



EASTERN CATHOLIC LIFE

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2024 BISHOP'S APPEAL BEGINS

Glory to Jesus Christ!
My dear friends,

Is there anything more beautiful than an icon of the Mother of God? In our Heritage Center, we have many such treasures, both simple and complex. The most ancient icon seems to be the famous “Hodogitria Icon” which means “Points the Way Icon”. It shows Mary pointing with her right arm at Jesus who is in her left arm. The icon is so ancient and venerable that most later icons keep her and her right arm in the exact same position, even if there are other changes. Even in the famous Perpetual Help Icon, in which she is holding the hands of little Jesus, the artist did not meddle with the shape and position of her right hand. The icon in our Heritage Center that caught my eye this year is the most simple of all. It has only Mary, the Mother of God, with her right hand pointing, but instead of the child Jesus in her hand, it is a scroll with elaborate calligraphy in Old Church Slavonic. The text in Slavonic says, “Lord, great in mercy, Lord Jesus Christ, Lord and my God, incline your ear.” Her prayer is an echo of the Psalm of David her royal ancestor, “O Lord, incline Your ear and hear me, for I am poor and needy.” Ps 85(86):1. It might also be an echo of the Psalm verse that we traditionally apply to our Lady, “Listen O daughter, and consider, and incline your ear, forget your people and your father’s house. Let the King be enthralled by your beauty. Honor Him, for he is your Lord.” Psalm 44(45):10. In either case, the Mother of God is interceding for us, asking the most high God to bend down to earth and listen to our prayers.

I was certainly enthralled by the subtle and sublime beauty of this icon. As you know, we often depict the Mother of God with a blue tunic and red cloak to symbolize that she is a human being (blue) who puts on a divine nature (red for fire). Jesus is often depicted with a red tunic and a blue cloak to symbolize that He is a divine being (red fire) who puts on a human nature. The rich red of her cloak in this icon seems deep beyond the wood of the icon, while the veil on her head is a delicate intimate shade of rose.

This year I travelled again to war ravaged eastern Europe, first for the consecration of our new Metropolitan in Presov, and then again for the consecration of our new Bishop of our Mother Church. Both men are monks or religious order priests. The former from a traditional monastery, and the latter from a new religious order that reaches out to the youth and the poor. It seems like I traveled more in the last two years than the rest of my life put together. It was a joy to travel to Florida for the 100th birthday party of one of our parishioners!



If you would like to help me in my work as your Bishop, I ask you to participate in this year’s Bishop’s Appeal. It would be wonderful if everyone makes some contribution. As my own mother used to quote, “God will not be outdone in generosity.” I have tithed my whole life, because I was taught so by my parents, and God has always been more generous to me than I to Him. This year, we hired a new catechetical director and a new media coordinator to help us “Preach the Good News to all nations”. We also have new young priests joining us with their families. Please consider making a gift to help with my work. May God bless you and your loved ones abundantly throughout the year.

Your brother in Christ,

+Kurt Burnette

+Bishop Kurt Burnette

POPE FRANCIS APPOINTS NEW BISHOP FOR THE EPARCHY OF THE HOLY PROTECTION OF MARY OF PHOENIX

Pope Francis has appointed Father Artur Bubnevych as Bishop of the Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Holy Protection of Mary of Phoenix, Arizona. Bishop-elect Artur is a priest of Holy Protection of Mary Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Phoenix and currently serves as pastor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Byzantine Church in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The appointment was publicized in Washington, DC, on November 8, 2024, by Cardinal Christophe Pierre, apostolic nuncio to the United States.

Bishop-elect Artur was born on June 22, 1975, in Perechin, Ukraine. He

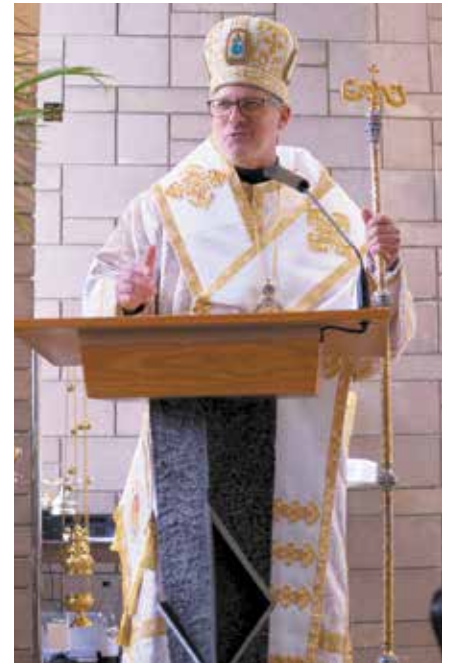
graduated from Uzhorod Greek Catholic Seminary of Blessed Theodore Romzha in 1998. He was ordained to the subdiaconate in January 1999 in the Eparchy of Mukachevo in Ukraine. In 2001, he earned a licentiate of sacred theology from the International Theologica Institute for studies of marriage and family in Austria. In 2013, Bishop-elect Artur was invited to the Eparchy of Phoenix where he was ordained to the diaconate in March 2014 and ordained to the priesthood on September 14, 2014.

Bishop-elect Artur has served as pastor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help in

Albuquerque, New Mexico, since 2014. He has also held positions within the eparchy, including member of the Inter Eparchial Youth and Young Adult Commission (May 2018 – present) and member of the Eparchial Vocation Board (January 2023 – present).

The Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Holy Protection of Mary ministers to 2,537 Catholics of the Byzantine-Ruthenian Church in the states of California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Nevada, Arizona, Utah, Wyoming, Montana, Colorado, New Mexico, Alaska, and Hawai’i.





Bishop +Robert of the Eparchy of Parma gives the homily.

EPARCHY OF PASSAIC ANNUAL CLERGY RETREAT

Father Paul Varchola West

And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. So, they drew near to the village to which they were going. He appeared to be going further, but they constrained him, saying, "Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent." So, he went in to stay with them. When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished out of their sight. They said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the scriptures?" And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven gathered together and those who were with them, who said, "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread. – Luke 24:27-35

Indeed, our hearts were burning within us with the love of Jesus Christ while at the serene and picturesque grounds of the San Alfonso Retreat Center located in Long Branch, NJ. From September 23-26, the presbyters of the Eparchy of Passaic traveled far and wide to congregate for the annual retreat – four days dedicated to prayer, spiritual nourishment, rest, fraternity, and, of course, food.

Nestled on the Jersey Shore, the retreat house affords many blessings we priests look forward to each year. Whether it is the fresh ocean air, time spent walking

on the beach, the calming sound of the waves crashing upon the shore, the quietness of the chapel space, or the stillness of the monastic house, these blessings help set the scene for a time spent truly resting in the Lord. While we are blessed every year, this year we were overly and abundantly blessed to have a very special retreat master: the Bishop +Robert (Pipta), Bishop of Parma!



Bishop Robert addresses the priests.

Freshly returned from a visit to Rome, Bishop +Robert led the priests of our eparchy in an extremely prayerful and Scripture-filled retreat inspired by the experience and insights he has gained over the first year of his episcopacy. Keeping us "in the season" so to speak, the central theme of the retreat was the Gospel of Luke (and the Acts of the Apostles), highlighting the various pastoral, ministerial, and spiritual lessons contained within. Among the

many significant topics brought forth, Bishop +Robert spoke to us on prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, as well as the myriads of variations stemming from them, reminding us that we, as priests, are models for our people. Through these discussions, he reminded us of the important role our personal health and spiritual wellness play in regard to the living out of our vocations to the priesthood and the core tenets of Christianity.

Seamlessly moving from the conference room to the chapel, Bishop +Robert prayed all the liturgical services with

character, bolstering Bishop +Robert's words, invigorating us priestly servants of Jesus Christ. With Bishops +Kurt and +Robert celebrating together and sharing preaching responsibilities, we were undoubtedly left with much to ponder and many lessons that we could take away and implement in various aspects of our parochial ministry.

Of the many beautiful and prayerful moments that made this retreat so memorable, there are also moments of levity that always highlight the retreat as a time that we priests truly enjoy each other's company as brothers in



Priests of the eparchy listen to the retreat master.

us and preached at the Divine Liturgy on the first full day of the retreat, which celebrated the ordination anniversaries of several priests, including our own high priestly servant Bishop +Kurt! Having two bishops presiding at all our liturgical services was a wonderful sight and a true blessing. A spirit of service and devotion permeated all the services that were prayed – the Akathist to the Theotokos, Parastas, Morning Prayer, Divine Liturgy – each with its own

Christ. One of the nights of the retreat, we always have a pizza night. This year, several "unconventional" topping combos were purchased. Bishop +Kurt, extremely happy about this, asked the group, "Has anyone here ever had a pizza called 'Angry Grandma?'" Without skipping a beat, I exclaimed, "No – but it can't be as bad as an 'Irate Baba!'"

Personally, this retreat was very significant for me as Bishop +Robert was the



Jubilarians: Father Stephen Galuschik (10yrs), Father James G. Hayer, Bishop Kurt, Bishop Robert, Father Ronald Barusefski, Father Michael Kerestes (all 35 years)



Jubilarians: Father John Basarab, Bishop Kurt, Bishop Robert, Father James Carroll, Father Taras Lovska

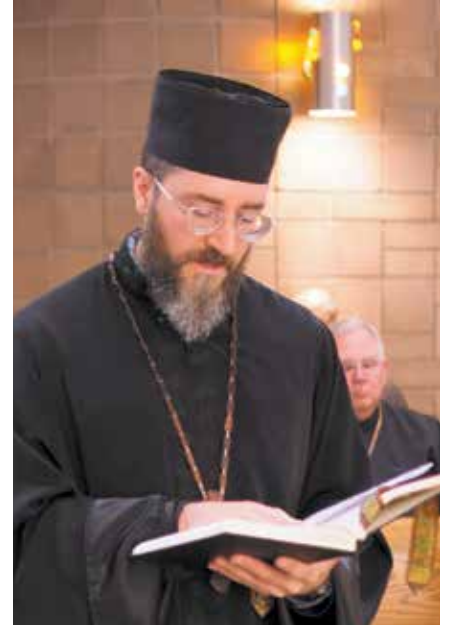


Father Michael Salnicki chants the Epistle

seminary rector during the four years I was in seminary. Fittingly enough, he gave this retreat just as I realized that I have been ordained to the priesthood as long as I was in seminary. Hearing the bishop's words was an excellent reminder for me and caused me to reflect on my formation, evaluating where I am succeeding, and where I need to improve. For me, this retreat was also a four-day crash course reminder of my seminary formation!

I leave you with the same words that Bishop +Robert left us as we departed from retreat, renewed and reinvigorated, the fire of Christ burning in our hearts.

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




Father Lewis Rabayda chants the Epistle

Below: Father Steven Galuschik incenses the faithful at the Liturgy



Below: Father Ronald Barusefski chants the Gospel





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66 Riverview Avenue Pittsburgh PA 15214
(412)231-1000 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,

+William C Skurla

Most Reverend William C. Skurla, D. D.
Metropolitan Archbishop of Pittsburgh

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EPARCHY OF PASSAIC ANNUAL DEACON RETREAT

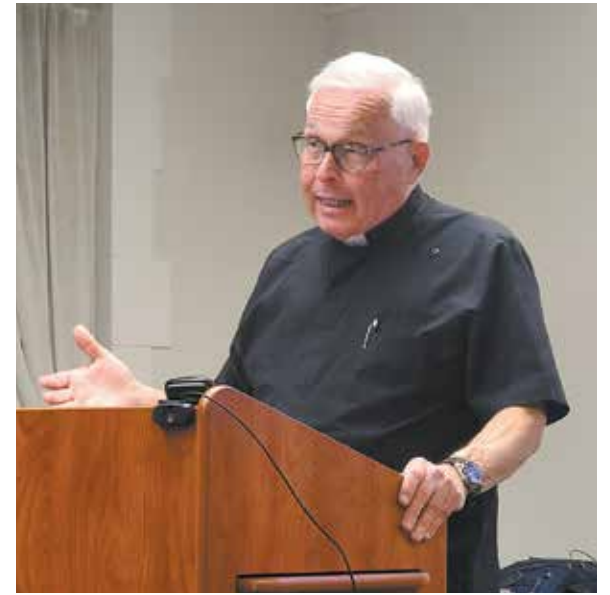
By Deacon John Reed, Epiphany of Our Lord, Roswell, Georgia

The 2024 Annual Retreat for the Eparchy of Passaic’s deacons, deacon candidates, and those in minor orders was held the weekend of November 1-3, 2024, at Immaculate Conception Seminary in Huntington, NY. Joined by Bishop Kurt, Father Nicholas Daddona, Director of the Diaconate, 17 deacons, 1 subdeacon, and 2 candidates made the trip along with the wives of 4 of the deacons.

The retreat master was Monsignor Thomas Caserta, a senior priest of the Diocese of Brooklyn and Professor of Theology at Saint John’s University Queens, NY. Monsignor Caserta has served as an associate pastor, youth retreat director and, for more than 22 years, as director of spiritual formation at his diocese’s seminary college. Monsignor is a well sought-out speaker

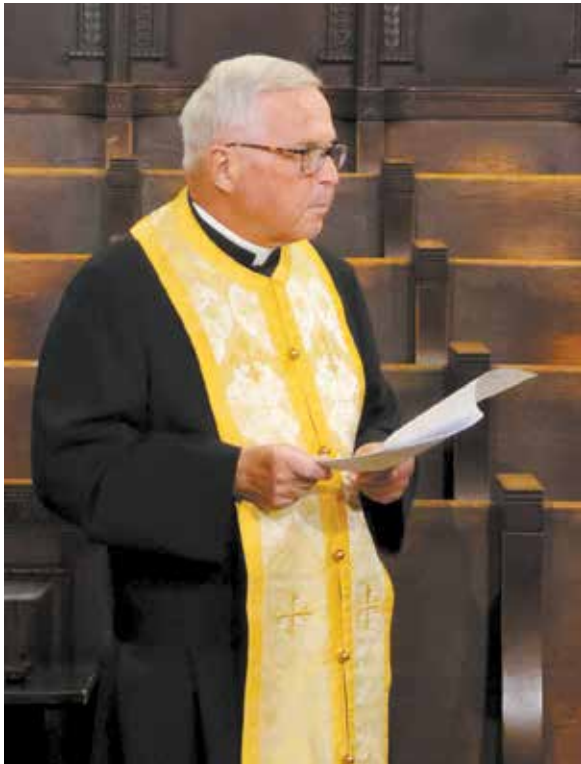
retreat master, who gives talks to priests, deacons, and laity at retreats and conferences all across the US. Monsignor Caserta is no stranger to the Eparchy of Passaic. He has a long strong love for the beauty of Christian East, and holds bi-ritual faculties and provides assistance in the New York area to our parishes.

Monsignor Caserta opened the series of conferences with a quote from the Gospel of Saint Matthew: “The Kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls.” (Mt 13:45). With a strong emphasis on the writings of Saint Isaac the Syrian, a bulwark of Eastern Christian spirituality, Monsignor Caserta explored three spiritual pearls: the pearls of prayer, stillness, and solitude.



Monsignor Caserta, Retreat Master

In addition to the three spiritual enrichment talks delivered by Monsignor Caserta, the deacons received their annual safe-environment refresher training. The days were also punctuated by coming together to pray the Divine Office. On Saturday evening, the deacons prayed the Office of Holy Oil and received sacramental anointing. On Sunday, the Divine Liturgy was celebrated by Bishop Kurt, with Monsignor Caserta delivering the homily. In addition to the various divine services celebrated together, ample time was also allotted for private prayer and meditation in the campus’s many beautiful chapels and among the beauty of the campus’s extensive grounds.



Monsignor Caserta, Retreat Master, prays with the clergy



Bishop Kurt opens his hands for the praying of the Our Father



Father Nicholas Daddona incenses the Holy Table



Eparchial deacons share some conversation



Deacons hold the Gospel Book over the faithful while Bishop Kurt prays during the Office of Holy Oil.



Eparchial deacons, deacon candidates, and wives share some conversation with Father Nick Daddona



Bishop Kurt Anoints Deacon Szweczyk



Deacons Nicholas Sotack and Anthony Kotlar



Bishop Kurt talks with the deacons and their spouses



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Contact for more information:
(610) 220-3479
andrewskitko@gmail.com



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 90TH PILGRIMAGE IN HONOR OF OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP

Uniontown, PA



Glory to Jesus Christ!

Dear Friends,

Sixty years ago, Julie Andrews strode through the Austrian Alps singing, "The hills are alive with the sound of music." Today, we sisters sing: "The Mount is alive with the sound of Pilgrims."

What an amazing Pilgrimage! Your prayers, presence, and magnificent singing filled Mt. St. Macrina once again and will fuel its engine until Labor Day weekend next year.

You traveled from near and far via plane, car, camper, or perhaps via computer. However you experienced this year's Otpust, we hope and pray that you came away from our 90th Pilgrimage with a renewed heart and spirit and that Our Lord and His Mother, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, give you the comfort and strength needed for the coming year.

Thank you for your participation, your prayers, and your support. We cannot begin to express what your presence means to the Sisters who call Mt. St. Macrina our home.

As we remove the tents, store the benches, and take stock of everything else, we can't help but feel the anticipation for the 91st Pilgrimage, which will be here before we know it. We'll be waiting for you!

May the Theotokos, Our Mother, walk with you every step of the journey, and may She be your ever-present Intercessor before the throne of her Son.

Gratefully in the Lord,

Sister Susan Sisko, OSBM

Sister Susan Sisko, OSBM
Provincial





LIFE, LOVE, AND THE HUMAN PERSON

By Ann M. Koshute, MTS

JUST A LITTLE LENT

Every year it feels like the holiday season starts earlier and earlier. With Hallmark Christmas movie marathons in July, and peanut butter pumpkins next to the checkout before Labor Day is over, it's easy to get so far ahead of ourselves that when the holidays arrive, we almost miss them. We can barely finish the Christmas turkey before retailers begin advertising post-holiday sales, and all the Christmas cheer is over before we know it. This is what happens when holidays like Christmas – and even Thanksgiving, a day to be grateful for our blessings and share time with family and friends – become materialistic, secular celebrations. There's nothing wrong with gift-giving and social gatherings, but it's so easy to get caught up in the busyness and hype that we can forget the "reason for the season."

Thankfully, our Church gives us the opportunity to hop off the holiday treadmill (even for just a few moments each day) to refocus our gaze on Christ because, after all, it's His Nativity for which we're preparing. Each year, the Church invites us into this time of preparation and gives us the tools to navigate it. In the West, this time is called *Advent* and begins on the first Sunday in December. In the East, however, the preparation for Jesus' Nativity starts much earlier, on November 15, the day after the feast of Saint Philip. Known as the *Philip's Fast*, this time mirrors the Great Fast (our spiritual preparation for Pascha) but with less intensity. The

Philip's Fast also lasts forty days (ending on Christmas Eve), and during this time the faithful are called to the same practices as the Great Fast: prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. For this reason, the Philip's Fast is often called "the little Lent," and we may forget about it and its importance in preparing us for the coming of our Savior. If we're not called to the more rigorous sacrificial offerings of the Great Fast, what changes (spiritually and concretely) can we make to ready ourselves for Jesus' birth? They can be simpler – and more meaningful – than we think.

During the Great Fast, we are called to make sacrificial offerings through prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. We're given specific dietary restrictions, a more intensive liturgical schedule that includes services we don't find outside this time, and we are encouraged to give up small pleasures to take the focus off self and direct it toward God and others. Forty days of such intensity can become exhausting (we all know the feeling!), which is why this little Lent feels less burdensome – and why it sometimes gets lost amid shopping, cooking, and family gatherings. This year I invite all of us to follow the guidance of the Church and our pastors, but to also be creative, asking God to show us how He wants us to prepare the way for Jesus.

Prayer: This one often feels most difficult, because it requires intentionality and a sense of discipline. We might be-

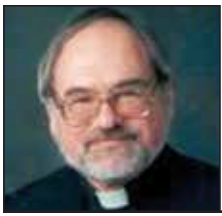
gin simply with the Liturgy, trying to be more present as we pray with our community, perhaps even arriving a little earlier, or staying for a few extra minutes after the closing hymn, for quiet prayer. From there we might expand our practice by attending any additional services at the parish and trying to live liturgically at home. If you don't already have one, set up a prayer corner in your home. Incorporate some of the prayers from matins in your morning routine – or add prayers from vespers or compline at night. Praying the Psalms is a wonderful way to connect our present experience to those who waited for God's promised redemption to be fulfilled. Whatever you choose to do, the idea is not to rack up a certain number of "prayer points." God wants a relationship with you and me, and the Philip's Fast is a reminder of just how far He will go to show us how much He loves us.

Fasting: This one is often confusing, especially during Great Lent, because there are fairly strict regulations for fasting, but also ways of fasting by Tradition that we may or may not choose to follow. During Philip's Fast we are bound, as always, to abstain from meat on Fridays, but that doesn't mean we can't do a little more. Sacrificing the gingerbread latte or not sampling the Christmas cookies are little "fasts" that can help us direct our hunger toward Christ. But fasting isn't limited to food. We can fast from criticism or judging others, gossiping, and the temptation

toward curiosity about others and their behavior. Fasting from being quick tempered, and indulging in acts of forgiveness, can spiritually shape us to be more like God.

Almsgiving: Charitable giving is important year-round, because there are always people in need. In tough economic times we can let almsgiving slide, because we may be just getting by ourselves. Giving alms should be a little risky, and just slightly uncomfortable. That discomfort reminds us that everything we have is a gift from God, and He is the one on whom we must rely. Even so, some of us may truly be in a position of great need ourselves, and financial sacrifices are already being made to care for ourselves and our families. Whether or not that's the case, we can all take a more creative approach to almsgiving. The alms of time are often more valuable than money, because so many are emotionally and spiritually poor because they lack family support or friendships. Those alms of our time may extend to our own families, who may be "robbed" of it through the distractions of social media or other screen time. We may find other creative alms to give that don't involve our wallets: prayers for the souls of the dead, attention to another when we'd rather be left alone, and alms of patience and understanding.

Jesus is coming! How will you get ready for Him and make the most of your "little Lent?" **ECL**



THE BYZANTINE LITURGY

By Archpriest David Petras, SEOD

THE DYNAMICS OF MARRIAGE

Our faith is that marriage is a sacramental mystery of the Church. In the theology of both the Eastern and Western Churches, marriage has been recognized as one of the seven sacraments. This comes certainly from Saint Paul's description in the Letter to the Ephesians, where he compares God's love for his people to the love of marriage: "For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." This is a great mystery, but I speak in reference to Christ and the church" (5:31-32). The whole history of our salvation by God's love has been described as a wedding: "For the wedding day of the Lamb has come, his bride has made herself ready" (Revelation 19:7). Marriage is a sacrament then because it is not only the individual human love of one man and one woman, but a true reflection of God's infinite and eternal love He has for His creation.

Sometimes we speak about marriage only as the ritual ceremony that marks this union. More often than not, the wedding ceremony is a big event is the couple's life: the rite in Church, the reception that follows, the wedding garments, the speeches and dances, the food and drink are the host of traditions that surround the occasion. However, marriage is, of course, more than the events of that one day. It is a relationship that is to last for the rest of the couple's life. In the rite itself, the priest prays, "Grant to your servants (here they are mentioned by name) a peace-

ful 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," and "[J]oin them in oneness of mind, crown them in love, unite them in one flesh, give them fruit of the womb and the enjoyment of good children." Due to human weakness, however, not all are able to make that life-time commitment. In America, 43% of first marriages end in divorce, and the most common reason for failure is infidelity. The average length of these failed marriages is eight years. The divorce rate of second and third marriages is even greater. The challenge to us today, as has always been the case in the Church, is how to make marriage an enduring reality in the lives of people called to this commitment.

We start by looking at Saint Paul's Letter to the Ephesians Chapter 5, which is the Epistle usually read at the marriage liturgy. Here Saint Paul gives the instruction, "Be subordinate to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives should be subordinate to their husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is head of his wife just as Christ is head of the church, he himself the savior of the body" (v. 21-23). He then adds, addressing the man, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church and handed himself over for her" (v. 25). This passage is controversial in the present culture, because it seems to affirm the subordination of the woman to the man. Some continue to maintain subordination as a practice,

while others say that society now recognizes a greater equality. We should, however, be aware of two realities: 1) the truth that the advice of Saint Paul does come from a society and culture of many centuries ago, and 2) this advice must be seen in the whole context of the Gospel of our Lord.

One of the most important teachings of our Lord was the importance of service to one another. Jesus was quite clear that we are not to be tyrants. This was his teaching to James and John: "You know that those who are recognized as rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones make their authority over them felt. But it shall not be so among you. Rather, whoever wishes to be great among you will be your servant; whoever wishes to be first among you will be the slave of all" (Mark 10:42-45). This certainly applies to the marriage community as well, and in this Saint Paul teaches clearly: "Be subordinate to one another out of reverence for Christ" (Ephesians 5:21). Clearly, he was not preaching slavery of the wife to the husband, but mutual love and respect. While the character of some men makes them acts like tyrants, there are also women who accept this passage and still dominate their husbands. This does not lead to happiness in marriage.

What we see in Saint Paul's letter is a comparison between God's love and

the love in marriage. No human being can love another with the love that God has for His people. Marriage can succeed only with God's help, by the power of His grace which He offers to creatures made in His image. Marriage is a blessing for the couple if it is lived on the model of our Lord and His people, the Church. The wife respects her husband, who loves her in the way of Christ. Saint Paul explains, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church and handed himself over for her," (Ephesians 5:25) and "husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself" (v. 28). If the husband has a selfish love, rooted in his own ego, and not like Jesus' love, then the wife is under no obligation to serve him. The teacher of Origen, an early Father of the Church, wrote that "a husband's trustworthiness, reliability, self-control and love of others that are to characterize a Christian's relations with outsiders are also to be exhibited to his wife" (David W. T. Brattston). In our days, the passage on love found in Saint Paul's first letter to the Corinthians is sometimes chosen: "Love is patient, love is kind. It is not jealous, love is not pompous, it is not inflated, it is not rude, it does not seek its own interests, it is not quick-tempered, it does not brood over injury, it does not rejoice over wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things" (1 Corinthians 13:4-7). Though Saint Paul meant this for the love all Christians should have for one another and not only for marriages, it is also good advice for making marriage work. **ECL**



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

246 East 15th Street, Manhattan, New York
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Sunday Divine Liturgy
10:00 AM

SEASONAL REFLECTIONS

Father Ronald Hatton



NOW ENTER INTO A HOLY SEASON

It seems to me that October has, more and more, turned into a season of darkness. On TV, in the secular world, the entire month is given over to the devil. It is all about scary movies and TV shows. For an entire month now, a local Roman Catholic parish has been advertising a fundraiser called “The Forest of Fear.” Hallowe’en parties with scary, frightening, and grotesque costumes are the centerpiece of the month. And most Catholic laypeople indulge in this as well as secular. I know there are those reading this who think I am going over the top, and saying, “Father, it’s all in fun! Loosen up!” And that, frankly, proves my point that Catholic understanding of All Hallow’s Eve (except for more traditional Catholics) has turned from being the eve before the Western celebration of All Saints into the beginning of the season of self-indulgence, whether it’s children with their obsession with candy and other treats, or adults dressing up and partying. What a poor way for Catholics, East and West, to prepare of that celebration of All Saints. Although it falls on deaf ears, I appreciate the fact that Eastern All Saints is the Sunday after Pentecost: at least the saints can be properly celebrated without interference from the world.

Come November, we can now scrape the mud of October aside. We enter into a holy month – at least the Eastern Church does. With November, we celebrate the Feast of the holy Archangel Michael and all the Heavenly Hosts (November 8), the Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple (November 21), and prepare ourselves to enter into the time of Saint Philip’s Fast and the Advent season (November 15 until Christmas Day).

Angels are an integral part of the Christian life. In the Eastern Churches, we acknowledge their role in our daily lives, and even identify ourselves mystically with them in our liturgical life. Our lives begin with the baptismal

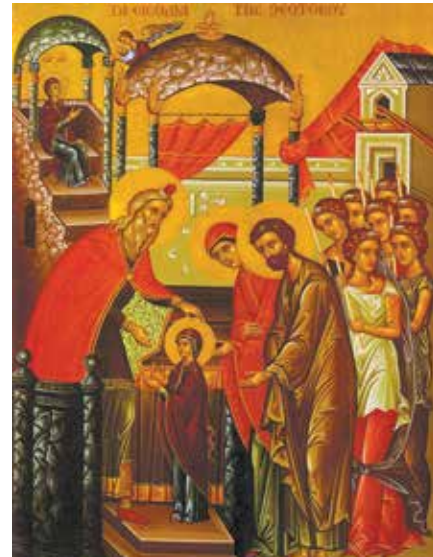
prayer which includes the line, “During (his-her) lifetime, give (him-her) the companionship of an angel of light to rescue (him-her) from every snare lying in (his-her) path, from the encounter of the evil one, from the noon-day demon and every evil imagination” (*The Rite of Christian Initiation*). In our Morning Prayers there may be this prayer, which



Icon of Archangels Michael, Raphael, & Gabriel

I learned during my time in seminary: “O holy Angel of Christ! In homage I come to you, my holy guardian who, since my baptism, has been assigned to me to protect my body and soul. I beseech your powerful intercession. I have often offended you by my indolence and bad habits. You are without stain in your glory, and I have often driven you away by my sins. I pray and beseech you, most holy guardian, be merciful to me, your sinful and unworthy servant. Be my defender and aid me against my enemies. Through your intercession, make me worthy to be a partaker of the kingdom of God with all the saints forever. Amen.” During our Divine Liturgy, we constantly identify ourselves with the angels, who celebrate the heavenly liturgy: “Around the throne, and on each side of the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind: the first living creature like a lion, the second living crea-

ture like an ox, the third living creature with a face like a human face, and the fourth living creature like a flying eagle. And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and inside. Day and night without ceasing they sing, ‘Holy, holy, holy, the Lord God the Almighty, who was and is and is to come.’” (Rev. 4:6-

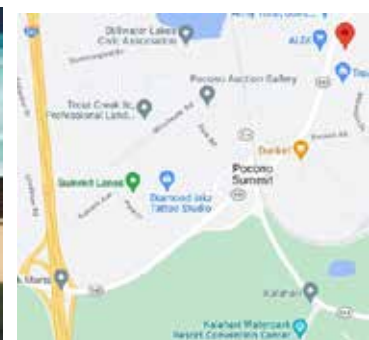


Icon of the Entrance of the Theotokos in the Temple

8). “Let us, who mystically represent the cherubim, and sing the thrice-holy hymn to the life-creating Trinity, now set aside all earthly cares, that we may receive the King of All, invisibly escorted by angelic hosts. Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!” (The Cherubic Hymn). We acknowledge that they are worshipping with us at the priest’s prayer at the Entrance with the Gospel Book: “O Lord, our Master and God, Who established orders and armies of angels and archangels for the service of your glory in heaven, make this our entrance an entrance of holy angels, concelebrating with us and glorifying Your goodness...” We even have symbolism in the liturgical role of our deacons, from the flowing of their orarion reminiscent of angels’ wings, to their moving from the Holy of Holies (the Altar) to the Holy Place (the Nave), being a symbol of angels moving between heaven and earth (cf. Gen. 28:12, John 1:51). So,

angels are with us, every waking moment and while we sleep, while we worship, and while we work or play. “Leaders of God’s armies and ministers of divine glory, commanders of angels and guides of mortals, plead on our behalf for what we need and for great mercy, since you are the leaders of the heavenly host” (Kontakion for the Feast).

The Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple is an historical feast. According to Tradition, the Theotokos was taken – presented – by her parents Joachim and Anna into the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem as a young girl, where she lived and served as a Temple virgin until her betrothal to Saint Joseph. One of the earliest sources of this tradition is the non-canonical *Proto-evangelion of James*, also called the *Infancy Gospel of James*. Mary was solemnly received by the temple community, which was headed by the priest Zachariah, the father of John the Baptist. She was led to the holy place to become herself the “holy of holies” of God, the living sanctuary and temple of the Divine child who was to be born in her. The Church also sees this feast as a feast which marks the end of the physical temple in Jerusalem as the dwelling place of God. Many hymns are offered for the Vespers and Matins of this feast, but I will offer only one for you here, which highlights the glory of the Theotokos replacing the glory of the Temple: “O faithful, let us leap for joy today, singing psalms and hymns of praise in honor of Mary, His Mother, the holy Tabernacle and Ark that contained the Word Whom nothing can contain. She is offered to God as a child in a marvelous way, and Zechariah the high priest receives her with great joy, for she is the dwelling place of the Most High” (Vespers, At Psalm 40). How fitting that we celebrate this feast in the midst of the Philippian Fast as a deeper preparation for the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord. **ECL**



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SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

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

GOING TO CHURCH OR BECOMING THE CHURCH?

“Let’s go to Church” said no early Christian ever. It’s not just that it wasn’t legal to build temples for Christian worship for the first three hundred years. It’s that they didn’t think of Church as a place at all.

The warning found in the Epistle to the Hebrews (10:25) puts it this way: “Do not neglect the assembly.” The Apostle’s word for “assembly” here has a distinctly Jewish ring to it: episyngogē (you can see the word ‘synagogue’ in it). It means “coming together in one place for a common purpose.” The more usual word for “church” in the New Testament is ekklesia, which means a “gathering” for religious or even civic purposes. The ek- in ekklesia adds a hint of separation to the meaning: the people who gather have been called away from something else or separated out of a larger group.

The Church is the local community of persons baptized into Christ, gathered around the local bishop (as a successor of the Apostles) or one of the priests ordained to represent him. This was true for the first Church that gathered around the eleven Apostles in the borrowed Upper Room in Jerusalem (Acts 2), for the Churches that gathered in people’s homes under the Apostles and their successors (Romans 16:5; 1 Corinthians 16:19; Colossians 4:15), and for every cathedral and parish church since then. Magnificent or humble, the buildings we call churches are merely houses where the real Church can gather.

Saint Paul wrote this to the Christians of Ephesus: “You are strangers and aliens no longer but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Christ Jesus Himself as the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building is fitted together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit” (Ephesians 2:20-22). The assembly which is the Church transcends time and space. Old Testament prophets, New Testament Apostles, and saints of every time and place join together with the community of believers in this time and this place to offer worship to God. The very art and architecture of a traditional Byzantine temple illustrates this truth: the saints on the iconostas and the walls, Christ exalted over all in the dome.

But it is only when we actually “set aside the earthly cares” of our everyday lives and come together at a particular time (the Lord’s Day), in a particular place (the parish church building), that we can do the work of being “fitted together” and “growing into a holy Temple in the Lord.” Saint Peter taught: “You also, as living stones, are being built

up into a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 2:5).

Stones have to be dressed and polished in order to fit together into a building that will endure. It is precisely in our coming together that we build each other up, help each other take off our rough edges, and polish each other’s virtues to shine. The earliest Church gathered to do four things: teaching,

fellowship, the Eucharist, and prayer (Acts 2:42). Apart from the Divine Liturgy, it is in the other three activities that our interactions with each other build us up and help us grow into our full stature in Christ (Ephesians 4:13).


Saint Paul (Romans 12:6-8) reminds us of the fact of our Baptism and Chrismation: “Each of us has gifts.” When we gather as the Church, each of us brings gifts to share and each of us can benefit from the gifts of others (1 Corinthi-

ans 14:12; Ephesians 4:12). We may think of the obvious roles of the bishop, priest, and deacon, or the particular talents of the cantors and catechists. We rely no less on the services of ushers and janitors. Our fellowship is supported by the people who set up, clean up and cook. A word of support, some wise advice, or silent good example are equally important gifts. Children need the encouragement of their “church friends.” Our youngest and oldest parishioners often form special bonds that are good for everyone.

All this is possible only when we do not neglect the assembly. Only then can we realize that we come to Church in order to become the Church. **ECL**

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Father G. Scott Boghossian



SEVEN PROMISES FOR ANSWERED PRAYER

Here are seven Bible promises in which God assures us that He will hear and answer our prayers.

Ask, Seek, and Knock

“Ask, and it will be given you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened” (Mt. 7:7-8, Lk. 11:9-10).

Jesus assures us that God the Father wants to give us good things, including the gift of the Holy Spirit, but we must pray with confidence and persistence. “You have not, because you ask not” (James 4:2).

Have 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 receive it, and you will” (Mk 11:22-24; see also Mt. 21:22).

The Apostle James illustrates how necessary faith is to receive an answer to prayer:

“But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord” (James 1:6, 7).

In Jesus’ Name

“Whatever you ask in My name, I will do it, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it.” (Jn. 14:13, 14; see also Jn. 15:16, Jn. 16:24).

To pray “in the name of Jesus” means to pray in virtue of His infinite merits, for His sake, for His glory. It also means that we dare only pray for the things that Jesus Himself would pray for, things conducive to our own salvation, as the name “Jesus” means, “God saves.”

“But it is necessary to know that this promise does not extend to temporal favors, such as health, goods of fortune, and the like; for God often justly refuses these graces, because He sees that they would be injurious to our salvation. Hence, we should ask temporal blessings only on condition that they will be profitable to the soul. But spiritual graces, such as pardon of sins, perseverance, divine love, and the like, should be asked absolutely and with a firm confidence of obtaining them” (Saint Alphonsus Liguori).

Ask According to God’s Will

“And this is the confidence which we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have obtained the requests made of Him” (1 Jn. 5:14-15).

Pray according to God’s will. Prayers that align with God’s will are infallibly effective, while prayers contrary to God’s will not be answered, or if answered, answered as a chastisement (see 1 Sam. 8, Hos. 13:11).

The Word Must Abide in You

“If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you” (Jn. 15:7).

Get familiar with the word of God in the Holy Bible. Pray scripture. Pray the psalms. Memorize biblical promises, like those listed here about prayer. Your prayers will prevail if you have God’s word in your heart.

Live for God and with a Clean Conscience

“Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God; and we receive from Him whatever we ask, because we keep His command-

ments and do what pleases Him” (1 Jn. 3:21, 22).

Live for the Lord. Keep His commandments and seek to please Him. If a sin is weighing on your conscience, get to confession and start again. A guilty conscience will undermine your faith and the effectiveness of your prayers.

Pray Together

“Again, I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in My name, there am I in the midst of them” (Mt. 18:19-20).

Pray with other fervent believers. Gather with fellow Catholics in the church, especially for the Divine Liturgy and other liturgical services. Meet for prayer in each other’s homes. Families that pray together stay together. There is miraculous power in praying together.

May reading, reviewing, meditating on, and memorizing God’s holy promises regarding answered prayer encourage you to believe in the power of prayer, pray more than ever, and encourage others to pray. “The prayer of a righteous man has great power in its effects” (James 5:16). **ECL**

ECPUBS EARNS EIGHT AWARDS IN 2024 CATHOLIC MEDIA ASSOCIATION BOOK AWARDS

Fairfax, VA

Three books published by Eastern Christian Publications (ECPubs) were named winners in the 2024 Catholic Media Association (CMA) Book Awards. One title earned four awards and another title earned three. The annual awards honor outstanding work in Catholic media in 65 categories. Eastern Christian Publications is unique among almost 100 publishers who submitted nearly 500 entries because it focuses on topics and authors from the Christian East. ECPubs won two out of four awards in the Ecumenism category. 2024 is the first year that ECPubs has participated in this award program. ECPubs Winners in the 2024 CMA Book Awards:

That They May All Be One: full color book of stories and photos of an ecumenical pilgrimage to Constantinople and The Holy Land as told by a 17-year-old pilgrim, Sophia Martin.

- 2nd place in Ecumenism
- 3rd place in Pilgrimages
- 3rd place in Coffee Table Art
- 3rd place in Best Book of a Small Publisher

One Mother, One Family: A Scriptural Meditation on the Rosary with Worldwide Sacred Art – full color book of scripture quotes for the rosary by Monica Amparo with art and icons of Mary from around the world and among both Eastern and Western Churches.

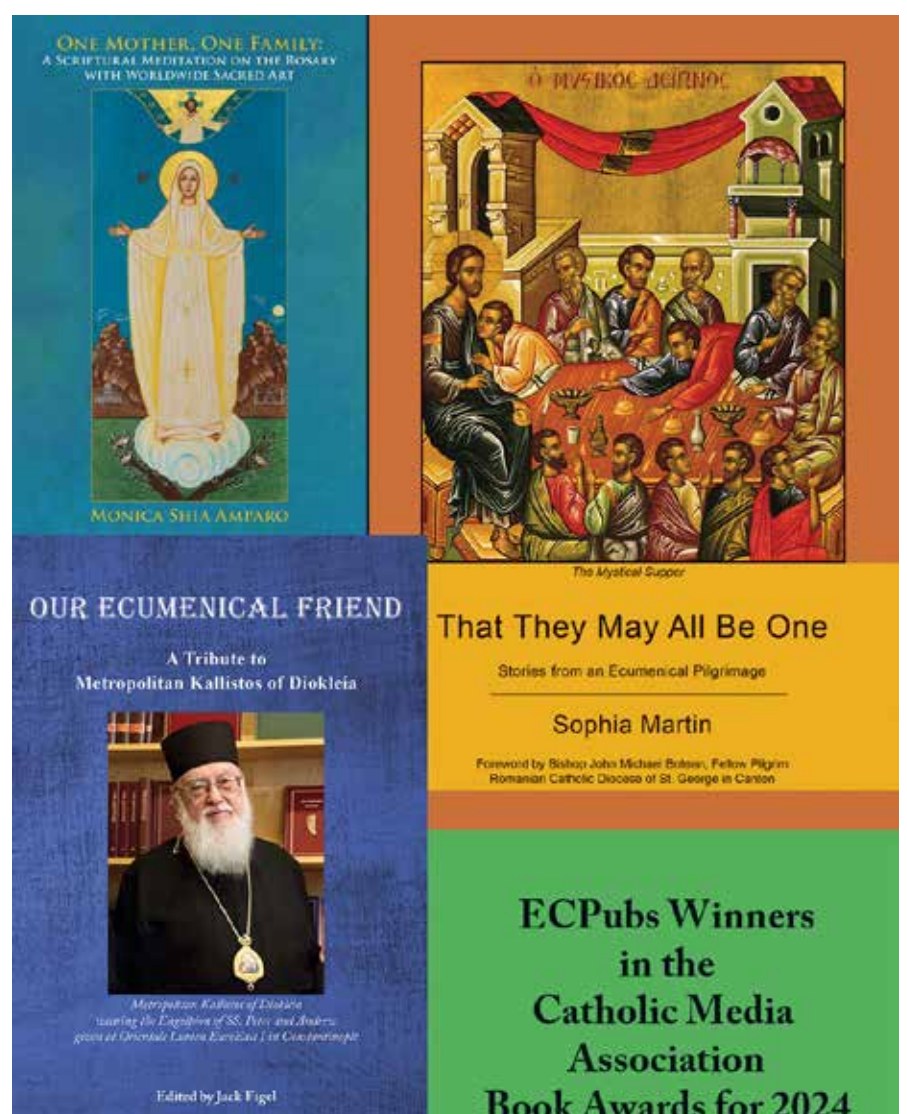
3rd place for Social Inclusion Honorable Mention for Prayer Books Honorable Mention for Design

Our Ecumenical Friend: A tribute to Metropolitan Kallistos of Diokleia, worldwide author, lecturer, pastor and ecumenist of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople (Greek Orthodox), by publisher Jack Figel.

3rd place for Ecumenism

More details about these titles can be found on the Featured Product page of the ECPubs website: <https://ecpubs.com/featured-products/>

Contact the publisher at info@ecpubs.com for more information about bulk order and bookstore discounts.



Distributors of One Mother, One Family include the bookstore/gift shop at the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception, Washington, DC, St. Patrick’s Cathedral,

New York, and Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land, Washington, DC.



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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 Father Michael.

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July 6-10, 2025

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July 13-17, 2025

Camp Theotokos—Girls Camp, Ages 6-17

July 20-24, 2025

Altar Server Congress—Ages 6-17

Aug 10-14, 2025

Camp St Nicholas—Preteen Coed Camp, Ages 6-12

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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.

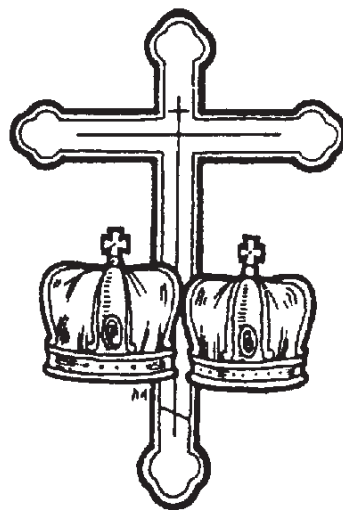
WEDDING JUBILARIANS SCHEDULED FOR FALL 2024

November 23
Middle States Syncellate – 4:00 PM (Saturday)
Epiphany of Our Lord Byzantine Catholic Church
3410 Woodburn Road
Annadale, VA 22003

December 1, 2024
Pennsylvania Syncellates – 3:00 PM (Saturday)
Saint John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church 3:00
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Southern states Bi-Yearly. Next one in 2026.

If you plan to celebrate a special wedding anniversary this year and would participate in the Jubilarians Celebration, please see your pastor.



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UPCOMING EPARCHIAL AND PARISH EVENTS

NOVEMBER, 2024

- 8 Holy Archangel Michael and All Holy Bodiless Powers of Heaven
Solemn Holy Day
- 11 Veteran's Day
*Civic holiday * Chancery closed*
- 14 The Christmas Fast
The Christmas Fast begins at sundown
- 21 Entrance of the Virgin Theotokos Into the Temple
Solemn Holy Day
- 28-29 Thanksgiving Holiday
Chancery closed

DECEMBER, 2024

- 6 Our Holy Father Nicholas the Wonderworker
Solemn Holy Day
- 8 Maternity of the Holy Anna
Solemn Holy Day
- 15 Sunday of the Holy Forefathers
- 22 Sunday of the Holy Fathers
Sunday before Christmas

- 24 Christmas Eve
- 25 Nativity of Our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ According to the Flesh
Holy Day of Obligation
- 26 Synaxis of the Virgin Theotokos
Solemn Holy Day
- 27 Holy Apostle, Protomartyr, and Archdeacon Stephen
Simple Holy Day
- 24-27 Chancery closed for Christmas holiday
- 29 Sunday after Christmas

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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