



EASTERN CATHOLIC LIFE

Official Publication of the Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Passaic

VOL. LI, NO. 4

APRIL 2015

CHRISTOS VOSKRESE! VOISTINNU VOSKRESE!



THE HARROWING OF HADES

Bishop Kurt's Pastoral Message for Pascha 2015

After a bitterly cold winter in the north, the blessed warmth of spring has arrived. The snow is melting, and the damp earth is exposed, soon to be broken by new plants pushing through to the surface. The dead branches of trees are covered, first with tiny red points, and then green buds, and finally fresh leaves, as if they were dressing for a party—the feast of Easter, the feast of the Lamb.

Without the winter, we don't appreciate the spring, and without facing death, we don't feel the full joy of the resurrection.

"Let no one mourn that he has fallen again and again; for forgiveness has risen from he grave." How comforting are these words of Saint John Chrysostom in the winter of our sins, whether truly deadly ones that make us weep for risking our eternal salvation, or the soul-numbing habitual sins that wear us down year after year with discouragement. Like snow and ice, sin seems beautiful through a window, and like the cold, it saps our strength and deprives us of life without protection. There is a phenomenon called paradoxical undressing. When people are freezing to death, they sometimes start removing their clothes because they feel extremely hot. A man in New Jersey was found in that state this winter. And so it is with anyone who is completely given over to evil—he believes himself righteous and confidently tears off all protection, sneering at everyone else. But for those who have been touched by evil and escaped, the memory of looking over the cliff and being gently pulled back by the loving hand of God is a memory of comfort and relief as well as overwhelming humility. Let no one mourn who has fallen

again and again; for forgiveness, that is, Jesus, has risen from the grave.

What kind of sadness do you live with? Is it pain in the flesh, a health problem that will never get better, or just old age that overtakes us all? Or is it the pain of the family, the loss of loved ones, or fighting and divi-

Himself, and when He sacrificed Himself on the cross as both victim and high priest, "surely He has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows, ... and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all."

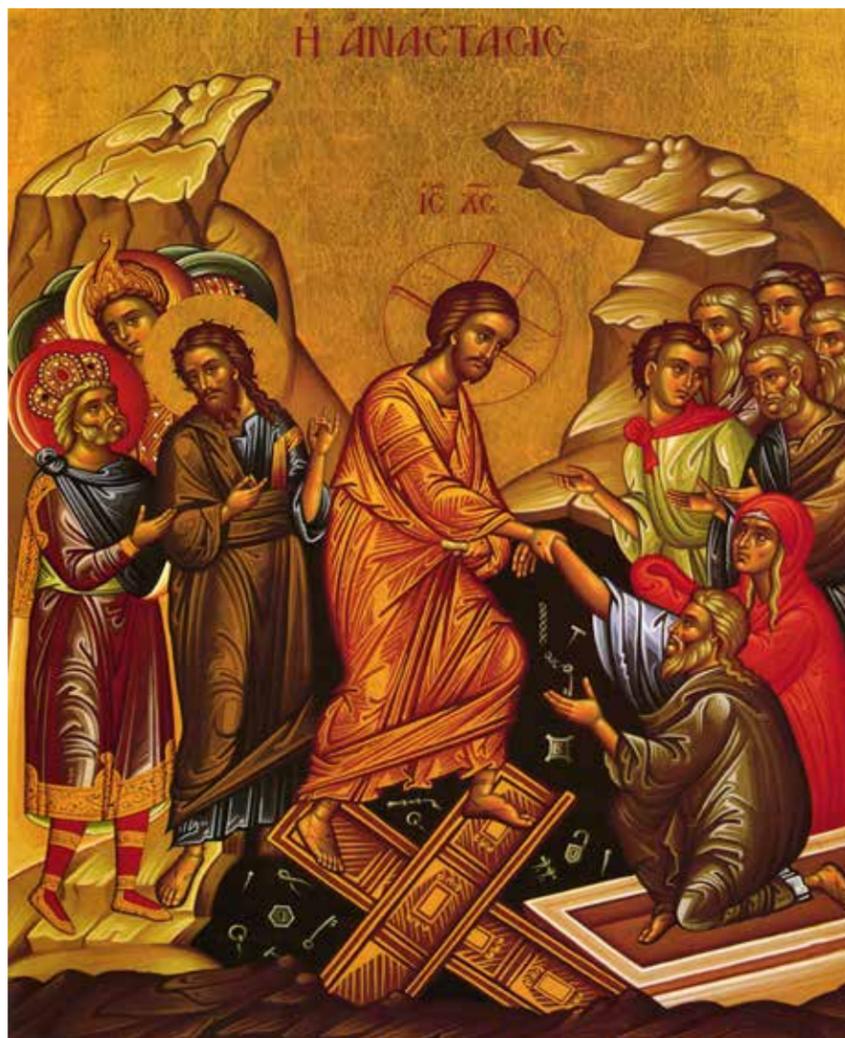
There is a passage in Isaiah that describes the descent into the under-

Saint John Chrysostom turns that passage upside down, and makes it a prophecy of the descent of Jesus into Hades. Like the King of Babylon, Jesus has lost everything on the cross: His dignity, His friends, His followers, His flesh, and finally His life. And when Jesus descends into Hades, all the dead stand up to greet Him, but not to mock Him as they mocked the King of Babylon, but to hear the Good News. As Saint Peter tells us in his first Epistle, Christ went in the Spirit to preach to the spirits in prison.

Imagine the joy that those souls must have felt in the underworld—Adam and Eve, who spent thousands of years watching their children and grandchildren arrive in the underworld, weighed down with their own sins and the sin of Adam and Eve—Moses who saw his students arriving in the underworld, condemned because they didn't listen to his admonition—David who saw his kingdom divided and his sheep carried off by lions and his house ravaged all because of his own adultery and murder. But then a change of mood when Saint Joseph arrives, according to our hymns, he tells Isaiah, "Your prophecy is fulfilled, the Virgin has given birth." And he tells King David, "Rejoice, for God has kept his promise to you—your Son and your Lord is taking His throne for all eternity." And finally, after the Crucifixion with its mighty earthquake, the Creator of Life itself arrives to take His saints to the new promised land. Imagine the joy when He preached to the spirits in prison.

King David prophesied in Psalm 15(16), "For you will not leave my soul in Hades, you will not allow

Continued on page 2



The Descent into Hades

sion? Or is it loneliness, or a feeling that life has no purpose or nothing ever gets better? Regret over lost opportunities? An unkind word to your husband or wife that you can't take back?

Easter is your feast day to rejoice! For Jesus took all of these things on

world of the King of Babylon when he is dead. It says that Hades is in a commotion, and all the dead kings get up off their thrones to greet him, and remind him that he has lost all his earthly splendor. It's a passage that ridicules this one time master of the world. Just as Jesus Christ turned everything upside down,

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THE HARROWING OF HADES

Pastoral Reflections of Bishop Kurt

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your holy one to undergo corruption." King David was talking about himself, but he did stay in Hades, and his body did decay. Then, with the entrance into the underworld of Jesus, Son of David, King David was restored; he was not left in Hades. But he also was prophesying about Jesus Christ Himself: His soul did not stay in Hades, and His body did not undergo corruption.

Speaking in Jerusalem after He cured the man born blind, Jesus said, "The good shepherd lays down His life for His sheep." And Jesus did lay down His life for us, His sheep. And then He said, "I lay down My life, that I may take it again. No man takes it away from Me: but I lay it down of Myself, and I have power to lay it down: and I have power to take it up again." Rejoice today,

all you mortals! For Jesus has laid down His life, destroying the power of evil and all of its offspring, paying the price for our sins, throwing hell into an uproar.

Rejoice all people! For the winter of our sins is over, the warmth of spring is melting the deathly ice. The damp ground is moving—pushed aside by new life, as the green plants come out of the underworld and reach towards the light. Our burdens are lifted, our chains are unlocked, and the doors of our prison are flung open. Re-



joice and walk into the new spring with Christ!

+Kurt Burnette

CATHEDRAL OF SAINT MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL, PASSAIC

Schedule of Divine Services For Great Week and Pascha

GREAT AND HOLY WEDNESDAY

10:00 AM - (Chapel) Office of Holy Anointing of the Sick

7:00 PM - (Cathedral) Hierarchical Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts with Office of Holy Anointing of the Sick

Celebrant: Most Reverend Kurt R. Burnette

GREAT AND HOLY THURSDAY

6:00 PM - (Cathedral) Great Vespers with Hierarchical Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil and Washing of Feet

Celebrant: Most Reverend Kurt R. Burnette

GREAT AND HOLY FRIDAY

9:00 AM - (Cathedral) Office of Matins and the Reading of the Passion Gospels

Celebrant: Most Reverend Kurt R. Burnette

3:00 PM - (Cathedral) Vespers and Burial Procession with the Holy Shroud

Celebrant: Most Reverend Kurt R. Burnette

GREAT AND HOLY SATURDAY

5:00 PM - (Cathedral) Great Vespers with Hierarchical Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great followed by Procession, Resurrection Matins, Blessing of Paschal Foods

Celebrant: Most Reverend Kurt R. Burnette

THE GREAT DAY - THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD

9:00 AM - (Cathedral) Hierarchical Divine Liturgy - Blessing of Paschal Foods

Celebrant: Most Reverend Kurt R. Burnette

11:00 AM - (Chapel) Divine Liturgy - Blessing of Paschal Foods

Celebrant: Most Reverend Kurt R. Burnette

BRIGHT MONDAY

9:00 AM - (Cathedral) Divine Liturgy

Celebrant: Very Reverend Marcel Szabo

BRIGHT TUESDAY

9:00 AM - (Cathedral) Divine Liturgy

Celebrant: Very Reverend Marcel Szabo



The World Meeting of Families will take place in Philadelphia, PA, from September 22-25, 2015. This gathering will offer an Adult Congress and a Youth Congress for ages 6 to 17. The Adult Congress, for ages 18 and older, will consist of keynote presentations and breakout sessions that address the many ways in which families can strengthen their bonds, especially in the face of significant challenges facing the family globally in the 21st century. The

EPARCHIAL REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Youth Congress will provide interactive programs designed for young people to play, listen, serve, build and embrace the mission of love in a family.

Held every three years and sponsored by the Holy See's Pontifical Council for the Family, the World Meeting of Families is the world's largest Catholic gathering of families. Each World Meeting of Families has a theme that energizes and enlivens the event while adding great depth of meaning to our understanding of families. The theme of the World Meeting of Families - Philadelphia 2015 is "Love Is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive," emphasizing the impact of the love and life of families on our society.

We are hopeful that many of our families of the Eparchy of Passaic will participate.

- Please go to <http://www.worldmeeting2015.org> for more information and to register.

- Once you have registered, please forward a copy of your registration to the Eparchy of Passaic at secretary@dioceseofpassaic.org.

- Bishop Kurt is planning a special event that will bring together everyone who will be attending. The Eparchy will also be offering a partial registration reimbursement to families who attend with children.

If you have any questions, please e-mail Father Ed Cimbala at: FREDSTMARY@aol.com

BREAKING NEWS!

GREEK CATHOLIC CHURCH IN HUNGARY ELEVATED TO *SUI IURIS* STATUS

Vatican City

On Thursday, March 20, 2015, it was announced that Pope Francis has elevated the Hungarian Greek Catholic Church to the status of Metropolitan Church *sui iuris*, at the same time elevating the Eparchy of Hajdúdorog to a Metropolitan Archeparchy, with its seat at Debrecen, appointing Bishop Fülöp Kocsis as the first Metropolitan. The Holy Father also elevated the Apostolic Exarchate of Miskolc to the status of Eparchy, making it a suffragan of the Metropolitan See of Hajdúdorog, appointing Bishop Atanáz Orosz, formerly Apostolic Exarch of Miskolc, as its first Eparchial Bishop. In addition, Pope Francis erected the Eparchy of Nyíregyháza, with territory taken from the Metropolitan Archeparchy of Hajdúdorog, making it a suffragan of the same Metropolitan Archeparchy, and appointing Bishop Atanáz Orosz as Apostolic Administrator *sede vacante*.

We wish Blessed Years and heartfelt, prayerful congratulations and best wishes to newly-elevated Metropolitan Fülöp and Bishop Atanáz and the faithful of the Greek Catholic Metropolitan Church of Hajdúdorog!

Adjon nekik az Isten sok boldog esztendő!

More information about the Church in Hungary to appear in a future issue.



Photo courtesy Father Joseph Bertha



+CANTOR ANDREW PETRUSKA

Called to Eternal Repose

Bristol, CT

On Tuesday, February 17, 2015, Andrew Petruska, 85, retired long time Cantor and Choir Director of Holy Trinity Byzantine Catholic Church in New Britain, CT, fell asleep in the Lord at The Pines of Bristol, CT. Born in Mahanoy City, PA, on September 20, 1929, he was the son of the late Andrew and Mary (Ciparik) Petruska. Mr. Petruska was a graduate of Saint Procopius College in Lisle, IL, and received his master's degree from Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, PA. Prior to retirement, in addition to his faithful duties as Cantor and Choir Director, he was a dedicated teacher of Latin and English in the New Britain Public

School System for 34 years and was a member of the CT Retired Teachers Association. He had lived many years in Newington, CT, before settling in Bristol, CT, where he was a member of the Senior Citizens Club. Mr. Petruska's heavenly tenor voice made its presence known especially at Holy Trinity Byzantine Catholic Church where he was Cantor, Choir Director, and a parishioner for many years, and in the New Britain Chorale, Saint Ann Church. He was preceded in death by his beloved wife, Carol (Kowar), in 1990, and by his sisters, Helen Petruska and Margaret Petruska. He is survived by his children, Dr. Janet (Petruska) Hamilton and her husband, Dr. Russell Hamilton of West Orange, NJ; Beth Kowar

of Dallas, TX; Andrew, Jr., of Bristol, CT; Mark and his wife, Donna, of Bristol, CT; as well as by his sisters and brothers, Sister Maria Petruska, OSBM, of Uniontown, PA; Fathers Gregory and Christopher Petruska, of Los Angeles, CA; and Theresa Ortmann of Pittsburgh, PA; and his precious grandchildren, Jessica and Dylan Petruska. Funeral services were celebrated beginning Saturday, February 21, 2015, at 8:45 a.m. from the Burritt Hill Funeral Home, 332 Burritt St., New Britain, CT 06053, with a 10:00 a.m. Funeral Divine Liturgy at Holy Trinity Byzantine Catholic Church, 121 Beaver St., New Britain. Interment followed at Holy Trinity Byzantine Catholic Cemetery. *Eternal memory!*

+IRENE JUBA

Called to Eternal Repose

Dunmore, PA



Irene Juba of Dunmore, PA, mother of George N. Juba, Jr., President and CEO of the Greek Catholic Union (GCU), fell asleep in the Lord at Heritage Valley Hospital, Beaver, PA. She was preceded in death by her husband, George N. Juba, a prominent Dunmore banker and community and political leader, who died March 12, 2006. They were married for 56 years.

Born in Old Forge, PA, daughter of the late John and Julia Ambrutis Dolinish, she was a graduate of Pittston High School and a member of Saint Michael Byzantine Catholic Church, Dunmore.

She was also an active member of the GCU, Lodge 945, where she shared many wonderful times with family and friends at golf and bowling

events. She was a devoted wife, mother, grandmother, sister and daughter. She was a beautiful homemaker, talented cook, and baker. Her warmth and kindness will be missed by the many lives she touched.

Her family would like to thank the dedicated staff at Beaver Meadows, where she resided in her later years, for the care they provided.

Surviving are a son, George N. Juba, Jr.; daughters-in-law, Susanne Juba, Beaver, and Anne Jeanne Juba, Scottsdale, AZ; a brother, Edward Dolinish and wife, Alice, Old Forge; sisters, Mildred Dunda, Elmhurst, PA; and Mary Close and husband, Courtney, Dunmore; four grandchildren, Edward C. Juba, Kimberly Gilligan,

Nicholas Juba and Christopher Juba; four great-grandchildren and several nieces and nephews.

She was also preceded in death by a son, Edward G. Juba; and a sister, Aldona Wright.

The funeral was held from the Albert P. O'Donnell Funeral Home, 2025 Green Ridge St., Dunmore, with a Panachida at 9:30 a.m., followed by the Funeral Divine Liturgy at 10 a.m. at Saint Michael Byzantine Catholic Church, 511 E. Drinker St., Dunmore. Interment followed at Saint Catherine Cemetery, Moscow, PA. *Eternal Memory!*



PEOPLE YOU KNOW

IN WILKES-BARRE...

by Archpriest James Hayer

Provincial Superior Visits Wilkes-Barre

Sister Seraphim Olsafsky, OSBM, Provincial Superior of the Order of Sisters of Saint Basil the Great in Uniontown, PA, recently visited Saint Mary Parish and Convent in Wilkes-Barre. She had visited the parish and convent annually during the past 10 years of her 2 terms as Provincial Superior. This year marked her last official visit as Provincial Superior as her term is expiring.

There have been Sisters of Saint Basil the Great serving at Saint Mary Church for nearly 90 years. In 1925, Father Nicholas Chopey petitioned Mother Macrina to send several Sisters of Saint Basil to teach at Saint Mary's Parochial School, the first Byzantine catholic Parochial School in the United States. Upon arriving in 1925, the Sisters have had a continuous presence in the Wyoming Valley, with residence at Saint Mary's Convent in Wilkes-Barre. The two Sisters currently serving here are Sister Theodosia Alishofski, OSBM, and Sister Regina Adams, OSBM. The Sisters provide catechetical and cantoring ministry, as well

as weekly visitations to the hospitalized and homebound. In service of all five Byzantine Catholic Parishes of the Wyoming valley, the Sisters visit between 30 and 40 nursing facilities each month.

Saint Mary Parish in Wilkes-Barre is served by Archpriest James Hayer with the assistance of Deacon Edward Frey and Deacon Basil Soroka. Saint Mary's Protection Parish in Kingston and Saint John the Baptist Parish in Wilkes-Barre Township are served by Father Mykhaylo Prodanets; Saint Michael the Archangel parish in Pittston and Saint Nicholas of Myra Parish in Swoyersville are served by Father Gary Mensinger, regional Syncellus, with the assis-



Sister Seraphim, Sister Regina, Archpriest James Hayer, Sister Theodosia, Server Leo Krugel, and Deacon Basil Soroka

tance of Deacon Lawrence Worlinsky.

May God grant to Sister Seraphim, Sister Theodosia, Sister Regina and all the Sisters of Saint Basil the Great peace health and happiness for many years!



Wyoming Valley Deanery Sunday Lenten Vespers

Each Sunday of the Great Fast, the clergy and faithful of the five Byzantine Catholic Parishes of the Wyoming Valley of Northeast Pennsylvania gather in a different parish for the celebration of

Vespers and the opportunity to receive the Holy Mystery of Reconciliation. Of course, there is also a fellowship social afterwards with an array of delicious Lenten foods. Traveling from parish

to parish each Sunday provides everyone with the opportunity to share in community prayer, see other churches, and meet new friends.

The celebration of vespers on the first Sunday of the Great Fast, which is dedicated to the restoration of the Holy Images, included an Icon Procession at Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church in Wilkes-Barre, where children from the various ECF programs carried icons in procession.

The five Byzantine Catholic Parishes of Pennsylvania's Wyoming Valley include Saint Mary's Protection in Kingston, Saint Michael the Archangel in Pittston, Saint Nicholas of Myra in Swoyersville, Saint John the Baptist in Wilkes-Barre Township, and Saint Mary of the Assumption in Wilkes-Barre. The parishes are served by Archpriest James Hayer, Father Gary Mensinger, regional syncellus, and Father Mykhaylo Prodanets, with the assistance of Deacon Edward Frey, Deacon, Basil Soroka, Deacon Lawrence Worlinsky, and the ministry of the Sisters of Saint Basil the Great.

EASTERN CATHOLIC LIFE

(USPS 165-600) (ISSN 0894-9786)

Official Publication of the
Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Passaic

Subscription Rate: \$15.00 per year.

News and Photo Services:
Catholic News Service, CNS Picture Service
and Member of the Catholic Press Association
of America.

Published monthly by the
Eastern Catholic Press Association,

445 Lackawanna Avenue,
Woodland Park NJ 07424.

Phone: 973-890-7777. Fax: 973-890-7175.

Postage Paid at Little Falls, NJ and additional
office at Bellmawr, NJ.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to:

Eastern Catholic Life
445 Lackawanna Avenue,
Woodland Park, NJ 07424.

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President and Publisher

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AROUND THE EPARCHY



IN SMITHTOWN...

Meatfare Sunday

More than two hundred parishioners and guests turned out on Meatfare Sunday for “Carnevale in Italia” at Resurrection Byzantine Catholic Church in Smithtown NY. Featuring the Neapolitan style spaghetti and meatballs with “Sunday sauce” prepared under the direction of Josephine and Joe Andrews, the meal included salads, garlic bread, home made Italian desserts, Italian wines and beer and an espresso bar. Table service was provided by parish teens and friends. The music of Rosalba Ranieri delighted the guests throughout the afternoon.

ByzanTeens, ByzanTeen alumni home from college, parents and moderators Bob Knapp and

Fr. Jack Custer offered a few hours of Lenten charity on Saturday, February 21, by volunteering to sort and organize the grocery stock of the Smithtown Emergency Food Pantry. Maintained by seven local congregations, Resurrection Church among them, the Food Pantry has provided grocery packages to needy families on Long Island for thirty one years. All seven congregations contribute foodstuffs weekly and take turns staffing the Pantry on a monthly rotation.



Chefs Joe and Jo Andrews take a break from the kitchen

Young Adult Marian Pilgrimage

Sponsored by the Orientale Lumen Foundation

The Orientale Lumen Foundation, a “grass roots” non-profit organization that promotes Eastern Christianity, will sponsor a Marian Pilgrimage to Slovakia, Hungary, and Austria on August 7-18, 2015. Byzantine Catholic young adults, age 20-29, from across the US, are invited to participate in this exciting trip to religious sites, churches, and cultural centers of Eastern Europe. In addition to learning more about their “roots,” they will meet other Byzantine Catholic young adults in Presov and Bratislava, and experience the vibrant, growing Churches in that region. This pilgrimage is designed to provide those who attended the ByzanTeen Rallies, and are now in their twenties, with an enjoyable and educational way to keep involved in the Byzantine Catholic Church. Similar to the seminary Concert Tours organized by the OL Foundation, this pilgrimage will also promote further direct communication between young American and European Byzantine Catholics.

Father Andrew Deskevich, Protosyncellus of the Archeparchy of Pittsburgh, and frequent visitor to Eastern Europe, will be the pilgrimage Chaplain. The Tour Director will be Lector Jack Figel, who has been traveling to this area for more than 30 years. He also successfully arranged the Ecumenical Pilgrimage in October 2014 that had private audiences with Pope Francis and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. He is directly

arranging events for this pilgrimage.

The pilgrimage will include attending the large outdoor gathering on Zvir Mountain near Litmanova, Slovakia where an apparition of Mary appeared to several Greek Catholics 20-25 years ago. This year is the 25th anniversary of the last apparition. It will also include touring wooden churches of the Carpathian Mountains, visiting the cathedrals of our eparchies, and traveling to the famous Mariapocs icons in Hungary and Vienna, Austria.

Local transportation, accommodations, and some meals are included in the pilgrimage package for only \$1,995 per person, double occupancy. Any who do not register with another person will be assigned a roommate. Air travel to and from Vienna is not included, but can be arranged through the OL Foundation office.

A registration deposit of \$500 is due by May 1, 2015, with monthly payments due until August 1st. Only a limited number of spaces are available, so register early to insure your place in this wonderful spiritual and cultural experience. Parents and grandparents of young adults might want to consider this pilgrimage as a gift for graduation, or some other purpose, to help younger generations learn about their religious background in Eastern Europe.



Visit the website for more details, to download a flier or detail itinerary, or to register online. Click on the Pilgrimage button at www.olconference.com. Or call 703-691-8862 for more information.

August 7-18, 2015

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Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

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 PO Box 192, Fairfax, VA 22030-0192

Reservation deposit of \$500 due by May 1, 2015.
 Full payment due by August 1, 2015.
 SPACE LIMITED – RESERVE EARLY



ANNUAL WATER BLESSING

Wilkes-Barre, PA

By Archpriest James G. Hayer

On Sunday, January 18, the Vigil of the feast of Theophany according to the Julian calendar, the clergy and faithful of the Byzantine Catholic Parishes of the Wyoming Valley of Northeast Pennsylvania, processed to the banks of the Susquehanna River in Wilkes-Barre for the blessing of the waters.



Archpriest James Hayer recites a prayer



Archpriest James Hayer blesses the faithful

Several dozen people, including clergy and faithful, from all five Byzantine Catholic Parishes gathered at the Nesbitt Park Boat Launch on a cold, blustery, but prayer-filled Sunday afternoon. This includes the parishes of Saint Nicholas, Swoyersville; Saint Michael, Pittston; Saint Mary's Protection, Kingston; Saint John the Baptist, Wilkes-Barre Township; and Saint Mary of the Assumption, Wilkes-Barre.



Wyoming Valley Clergy bless the water

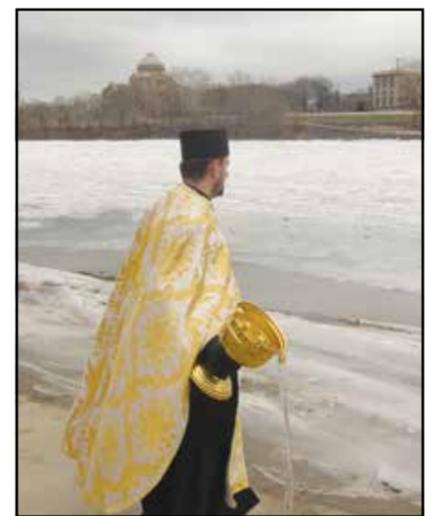
The annual River Blessing in the Wyoming Valley area has special significance for long-time residents who recall the Great Flood of 1972 as a result of Hurricane Agnes. The



Cross bearers lead the procession to the river

banks of the Susquehanna typically overflow from time to time, and the prayers of the faithful are a great source of comfort. Following the blessing all were invited back to Saint Nicholas Church in Swoyersville for hot chocolate and dessert.

The five Byzantine Catholic Parishes of Pennsylvania's Wyoming Valley are served by Archpriest James Hayer, Father Gary Mensinger, and Father Mykhaylo Prodanets with the assistance of Deacon Edward Frey, Deacon, Basil Soroka, Deacon Lawrence Worlinsky, and the ministry of the Sisters of Saint Basil the Great.



Father Mykhaylo Prodanets mingles the blessed water with the Susquehanna

JERSEY CITY CHOIR OFFERS CDs AND CASSETTES

St. Mary Church Byzantine Catholic Church announces the sale of their four compact disc (CD) recordings and their four stereo cassette recordings.

Compact discs are \$12.00 each, or any four for \$43.95. Stereo cassette recordings are \$7.95 each or any four for \$29.95. All orders are postage and handling free.

Select from

- (1) Great Fast and Resurrection
- (2) Divine Liturgy in Old Slavonic
- (3) Divine Liturgy in English
- (4) Christmas Caroling

Send orders to: St. Mary Choir, 231 Pacific Avenue, Jersey City, NJ 07304

DOME RAISING AT SAINT NICHOLAS PARISH Danbury, CT

On February 17, 2015, a cold, blustery morning, but with the sun shining brightly, the parishioners and neighbors of Saint Nicholas Parish, in Danbury CT, were able, once again, to see an onion dome perched atop their church, now under re-construction after the devastating fire of June 28, 2013. A group of parishioners braved the single-digit wind chill and joined Father Ronald Hatton, pastor of Saint Nicholas, to bless the dome and watch as it was raised to its home on the bell tower.

The dome was manufactured by Architectural Fiberglass, Inc., Brecksville, OH, and had to have "wide-load" permits to travel the highways through Ohio, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York and Connecticut. The dome weighs 1800 pounds, more than half of which is the weight of the cross. The crane used to erect the dome had to raise it 127 feet at an angle of 50 degrees, and was prevented from getting close to the building due to the amount of snow on the ground around the church. Despite the conditions, the dome was expertly inched on top of the bell tower.

Caldwell & Walsh Building Construction, Inc., of Sandy Hook, CT, is the General Contractor of the project, and anticipates completion by the end of May. The Parish family of Saint Nicholas is looking forward to re-occupying its parish home in June, with a re-dedication by Bishop Kurt later in the summer.



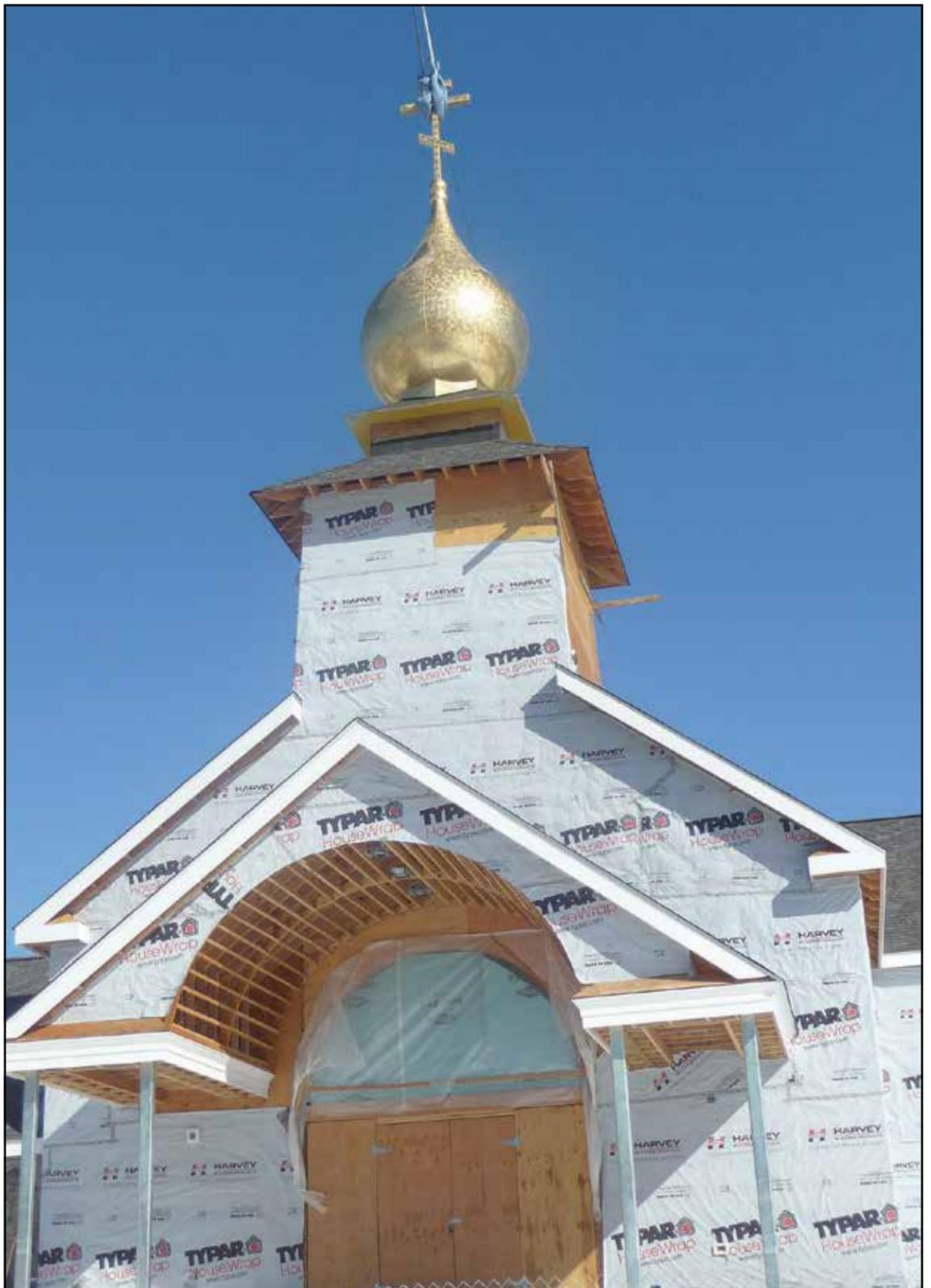
Father Ron prays the prayer of blessing for the dome, while parishioner, Sharon Siwik, participates. George Fairchild, Site Superintendent, looks on



Father Ron blesses the dome with Holy Water as part of the Ritual



The dome is gently placed atop the tower



The new dome is a witness to the Danbury community of Christ's presence in our world

WHAT'S COOKING FOR PASCHA?

By Georgia Zeedick

Slavic people everywhere will be taking baskets loaded with holiday foods to church for the traditional Paschal blessing which is a *must* prior to eating those exquisite foods.

Neatly arranged in the baskets will be *sunka* (ham), *slanina* (bacon), *chrin* (beets with horseradish), salt, *pascha*, *kolbassi*, *hrudka* (*sirets*), butter, *pysanki* (ornately decorated eggs for decoration), colored eggs for eating, and *kolachi*. Some people may add candy and a bottle of wine (or other items of Lenten sacrifice) to their baskets.

After the foods are placed in the basket, an embroidered cloth cover is placed over them and a blessed candle is fastened upright near the basket handle.

For the first-timers who have never put together a Paschal basket, let alone prepared foods for it, the whole process can be mystifying. Every cook has his or her favorite way of preparing these foods and of measuring the ingredients for them, and asking for recipes can result in confusion.

To take some of the mystery out of the preparation of the traditional foods, here are a few recipes gleaned from my own experience and a few Slavic cookbooks.

Hrudka (Sirets)

- 1 doz. eggs
- 1 or 2 tsp. vanilla
- 1 qt. milk
- ½ cup sugar

Combine all ingredients in a white enameled pan. Cook over medium to low heat, stirring constantly, until mixture curdles. Pour mixture into a colander that is lined with several thicknesses of cheesecloth. Once mixture is drained, pick it up, cheesecloth and all, and shape into a ball by twisting the top part of the cheesecloth. Tightly tie open end with string, placing string very close to top of ball. Caution: This will be hot. Hang over sink until cool. Remove cheesecloth when cool; wrap and refrigerate. (The whey from the *hrudka* can be saved and used when making *pascha*. To conserve the whey, place the colander over a large pot before pouring mixture into cheesecloth.)

Pascha

- 3 cups scalded milk, or enough scalded milk added to whey from *hrudka* to make 3 cups
- ½ tsp. salt
- 6 beaten eggs
- ½ cup lukewarm water

- ½ cup sugar
- 1 cup melted butter
- ½ large cake yeast or equivalent portion of dry yeast
- 12 to 14 cups flour.

In a large bowl, combine milk, sugar, with butter and cool to lukewarm. Save 2 tablespoons of the eggs and add the rest of the eggs to the milk mixture. In a separate bowl, crumble yeast in water and let stand for 10 minutes. Add to above mixture. Add flour, about 2 cups at a time, until the dough can be handled.

Knead on floured board for 15 minutes. Place dough in greased bowl, grease top and let rise in a warm place for about 1½ hours.

Punch down, and let rise a second time for about 45 minutes.

After second rising, shape into four balls and place into greased pans. Small, 1½ quart enameled saucepans can be used for baking. Let rise. Brush tops with 2 tablespoons eggs to which some milk has been added. To achieve that glazed appearance on the loaves, brush

- 3 bottles horseradish (Do not use creamed horseradish.)

Grind beets, using fine grinder attachment. The juice can be saved for soup. Add horseradish to beets; mix well, refrigerate. An empty horseradish jar (washed, label removed and dipped in boiling water to sterilize it) can be filled with the mixture and placed in the Easter basket. The jar's cap can be disguised with aluminum foil, thus hiding any advertisement.

Kolachi

(Nut and poppyseed)

- 8 egg yolks
- 8 cups flour
- ½ lb. butter
- 1 cake yeast
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 cups scalded milk
- 4 tbs. shortening

Beat eggs and sugar. Melt butter and shortening in hot milk, saving ½ cup for the yeast. Dissolve yeast in lukewarm milk and let stand for a few minutes. Combine both mixtures in large bowl.



Photo by Bob Bruce.

tops several times prior to removing them from the oven. Bake at 325 degrees for about 1 hour.

Note: Before placing dough in pans, about 1 cup of the dough can be saved and shaped into designs (plaits, crosses, etc.) and placed on top of the unbaked *paschy*. These fancy shapes can be prevented from scorching in the oven by placing aluminum foil on top of the *pascha* during baking.

Hrin

Beets with Horseradish)

- 8 cans whole beets, drained

Add flour and mix well with hands until dough leaves the hands. Refrigerate overnight. In the morning, divide the dough into eight balls and let rise for one hour. Roll out on floured board and spread with filling. Roll up gently, tucking in ends.

Bake at 350 degrees until brown, about 45 minutes.

Brush tops of rolls, prior to putting into oven, with an egg-milk mixture. Doing so produces beautifully browned, shiny rolls.

Nut Filling

- 1 lb. ground walnuts
- 1 cup canned milk
- ½ cup sugar

- 2 eggs
- ½ cup honey (optional)

Combine sugar and nuts. Beat eggs and add to mixture, add honey and milk. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly. Bring to boil, remove from stove; let cool. Roll out dough to ½-inch thick; brush with butter; place filling on dough and roll up. Bake.

Poppyseed Filling

- 1 lb. ground poppyseed
- ½ cup honey
- ½ cup sugar
- 2 Tsp. butter, melted
- ½ cup milk

Combine sugar with poppyseed. Add melted butter. Then add honey and milk. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly until blended. Cool and spread over dough that has been rolled out to ½-inch thickness and brushed with butter. Roll up and bake.

Ham

The ham is decorated and baked according to your favorite recipe. How large a ham you buy and use depends on how many people you are serving. For a 20-pound ham: Cut it in half, decorate the halves, bake them and place one of them in the basket.

Kolbasi

Again, the amount of kolbasi purchased depends on how many eager eaters you are serving.

Place the kolbasi in a pan, cover with water and boil for about 45 minutes. Some cooks, after the kolbasi is boiled, place a few into a baking pan and sprinkle them with about 2 tablespoons of brown sugar and honey. This is then popped into the oven for about 15 minutes at 350 degrees. Cool before refrigerating.

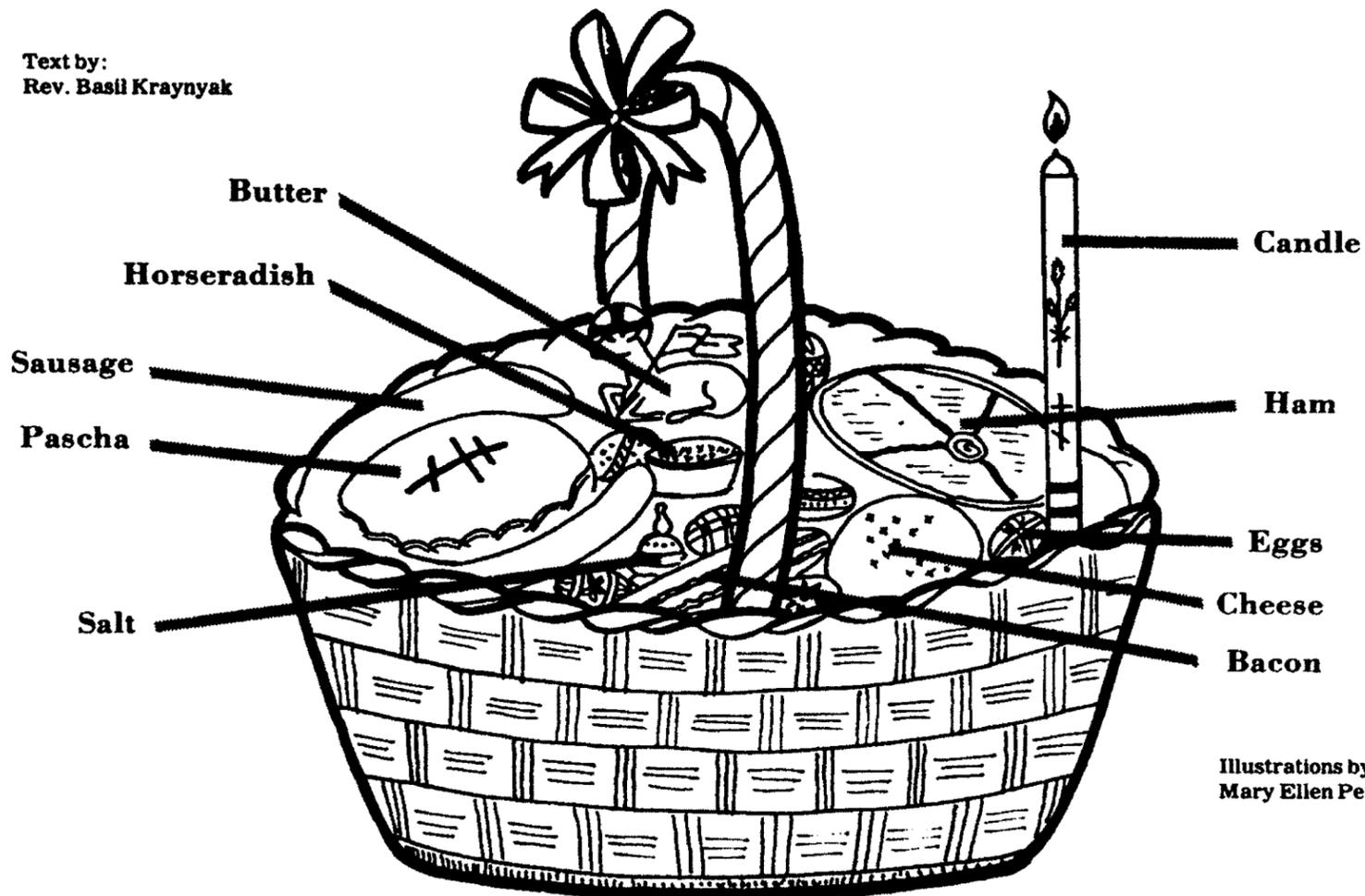
Butter

If you prefer not to use already prepared butter for the Easter feasting, the butter can be made by whipping heavy cream. Use either one pint or one-half pint heavy whipping cream. Place in bowl and mix with hand beater until butter forms. Place sample of butter in a small fancy bowl and decorate for use in Easter basket.

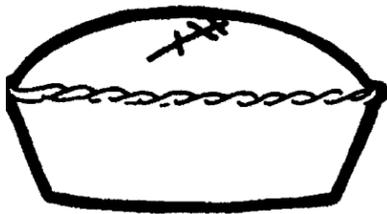
(The above is a revised version of an article that originally appeared in the April 10, 1979, edition of the *Homestead, PA, Daily Messenger*.)

How to Put Together a Traditional Easter Basket

Text by:
Rev. Basil Kraynyak

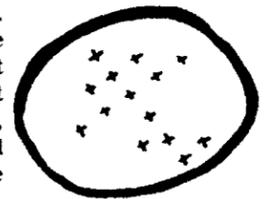


Illustrations by:
Mary Ellen Petro

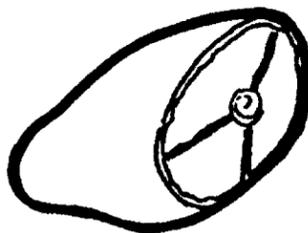


PASCHA - The Easter Bread (pron. pá-ska.) A sweet, yeast bread rich in eggs, butter, etc. Symbolic of Christ Himself who is our True Bread. Usually a round loaf baked with a golden crust decorated with a symbol indicative of Christ. Sometimes a cross (+) of dough is placed on top encircled by a plait giving it a crowned effect or Greek abbreviatios for the name of Christ. The letters XB indicate the Slavonic for Christ is Risen.

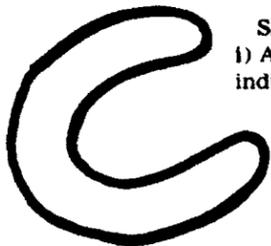
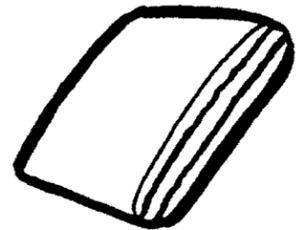
CHEESE (Slav. Hrudka or Sirets pron. hrood-ka or sí-rets) A custard-type cheese shaped into a ball having a rather bland but sweet taste indicative of the moderation that Christians should have in all things. Also, creamed cheese is placed in a small dish and both are decorated with symbols (see Pascha) out of cloves or pepper balls.



HAM (Slav. Šunka - pron. shoon-ka.) The flesh meat popular with the Slavs as the main dish because of its richness and symbolic of the great joy and abundance of Easter. Some may prefer Lamb or Veal. This is usually well roasted or cooked as well as other meats so that the festivity of the day will not be burdened with preparation and all may enjoy the Feast.



BUTTER (Slav. Maslo pron. má-slo) This favorite dairy product is shaped into a figure of a Lamb or small cross and decorated as the cheese. This reminds us of the goodness of Christ that we should have toward all things.



SAUSAGE (SLAV. Kolbasi - pron. kol-buś-i) A spicy, garlicy sausage of pork products, indicative of God's favor and generosity.

BACON (Slav. Slanina pron. sla-ní-na) A piece of uncooked bacon cured with spices. Symbolic of the overabundance of God's mercy to us.



SALT (Slav. Sol' pron. sol') A condiment necessary for flavor reminding the Christian of his duty to others.

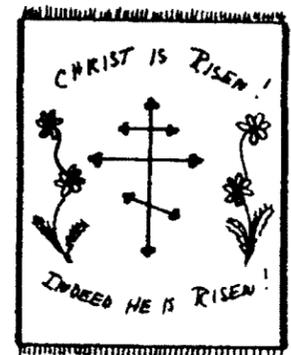
EGGS (Slav. Pisanki pron. pi-sún-ki) Hard-boiled eggs brightly decorated with symbols and markings made with beeswax. Indicative of new life and resurrection.



HORSERADISH (Slav. Chrin pron. khrin) Horseradish mixed with grated red beets. Symbolic of the Passion of Christ still in our minds but sweetened with some sugar because of the Resurrection. A bitter-sweet red colored mixture reminds us of the sufferings of Christ.

These articles are placed in a wicker basket and a ribbon or bow is tied to the handle. A decorated candle is placed in the basket and is lit at the time of blessing. A linen cover usually embroidered with a picture of the Risen Christ or symbol with the words "Christ is Risen" is placed over the food when brought to the Church.

In some places a large Easter Bread (Pascha) is made and brought separately in a large linen cloth. If the origin of the people was from a wine growing area, a sweet wine may be brought.



CHRIST IS RISEN! INDEED HE IS RISEN!



SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

Father Jack Custer, S.T.D.

“LET GOD ARISE”—PSALM 68 AND PASCHA

We huddle with anticipation outside the closed doors of our parish church early on a spring Sunday morning. The priest intones the tropar “Christ is risen” for the first time. The bells ring, the doors open, we stream into a temple bathed in light and filled with flowers to find an empty tomb. There can be no better moment than this.

Our tradition links the Paschal tropar with the first three verses of Psalm 68. We know these verses by heart, but have probably never given them much thought: (1) Let God arise, and let His enemies be scattered, and let those who hate Him flee from before His face. (2) As smoke vanishes, so let them vanish; as wax melts before a fire. (3) So let the wicked perish at the presence of God, but let the righteous ones rejoice.

Psalm 68 has had a long and complex history reaching all the way back to the conquest of the land of Israel by Joshua and his successors, perhaps as early as the 15th century BC. It is a hymn sung in the aftermath of a battle in which the Lord has led His people to victory. That battle may well have been the one described in the Book of Judges (chapters 4 and 5), when Israel defeated the Canaanite King Jabin, and his general Sisera was killed in a most humiliating way by Jael as he attempted to flee. The particular mention of the tribes of Benjamin, Naphtali and Zebulun (v. 28) suggests that this psalm may have first

been used at their local shrine on Mount Tabor (the site of Our Lord’s Transfiguration). The reference to Jerusalem (v. 30), which was conquered by David several centuries later, marks the next stage, when Psalm 68 would have been sung in the Temple built by David’s son, King Solomon. When the psalmist singles out Egypt and Ethiopia (v. 32), he may be pointing to even more recent hostilities.

All of these historical references are milestones on the path of salvation. They foreshadow in some partial way what God had planned to realize completely in His Son, Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1). Ethiopia and Egypt received the Good News from the Apostles and came to know new life in the Risen Christ. In the end, the Enemy is no momentary threat like Sisera or any hostile nation. Saint Paul teaches that “The last enemy to be destroyed is death” (1 Corinthians 15:26), and Saint John’s Revelation describes how the Devil (20:10) and then Death and Hades (20:14) are finally thrown into the eternal pool of fire by the victorious Christ.

Pascha celebrates this victory over sin and death. Christ has already won it for us (Revelation 3:21). It remains for us to deal with the residual skirmishes of sin in our own lives and, with God’s grace, to make an end of them as the virtuous woman Jael made a shameful end of cowardly Sisera (Judges 4:17-24). Each year, the discipline of the Great Fast

offers us a chance to kill off a bit more of the defeated but not yet destroyed power of sin in our own lives.

The Entrance Hymn for the Divine Liturgy of Pascha (Psalm 68:27) looks forward into God’s plan and sees us: “In the churches bless God; from Israel’s wellspring bless the Lord.” The word “churches” translates the Hebrew *qahal*. In the singular, this word often describes the liturgical gathering of the people of Israel in the Old Testament. It is used in the plural only here, implying something more, something new, a multitude of gatherings around the world, to which all nations are invited (Matthew 28:19). In God’s plan, Tabor and Jerusalem point forward to the little temples of our own parishes. Yet there remains only one “wellspring,” one single source of life and victory, “the fountain of immortality, springing up from the tomb of Christ,” as Saint John Damascene teaches us to sing in his Paschal Canon. It flows on in the preaching of the Apostles, flows through their successors the bishops of the Church, flows through

the sacraments of the Church.

We offer Christ a hymn of victory (“the triumphal hymn”) in every Divine Liturgy, because every Divine Liturgy makes the sacrifice of Calvary and the victory of Pascha present and available to us. It is this same victory—Christ’s victory over sin and death—that we cel-



brate with the verses of Psalm 68. The long journey that Psalm 68 has taken through more than 3000 years of history leads right to us and the victory over sin and death that we celebrate this Pascha. **ECL**

BYZANTINE CATHOLIC FAMILY DAY — 2015

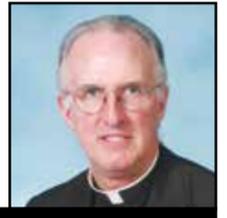
*Knoebels Amusement Resort
Elysburg, PA*

Sunday, May 17, 2015



CATECHETICAL REFLECTIONS

Father Robert F. Slesinski, Ph.D.



OMG: A SHOUT IN THE STREET?

Installment 2 of 6

In the inaugural entry for this column, a justification of the title was drawn from a couple of sources found in world literature of the last century. Regarding a “shout in the street,” there is another striking passage from a true classic of world literature. But this one dates to the Medieval Ages, the fourteenth century to be exact. It is found in *The Divine Comedy* of Dante Alighieri (1265–1321) and unlike the cases of Rozanov and Joyce, it is suffused with a vibrant faith. Specifically in his *Purgatorio*, Canto V, we find Dante traversing this state of suffering, gaining insights into why people are found there. In short order, he comes across one of his rivals from the past, a one Buonconte (ironically meaning “Good Count”), someone he knew to be a true reprobate whose life of nefarious deeds should have landed him in hell. But how could he have earned for himself a spot in purgatory that will in time after his purgatorial suffering enable him to enter heaven for all eternity? Curiously—most interestingly, indeed—he is ranked among the “unshriven” (to use an archaic term, but one which is still used in such terms as “Shrove” Tuesday), namely, those who died unconfessed, those who died not having availed themselves of the sacramental grace of confession.

As “things” turned out, on a battlefield at the moment of his being about to be killed, this reprobate warrior cries out “OMG!”—not invoking the Name of the Lord in vain, but that of the Lord’s Mother—“O Mother of God!” Yes, on hearing her name, the Mother of God did, indeed, intervene and whisked him away from the grasp of Satan and found refuge for this inveterate sinner in purgatory. The words of Dante on this incident bear quotation in full:

Just at the junction, where its name perforce
is lost, I arrived, stabbed in the throat, fordone,
fleeing on foot and bloodying my course.
There I lost sight, and with my latest groan
I uttered Mary’s name, and there I fell:
And in that spot remained my flesh alone.
I’ll tell the truth: do thou the same re-tell
‘monst living men; God’s angel snatched me, and “Why
dost rob me, O thou from heav’n?” cried he of hell.
“Thou carriest off and dost to me deny
this man’s eternal part for one small tear:
but deal with the other otherwise will I.”

Now in our day-to-day world, whether at work or while shopping or just being “on the street,” we hear the Names of the Lord and His Mother, the Holy Theotokos, taken in vain so contrary to their true sublimity (one should note that the Roman Rite even has two feast days in honor of the

Holy Names of Jesus [Jan. 2] and Mary [Sept. 12]). And, sad to say, most probably most of these offenders may never cross the threshold of a church. Yet, is there no hope for these forlorn souls? I would definitely not think so, as their very cries, however mindless, still indicate some awareness of a higher order, however indifferent they may seem to it, however oblivious they may be to the true power behind these Names.

More importantly, however, in the very misuse of the Holy Names of God, Jesus, and Mary—not to forget the saints—we do, oddly enough, find ourselves in a position for possible incipient dialogue with those otherwise unmindful of religion and the faith. Seemingly everyday discourse presents itself to us as a point of departure for a journey toward more permanent and, yes, ultimate things in life, if only we can be sensitized to it.

The Name of the Lord is, indeed, the All-Name; all human discourse—in fact, the entire created order—is founded upon it. As we read in the Gospel of Saint John,

In the beginning was the Word; the Word was in God’s presence, and the Word was God. He was present to God in the beginning. Through Him all things came into being, and apart from Him nothing came to be. Whatever came to be in Him, found life, life for the light of men. The light shines on in darkness, a darkness that did not overcome it (John 1:1–5).

In this fashion, it would seem, we can postulate that all human discourse—yes, even banal, everyday discourse—has the seed of the Logos planted within it. As novel an idea as this may seem, it actually is a very ancient one in Christian understanding. It harks back to Saint Justin Martyr (b. between 100–110 – d. ca. 165), who shrewdly coined the term “Christians before Christ” in referring to noted pagans like Socrates and Heraclitus. Expanding upon the prologue of Saint John’s Gospel, he speaks of the *logos spermatikos* (Gr.), rendered in Latin as *semina Verbi* or “seeds of the Word.” With this term, he insightfully heralds Christ the Word as the true causative principle of the Universe, which is at work everywhere and at all times in the world as we know it. And, thus, whenever anyone—non-Christians included—speak true words about true things they do so because the seed of the Logos in implanted in them.

What Saint Justin attributes to the great pagan thinkers of antiquity can, I would maintain, be applied to even the lowly and base characters we meet in life in that nothing in the created order is beyond the purview and reach of Divine Providence and Sustenance. OMG!—what hidden power lies within this interjection—even when mindlessly uttered! **BCL**

Open to ALL Parishioners, Family, Friends, GCU Members and Guests - Rain or Shine!



Tentative Schedule

12:00 pm
1 pm - 2 pm
3:00 pm
4:00 pm
4:30 pm
5:30 pm
7:00 pm

Park Opens
Catered Lunch! (optional)
Bingo / Games for Adults (with prizes!)
PRAYER SERVICE (Moleben)
Kids Games with prizes!
Evening Entertainment / Sing-A-Long!
Park Closes - hope you had a great day!

Discounted ride-all-day passes and tickets! Free admission! Free Parking!
Lunch ticket purchase will not be required to join us in Pavilion “O”
Families may instead bring a picnic lunch or buy food in the park.
Questions? Call Christie Petty: 1-800-722-4428 x3923.



UNDERSTANDING ICONS

Father Joseph Bertha, Ph.D.

HAGIA SOPHIA: ISTANBUL'S ANCIENT MYSTERY

The PBS *Nova* Special

Original air date 25 February 2015, downloadable on iTunes, also on YouTube

Photos courtesy of Deacon Lewis Rabayda

The title of the upcoming program on PBS was intriguing: *Hagia Sophia: Istanbul's Mystery!* I set my DVR to record the program at 1 a.m. and eagerly watched the presentation the following morning. While the program was presented from a scientific point of view, the visual effects are a feast for the eyes and make it well worth watching! Scientists discussed earthquake preparedness, searching for hidden mosaics, as well as displaying the physical dimensions of Hagia Sophia in models from an architectural point of view. Since Justinian's Hagia Sophia is considered to be the jewel in the crown of Byzantine Christendom, it served as the model for construction of all Byzantine churches worldwide.

The masterpiece built by Emperor Justinian with unlimited access to imperial funds and solemnly blessed on Christmas Day in 537 was planned and built by the math-

metician and physicist Isodore and Anthemius who were not architects. As the program clearly shows Hagia Sophia was a completely innovative endeavor. Four arches, supported by exterior piers, and crowned with a dome supported in the four corners by pendentives form the confluence of the basilica type building used by Romans for law and other assemblies, culminate in the soaring dome reaching 180 feet tall. While the *Nova* episode details Hagia Sophia's earthquake withstanding characteristics, it overlooks the religious significance of church architectural features; articulating the incarnation of the Son of God, Jesus Christ as the Wisdom (Sophia) of God.

Byzantine Christians visualize the mystery of the Incarnation by showing Our Lord descending from the central dome, the highest point of the church, down through the architectural supports, which are not visible at Hagia Sophia. They continue to extend down to the earth through the four arches and the pendentives. They reach the earth in the nave of the church at the base of the four piers. The incarnation of the Son of God which occurs on Christmas Day, 25 December, is the day Hagia Sophia on which Justinian dedicated this masterpiece.

Justinian is reputed to have boasted at the



Interior of Hagia Sophia

event: "Today, O Solomon I have outdone you!" A Byzantine emperor has claimed that he has shown the mystery of the incarnation of the Son of God in architectural form. The Jewish Temple in Jerusalem was the place of the presence of God, where he dwelled on the face of the earth. In Constantinople, the entire Justinian church is the embodiment of the Wisdom of God, Jesus Christ.

The religious aspects were only hinted at briefly and included a few and far between in the *Nova* Special, but several keen insights were offered by Professor Joan Branham of Providence College, a Dominican Catholic College in Rhode Island.

She pointed out the innovative design which was used to build this Imperial church, a basilica type crowned by a central dome, and that it signifies the interplay between the spiritual world of the dome with the earthly represented by the nave. She remarked how people even today are awestruck at how the central dome seems suspended from heaven with no visible means of support. Pro-

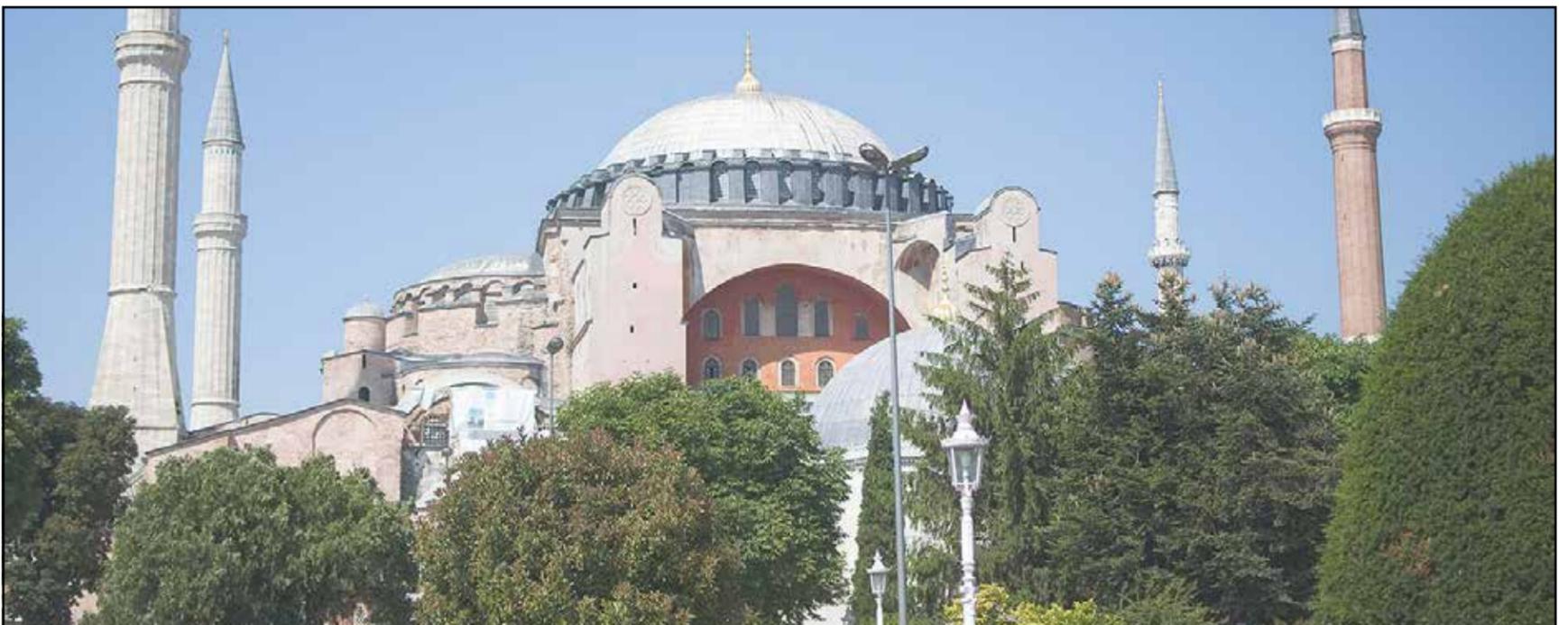
fessor Branham also stressed the link between Muslim and Christian architecture, showing how the Ottoman Turks in 1453 within days of its seizure adopted Hagia Sophia as a mosque for Friday prayer services. Hagia Sophia served not only as a place of prayer for Moslems for several centuries, it also served as the model for Turkish Islamic architecture. The central dome in both religious symbolism signifies the dwelling place of God in heaven.

Having been turned into a museum in the twentieth century, Hagia Sophia is one of present day Istanbul's most visited tourist sites. All kinds of visitors flock to view the mysterious Hagia Sophia, pondering upon its awe inspiring soaring central dome and glittering mosaics. Many of these viewers are moved to silent meditation or even prayer upon seeing these visual treasures created so many centuries ago! Thanks to the PBS team at *Nova* for showing so many details of its creation, and helping to unveil the mystery of Istanbul!

ECL



The Dome from the interior of Hagia Sophia



Hagia Sophia, Istanbul, Turkey



Icon of the Annunciation
of the Virgin Theotokos

As our Church solemnly celebrates the Feast of the Annunciation, the Gospel account of Luke (1:26-38) identifies the town to which God sent the Archangel Gabriel to announce this important event to the Virgin Mary as Nazareth. The Archangel tells Mary that she will conceive in her womb and bear a son whom she shall name Jesus.

The evangelist Matthew frames Jesus' residing in Nazareth as a fulfillment of an unspecified Jewish quotation, "He shall be called a Nazarene" (Matthew 2:23). The source of this quotation and its connection with Nazareth, according to some Scripture scholars can be traced to

biblical messianic prophecies involving the Messiah described by Isaiah in the eleventh chapter of his prophecy.

Nazareth itself has been called the cradle of Christianity since it was there that Jesus spent his childhood and youth. The city is located in the heart of a valley surrounded by mountains that embrace some of the most important Christian sites in the world. Nazareth began as a tiny, culturally and politically insignificant Jewish village more than 2000 years ago but has since grown extensively for pilgrims to visit the place where Jesus, Mary and Joseph had lived. Its very distinguished "ordinariness" may have caused Nathaniel's first reaction to Jesus in John 1:46, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?"

The city's stunningly unique church of the Annunciation was its first church. Next to it can be found a church dedicated to Saint Joseph where, according to Tradition, Joseph had his carpentry shop.

Nearby is the location of the synagogue in which Jesus prayed. It was in that synagogue where Jesus describes His ministry as fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah to "...bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor" (61:1-2). He then added, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing" (Luke 4:23).

Jesus, however, was unceremoniously rejected by those who heard those words. Luke records their untoward reaction: "When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with wrath. They rose up and put Him out of the city and led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built that they might throw Him down headlong, but passing through the midst of them, He went away." (Luke 4:28-30) Jesus then made the base for His ministry in Capernaum in the northwest shore of Lake Galilee; nonetheless, He

remained known as "Jesus of Nazareth" (Matthew 2:13-23).

Nazareth is mentioned in several hymns of our Vespers and Matins for the Annunciation such as this example: "The Archangel Gabriel was sent from heaven to bring to the Virgin glad tidings of her conception. When he came to Nazareth, he marveled at the miracle and thought to himself: How is it that He Whom the heavens cannot comprehend is now being born of a virgin? The one Who has heaven for a throne and earth for a footstool is being enclosed within a virgin's womb. He, upon Whom the six-winged Seraphim and the many-eyed Cherubim cannot gaze wills to become incarnate of her by a single word..." {Vespers at Psalm 140, Glory... now and ever]

As we celebrate on March 25 this grand Feast, may we devoutly reflect on the mystery of God's taking human flesh for our salvation through the cooperation of the ever-Virgin Mary so long ago in Nazareth. **ECL**

SEASONAL REFLECTIONS

Monsignor John. T. Sekellick, JCL



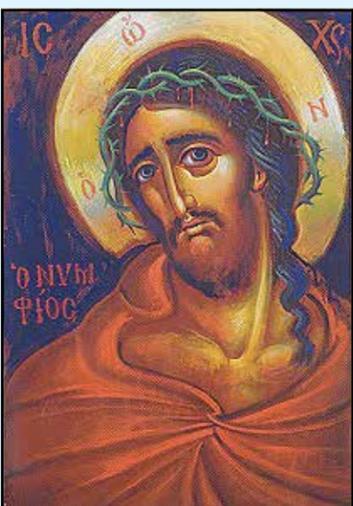
NAZARETH, JESUS' HOME



HOLY DORMITION FRIARY TO HOST ICON RETREATS

Contact: Father Carmen at holydormition@gmail.com or 570-788-1212 x406

CHRIST THE BRIDEGROOM Icon Retreat with Peter Pearson



Peter Pearson has forty years experience writing icons for churches, private individuals, and institutions around the world. He is noted for teaching both painting technique and the spirituality of creating icons. He has given presentations to groups ranging from school children and senior citizen groups to artists and seminarians and is the author of *A Brush with God: An Icon Workbook*. Samples of his iconography are available online at <http://www.peterpearsonicons.com/> or may be seen in Hazleton at St John Byzantine Catholic Church or Holy Rosary Roman Catholic Church.

COST: \$280
MAY 7-9, 2015

THURSDAY—SUNDAY

Retreatants will follow step by step instructions to produce an icon of Christ the Bridegroom similar to the image on this flier. We will also discuss the development of iconography, the spirituality of creating an icon, and praying with icons.

GUARDIAN ANGEL Icon Retreat with Marylyn Barone



Having studied under Phil Zimmerman, Marylyn has written icons since 1997. She gives workshops in parishes from Ohio to New Jersey. She has written icons for many parishes and individuals, also teaching individuals and groups of all ages and abilities.

COST: \$250
JULY 23-26, 2015

THURSDAY—SUNDAY

Each Student will write a 10"x12" icon of a Guardian Angel on a gesso covered board, using a prepared prototype and 23k gold-leaf gilding, learning techniques for painting details. All supplies included.

Housing and other meals available at added charge: room & board \$50/night, shared bath



FAITH AND COMMUNITY ISSUES

By Father Carmen Scuderi, OFM, Ed.D., P.C.C.

SUICIDE: ITS EFFECTS ON FAMILY LIFE

Some requests have been made to supply information on suicide and its causes and prevention. To respond to these requests, the next few presentations will deal with the issue of suicide, its causes, effects, and possible options for prevention. The study will lead us through suicide attempt experiences; the kinds of persons and circumstances that are high risk scenarios for suicide; what the statistics tell us about the probability of suicide attempts (parasuicides); and repeaters who eventually succeed in the attempt to end their lives.

An overview of options for suicide intervention will be discussed, what signs are evidence that suicide is either contemplated (ideation) or about to be carried out in a short period of time and what one can or cannot do to thwart a suicide attempt. Triggers for suicide occurrences will be examined as well as the underlying factors that bring about the act of suicide. Is there a link between suicide and factors of aging that may place the very old and the very young at risk? What is available in the medical-psychiatric world in the form of preventative treatment or intervention to intercept or prevent a suicide attempt from occurring? How effective are these medical interventions in suicide prevention? These and similar questions will be examined throughout this article. The information discussed in these articles comes primarily from the textbook: *Fundamentals of Abnormal Psychology*, Sixth Edition by Ronald J Comer, Worth Publishers, 2011.

Ultimately, an informed realistic perspective concerning suicide and what preventative interventions can be had to assist the families and friends of the suicide victim, will give insight

into the act of suicide and avenues of coping and grieving that will lead to a measure of closure and understanding. All of these actions will aid the family members to move on and permit the letting go so necessary in a healthy grieving process.

SUICIDE: THE ACT

“He/she was so young; they had everything going for them. What happened? Was it my fault? What did I miss? How could this have happened? Who would have thought?” These are but a very few of the many questions often left unanswered when a suicide occurs. The act of suicide is profound in its shocking and horrific violence perpetrated both toward the individual victim and to the family members and individuals invested heavily in a relationship with the victim.

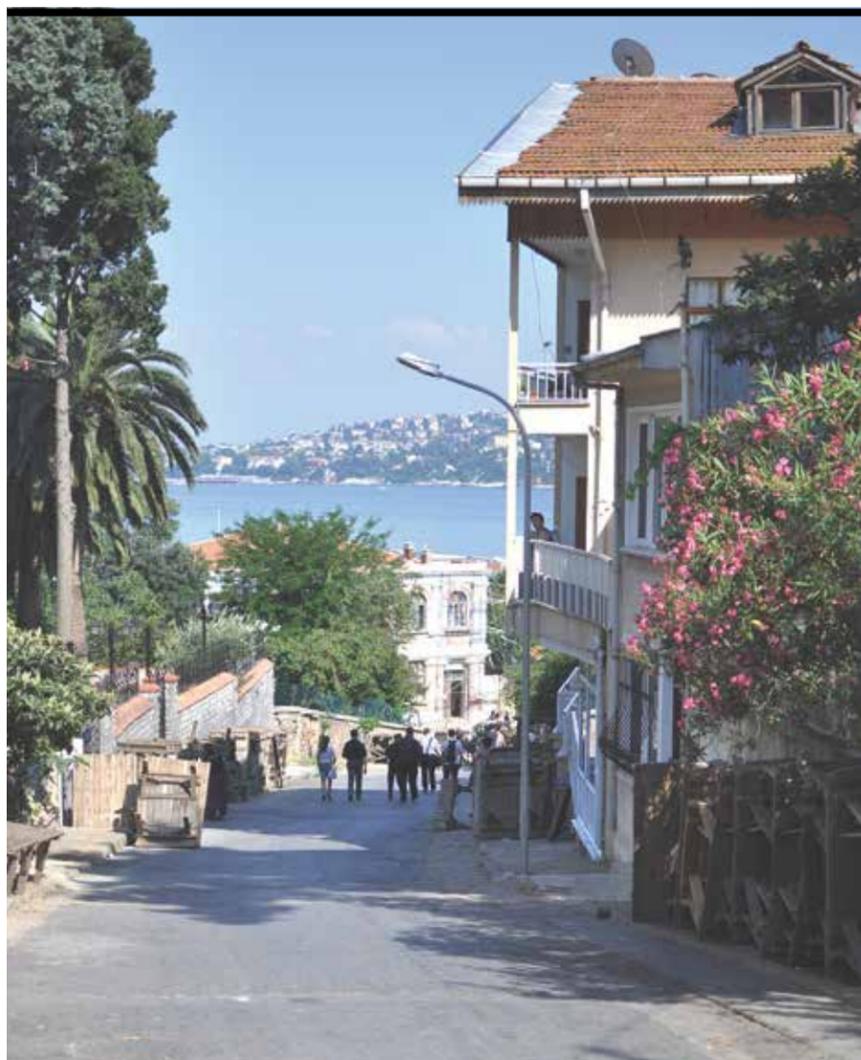
Sadly, it is becoming all too commonplace today. Suicide is an act of extreme violence which fractures both the individual committing the act and the relationships that were shared by and with the victim. Many unanswered questions accompany the experiences of shock and guilt that remain in the wake of a suicide. The impact of the sudden, often unexplained loss long endures, oftentimes taking many years to process and finally release.

In his text, Comer makes the analogy of salmon spawning and subsequently dying and the story of lemmings rushing over the Dover Cliffs into the sea as an instinctual urgent behavior. The act of suicide on the part of human beings is unique, however, in that, “in the human act of suicide do beings act for the specific purpose of putting an end to their lives” (Comer, 2011, p. 229).

HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF SUICIDE

There is precedent in history for suicide. It is even recorded biblically. Comer (2011) reports accurately that the Old Testament succinctly records the death of Saul in the First Book of Samuel Chapter 31 verse 4: “So Saul took his own sword and fell upon it.” There are the accounts among the Samurai of Japan and the Chinese of those who have lost honor due to inappropriate or illegal behavior committing *seppuku*, the act of disembowelment, in order to restore lost honor to family and ancestors (The Code of Bushido, The Art of Manliness, www.artofmanliness.com, 2008, the code of bushido). The Greeks have the *Phaedo* by Heraclitus, the life and death of Socrates, where Socrates, upon the sentence of the court for committing heresy, takes hemlock in the presence of his friends. Comer (2011) cites the deaths of Ernest Hemmingway, Marilyn Monroe, the contemporary rock star Kurt Cobain, and the mass suicides of various cults such as Heaven’s Gate (Comer, 2011, p. 230), as indicative of suicidal activity into the present day. Schneidman and Mandelkorn (1983) are cited by Comer (2011) as stating that the time it takes to read an 8 1/2 x 11 sheet of printed material someone in the USA will attempt suicide and within 24 hours from this moment 60 Americans would have attempted suicide and succeeded.

In the next installment the statistical data of suicide in the US will be examined, opening the door to answering the question, what is suicide, which will be approached and developed in the next installments. **ECL**



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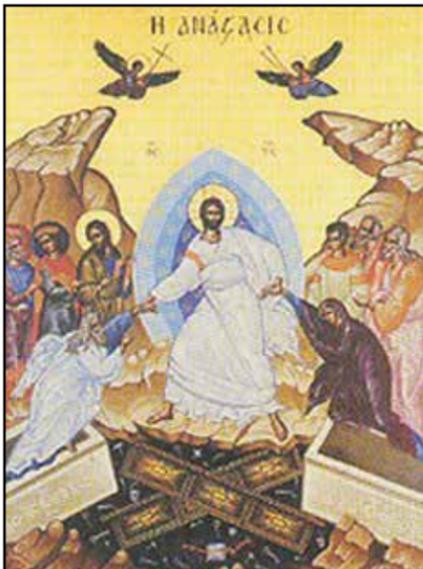
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The Descent into Hades

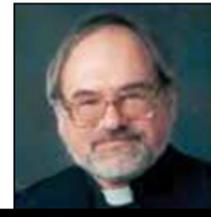
The most important question about the concept of Hades is: what is its meaning in faith? As we have written, there is no narration of the descent into Hades in the New Testament. There are, however, the seeds of this story. Let us follow here the Catechism of the Catholic Church, (§§ 631-637) which corresponds to the general teaching of the Orthodox Church also. In the New Testament, we do find statements of Christ's "descending" after his death on the Cross: "What does 'he ascended' mean except that he also descended into the lower [regions] of the earth? The one who descended is also the one who ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things. (Ephesians 4:9-10)" and "For Christ also suffered for sins once, the righteous for the sake of the unrighteous, that He might lead you to God. Put to death in the flesh, He was brought to life in the spirit. In it He also went to preach to the spirits in prison. (1 Peter 3:18-19)"

This was thought of as the preaching of the Gospel even to the departed: "For this is why the gospel was preached even to the dead that, though condemned in the flesh in human estimation, they might live in the spirit in the estimation of God. (1 Peter 4:6)" "Amen, amen, I say to you, the hour is coming and is now here when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. (John 5:25)"

These basic ideas then became elaborated in Christian meditation. Perhaps there was some influence from Old Testament prophecies (Pss. 48:16; 29:4; Hosea 13:14; Zechariah 9:11) or apocryphal works (Ascension of Isaiah 9:16). Certainly by the end of the second century, particularly in Alexandria, Clement (Stromateis 6.6)

THE BYZANTINE LITURGY

By Archbishop David Petras, SEOD



THE DESCENT INTO HADES

and Origen become quite explicit about Christ's descent to liberate the captives. For Clement, Christ preached in Hades and those who believed in Him were saved. Clement extends this preaching not only to the chosen people but also to righteous Gentiles. (Bishop Hilaron Alfeyev, "Christ the Conqueror of Hell,") There is also the tradition in the Byzantine Liturgy that John the Baptist was the forerunner of Christ even in Hades, "You fought for the truth and with joy proclaimed the Good News to those in Hades that God has appeared in the flesh to take away the sins of the world." (Troparion for the Feast of the Beheading) The death and resurrection of Christ becomes also His descent into Hades in order to lift up the righteous who had fallen asleep. This is the meaning of the Paschal Troparion: "Christ is risen from the dead ... " is the statement of fact from the Gospels. "By death He trampled death ... " means He descended into Hades, death personified, and trampled upon the bronze gates to free those imprisoned there. "And to those in the tombs He granted life," that is, to those in Hades, and by implication to all of us who must pass through the kingdom of death to attain resurrection.

For Saint Gregory the Theologian, Christ had to enter Hades in the flesh to deceive death personified, and trick him into seizing the Messiah, hoping to seize His power, but instead was defeated: "As the ruler of darkness could not approach the presence of the Light unimpeded, had he not seen in Him something of flesh, then, as soon as he saw the God-bearing flesh and saw the miracle performed through it by the Deity, he hoped that if he came to take hold of the flesh through death, then he would take hold of all the power contained in it. Therefore, having swallowed the bait of the flesh, he was pierced by the hook of the Deity, and thus the dragon was transfixed by the hook." (The Homily on the Three-Day Period) Christ could achieve this victory only through the mystery of the Incarnation, in that He was both human (hence subject to death) and divine (hence the conqueror of death). A question may be raised, did Christ descend into Hades with His

body and soul or with His soul only? The body reposed in the tomb on the blessed Sabbath, therefore, it would seem only the soul went into Hades. However, we must take care not to conceive of this as an actual measurable journey to some place with an address in our space and time, and of Hades as an actual existing person. The mystery of the descent is that "by death Christ trampled upon death. The mystical concept is that Hades personified - to be sure - seized upon Christ precisely in the act of dying, which we can define as "the separation of the soul and body," and in this act of seizure was destroyed by the eternal Word, the one Person of Jesus the Messiah, giving to all existing human persons the gift of resurrection. Perhaps this is why the Gospel of Saint Matthew describes the resurrection of many of the souls of the just in the Paschal mystery of our salvation.

By the time of Maximus the Confessor (Answers to Thalassius 7) and John Damascene (Orthodox Faith 3, 29) in the seventh century, this teaching reaches its maturity. It is the theme of the Stichera at Psalm 140 of the Paschal Vigil: "Today Hades sighs and cried aloud: My power is destroyed! I received a mortal as if He were merely one of the dead, but I was powerless to hold Him; and along with Him I shall lose those over whom I ruled, I held the dead from all ages; but behold, He is raising them all! He trampled the brazen gates, and, being God, He raised up the souls which once I held. O Lord, glory to Your cross and resurrection."

In a way, the harrowing of hell is considered already the resurrection: "Since the time that You, the Master of all things, rested in the tomb, then crushed the power of death, death has become nothing more than sleep for those who believe in You." (Aposticheron, Tone 4, Saturday) The very center of this expression of the Paschal mystery is that Jesus, by His death on the Cross, has destroyed the power of death ("Where, O death, is your victory?" 1 Corinthians 15:55) and brings us to divine salvation, ultimately in Resurrection. By venerating this icon, the faithful Christian acknowledges Jesus as Savior. **ECL**

ARTICLE SUBMISSION REQUEST

Does your parish have Feast Day events, fundraisers, community service projects, special liturgical services, or any other type of happening? Speak with your pastor and become your parish media liaison!

Articles can be emailed to the editor at:
ECL@dioceseofpassaic.org

Article Submission Requirements:

- Article must be approved by the pastor
- Article written in Microsoft Word
- Author's name
- Photographer's name
- Key people present in photographs
- Photographs preferred at a resolution of 300ppi, 150ppi minimum

Please Note Regarding Photos of Children:

We cannot publish photos containing only one child. Photos of children must be in groups of two or more.



SPIRITUAL REFLECTIONS

Deacon Lewis Rabayda

HOPE IN THE RESURRECTION OF BODY AND SOUL

Family members and close friends who attend the funerals of their loved ones often experience a great deal of mourning. This mourning usually manifests itself during these services and especially at the climax of internment when the casket is lowered into the earth and the cantor sings, "Oh gaping earth, receive the body formed from you by the hand of God." This process of mourning is natural for us to experience; is a beautiful testament to the lives of those who have fallen asleep; and is also a healing process for those who are left behind. Jesus Himself mourned deeply at the death of His friend Lazarus, which may have been one motivating factor in why He raised Lazarus from the dead. But even though mourning is appropriate and helpful, Jesus taught His disciples that death from this world is not the final death.

Death is a time to contemplate the important things in our lives, that is why the "Fear of death is a property of nature due to disobedience, but terror of death is a sign of unrepented sins" (Saint John Climacus, The Ladder of Divine Ascent, 6). In this contemplation, the thought of death brings into focus what is important,

and what is not so important. If, as faithful Christians, we properly contemplate death, it would be difficult for us to see anything else in life being more important than our devotion to God and to living our lives in service of Him. Attending these funerals and mourning brings us to realize the paths we travel in our lives. The death of others reminds us that we, too, cannot escape death. When we die, will those who attend our funeral say that "They're in a better place," with confidence and hope for a life well steeped in devotion to God? Or will those words be empty gestures of politeness, full of uncertainty of destination because of a life not lived so faithfully?

Since those who are reading this are still alive, what can "we, the living, the survivors" do that will help us, with confidence, approach that most sacred time of life that is our transition to another state (1Th. 4:17)? For one, we can think of this life as not being the climax of our existence. We are a creation of God, made with a body of flesh and a spirit given to us by God when He breathed His own Spirit into Adam, his creation. When our bodies give way to the order of the fallen cre-

ation through decay, we would do well to not allow that to discourage us. Our bodies are just one aspect of our person, and our soul is the other aspect. That is why we do not say that we have died, but that we have "fallen asleep in the Lord."



The aspect of our person that is still alive is our soul, which will be reunited with our bodies at the final resurrection. But Jesus tells us in John's Gospel, "for the hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear His voice and come forth, those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of judgement" (Jn 5:28-29). We

will be raised and reunited soul with body, but to which end: eternal life, or eternal death?

We mourn the loss we experience in this world, or in this stage of our existence. But if we can say with confidence that we believe in Jesus Christ and participate in the Church that He established for us, then our mourning is only for the temporary state. That mourning can then lead to exceeding joy, knowing that the suffering of this world is only a moment in our existence, and that we have the opportunity to spend eternity with the loving God who created us and wants us to be happy with Him. Jesus resurrected in a state of physical being which theologians call *The Glorified Body*. His body that was severely beaten, disfigured, and crucified is now no longer subject to pain or corruption. Jesus is known as the first-born of the dead, and has shown us through His resurrection the splendor that we have to look forward to after we endure the suffering of this fallen world. May our Lord's resurrection bring joy to our hearts, and may He give us the strength to take up our crosses so that we may be found worthy of His gift of salvation. Christ is risen! **ECL**

UPCOMING EVENTS FOR APRIL

Eparchial and Parish Events

*Christ is risen!
Indeed He is risen!!*

APRIL, 2015

1 Great and Holy Wednesday

2 Great and Holy Thursday

Chancery closed

3 Great and Holy Friday
Chancery closed

4 Great and Holy Saturday

5 PASCHA * THE GREAT DAY * The Resurrection of Lord, God, and Savior, Jesus Christ
Christ is risen! Indeed He is risen!

6 Bright Monday
Chancery closed

12 Thomas Sunday
3:00 p.m. Vespers at Saint Nicholas, Swoyersville, PA, followed by reception (reservation only) at Knights of Columbus Hall, Luzerne, PA

23 Holy Great Martyr George

27 Beginning of Presbyteral Days

Eastern Catholic Life

Circulation Department
445 Lackawanna Avenue
Woodland Park, NJ 07424

Next Issue:
May, 2015

Copy Deadline:
April 17th

The current issue of the ECL was printed at Evergreen Printing, Bellmawr, NJ and was distributed from the U.S. Post Office via second class mailing in Bellmawr, NJ.