitan Centennial Celebration
National Shrine, Washington, DC