



# EASTERN CATHOLIC LIFE

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## FIRST AMERICAN ELECTED POPE: CARDINAL PREVOST TAKES NAME LEO XIV

written by Cindy Wooden of Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Cardinal Robert F. Prevost, the Chicago-born prefect of the Dicastery for Bishops under Pope Francis, was elected the 267th pope May 8 and took the name Pope Leo XIV.

He is the first North American to be elected pope and, before the conclave, was the U.S. cardinal most mentioned as a potential successor of St. Peter.

The white smoke poured from the chimney on the roof of the Sistine Chapel at 6:07 p.m. Rome time and a few minutes later the bells of St. Peter's Basilica began to ring.

About 20 minutes later the Vatican police band and two dozen members of the Pontifical Swiss Guard marched into St. Peter's Square. They soon were joined by the marching band of the Italian Carabinieri, a branch of military police, and by units of the other branches of the Italian military.

As soon as news began to spread, people from all over Rome ran to join the tens

of thousands who were already in the square for the smoke watch. Rome Mayor Roberto Gualtieri was among them.

French Cardinal Dominique Mamberti, protodeacon of the College of Cardinals, appeared on the central balcony of St. Peter's Basilica at 7:12 p.m. He told the crowd: "I announce to you a great joy. We have a pope ('Habemus papam')," saying the cardinal's name in Latin and announcing the name by which he will be called.

Ten minutes later, the new Pope Leo came out onto the balcony, smiling and waving to the crowd wearing the white papal cassock, a red mozzetta or cape and a red stole to give his first public blessing "urbi et orbi" (to the city and the world).

The crowd shouted repeatedly, "Viva il papa" or "Long live the pope" as Pope Leo's eyes appeared to tear up.

"Peace be with you," were Pope Leo's first words to the crowd.



Pope Leo XIV, the former Cardinal Robert F. Prevost, waves to the crowds in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican after his election as pope May 8, 2025. The new pope was born in Chicago. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)

"My dear brothers and sisters, this is the first greeting of the risen Christ, the good shepherd who gave his life for God's flock," he said, praying that Christ's peace would enter people's hearts, their families and "the whole earth."

The peace of the risen Lord, he said, is "a peace that is unarmed and disarming."

Signaling strong continuity with the papacy of Pope Francis, Pope Leo told the crowd that God "loves all of us unconditionally" and that the church must be

open to everyone.

"We are all in God's hands," he said, so "without fear, united, hand in hand with God and with each other, let us go forward."

He thanked the cardinals who elected him, apparently on the fourth ballot of the conclave, "to be the successor of Peter and to walk with you as a united church always seeking peace, justice" and together being missionary disciples of Christ.

...continued on page 3



## THOUSANDS LINE STREETS OF ROME TO BID FINAL FAREWELL TO POPE FRANCIS

Article from Catholic News Service—Rome written by Junno Arocho Esteves, April 26, 2025

Editor's Note: Metropolitan William Skurla and Bishop Kurt Burnette were both in attendance at the Funeral Mass of Pope Francis

Left: Pope Francis' casket is driven past the Colosseum on its way toward his burial place in the Basilica of St. Mary Major in Rome April 26, 2025. (CNS photo/Justin McLellan)

The casket bearing the body of Pope Francis made its final journey through the streets of Rome accompanied by applause and shouts of gratitude from thousands of mourners.

After the funeral Mass April 26, pallbearers carried Pope Francis' coffin through St. Peter's Basilica, stopping briefly at the steps leading to St. Peter's tomb before placing it on a retrofitted popemobile parked outside.

Hundreds awaited outside and applauded as the vehicle, accompanied by four police officers on motorbikes, left the grounds of Vatican City for the last time.

According to the Vatican and Italian police, some 150,000 people watched the pope's casket pass by.

Along the wide boulevard in front of Torre Argentina, where Julius Caesar was assassinated in 44 A.D., tourists and bystanders packed the streets, some tee-

tering on top of the stone walls around the ancient site. Residents were leaning out of their upper-story apartment windows, everyone camera-ready. When the motorcade passed, people clapped and cheered, some shouting "Grazie, Papa Francesco" ("Thank you, Pope Francis") and "Viva il papa." ("Long live the pope").

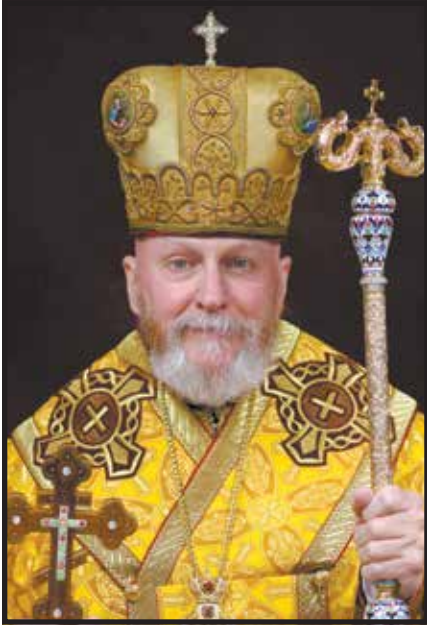
The cortège bearing the first Jesuit pope passed by the Gesu Church, the mother church of the Society of Jesus in Rome's historic center, where the body of the order's founder, St. Ignatius of Loyola, is buried.

Among the tens of thousands of people

hoping to catch a glimpse of the papal casket outside Rome's famed Colosseum was a group of 50 young people from the Diocese of Verona who were in Rome for the Jubilee of Adolescents.

For 23-year-old Samuele Simoni, the death of Pope Francis, which happened while the group made their way to Rome for the Jubilee pilgrimage, was "unimaginable."

Speaking to Catholic News Service, Simoni said bidding the pope farewell along the route to his tomb was a way for the group to witness "the strength of the church in such an important time of mourning." ...continued on page 8



## I LIFT UP MY EYES

Pastoral Reflections of Bishop Kurt



### AD LIMINA APOSTOLORIUM VISIT 2020

Reprinted from the March 2020 issue of the Eastern Catholic Life

In the plaza before St. Peter Basilica in Rome, there are two great statues of St. Peter and St. Paul. One of them is pointing down, and the other is pointing out. A monsignor there used to tell me the joke that they symbolize the principle, “We make the rules here, and you keep them out there.” In 1585, Pope Sixtus V ordered that bishops should visit the Pope of Rome every three years. In 1909, the law was revised to require a visit every five years, ten for bishops outside of Europe. More recently, the law was changed to require all the bishops in the world to visit the Pope every five years, to venerate the tombs of the Apostles Peter and Paul, and to give an account to the Holy Father of the pastoral situation in their dioceses and eparchies. Well, the law says every five years, but we can’t just show up and walk into the Pope’s office. Instead, it is up to the bureaucracy in Rome to arrange the visit for the over 5,000 bishops in the world. For the United States, the last visit to the Holy Father was 2011-2012. It was eight years before the next visit. That’s why I began with the joke, “We make the laws here (in Rome), and you keep them out there.”

The visit is called *ad limina apostolorum*, which means to the thresholds of the apostles. You might be familiar with the word *limina* from the English word “liminal” which is used to mean at the threshold of something, such as liminal consciousness. The last time our Eparchy was called to the Holy Father while there was no bishop, and our Administrator, Father Ed Cimbala, visited Pope Benedict XVI on behalf of our eparchy. This time, three priests were able to visit the Holy Father with me, but more on that later.

Saturday evening, February 15, we took off from Newark airport. United cancels its direct flight to Rome from Newark during the winter, so I booked on Lufthansa through Frankfurt. One reason I chose Lufthansa is because they still fly 747’s to Germany. United has discontinued all of its 747’s and I don’t know how much longer they will be flying. The first time I flew to Europe in 1973 was on a 747 from Houston to Amsterdam. I remember how enormous the plane looked, and it still does. They used to call it the Queen of the Skies. I was in high school, and my parents convinced me to use the money from my summer job to take a high school sponsored bicycle trip

across northern Europe. We flew to Switzerland and bicycled to Holland (somewhat downhill). I also purchased a good bike with the money. I don’t know what became of that bike.

I enjoyed flying across the Atlantic with my window seat but didn’t get much sleep. The man next to me turned on a movie, and the bright screen kept me awake, though he slept like a baby through it. It was just dawn as we landed in Frankfurt, and the sky was streaked with dark red. I booked a long layover in Frankfurt to break up the trip, and we tried to find the train into the center of the city. We decided to take a taxi instead. The taxi driver was from Pakistan and offered to pick us up later when we asked him how to find a taxi downtown. You know, the Germans have a lot of laws, and they also observe them, so we were worried about finding a taxi since we had a plane to catch.

We found the great cathedral of Frankfurt which is dedicated to St. Bartholomew. In Germany, the cathedral is called the “Dom.” To be honest, I fell asleep for an hour in the airport, so by the time we got downtown, the 10:00 Mass was letting out. It sounded like it was a beautiful Mass with good music, but we missed it. So, we took a walk on the river for a while. The ducks and the geese there are easy to recognize as ducks or geese, but they are definitely different from ours. I couldn’t get any good pictures to show you because it was so overcast. Though for Germany in February, it was mercifully temperate. As we returned by the Dom, the bell was ringing, and when we entered it was packed for another Mass, one that wasn’t posted on the schedule. I figured it would be a long service because the priest preached a pretty fair sermon before he even started. When he made the sign of the cross at the beginning, I almost thought he was using Church Slavonic, but then it went off the rails. So, we knew immediately it was a Slavic language—in fact, it was the Polish Mass. We stood through the whole Mass because the church was packed. It was fun to try to understand as much as possible from words I know from our liturgy. I could understand words like “God,” and “holy,” and “reading,” etc., and fill in some other words.

By the time it was over, and we made it outside, we saw our Pakistani taxi driver waiting for us, and headed back to the airport. Somehow, I set off the alarm at the security and was rather thoroughly searched at the airport. Of course, we were fighting to stay awake by that time of day, but soon we were in the air headed to Rome. Although it was overcast most of the way, there was just enough of a break to see some of the Alps. After two hours, we landed in Rome. The airport in Rome is now named Leonardo da Vinci, but it was originally named Fiumicino, which is

what most people call it, and that is way the code for it is FCO. I’m accustomed to take a taxi, but the college had arranged cars for the bishops coming to *ad limina*. When I was living in Rome, the government passed a law that guaranteed a fixed price for taxi rides into the city, because they were tired of tourists complaining that they were ripped off. The fixed price then was 40 euro. I remember once when I took a

chapel is beautifully furnished in dark red marble. The nuns originally were from the aristocratic families of Rome. The statues are all of female saints in white marble. I remember thinking when I lived there how much great art there is in Rome. In this chapel there were six or eight statues of higher quality than anything in the whole state of Oregon, and in Rome it was just another small chapel. The American Civil



Pope Francis greets Bishop Kurt during the 2020 Ad Limina Visit of the Eastern Catholic Bishops of the United States

taxi, I asked the driver, how much to the center of the city. He replied 60 euro. I said (in Italian), isn’t there a fixed price? He said, 50 euro. I stared at him for a moment, and he grinned and said 40 euro with no embarrassment, as if he had just realized I meant the other “fixed price.”

The Pontifical North American College hosted almost all the American bishops for this round of visits. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops is divided into geographical regions, 1 through 14. Ten or so years ago, they created a 15th region for the eastern bishops. In previous years, each eastern bishop visited the pope along with the Latin rite bishops of his area. I am told we were like the poor step-cousins. The last *ad limina* visit was the first time the eastern bishops visited in a group, and this was the second time. The College was a great help to us, providing rooms and meals, and arranging all the transportation for us as a group. That also made it easier to get into the more secure areas at the Vatican.

The Pontifical North American College was founded in 1859 by Pope Pius IX, the longest reigning pope in history. He suggested that the American bishops establish a college in Rome for the training of American priest as early as 1855, but they didn’t take the hint. So, the Pope himself purchased a property and gave it to the American bishops. Pius IX was familiar with a convent at the foot of the Quirinale Hill, just a short roll down from the pope’s palace, because he served there as an altar server when he was a boy. It was originally a convent for Dominican nuns, and the

War broke out just as the first class of seminarians began. More Americans were killed in that war than all other wars combined. The seminarians from both sides of the war agreed not to talk about the war while in Italy. Otherwise, they could not have lived together.

When Pius IX was elected during the democratic upheaval of the 19th century, he was at first the most popular man in Italy—young and progressive. As often happens once someone is in authority, the crowds turned against him. The flashpoint was when he refused to declare war on Austria. At one point, he fled to the south and was received on an American naval ship on August 1, 1849, the USS Constitution, off the coast of Gaeta near Naples. The captain of the ship would probably have been disciplined by his authorities for interfering in Italian politics had he not died soon after from gastritis. The pope’s reception on the ship is commemorated in a painting by the contemporary artist Tim Freeman. It shows the pope in white climbing a ladder to the ship with all the sailors in white, even at attention on the yards. The ship is flying the Stars and Stripes and the Vatican flag.

In 1870, the Italian revolutionaries entered Rome. The American seminarians offered to fight for the Pope, but he told them they were supposed to be studying, not fighting, and he refused their offer. After the revolution, the new Italian government seized most of the church property in Rome, and many buildings owned by aristocratic families. Interestingly enough, our own President Chester Arthur sent a letter to the new government in 1884

and informed them that the American College was for Americans and they were not to touch it—and the new government left it alone. The Holy Father went into self-imposed exile in the Vatican enclave, and no pope set foot outside until the Italian government made peace with the Pope in 1929 and signed a treaty recognizing the Holy See as a sovereign government.

Although our college was a stone's throw from the Pope when he lived on the Quirinale Hill, after he moved to the Vatican, he was quite a bit farther. So, in 1926, the American bishops purchased land on the Janiculum Hill overlooking St. Peter Basilica and the Vatican. By the way, neither the Vatican Hill nor the Janiculum Hill is one of the seven hills of Rome. I only mention that because

some fundamentalist preachers make claims about the Vatican based on the seven hills of Rome, but the Vatican is outside of ancient Rome.

After World War II, there was a surge of vocations to the priesthood in the United States, and the bishops built a new much larger seminary on the Janiculum Hill. They kept the original building by the Quirinale Hill, a block from the Trevi Fountain, and use it now as a house for diocesan priests who are studying in Rome for an advanced degree. Most people call the old campus "the Casa Santa Maria," and the new campus "the Janiculum." I lived at the Casa when Archbishop Skurla sent me to study canon law in 2004, and Father Ron Barusefski lived there for one year when he went to finish his doctor-

ate. After one year, the College hired Father Ron Barusefski as Director of Apostolic Works, and he now lives at the Janiculum where he is finishing his fourth year of work. "Apostolic Works" means the pastoral works that all seminarians are required to do. It might include prisons, hospitals, catechism, homeless ministry, and so on. Father Barusefski oversees these ministries for all 200 seminarians at the NAC (North American College) and is also an advisor to 25 individual seminarians. Imagine trying to supervise those kinds of works in a foreign country!

After we arrived at the College from Frankfurt, we were greeted by Father Barusefski, and had our first dinner in Rome. We knew it would be a very early start the next morning. Our first

appointment in Rome was a visit to the tomb of St. Paul the Apostle. His resting place, near to the place where he was beheaded, is called "St. Paul Outside the Walls." The ancient Romans did not allow executions or burials inside the sacred boundaries of the city, so both St. Peter and St. Paul were executed and interred outside of Rome itself. The bus would get us "early in the morning before dawn" to take us to venerate the tomb of St. Paul, to pray for our dioceses, and to celebrate the Holy Eucharist according to one of our eastern traditions. I'll leave off here and being again in the next month's issue.

+Kurt Brunette

## FIRST AMERICAN ELECTED POPE: CARDINAL PREVOST TAKES NAME LEO XIV

written by Cindy Wooden of Catholic News Service  
...continued from page 1

Telling the crowd that he was an Augustinian, he quoted St. Augustine, who said, "With you I am a Christian and for you a bishop."

"Together we must try to be a missionary church, a church that builds bridges and always dialogues, that is always open to receiving everyone like this square with its arms open to everyone, everyone in need," he said.

The new bishop of Rome told the people of his diocese and of the whole Catholic Church, "We want to be a synodal church, a church that journeys, a church that seeks peace always, that always seeks charity, that wants to be close to people, especially those who are suffering."

After asking the crowd to recite the Hail Mary with him, Pope Leo gave his first solemn blessing.

Cardinals over the age of 80, who were not eligible to enter the conclave, joined the crowd in the square. Among them were Cardinals Seán P. O'Malley, the retired archbishop of Boston; Donald W. Wuerl, the retired archbishop of Washington; and Marc Ouellet, retired prefect of the Congregation for Bishops.

A longtime missionary in Peru, the 69-year-old pope holds both U.S. and Peruvian citizenship.

La Repubblica, the major Italian daily, described him April 25 as "cosmopolitan and shy," but also said he was "appreciated by conservatives and progressives. He has global visibility in a conclave in which few (cardinals) know each other."

That visibility comes from the fact that as prefect of the Dicastery for Bishops for the past two years, he was instrumental in helping Pope Francis choose bishops for many Latin-rite dioceses, he met hundreds of bishops during their "ad limina" visits to Rome and was

called to assist the world's Latin-rite bishops "in all matters concerning the correct and fruitful exercise of the pastoral office entrusted to them."

The new pope was serving as bishop of Chiclayo, Peru, when Pope Francis called him to the Vatican in January 2023.

During a talk at St. Jude Parish in Chicago in August, the then-cardinal said



Pope Leo XIV, the former Cardinal Robert F. Prevost, waves to the crowds in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican after his election as pope May 8, 2025. The new pope was born in Chicago. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)

Pope Francis nominated him "specifically because he did not want someone from the Roman Curia to take on this role. He wanted a missionary; he wanted someone from outside; he wanted someone who would come in with a different perspective."

In a March 2024 interview with Catholic News Service, he said Pope Francis' decision in 2022 to name three women as full members of the dicastery, giving them input on the selection of bishops "contributes significantly to the process of discernment in looking for who we hope are the best candidates to serve the church in episcopal ministry."

To deter attitudes of clericalism among bishops, he said, "it's important to find

men who are truly interested in serving, in preaching the Gospel, not just with eloquent words, but rather with the example and witness they give."

In fact, the cardinal said, Pope Francis' "most effective and important" bulwark against clericalism was his being "a pastor who preaches by gesture."

In an interview in 2023 with Vatican News, then-Cardinal Prevost spoke about the essential leadership quality of a bishop.

"Pope Francis has spoken of four types of closeness: closeness to God, to brother bishops, to priests and to all God's people," he said. "One must not give in to the temptation to live isolated, sepa-

more than two decades serving in Peru, first as an Augustinian missionary and later as bishop of Chiclayo.

Soon after coming to Rome to head the dicastery, he told Vatican News that bishops have a special mission of promoting the unity of the church.

"The lack of unity is a wound that the church suffers, a very painful one," he said in May 2023. "Divisions and polemics in the church do not help anything. We bishops especially must accelerate this movement toward unity, toward communion in the church."

In September, a television program in Peru reported on the allegations of three women who said that then-Bishop Prevost failed to act against a priest who sexually abused them as minors. The diocese strongly denied the accusation, pointing out that he personally met with the victims in April 2022, removed the priest from his parish, suspended him from ministry and conducted a local investigation that was then forwarded to the Vatican. The Vatican said there was insufficient evidence to proceed, as did the local prosecutor's office.

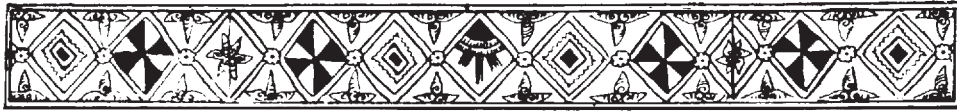
Pope Leo was born Sept. 14, 1955, in Chicago, Illinois. He holds a bachelor's degree in mathematics from the Augustinian-run Villanova University in Pennsylvania and joined the order in 1977, making his solemn vows in 1981. He holds a degree in theology from the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago and a doctorate from the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas in Rome.

He joined the Augustinian mission in Peru in 1985 and largely worked in the country until 1999 when he was elected head of the Augustinians' Chicago-based province. From 2001 to 2013, he served as prior general of the worldwide order. In 2014, Pope Francis named him bishop of Chiclayo, in northern Peru, and the pope asked him also to be apostolic administrator of Callao, Peru, from April 2020 to May 2021.

The new pope speaks English, Spanish, Italian, French, Portuguese and can read Latin and German.

### Pope Leo XIV a Chicago Native

A Chicago native, he also served as prior general of the Augustinians and spent



# PEOPLE YOU KNOW

## IN BEAVER MEADOWS...

*ECF Children Enjoy Easter Egg Hunt*

The ECF class of SS Peter & Paul Church in Beaver Meadows, PA enjoyed an Easter egg hunt on a warm and sunny spring day. After finding over 100 eggs, the children opened the eggs to reveal prizes such as candy and coins. ECF instructors are Dr. Marisue Rayno and cantor Mike Komishock. Rev. Dr. Vasyl Chepelskyy is pastor.



## IN BEAVER MEADOWS...

*Guest Priest Gives Spiritual Reflection*

Morning of Prayer and Spiritual Reflection "From the Grave to Glory: The Journey from Lazarus Saturday to Pascha" with Fr. Roman Vasylynka at Saints Peter and Paul Byzantine Catholic Church in Beaver Meadows, Pennsylvania. Rev. Dr. Vasyl Chepelskyy is pastor.

## IN CHARLOTTE...

*Pirohy, Palm Sunday, & Pascha*  
[www.carolinabyzantine.com](http://www.carolinabyzantine.com), or email [petromissionfortmill@gmail.com](mailto:petromissionfortmill@gmail.com)

The 2025 Lenten & Pascha seasons were full of traditions, new and long standing at the Petro Oros Byzantine Mission of Fort Mill, South Carolina.

As it is part of Byzantine tradition, we held the mission's first Pirohi sale. Unfortunately, we do not have a physical building, yet alone a kitchen and freezer to store delectables. Did that stop us? No! Our parish family, young and old, bonded over a Pirohi assemble line in a fellow parishioner's home. Pirohi "pincher" El Rinko said, "I had such a nice time doing something worthwhile, that will eventually help build a church!"

Palm Sunday was marked not only by the blessing of palms and pussy willows, but a Sunday dedicated to passing on Ruthenian Easter traditions. This year, many of our young parishioners designed Easter basket covers. The kids are "dyeing" for a pysanky class next year. (With any luck, eggs will be less expensive otherwise giant marshmallows will be our canvas, as one clever mom suggested.)

On Pascha, our little mission saw an influx of people from areas surrounding Charlotte Metro fill their spiritual hunger with a "reverent and beautiful divine liturgy and the blessing of paska, hrudka and other basket staples. The mix of Byzantine and Latin Rite Catholics in attendance is what makes this liturgy so special year after year. "This is the Resurrection Day! Let us be enlightened by this Feast. Let us joyfully embrace one another." -Paschal Stichera



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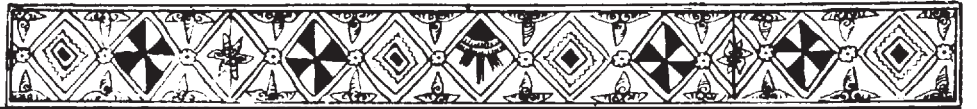
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# AROUND THE EPARCHY



## IN HILLSBOROUGH...

*Parishioner visits Byzantine Catholic Church in Budapest*

Zachary Bezick, a parishioner of Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church in Hillsborough, New Jersey, recently had the opportunity to visit a Byzantine (Greek) Catholic Church in Budapest, Hungary, while on spring break. With the help of a translator app on his phone, he was able to communicate with the priest and faithful at the parish, who were happy to learn that our Byzantine Catholic faith was alive and thriving in the United States. The pastor and parishioners presented Zach with a three-barred cross as a memorial of his visit. Reflecting on his visit, Zach commented, "Seeing Greek [Byzantine] Catholicism thrive far from my home is something I will always cherish and stands a testament to the strength of our faith." Zach is a junior at Florida State University in Tallahassee, Florida, and is currently studying abroad in Valencia, Spain. Father James Badeaux is pastor of Saint Mary Parish in Hillsborough, NJ.



## IN HILLSBOROUGH...

*Parishioner Received Firefighter Certification*

Recently, Daniel Smith, a parishioner of Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church in Hillsborough, New Jersey, completed 90 hours of classroom and hands-on learning for his Firefighter Two Certification from the State of New Jersey. Dan is a 6th-generation firefighter and has been volunteering since 2021. His family has been in the fire service since 1881. Dan is currently serving with Three Bridges & Readington Volunteer Fire Companies along with being an Associate Member of Lebanon Fire Company. Father James Badeaux is the pastor of Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church.



## IN PERTH AMBOY...

*Saint Michael Palm Sunday Luncheon*



Today was a beautiful and truly special day in our parishes of St. Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church, Perth Amboy, NJ and St. Michael's Byzantine Catholic Church, Perth Amboy, NJ – spent together with Bishop Kurt.

Two festive Liturgies, heartfelt prayer, a meaningful message, shared joy, and time together over lunch in the St. Michael's parish hall.

We are sincerely grateful to Bishop Kurt for spending the day with us and it was a joy and encouragement for both communities.

Many thanks also to everyone who helped with preparations and made the day feel so warm and full of light. Father Vasyl Remitskyi is Parochial Vicar, and Father Ed Cimballa is Parochial Administrator of Saint Nicholas & Saint Michael parishes.





# PEOPLE YOU KNOW AROUND THE EPARCHY



## IN ROSWELL...

### *Pysanky Workshop*

On Saturday, April 12th, Epiphany of Our Lord parish of Roswell, Georgia hosted its first Pysanka Workshop. The workshop was led by parishioner Irene Laschuk. The workshop was very well received and attended by 47 parishioners and friends of all ages.

Participants learned not only how to write pysanky but also the origins of the pysanka including, legends, customs, and symbolism. By the end of the workshop, participants were able to show off and enjoy their beautiful pysanky. With each participant receiving their own kit, they were able to continue the tradition of writing pysanky during Holy Week at home.

Since our first workshop was so successful, we are planning to make the Pysanka Workshop a regular part of our already rich parish life here at Epiphany of Our Lord. Father Lewis M. Rabayda is Parochial Administrator of Epiphany of Our Lord.



## IN ROSWELL...

### *Thomas Sunday Festival—Photos by Abigale Francis*

Each year on Thomas Sunday, the parishioners of Epiphany of Our Lord, Roswell, hold a big parish festival with great food and fun for all ages.

## IN SMITHTOWN...

### *15th Annual Pysanky Class Article and photos by Joanne Marcus*

Resurrection Byzantine Catholic Church, Smithtown New York sponsored its 15th Annual Pysanky egg class! Thanks to our parish volunteer teachers Lisa Knapp, Joanne Marcus, and Deacon Bob Knapp, along with our color dye experts Emily Knapp and Bohdan Budash. These knowledgeable volunteers welcomed all who wished to learn this traditional Ukrainian egg decorating style. Father Vladyslav Budash is Parochial Administrator.



3 Generations of the Caston Family



# IN SWOYERSVILLE...

*Traditional Pysanky Workshop*

A small group gathered midday on Saturday, March 29 at Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church, Swoyersville. However, it was not for worship at this time, but to learn the amazing art of creating Ukrainian-style pysanky. Open to both parishioners



and the public, the registration fee for the workshop also served as a donation, designated by those attending, to either Saint Nicholas Church, or Saint Michael Church, Pittston. Father Andrii Dumnych is Parochial Vicar of both parishes and Deacon Larry Worlinsky is Parochial Administrator. Each kistka stylus and beeswax used for layering wax on a raw egg in the class, was special from Ukraine. All parts of the process were taught – how to use the kistka; dyeing the eggs in the correct color sequence;

and learning an alternate method, in how to blow out the contents of the egg before melting off the wax to reveal the resulting design. Everyone was delighted to have successfully created a personalized egg! With such detail required, one might think writing with wax on an egg is far from relaxing. But the opposite is true, as many are surprised to find it a pleasant and quieting experience. And that is one of the satisfactions of creating pysanky. Furnished with a set of resources and tips to get started, all were encouraged to create more pysanky on their own, or to share this new knowledge with others. Mary Anne Fedor, a parishioner of Saint Michael's Church, Pittston, was the instructor.



## BYZANTINE CATHOLIC EPARCHY OF PARMA HOSTS 4TH METROPOLITAN ASSEMBLY IN WHITING, INDIANA

Independence, OH – The Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Parma is pleased to announce the 4th Metropolitan Assembly, scheduled to take place from July 16-20, 2025, at Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church in Whiting, Indiana. This year's theme, "Come let us worship and bow before Christ!" aims to inspire and deepen the faith of all attendees.

The bi-annual gathering is more than just an event; it is a heartfelt moment for the Metropolitan Church of Pittsburgh, embodying the essence of a Synodal Church. It is a time for us to unite as a community of faith, looking to Christ as our hope and the promise of our future. As the third Assembly in a series of many to come, it stands as a testament to our enduring faith and commitment to reflecting on the presence of God in our midst. Open to everyone in our community, this gathering is an incredible opportunity to connect, reflect, and grow in faith together.

This year's gathering is set in the picturesque city of Whiting, Indiana, home to Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church. Founded in 1898 by Eastern European immigrants, Saint Mary's holds the distinction of being the oldest Eastern Catholic church in Indiana and Chicagoland. Today, the congregation represents five language groups and offers a multicultural and intergenerational experience of prayer and community, driven by its Accessibility to Beauty Project. Saint Mary's parishioners have put their church and volunteerism at

the service of the Whiting-Robertsdale community and beyond for over a century. Their vibrant parish life is embedded in the wider community. Nestled on the southern shore of Lake Michigan, Whiting offers a delightful mix of small-town charm and vibrant community life.

The Assembly will feature enriching activities such as interviews, roundtable discussions, worship services, and opportunities for fellowship and spiritual growth. Participants can explore the experiences and insights of Metropolitan William, Bishop Kurt, Bishop Robert, and Bishop Artur, fostering a deeper connection with the Byzantine Catholic faith. Each bishop will share unique perspectives and lessons from their journeys. Participants will also have the opportunity to experience an exclusive tour of Annunciation Byzantine Catholic Parish in Home Glen, Illinois, led by Father Tom Loya, and a live broadcast of the "What God is Not" podcast with Father Michael O'Loughlin & Mother Natalia.

Additionally, attendees will have the chance to meet our keynote speaker, Archbishop Michel Jalakh, from the Dicastery for Eastern Churches. Appointed by Pope Francis in February 2023, Archbishop Jalakh will give a presentation on the importance of the Eastern Churches within the Catholic Church and join us in prayer and reflection.

We invite all faithful to join us for this inspiring event and be part of a community dedicated to worship and spiritual

renewal. Take advantage of Early Bird rates through May 15! Don't miss this opportunity to save on registration and ensure your spot at this inspiring event.

For more information, please visit our website at [www.byzantineassembly.org](http://www.byzantineassembly.org) or email [byzantineassembly@gmail.com](mailto:byzantineassembly@gmail.com).



**2025 BYZANTINE ASSEMBLY**  
*Come let us worship, and bow before Christ*  
**JULY 16-20 | 2025**  
**IN WHITING, INDIANA**

Join us in Whiting, Indiana, home of St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church, for a significant moment in the Metropolitan Church of Pittsburgh's journey. This bi-annual event embodies the essence of a Synodal Church, reflecting our enduring faith and commitment to God's presence. Open to everyone, this is a unique chance to connect, reflect, and grow in faith together.

Visit the community webpage to explore the city and discover where the event will take place.

Registration opens April 1! Check our website for the early bird special!

[www.byzantineassembly.org/community](http://www.byzantineassembly.org/community)

## THOUSANDS LINE STREETS OF ROME TO BID FINAL FAREWELL TO POPE FRANCIS

...continued from page 1

Pope Francis was “an important and influential figure” in the lives of young people, and to join others in bidding farewell to the pontiff was “definitely a time in which they could also fully experience a bit of the Jubilee,” he said.

“People often think of the Jubilee as seeing the pope in a different way. Yet, it is certainly an emotional moment of prayer that is both strong and beautiful,” Simoni told CNS. “For them, it will truly remain an indelible memory in their hearts.”

When the casket arrived at Rome’s Basilica of St. Mary Major, pallbearers carried it in a solemn procession down the central nave.

Among the cardinals present for the burial were: Cardinals Giovanni Battista Re, dean of the College of Cardinals; Roger M. Mahony, retired archbishop of Los Angeles, and ranking member of the order of cardinal priests; Dominique Mamberti, former prefect of the Apostolic Signature and ranking member of the order of cardinal deacons; Stanisław Rylko, archpriest of the Basilica of St. Mary Major; Rolandas Makrickas, coadjutor archpriest of the basilica; Pietro

Parolin, secretary of state under Pope Francis; Baldassare Reina, papal vicar of Rome; and Konrad Krajewski, the papal almoner.

Before reaching the pope’s final resting place, the pallbearers stopped in front of the chapel where Pope Francis often laid flowers and prayed before the icon of Mary. This time, two boys and two girls carried baskets of white flowers and set them before the altar under the Marian icon.

The pallbearers then made their way to Pope Francis’ tomb, where Cardinal Farrell presided over the burial rite. Earlier in the week, Vatican spokesman Matteo Bruni told journalists that the actual burial would not be broadcast live.

In a statement released April 24, the Vatican press office said “a group of the poor and needy will be present on the steps” leading to the papal basilica to welcome his casket.

Corriere della Sera also reported that five prisoners from Rome’s Rebibbia prison were given special permission to be present at the basilica and attend the pope’s burial.

The pope had a special affection for prisoners, celebrating Holy Thursday Mass almost every year at a prison or jail. On April 17, just four days before his death, Pope Francis visited Rome’s Regina Coeli jail.

According to *Avvenire*, the newspaper of the Italian bishops’ conference, Auxiliary Bishop Benoni Ambarus of Rome, who was charged with prison pastoral care for the diocese, revealed the late pope had recently made a personal donation of 200,000 euros (\$228,100) to a pasta factory run by the prisoners of Rome’s Casal del Marmo prison.

Saying the prisoners felt orphaned after the pope’s death, Bishop Ambarus said he was “working so that (the pope’s) favorite children can be at the funeral. We will see what we can do.”

The Basilica of St. Mary Major was dear to Pope Francis throughout his pontificate as he would often go to pray before the icon “Salus Populi Romani” (“Health -- or salvation -- of the Roman people”), especially before and after his papal trips.

At a briefing with journalists outside the basilica April 26, Cardinal Makrickas said the pope, who was initially reluctant to be buried outside of St. Peter’s Basilica, told him in May 2022 that the “Virgin Mary told me, ‘Prepare the tomb.’”

The Vatican previewed an image of the tomb, which was created with marble from the northern Italian region of Liguria, the land of the late pope’s grandparents, and inscribed with the Latin version of his name: Franciscus. It also featured a large reproduction of his pectoral cross.

In his final testament, which was published by the Vatican shortly after his death April 21, the pope expressed his wish to be buried at the basilica dedicated to Mary to whom he had entrusted his “priestly and episcopal life and ministry.”

The pope further explained his reasons in his autobiography, “Hope,” which was published in January. In it, he said he would not be buried in Saint Peter’s Basilica because “the Vatican is the home of my last service, not my eternal home.”

“I will go in the room where they now keep the candelabra close to the Regina della Pace (Queen of Peace) from whom I have always sought help, and whose embrace I have felt more than a hundred times during the course of my papacy,” he wrote.

—Contributing to this story were Carol Glatz and Justin McLellan in Rome.



## LIFE, LOVE, AND THE HUMAN PERSON

By Ann M. Koshute, MTS

### YOU ARE “CHOSEN”

This year during the season of the Fast my husband and I went to the movies for the premiere of season five of *The Chosen*, a series dramatizing the life of Jesus and His followers. This is not a movie review, or even a recommendation, because, although we enjoy the series, I know that it’s not quite everyone’s cup of tea. The series chronicles key moments in the life of Christ (the current season focusing on the Last Supper), but the name of the series refers to the other key players in the story of the Messiah: the Apostles and other followers. The series is, of course, an artistic rendering of the gospel narratives, adding dialogue and circumstances that help move the story along in a compelling way. The director and writers try to stay true to the Gospel while taking enough creative license to weave a story, not just narrate written accounts. As I said, some people find *The Chosen* both entertaining and spiritually edifying – and others don’t. Whether you’re a fan, or choose not to watch, the series’ attention on Christ’s followers is a helpful reminder for you and me that He did not come into our world just to “do a job” and then return to heaven, leaving us on our own. Jesus’ saving work of vanquishing sin and death included teaching, proclaiming the Kingdom, and forming His closest followers so that they could continue His work.

The *Chosen* portrays the differences in the Apostles’ personality, their strengths, and weaknesses, bickering with each other as they try to comprehend all they hear and see, and slowly coming to realize, as they enter Jerusalem, that things are headed in a direction they didn’t expect. In this dramatic portrayal we see men being “chosen” by Jesus to follow Him, each one drawn to Him personally, and to the message of God’s love and plan of salvation. As I said, this isn’t meant to be an endorsement of the series, or to be about it at all, but a way to remind us that we, too, are chosen.

Each of the Apostles met Jesus as they were – fishermen, despised tax collector, political zealot, men of integrity, and one man (Simon Peter) who was particularly stubborn, often speaking before thinking. Yet the Lord met them in their strengths and weaknesses, gave them a front row seat to His many signs and wonders, and formed them intellectually and spiritually so that they could continue His work in the Church and the world. We are not in the same position as the original Twelve, or any of the others who followed Jesus during His three-year public ministry, but we’re also not so far removed as we may think. Jesus left us the Gospel, the Church, and a living memorial of Himself in the Eucharist and the means for encounter with God through the Holy

Mysteries. In other words, He meets us every day in our personal prayer and in the Divine Liturgy. Jesus continues to teach us through the wisdom of the Holy Spirit as we read and contemplate the Scriptures. He meets us where we are, with our unique (and sometimes difficult) personalities, our weakness, and the gifts He invites us to share in service to others.

On the day you were baptized and chrismated, Jesus called you. Each time you pray, receive the Eucharist, confess your sins and vow to live a converted life, Jesus is calling you. At this moment, as you read these words, Jesus is calling you, inviting you to walk in His footsteps, to follow Him and to give up your life – not in bloody sacrifice but in all the small ways you can die to yourself and your appetites, doing everything for Him by doing everything for others. This is what it means to follow Jesus, to live the Christian life, to belong to Him. Just as the Twelve were chosen by Him, so are you and me. But what does that mean in day-to-day life?

Jesus gave the Apostles a special mission, to preach, teach, and heal just as He did. He invites us to the same mission, though it will look different for most of us. We have been chosen by Christ, **to teach** others (spouse, children, family and friends, fellow parishioners, and others) about the Faith

and God’s love for them. We have been chosen **to preach** the Good News of Christ to all we encounter, not by giving sermons, but in how we treat and serve them, through word and deed, and by the example of our lives. Finally, we have been chosen **to be a healing balm** to those who are hurting, by our prayers for their souls as well as their bodies, in friendship, and by compassionately walking with them as they bear their crosses.

Salvation history is not a fable, or a story dreamed up by a screenwriter, and Jesus and His followers are not characters in a play. Yet novels and spiritual classics, films, music, and art can all be catalysts that spark our Catholic imagination, shaking us from the spiritual complacency it is all too easy for us to fall into. Whatever that “spark” is for you, allow it to ignite and become a burning desire for the Lord that prompts you to share Him in whatever ways fit your state in life and your capabilities at this time. The smallest gestures and the prayers offered for the good of others – even if they don’t know we’re praying – are essential to fulfilling the mission. Whatever happened in the past, whatever your weaknesses, bouts of laziness, or attachments to sin, Jesus is meeting you where you are and calling you. Today, at this moment, Jesus is choosing you. How will you respond? **ECL**

# SEASONAL REFLECTIONS

Father Ronald Hatton



## BE EXALTED ABOVE THE HEAVENS, O GOD!

At the end of May, we will celebrate the glorious Ascension of our Lord, at the end of His time with His disciples after His Resurrection from the dead. I am reading through all the Stichera for Vespers and Matins for the feast of the Ascension, and I am overwhelmed at the beauty of these hymns given us. As I read, I am filled with love for our Lord, and His love for Mankind, shown in His Passion, Resurrection, Ascension, and sending down to us the Holy Spirit.

“And when [Jesus] had said this, as they were looking on, He was lifted up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they were gazing into heaven as He went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, and said, ‘Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, Who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw Him go into heaven.’” (Acts 1:9-11)

“The Lord ascended into heaven to send the Comforter into this world. The heavens prepared His throne and clouds were His ladder; the angels marveled at the sight of a man more exalted than themselves. Today, the Father

receives again in His bosom the One Who was in Him from all eternity, and the Holy Spirit gives a command to all the angels: Lift up your lintels, O you gates! O you nations of the earth, clap your hands, for Christ ascends to the place He had been from all eternity!”

“O loving Jesus, while You lived on earth, You were God inseparable from the Father, and You truly shared our humanity. Ascending in glory today from the Mount of Olives, through Your great love You lifted up our fallen nature and enthroned it with the Father on high. Therefore, the bodiless powers were amazed and filled with awe at seeing Your great love for Mankind. Together with them, we who live on earth are glorifying Your condescension to us and Your ascension away from us. Now we implore You, saying: Through Your ascension You have filled Your apostles and Your mother with a joy that surpasses every other joy, and through their intercession make us worthy of the joy of Your elect, for You are rich in mercy.” (Stichera for Vespers of the Ascension)

For some, this part of the Paschal season, the Ascension of our Lord Jesus

Christ, is very difficult to understand or accept. We believe that Christ physically died and rose in the flesh to conquer sin and death for our salvation. We are caught up in crying out “Christ is risen” for forty days after Easter; most homilies for this time are centered on, or at least refer in some way to, the Resurrection. But, come the Feast of the Ascension, we start to lose that sense of “foregone conclusion.” Many years ago, I was in a conversation with a non-Catholic professor who taught seminarians at the theological seminary attached to the college I attended, and at one point he stated, “I can’t believe that the last thing the disciples saw of Jesus was the bottoms of His feet.” I was so taken aback that someone who was teaching future ministers did not believe in the physical ascension of our Lord that I had no answer for him. I believe that if we deny that Christ physically “ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father,” (cf. the Profession of Faith), we deny His Incarnation as surely as if we denied His physically taking flesh from the Virgin at His birth, or truly and physically rising from the dead on the third day. Yes, our finite minds cannot picture heaven, the throne, His physically be-

ing lifted from the sight of the disciples, and taking His seat in heaven, yet we know by faith that it is true. The “how” is beyond our understanding, but we believe it to be true, just as we believe that He was born, taught us, suffered for us, and rose from the dead for us. We see it in His encounter with the two disciples at Emmaus. We see it in His appearance to Mary Magdalene at the Tomb. We see it in His appearance to the Ten and, eight days later, in telling Thomas to touch the nail prints in His hands and to place his hand into His side. “And he [John] who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe.” (John 19:35)

Yes, all this has been testified to, so that we may believe. “Remembering, therefore, this saving command and all that has come to pass in our behalf: the cross, the tomb, the resurrection on the third day, the ascension into heaven, the sitting at the right hand, and the second coming in glory...” (Anaphora, Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom), we embrace and hold fast to the fact of His physical ascension into heaven, and to His physical return on the Last Day. Let us rejoice and be glad in it! **ECL**



## WHY BYZANTINE CATHOLICS DO THAT

By Lisa Krochta Cipriani

### ECCLESIASTICAL WALL CALENDAR

#### With a Martyrology of the Byzantine Catholic Church

At the end of every year, in preparation for the new year, the Ecclesiastical Wall Calendar with a Martyrology of the Byzantine Catholic Church is made available to all the faithful of the church. Ecclesiastical meaning “church” and Martyrology meaning “history that explains the lives of martyrs (a person who is killed because of their religious beliefs)”.

If you are like me, as soon as you have the calendar in hand you check for two dates – the first day of Lent and Easter Sunday. Then how many of us hang the calendar either on the kitchen wall, inside a kitchen cabinet door, side of the refrigerator or even the stairway to the basement. Once the calendar has its home for the year, we glance at it once a month to see if there is an upcoming Holy Day of Obligation. Many don’t take the time to realize that the Ecclesiastical Wall Calendar offers a meaningful way to incorporate our Byzantine Catholic faith into everyday life.

When we pick up a new calendar it contains a Legend cover page. The cover

page provides an explanation of the contents. For example:

- Dates with a colored background indicates Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation
- Dates with a background color of light grey indicate Solemn or Simple Holy Days
- A fish marks a fasting day from meat (except when directed during Lent)

Holy Days whether those of Obligation, Solemn, or Simple are celebrated either on the same calendar date every year and are known as “fixed” or are “moveable” meaning their dates change every year based on the date Easter is celebrated.

*Holy Days of Obligation* are days on which the faithful are expected (obligated) to attend Divine Liturgy.

*Solemn Holy Days* are celebrated at the option of the Priest. The faithful are

encouraged to attend Solemn Holy Days whenever they are scheduled.

*Simple Holy Days* are celebrated with a Divine Liturgy of the Feast. The faithful are encouraged to attend Simple Holy Days whenever possible.

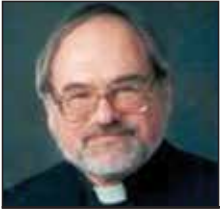
The following additional sources of information are also provided:

- The *Resurrection Tone* (Tones 1-8 and Festal Tone) for the Troparion, Kontakion, Prokeimenon and Alleluia that will be sung during a Sunday (or Saturday) Divine Liturgy is listed in the calendar on Sundays. This is the same Tone number that the church Cantor announces will be used prior to the start of the liturgy. The same tone is used throughout the week.
- On each day of the month are two bible references as suggested reading for reflection. Why not make it a habit of reading these versus every morning before starting or ending your day. Verses noted on

Sunday are those read at Sunday Divine Liturgy (or Saturday Liturgy for Sunday).

- There is a Remarks section for each month detailing special considerations for the month.
- On the back of each month associated by date are prominent facts about the lives of Saints honored by the Byzantine Catholic Church. That’s three hundred sixty-five days of interesting tidbits.

Much time and effort are put into making the yearly Ecclesiastical Wall Calendar. Don’t miss out on all it has to offer throughout the year. **ECL**



# THE BYZANTINE LITURGY

By Archpriest David Petras, SEOD

## THE ORDER OF SUBDEACON

The second minor order is called the subdiaconate. As the lectorate, the ordination to the subdiaconate takes place before the Liturgy. The ordination to the subdiaconate is very simple: the candidate is first vested in the sticharion and orarion (the orarion is worn in the form of a cross on the chest). After the vesting the bishop makes the sign of the cross on the head of the candidate three times, imposes hands and says the prayer for the subdiaconate: "Lord our God, through the one and the same Holy Spirit You distribute Your graces to everyone You have chosen. You have bestowed various orders upon Your Church, and have established different degrees of ministry for the service of Your holy and pure mysteries. In Your ineffable foreknowledge, You have appointed Your servant (name) worthy to minister to Your holy Church. Master, keep him blameless in everything, and grant that he may love the beauty of Your house, stand at the doors of Your holy church, and light the candles of the dwelling of Your glory. Plant him in Your Church as a fruitful olive tree bearing the fruits of righteousness. Show Your servant to be perfect, that at the time of Your coming, he may receive the reward of those pleasing to You."

The subdeacon then fulfills one of the roles of his office by washing the bishop's hands, saying, "Whoever is faithful." This refers to the dismissal of the catechumens, another of the subdeacon's functions. He was to assist the deacon in making sure the catechumens left the church before the Great Entrance, therefore the words, "Whoever is faithful [may remain]." St. Simeon of Thessalonica notes that "the white sticharion," the vestment of the subdeacon, "shows the more-pure rays of God's glory." It is a sign of purity and chastity, since after receiving the subdiaconate, a man was no longer allowed to marry. The reason for this was probably the subdeacon's job involved touching the sacred vessels. The Roman Church at one time considered the subdiaconate a major order, but no longer bestows this order. The Byzantine Church also forbade those who had been ordained subdeacons to marry. (Council of Trullo 6). However, this obligation is no longer in effect.

From the title of the office, we see that the subdeacon was a cleric who was immediately an assistant to the deacon. He took care of all the practicalities necessary for the deacon to serve at the altar. St. Simeon of Thessalonica explained the duties of the subdeacon: "He watches the sacred doors, lest any of the profane enter the sanctuary; he touches the sacred vessels, and keeps them in beautiful order. He hands the gifts to the priests, who come and find them prepared, and receive them in the Great Entrance. I say, watch over

the abundance of sacred vessels, and give them to the ministers (the Greek word hypêretês, the original title for a subdeacon), for it is not the custom for inferiors to touch them. They also expel catechumens at the appointed time, when the deacons say, 'Catechumens, depart.' At processions, they carry the cross and precede the others. The subdeacons also prepare and trim the candles on the holy table and the trikerion (three-branched candle) of the sanctuary and the other candles. Therefore, they serve the bishop in all his works, and go after the deacons to the holy doors, and communicate there of the mysteries."

Today subdeacons vest in the sticharion and the orarion in the form of a cross. However, this is not to be confused with the deacon's orarion, and the subdeacon's vestment is never called an "orarion" in the documents. The Council of Laodicea (Canon 22) forbade the subdeacon to wear the orarion. The Slavonic calls the subdeacons vestment the sticharny pojias ("tunic belt"), but

they have become virtually the same thing as the deacon's orarion.

In the ordination rite, after the subdeacon washes the bishop's hands, the towel he used in placed on his head. At the end of the Anaphora, he is led into the sanctuary. The subdeacon had access to the sanctuary, he was to take care of all the holy vessels and assist the deacon in service during the liturgy. Today the role of subdeacon is usually fulfilled by lay altar servers. This was a very responsible office. Today it is most frequently done by schoolboys, as a way of getting the youth involved in the Liturgy. However, many parishes now have adult servers, who either serve by themselves or supervise the children who serve. Servers today are expected to light the censer, give the censer to the deacon or priest when needed, precede processions with processional crosses, lighted candles, censers or ripidia, to accompany the gospel with candles or ripidia, or open and close the service (deacon's) doors for entrances, to assist at Communion by holding the lention,

to prepare and present the hot water for the rite of zeon (teplota), to hold the antidoron (in a basket) when there is an anointing following the Liturgy.

Servers may not pass through the Holy Doors, nor may they cross in front of the Holy Table. The system varies from parish to parish and there are many different styles of serving. Today the rules about touching the holy vessels (chalice and discos) are generally relaxed. However, in any case, the servers do not hold the chalice or discos after the consecration of the gifts. All in all, however, it is a good discipline for young men, though at times they do get fidgety and nervous, especially if they are younger. Servers wear a cassock and a sticharion for their service. An ordained subdeacon wears the orarion, not on the shoulder but in the cross form that a deacon uses for the time of Communion. There are, however, some, but very few men, who are ordained permanent subdeacons. **ECL**



DECREE

For the Opening of the Jubilee Year 2025

Blessed be the Holy Consubstantial and Undivided Trinity, in the name of the unoriginate Father, the beloved Son Jesus Christ, and the life creating and reviving Holy Spirit. Amen.

My dear friends in Jesus Christ,

The Pope of Rome Francis has declared a Holy Year for all of us, as popes have done from many centuries. The custom is from the Jubilee Year that God ordered for his chosen people, that they should rest every seventh day, that the land should rest every seventh year, and that after seven cycles of years, that is after forty nine years, the fiftieth year should be a time of celebration, for thanking the almighty God for blessing the earth, and for forgiveness of debts and reconciliation.

St. John the Beloved Disciple tells us that to all who receive Jesus, and to those who believe in the name of Jesus, He gave the power to become children of God.

The Holy Father, using the keys given to Peter by Our Lord, and using his power to bind and loose on earth, knowing that God will bind and loose in heaven, has given to all of us the power to obtain a plenary indulgence, the remission of all the temporal punishment due to us for our lives of sins, provided that we repent of these sins, and ask for forgiveness in the Sacramental Mystery of Confession, and receive the Holy Eucharist, and make a pilgrimage to one of the sites designated for this purpose.

We can make our pilgrimage by traveling to the Eternal City of Rome and visiting a designated church, or by visiting churches in Assisi or Pompeii or Loreto or Padua. In addition, the Holy Father has empowered your bishop to designate pilgrimage churches in our own Eparchy of Passaic.

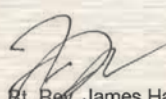
Taking into consideration the vast distances in our Eparchy and the spiritual needs of the people, as Bishop of Passaic, I designate the following churches as pilgrimage destinations:

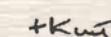
The Cathedral of St. Michael in Passaic, New Jersey, which is already designated by the Pope, Furthermore, I designate

St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church in Freeland, Pennsylvania,  
Holy Ghost Byzantine Catholic Church in Jessup, Pennsylvania,  
St. Andrew Byzantine Catholic Church in Westbury, New York,  
St. Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church in Danbury, Connecticut,  
Epiphany of Our Lord Byzantine Catholic Church in Annandale, Virginia,  
Epiphany of Our Lord Byzantine Catholic Church in Roswell, Georgia,  
St. Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church in Orlando, Florida, and  
Our Lady of Perpetual Help Byzantine Catholic Church in Toms River, New Jersey.

St. Paul tells us that the great virtues are Faith, Hope, and Love, and the greatest of these is Love. We need Faith and Hope to Love, and the Holy Father has asked us this year to pray humbly to God for a rekindling of Hope in our lives and in the world and to meditate on the beautiful virtue of Hope.

Given by my hand, this nineteenth day of January in the year of Our Lord 2025.

  
Rt. Rev. James Hayer  
Protosyncellus and Notary

  
Most Rev. Kurt Burnette  
Bishop of Passaic



## SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

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

### WHERE IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?

Where is the Holy Spirit? Of course, our prayer teaches that the Spirit is “everywhere present and filling all things.” But if we stop there, “everywhere” can become a sort of theological escape hatch; it’s no better than saying “wherever, whatever.”

Our Vesper Psalm (104:29-30) celebrates the Holy Spirit as Giver of Life to all creatures: “You take back their spirit and they die and return to their dust. You send forth Your Spirit and they are created and You renew the face of the earth.” In fact, the creation of all things begins with the Spirit hovering over the formless void of nothingness as the Father speaks the creative Word (Genesis 1:1-3).

Only God has life. Only God is eternally sharing life and love within the unity of the Trinity. Everything else that exists gets its existence as a gift from God who creates through His Divine Word – His Son – and the Holy Spirit. But of all God’s creatures only human beings are brought into being directly by the breath of God who endows us with an immortal soul.

There’s only one other thing that comes into existence through the breath of God: the Scriptures. Saint Paul teaches “All Scripture is inspired by God” (1 Timothy 3:16) but that word “inspired” is literally “God-breathed” or “God-spirited.” It’s the Holy Spirit who guides the whole process of Scripture including witnessing the events, remembering those events, choosing how and what to write them down, and how they were brought together in a single book. The Holy Spirit guided the Church through all that in the first 300 years, and continues to guide the Church in correctly understanding and teaching what those Scriptures say.

Where is the Holy Spirit? Ever since Pentecost, the Spirit is present and active in the Church (Acts 2). The Acts of the Apostles proves that Jesus kept His promise that the “Spirit of Truth” (John 14:17) would teach the Apostles “all things” (John 16:25-26). And so, we see Peter (Acts 2:14-39; 3:17-26) and Stephen (Acts 7:1-53) preaching eloquently and proving from the Old Testament that Jesus is the Messiah who had to die and rise.

Where is the Holy Spirit? In the living chain of the priesthood (Acts 1:15-26; 6:1-6; 9:17-19; 13:1-3; 1 Timothy 4:12-15) that goes from Jesus to His Apostles, to their successors the bishops and to the priests and deacons who receive a share of the apostolic priesthood when a bishop who is a successor of the Apostles calls down the Holy Spirit upon them.

Where might the Holy Spirit be for you personally? When Jesus appeared to His Apostles in the upper room on Resurrection night, He breathed on them and said: “Receive the Holy Spirit: if you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven” (John 20:22). It’s the Holy Spirit who makes the remission of sins that flows from the Cross (John 19:30) possible every time we need it in the sacramental mystery of Repentance.

Where might the Holy Spirit be for you personally? The prophet Joel (2:28-29) predicted how God would pour out the Spirit upon all mankind: “Your old men will dream dreams and your young men will see visions.” That’s potentially you and me, but we may be spending so much time staring at other people’s dreams and visions and distractions

and delusions on our screens that the Holy Spirit gets no airtime.

Where is the Holy Spirit? Possibly in our prayers, if we do more than recite some memorized words or hand God a shopping list of requests. Saint Paul teaches: “We know not how we ought to pray, but through our inarticulate groaning, the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us” (Romans 8:26).

Have you ever felt an inner challenge to grow in wisdom or understanding or counsel or fortitude, or knowledge or piety or fear of the Lord? The prophet Isaiah (11:1-3) revealed that those are the gifts of the Holy Spirit given to Christ and shared with us. We’ve had the gifts, ever since our baptism and chrismation. But we have to open them, we have to try them on, we have to grow into them.

Where is the Holy Spirit? Everywhere we baptized Christians bring Him, so long as we seek Him, make Him a place in our lives, value the gifts He offers, and follow where He leads us. Because where the Spirit leads us will always be closer and closer to Christ and through Christ, to the Father. **ECL**

From Bethlehem to Calvary, the life of our Savior was one of continual suffering. So it was also with Our Lady.

Saint Alphonsus Liguori writes: “The passion of Jesus commenced with His birth, as Saint Bernard says; and Mary also, in all things like unto her Son, suffered her martyrdom through her whole life.”

As Christ redeemed us by His suffering on the cross, so must His disciples suffer for Him. As Our Lady was His most perfect disciple, so must we suffer with her.

Jesus says, “If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me” (Matt. 16:24), and “he who does not take his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me” (Matt. 10:38).

When we signed up to follow Jesus Christ, we signed up for suffering. Somebody should have told us that at our baptism. We would have been better Christians for it.

Jesus invokes blessings on the poor, hungry, sad, and rejected, and pronounces curses on the rich, satisfied, successful, and popular (Luke 6:20-26).

After Saint Paul experienced his conversion on the road to Damascus, God told Ananias to go and pray for him, saying, “Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine... I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of My name” (Acts 9:15-16).

Paul and Barnabas preached that it is “through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God” (Acts 14:22).

Saint Paul told the church in Thessalonica not to be shaken by persecutions, trials, and afflictions, saying, “You yourselves know that this is to be our lot,” and the “destiny” to which “we are appointed” (1 Thess. 3:3, various translations).

For a follower of Christ, suffering is the norm. Saint Peter writes, “Do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal which comes upon you to prove you, as though something strange were happening to you” (1 Peter 4:12).

Saint James writes, “Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds” (James 1:2 NIV).

Sometimes, we think God isn’t with us or doesn’t love us when we go through trying times. But this is not the case. “God had one son on earth without sin, but never one without suffering,” says Saint Augustine.

Our Lord told Saint Teresa of Avila: “Know that the souls dearest to My Father are those who are afflicted with the greatest sufferings.”

## SCHOOL OF PRAYER

Father G. Scott Boghossian



### TAKE UP YOUR CROSS

“If God sends you many sufferings, it is a sign that He has great plans for you and certainly wants to make you a saint,” says Saint Ignatius Loyola.

Saint Augustine wrote: “He who does not suffer now will have to suffer in the hereafter,” and therefore prayed: “In this life, O Lord, burn, scorch, and wound me, only spare me in the life to come.”

Similarly, Saint Francis Xavier says, “think yourself happy if you can exchange the agonizing pains of purgatory for sufferings in this world.”

“Lord, what can I do that will be most pleasing to you?” asked Saint Gertrude the Great. He replied to her, “My child, thou canst do nothing more gratifying to Me than to submit patiently to all the tribulations that befall thee.”

The great saints not only accepted and submitted patiently to trials, hardships, and sufferings. Because they understood their great value in the process of our salvation, they earnestly desired to suffer.

Saint Aloysius Gonzaga says, “He who wishes to love God does not truly love Him if he has not an ardent and constant desire to suffer for His sake.”

When Our Lord asked Saint John of the Cross what reward he wanted for his labors, he replied, “nothing else, O Lord, but to suffer and to be despised for Thy sake.”

In his Letter to the Friends of the Cross, Saint Louis De Montfort summarizes the teaching of Saint John Chrysostom on the glory of suffering:

“I would willingly leave heaven in order to suffer for the God of heaven. I would prefer dungeons and prisons to the thrones of the highest heaven, and the heaviest of crosses to the glory of the seraphim. I value the honor of suffering more than the gift of miracles, giving me the power to command evil spirits, shake the elements of the world, halt the sun in its course, or raise the dead to life. Saint Peter and Saint Paul are more glorious in their prison chains than in being caught up into the third heaven or receiving the keys of heaven.”

Suffering is the vocation of every Christian. Take up your cross and follow Christ.

“It has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in Him but also suffer for His sake” (Phil. 1:29).



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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.**

## 2025 Summer Camp Dates

**July 6-10, 2025**  
Camp Theodore Tyros—Teen Coed Camp, Ages 13-17

**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

## SAVE THE DATES

### 2025/26 Marriage Jubilarian Dates

<b>October 11, 2025 (Saturday)</b> Marriage Jubilarians - Middle States Epiphany of Our Lord - Annandale, VA 4:00 PM - Banquet to Follow on Premise	Saint John's - Hazleton, PA 3:00 PM Banquet to Follow at Capriotti's Catering- McAdoo
<b>October 19, 2025 (Sunday)</b> Marriage Jubilarians - New Jersey, New York, Connecticut Saint Mary's - Hillsborough, NJ 3:00 PM - Banquet to Follow on Premise	<b>January 17, 2026 (Saturday)</b> Marriage Jubilarians - Southern States Saint Nicholas - Orlando, FL 11:00 AM – Banquet to Follow on Premise
<b>October 26, 2025 (Sunday)</b> Marriage Jubilarians - All Pennsylvania	If you are celebrating a special Wedding Anniversary – 5-year increments, Please submit your name to your pastor to be included in this year's Jubilarian Celebration.



## From the Office of the Bishop

—APPOINTMENTS—

As of March 24, 2025, Very Reverend Nicholas Daddona has been relieved in his duties as Director of Deacons. I thank him for his MANY years of service in this position.

As of March 24, 2025, Reverend Paul Warchola West has been appointed as Director of Deacons. Fr. Paul currently serves as Parochial Administrator of Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Levittown, PA and Holy Trinity in Philadelphia.

—STATEMENT ON THE FALLING ASLEEP IN THE LORD—  
OF POPE FRANCIS

Today, the twenty-first day of April in the Year of Our Lord 2025, Kevin Cardinal Farrell announced that the Holy Father had fallen asleep in the Lord at 7:35 in the morning local time. Cardinal Farrell is an American and is the Camerlengo, the official who oversees the Vatican when there is no Pope.

Pope Francis stunned the world in 2013 when he eschewed the trappings of monarchy and presented an example of humility to the universal Church and the world.

Pope Francis worked tirelessly to return the Catholic Church to the core message of our Faith, that the good God loves us so much that He is willing to forgive all of our mistakes, even paying the price for them Himself in the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ on the cross. The core message of our Faith is not rules and accusations, but mercy and God's gentle call. 'And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.'

The key Gospel, passage of the tenure of Francis was this, "It is not the healthy who need a physician, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

Pope Francis did preach repentance, incessantly promoting the Sacramental Mystery of Confession. On Copacabana Beach in 2013 he said, "...with His mercy He will cure all the wounds caused by sin. Do not be afraid of God's forgiveness, because He never tires of forgiving us, like a Father who loves us. God is pure mercy." In 2014, he said, "Go -the priest will be good. Jesus is there, and Jesus is more benevolent than priests, Jesus receives you, he receives you with so much love." And for the Jubilee Year he said, "Let us place the Sacrament of Reconciliation at the center once more in such a way that it will enable people to touch the grandeur of God's mercy with their own hands. For every penitent, it will be a source of true interior peace."

It is the tradition in our Eastern Church that when people die during Bright Week, the gates of Heaven are open to them with no delay. I am grateful to God for the life and example of Pope Francis, Jorge Mario Bergoglio. May he dwell in a place of light, peace, and verdure, and may his memory be eternal.

*+Kurt Bunette*

**Eastern Catholic Life**

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## UPCOMING EPARCHIAL AND PARISH EVENTS

- MAY, 2025**
- 6 Annual Seminary of Saints Cyril & Methodius Lecture
  - 14 Mid-Pentecost
  - 26 Memorial Day  
*Chancery Closed*
  - 29 Ascension of Our Lord: Holyday of Obligation

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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*Maureen French – ECL circulation editor*