



# EASTERN CATHOLIC LIFE

Official Publication of the Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Passaic

VOL. LI, NO. 8

AUGUST 2015



## BISHOP KURT ORDAINS TWO DEACONS

### Deacon Thomas P. Shubeck

June 14th at Saint Thomas the Apostle, Rahway, NJ

### Deacon Peter Turko

June 21st at Epiphany of Our Lord, Annandale, VA

By Debra Bass Photos by Greg Kowalski



Subdeacon Thomas P. Shubeck was ordained to the Holy Order of the Diaconate by Bishop Kurt on Sunday, June 14, 2015, during a Hierarchical Divine Liturgy at Saint Thomas the Apostle Byzantine Catholic Church in Rahway, NJ.

Deacon Thomas is the son of Dr. Paul P. Shubeck and the late Mary Shubeck. He was born and raised in Elizabeth, NJ, where he attended public schools. Before studying psychology, Deacon Thomas earned degrees in biology (BS, Rutgers) and zoology (MS, Connecticut). He then taught for a year at the Delbarton School and proceeded to earn degrees in counseling psychology (MA, Loyola of Maryland) and marriage and family therapy (PhD, Purdue). After completing graduate studies, Deacon Thomas held clinical positions at Newton Memorial Hospital and Family Service Association of Summit, NJ. He also served for ten years as a medical review psychologist for the NJ Division of Disability Determinations.

Deacon Thomas is married to the former Caroline Rampello, MD.

They have three children: Adriana, a nursing student at Villanova University, Villanova, PA; John, a rising sixth grade student at Saint Vincent Martyr School in Madison, NJ; and the late Paul Francis, who succumbed to mitochondrial disease at the age of eight. As a result of Paul's illness, Deacon Thomas served for several years as president of the NY Metro Chapter of the United Mitochondrial Disease Foundation and currently is the Director of Psychological Services at the College Seminary of the Immaculate Conception at Saint Andrew's Hall, Seton Hall University, where he has served since November 2005. Since 2011 he has also been an adjunct professor of pastoral theology at Seton Hall's Immaculate Conception Seminary Graduate School of Theology. He also served a four year term as a member the Advisory Council of the Byzantine Catholic Seminary.

Deacon Thomas reflects on his ordination: "What a privilege it is to have received God's call to the diaconate. As I knelt at the Holy Table on which the Holy Eucharist lay and Bishop Kurt made the sign

*Continued on page 8*

The Turko family of Fairfax, VA, had much to celebrate on Father's Day this year as Subdeacon Peter L. Turko was ordained to the Holy Order of Deacon by Bishop Kurt at Epiphany of Our Lord Byzantine Catholic Church in Annandale, VA.

With his sons, Ben, Brian, and David in attendance, along with his wife Carren, Deacon Peter welcomed this goal in the spiritual journey he began when he entered the Eparchy of Passaic's deacon formation program in 2004.

Concelebrating with Bishop Kurt on Sunday, June 21 were Father John G. Basarab, Pastor of Epiphany and Msgr. George Dobes. Deacon Nicholas Daddona, Director of Deacons, presented the subdeacon for ordination and served as one of the two deacons at the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy. Deacon Elmer Pekarik of Epiphany parish also served while Deacon Lewis Rabayda, parish vocation, presently assigned at Holy Ghost, Jessup, PA, was the Master of Ceremonies. Deacon William Szwczyk and Deacon Nicholas Sotak were in attendance.

Following the liturgy, a reception was held in the Epiphany Parish Center. In brief comments, Deacon Peter thanked God, the bishop for ordaining him, his wife and sons, Fr. Basarab, and the parishioners of Epiphany for their support.

Deacon Turko traces his strong vocational calling to his teenage years, while growing up in Heilwood, PA while attending St. John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church, Barnesboro, PA. He graduated with a BA in Sociology from St. Francis College in Loretto, PA, where he met his wife of 41 years, Carren Turko. Together they raised their three sons while Deacon Peter worked in the financial services industry for more than 30 years. Deacon Peter is now retired and ready to step into a new role as deacon at Epiphany.

The ordination on Father's Day brought rays of joy and light to the Turkos as well as the entire Epiphany family on the first day of summer.

*Continued on page 8*

Photo montage from Sicily — pages 2—3

Father Bujnak celebrates milestone—page 5

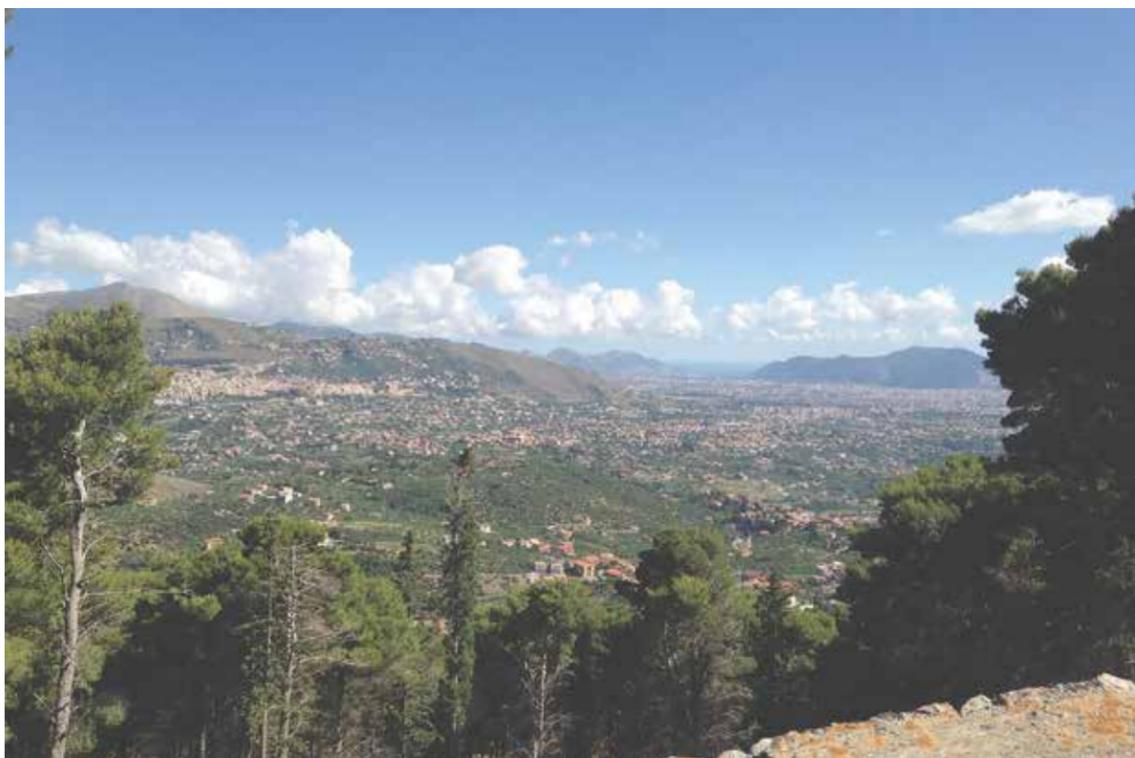
Uniontown and Sloatsburg Pilgrimages—pages 10—12

First Feast Day of Blessed Miriam Teresa Demjanovich —page 13



# I LIFT UP MY EYES...

*A Photo Montage from Bishop George Gallaro's ordination and enthronement as Bishop in Sicily by Bishop Kurt*



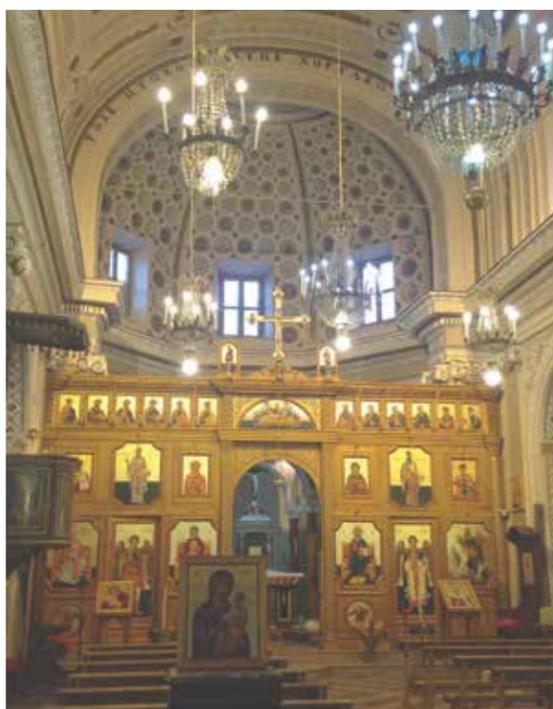
*Looking down on Palermo, Sicily, on the drive to Bishop George's pro-cathedral in Palermo. Bishop George did his profession of faith during Vespers at the pro-cathedral.*



*Bishop-elect George is led around the altar by Bishop Nicholas Samra. He walks around the altar three times, kissing the corners, and the chief consecrator, while the choir sings the tropars of the martyrs and "Rejoice, O Isaiah."*



*Bishop George and Bishop Nicholas Samra after the Divine Liturgy on June 29. Bishop Nicholas was his bishop when Bishop George was a priest of the Melkite Diocese of Newton (and our Vice-Rector at the Seminary in Pittsburgh).*



*The (Greek Catholic) pro-cathedral in Palermo, Italy.*



*The (Greek Catholic) Cathedral of Saint Demetrios in Piana degli Albanesi, Italy.*

## FATHER GEORGE DEMETRIO GALLARO CONSECRATED AND ENTHRONED AS BISHOP OF PIANA DEGLI ALBANESI

*Article Courtesy Byzantine Catholic World*

Former Judicial Vicar for the Archeparchy of Pittsburgh and Professor of Canon Law for the Byzantine Catholic Seminary of Saints Cyril and Methodius in Pittsburgh, PA, Father George

D. Gallaro has been enthroned as Bishop of Piana degli Albanesi near Palermo, Sicily (Italy).

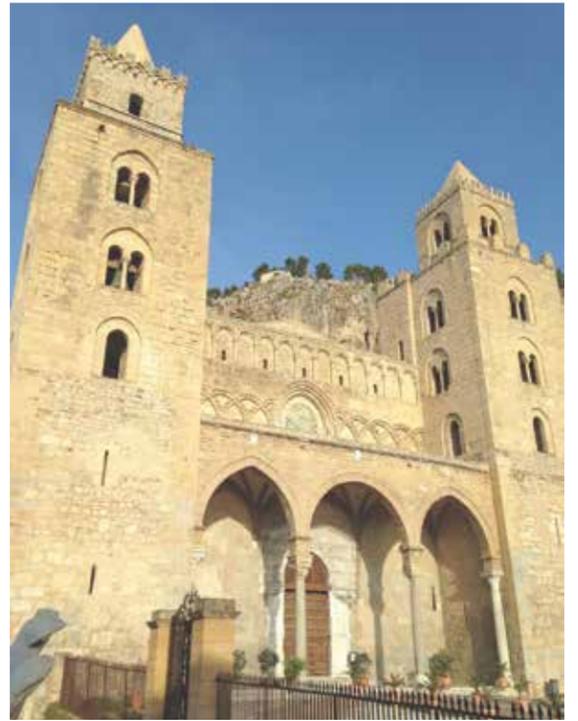
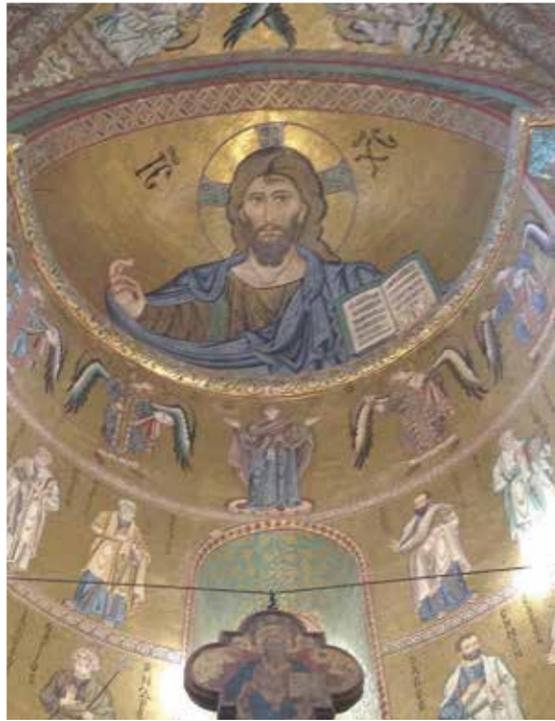
Events included Profession of Faith during Vespers of June 27th, 2015, at the Co-Cathedral of Saint Nicholas of the Greeks at the Martorana in Palermo and Episcopal Chirotonia (Consecration) at the Cathedral of Saint Demetrius the Great-Martyr in Piana degli Albanesi on Sunday, June 28th, 2015. In the presence of Cardinal Paolo Romero, Roman Catholic Metropolitan Archbishop of Palermo, and the Christian People of the Eparchy, the Chirotonia was conferred by Bishop Donato Oliverio, Bishop of the Eparchy of Lungro, Bishop Nicholas Samra, Bishop of the Melkite Eparchy of Newton, and Bishop Dimi-

trios Salachas, Bishop of the Exarchate in Athens.

In addition to Bishop Kurt, also in attendance were Metropolitan Archbishop William C. Skurla, Father Andrew J. Deskevich, Protosyncellus of the Archeparchy of Pittsburgh, and Father James Hess, O.Carm., also from the Archeparchy of Pittsburgh.

Established over 500 years ago, Piana degli Albanesi is the episcopal see of the Italo-Albanian Byzantine Catholic Church.

May God grant to his servant Bishop George Peace, Health and Happiness for many blessed years! AXIOS!



Up the coast from Palermo is the city of Cefalu. The mosaics here were the warm up for Monreale. After the king died, the next king cut off the money, and only the mosaics in the front were finished.

The Cathedral in Cefalu is dedicated to the Transfiguration, so it has a tower for Moses and a tower for Elijah.



Even the cloister at Monreale is mosaic. There are over two hundred columns and every one is different. Even the tops have unique sculpture.

King's throne at Monreale. Note mosaics above it and the beautiful cosmatesque design, also found on the papal throne at Saint John Lateran in Rome, the pope's cathedral.



Even the side aisle at Monreale is astounding (Saint Peter).

The Cathedral at Monreale is the largest mosaic area in the world. Built by the Norman kings almost nine hundred years ago, the mosaics cover 70,000 square feet. It's interesting to think that before the era of electric lights, no one was really able to appreciate them for their first 800 years.



The Hodigitria Icon is the Icon of the Mother of God pointing at Jesus. She is the Patroness of Sicily, and the icon is seen everywhere! This one is in the Piana Museum.



Food is of paramount importance in Italy. This is only the antipasto.



The orphanage in Piana taught needlepoint so the girls could learn a trade. This antimemion is entirely needlepoint.



# PEOPLE YOU KNOW AROUND THE EPARCHY

## IN ANNANDALE...

Nearly 50 fathers and sons gathered for the Epiphany Men's Club annual "Father-Son Steak Night" at Epiphany of Our Lord Byzantine Catholic Church (Annandale, VA) to hear from Father Sal Pignato, Vocation Director for the Eparchy of Passaic. Clergy in attendance included (front row, l to r): Father Nicholas Wyborski, pastor of Saint Nectarios Orthodox Church in Lakeland, Fl (and father-in-law of Epiphany Mens Club member Jim Naccash); Father John Basarab, pastor of Epiphany parish; Father Sal Pignato; and Deacon Elmer Pekarik, deacon at Epiphany parish.



Epiphany Men's Club fathers and sons with Father Nicholas Wyborski, Father John Basarab, Father Sal Pignato, and Deacon Elmer Pekarik.

## IN WILLIAMSBURG...

### PROSPHORA CLASS

On Saturday, June 13, 2015, a number of parishioners of Ascension of Our Lord Church in Williamsburg, VA, met for an enjoyable and informative class. Reader Joseph Bernard from Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church in Virginia Beach led a class in prospora making. Reader Joseph has been baking this liturgical bread for past 15 years and until recently has done this job on his own. Ascension has benefitted from his baking during this entire time. With Father Alex Shuter and a number of parishioners learning the secrets of perfect prospora, Ascension will now produce its own bread. Plans are being made to have a number of prayerful baking sessions throughout the year where they will prepare for the sacred banquet.



Reader Joseph handles the dough while instructing parishioners.

### PANACHIDA

Following Divine Liturgy, Father Alex Shuter of Ascension of Our Lord Church in Williamsburg, VA, leads the parish community in a Panachida (memorial service) for the servants of the Lord Clementa, Sharonda, Cynthia, Tywanza, Ethel, Susie, Daniel, Myra and Depayne who were recently murdered in South Carolina. May their memory be eternal!



Father Alex Shuter leads the congregation in prayer for the deceased.

**VISITING MYRTLE BEACH  
THIS SUMMER?**  
Blessed Basil Hopko Byzantine Catholic Mission  
welcomes you!

**THE DIVINE LITURGY**  
WILL BE CELEBRATED ON THE FOLLOWING  
SUNDAYS AT 10 A.M.:  
**AUGUST 2ND, 9TH, AND 16TH**

For more information call Don and Jean Wirth at 843-249-9502 or  
Father Conan Timoney 410-302-6996.

The Blessed Basil Hopko Mission is located  
at 3059 Highway 90, Conway,  
Myrtle Beach, SC  
It is located between  
Routes 22 and 501 on Highway 90.



Jubilarian Father George Bujnak gives remarks.

## FATHER BUJNAK CELEBRATES 50 YEARS OF ORDINATION

McAdoo, PA

Father George Bujnak, Pastor Emeritus of Saint Michael Byzantine Catholic Church, McAdoo, PA, celebrated his 50th anniversary of ordination to the Holy Priesthood with Divine Liturgy of Thanksgiving and a celebratory dinner afterwards. Many parishioners, family, and friends, were in attendance for the Divine Liturgy and the celebratory repast, held at Capriotti's Catering in McAdoo. A good time was had by all.



Father George with his family.



Father Donish, Monsignor Puhak, Father Demko, Sisters Regina and Theodosia, OSBM.



Parishioners and friends of Father Bujnak.



Family and friends of Father Bujnak.



Some of Saint Michael's Guild members.

### 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:  
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.

Most Reverend Bishop Kurt Burnette,  
President and Publisher

Reverend James Badaux, *Editor*  
Reverend Ronald Hatton, *Associate Editor*  
Deacon Lewis Rabayda, *Layout Editor*  
Mrs. Diane Rabiej, *Copy Editor*  
Mrs. Maureen French, *Circulation Editor*  
(mfrench@eparchyofpassaic.com)

E-Mail us at:  
**ECL@eparchyofpassaic.com**

Eparchial Website:  
**www.EparchyofPassaic.com**



The Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Passaic Invites:

**ALL PARISHIONERS**

**Families • Singles • Seniors  
Young Adults • Teens • Children**

to a continuing celebration of the World Meeting of Families

**Our Church, Our Family,  
Our Mission: Called to Love**  
Regional Parish Family Days of Recollection

Dates and Locations

**Saturday September 19**

*St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church – Scranton, PA - 8:30 AM*

**Saturday, October 10**

*St. Therese Byzantine Catholic Church – St. Petersburg, FL - 8:30 AM*

**Saturday, October 17**

*St. Nicholas – Danbury, CT - 8:30 AM*

**Sunday, October 25**

*Epiphany of Our Lord Byzantine Catholic Church Annandale, VA  
Following 10:30 AM Divine Liturgy*

**Sunday, November 8**

*St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church – Hillsborough, NJ  
Following 11:00 AM Divine Liturgy*

Continental Breakfast and Lunch included at all locations

As the World Meeting of Families closes in Philadelphia, the work of building up and nurturing the Family is just beginning! This Day of Recollection will focus on individual and family spirituality and the meaning of our vocation to love. Through four presentations, we will explore Jesus Christ’s personal invitation to each of us to live as children of God, called to love and be fruitful as part of a family (single persons, spouses, parents, children, grandparents), and in support of families as friends, neighbors and parishioners. Whether we are married or single, parents or godparents, aunts and uncles, widowed or divorced, we are members of God’s family, and this day of fellowship, prayer and time with our extended family—the Church—will offer ways of strengthening our own family bonds, as well as our personal relationship with Christ.

**For children and teens:** This day of recollection will ask young people of all ages to discover the priceless treasure they have in God’s love. Through reading Scripture, role playing, talking, and creating, they will learn to recognize God is with them in everything they do. The final activity will ask families to work together to recognize God’s love that has been shared with them through family and friends through the ages.

**The Presenters**



**Ann M. Koshute, MTS** will deliver the Adult track. Ann is Adjunct Instructor in Theology at St. Joseph’s College of Maine and DeSales University. She obtained her Master of Theological Studies from the Pontifical John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family at the Catholic University of America. In addition to working on marriage preparation and adult faith formation programs, Ann is a retreat leader and writer. She and her husband Keith are parishioners of St. Ann Byzantine Catholic Church, Harrisburg, PA.

**Marie C. Nester, M.Ed** will coordinate and present the pre-K to Teen tracks. Marie wrote the God With Us catechetical texts for Grades 3, 4, 5, and 7. She also contributed meditations for Journey Through The Great Fast and Christ Is Born, published by the Office of Religious Education, Archeparchy of Pittsburgh. Marie is Adjunct Instructor of English at Harrisburg Area Community College. She and her husband Luke are members of St. Ann Byzantine Catholic Church, Harrisburg, PA. They have 3 children and 6 grandchildren.



**Event is FREE!**

Generously Underwritten by:  
The Byzantine Catholic  
Eparchy of Passaic

**Schedule**

- Registration - Morning Prayer and Welcome
- Session 1 – The Family: Created to Love
- Session 2 – The Family: Center of Love
- Session 3 – The Family: Fruit of the Union between a Man and a Woman
- Session 4 – The Family: A Result of Everlasting Love
- All gather for sharing Family Activity and Liturgy or Closing Prayer

**Registration Form**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Location:  Scranton, PA       St. Petersburg, FL       Danbury, CT       Annandale, VA       Hillsborough, NJ

Number of Adults: \_\_\_\_\_ Number and Ages of Children: \_\_\_\_\_

Please send completed registration form at least two weeks prior to your Day of Recollection to:  
Father Ed Cimbala, St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church, 1900 Brooks Boulevard, Hillsborough, NJ 08844  
FREDSTMARY@aol.com      Questions? Call Fr. Ed Cimbala at 908 725-0615 or contact him by e-mail.



# WORLD MEETING OF FAMILIES IN PHILADELPHIA

## THE COMPLIMENT IN COMPLEMENTARITY

By Ann M. Koshute, MTS

Our world is changing at a dizzying – even frightening – pace. Science and technology open us to possibilities never dreamed of by our parents and grandparents, and our knowledge of the world around us (and of ourselves) continues growing. There is much good in this rapid expansion of our horizons, and many improvements made to our lives. At the same time, with these changes comes confusion: about our identities as human persons, and by extension about the nature of marriage, family, and the meaning of love. These “big issues” are more than we can tackle in a short column. Yet given the changes in “perspective” on who we are, it’s important for us to consider what it means that we are human persons made in God’s image and likeness. It is especially important in our current culture understand that our sexuality is an integral part of this image, and that sexual difference is neither random nor accidental. In fact, sexual difference is the foundation upon which our capacity to love, and the institutions of marriage and family, are built.

God is the Creator of the world and all things in it – including us. He took nothing and made a world of beauty and wonder. Everything in God’s creation (from oceans to plants and animals, to you and me) gives Him glory simply by being what it is. While human persons have an intimate relationship to everything in God’s creation, being made in His image and likeness is unique to us, and it is a special expression of His love for us. God is Trinity: a communion of persons who are Father, Son and Holy Spirit. St. John the Evangelist says that “God is love.” (1Jn 4:8) Therefore, as icons (images) of God, we are made to be like Him. We are made for love and communion.

Each one of us is called by God into an intimate friendship with Him, from which the love in all of our other relationships springs: spouses, parents and children, siblings, friends, and so on.

From the beginning, God designed the human person for unity within his and her difference. Rather than creating humans of one sex or the other, God created male and female persons, enabling them to share in a communion of life and love. Male and female are not interchangeable or random designations that can be altered at will by the individual. Though some may attempt to alter their sexuality or “gender identity,” these are superficial and semantic changes that ultimately distort the truth of the person. God’s deliberate design of sexual difference is a human expression of the difference-within-unity of God as Holy Trinity. By creating us male and female God inscribes an aptness for communion (and the ability for this communion to generate new life) in our bodies. But this sexual difference and its aptness for communion and new life isn’t just “skin deep.” We are male and female to the core – to our immortal soul, with its powers of reason and the ability to act on our choices. As male and female we are equal, in our humanity, personal dignity, and in imaging God. Yet although we are equal, we are not the same. Men and women are different, and that difference is very good! (cf. Gn 1:31). It’s only because of sin that this difference sometimes causes both internal and external conflict and confusion. But from the beginning, it was not so. (cf. Mt 19:8)

Marriage and family are built upon the communion born of sexual difference. This difference is not a social construct or the “fluid movement” of

one’s personal decision. Our sexuality is a physical, biological, psychological and spiritual reality. The confusion some individuals feel about their identities, or about the nature of marriage as the intimate bond of love between a man and woman for their good and the good of children, is a sad consequence of the Fall. But it doesn’t change the objective reality of sexual difference, or negate the truth of God’s design for family (cf. Gn 1:26-18; Gn 2:22-25). Indeed, “It is not good for the man to be alone,” (Gn 2:18), and man and woman become “suitable helpers” for each other in and through their sexual difference.

Sexual difference and the complementarity inherent in it truly is God’s “compliment” to us. He loves and values us so highly that He created us to be like Him: with differences that allow us to be united in a communion of love, for the good of our relationship with Him, and the relationships we cultivate with our families and beyond.

In celebration of the World Meeting of Families taking place September 22-25, 2015, in Philadelphia, PA, the Eparchy of Passaic is offering five regional Family Days of Recollection. Our Church, Our Family, Our Mission: Called to Love is a day of faith, fellowship and celebration of all of us as members of God’s family and missionaries of love to the world. The Days are open to all adults, and there are children’s/teen tracks. The event is FREE and includes continental breakfast and lunch. Email Father Ed Cimbala to register: [FrEdStMary@aol.com](mailto:FrEdStMary@aol.com), or use the registration form in the ECL. [ECL](#)

# WORLDMEETING2015.ORG

## LOVE IS OUR MISSION THE FAMILY FULLY ALIVE



# WORLD MEETING OF FAMILIES

## 2015 Philadelphia

# SEPTEMBER 22 - 27



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 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.

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

2 Once you have registered, please forward a copy of your registration to the Eparchy of Passaic at [secretary@dioceseofpassaic.org](mailto: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](mailto:FREDSTMARY@aol.com)

# BISHOP KURT ORDAINS TWO DEACONS

*Continued from page 1*

## Deacon Thomas P. Shubeck

*June 14th at Saint Thomas the Apostle, Rahway, NJ*

of the cross on the top of my head as his omophorion rested over it, I felt a strong connection to Christ, his Bishops, Priests, Deacons, religious and faithful over these two millennia. I also felt a strong connection to my Bishop under whom I will serve.

To have had the support and encouragement of my wife, Caroline, and my children, John and Adriana, has been a true blessing through my discernment process—which really kicked into high gear in 2010 -- and through my four years in the formation program.

When Bishop Kurt imposed his right hand over my head and prayed, "Divine Grace, which always heals what is infirm and supplies what is lacking, ordains the Subdeacon Thomas to be a Deacon," I saw so clearly how it is through God's Grace that I serve in the capacity. Any good that I may do as a Deacon ultimately comes from my cooperation

with the Holy Spirit.

My family, friends, fellow parishioners, Priests and Deacons of the Eparchy, and seminarians with whom I work at Seton Hall in the pews; my son, John, serving in the sanctuary; Father Michael Mondik, Father Steven Galuschik, Deacon Charles Laskowski, and my all Priestly colleagues, including Priests from Seton Hall, concelebrating at the Holy Table, were all a great source of affirmation to me.

I look forward to serving as a Deacon of the Eparchy of Passaic and pray that I always be open to the stirrings of the Holy Spirit to guide all that I do and that the lives of the Deacon Saints - Ephrem of Syria, Francis of Assisi, Stephen, and Philip be a source of inspiration as I begin my Diaconal ministry."

May God Grant Peace, Health and Happiness to the newly ordained Deacon Thomas P. Shubeck.

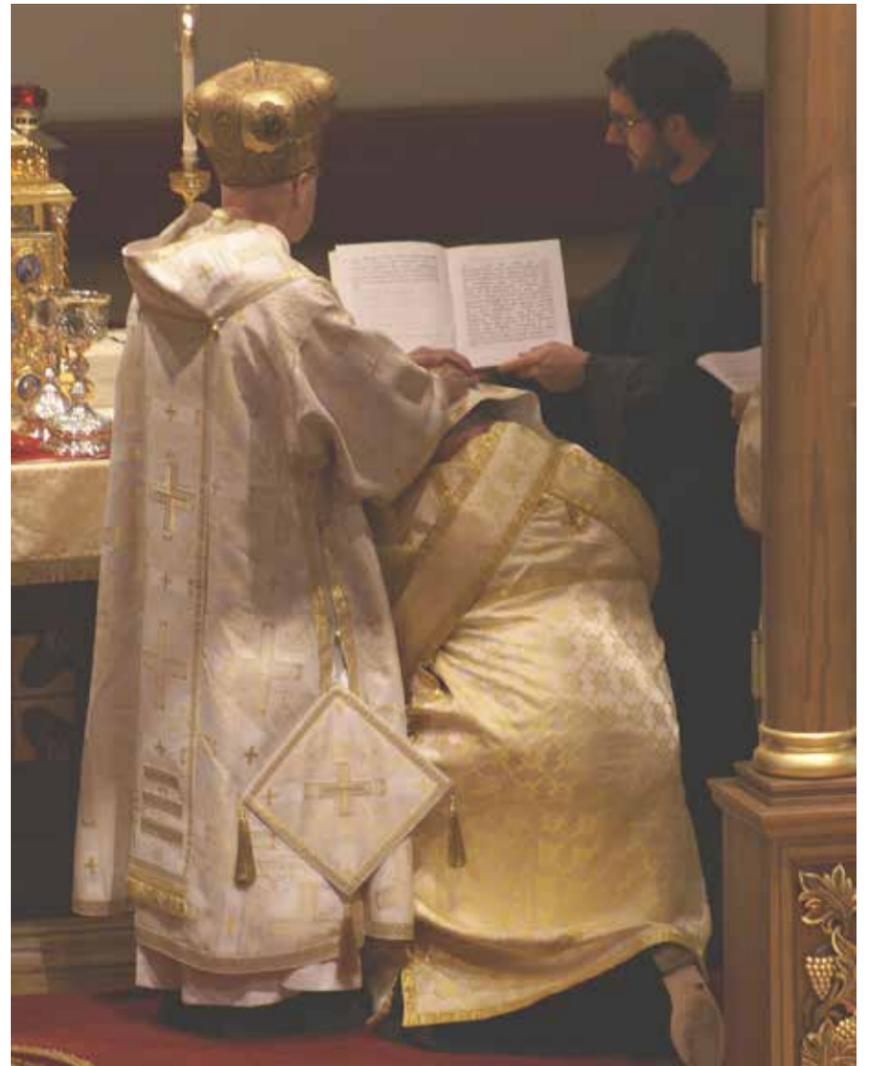
## Deacon Peter Turko

*June 21st at Epiphany of Our Lord, Annandale, VA*

*By Debra Bass Photos by Greg Kowalski*



*Deacon candidate Turko reverences Bishop Kurt while being led around the altar by Deacon Daddona.*



*Bishop Kurt imposes hands while reading the prayer of ordination.*



*Bishop Kurt awards Father Mondik with the Gold Cross for his service to the Eparchy after Deacon Shubeck celebrates as deacon for the first time.*



*Newly-ordained Deacon Shubeck with his wife, Caroline; daughter, Adriana; and son, John.*



*Newly-ordained Deacon Turko with his wife, Carren; Father Basarab; Bishop Kurt; Monsignor Dobes; and Deacon Rabayda enjoy the meal.*

# SAINT MICHAEL PARISH: 100TH ANNIVERSARY WORK MOVING FORWARD

Pittston, PA

Saint Michael Byzantine Catholic Church committee members are hard at work in the middle of summer, seen here at their monthly report session held July 12. While the climax of the year's work will be November 1, 2015—the Anniversary Celebration banquet for parishioners, clergy, and friends—work continues to move forward on details of other upcoming events for the community at large, and several parish projects.

Saint Michael Church is located at 205 North Main Street, Pittston, PA, and has been a hub parish for members from a wide area of Greater Pittston and beyond. The parishioners share the spirit of their faith with their sister parish, Saint Nicholas of Myra, Swoyersville, PA.

The parish recently was one of the host parishes of the annual Pittston Church Tour in June, which was a great success. The church tour included two local churches, Saint John the Evangelist Roman Catholic Church and Saint Michael the Archangel. The highlight of the tour was a presentation held at Saint Michael Parish by iconographer Father Tom Major, a Pittston native. A group of 50 people of all faith denominations learned how icons are created and their spiritual significance. All this took place in the peaceful beauty of the interior of Saint Michael's church. The parish volunteers were excited about sharing with others the spiritual and artistic treasures inside their church, something that

cannot be even remotely imagined when driving by and only seeing the exterior. Many of the visitors, new to Saint Michael Church, simply did not want to leave and stayed to ask questions. This was a valuable experience for all participating.

While planning a 100th Anniversary is a formidable task in itself, the parish volunteers have been gearing up for their church's Annual Flea Market/Ziti Dinner. This major fundraiser is in its 19th year, held on the weekend of August 1st and 2nd. Doors open at 9 a.m. Saturday to 4 p.m.; and Sunday 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.. It's not only a gigantic flea market, but a market that also hosts some of the most delicious parish-made ethnic specialties. The return customers who come for the "best-in-the-area" "piggies" (holupki); homemade pirohi; and halushki, have been definite proof. Both hot and cold varieties are offered for those who want ready-to-eat or to freeze and enjoy later. And parish members pitch in to make baked goods for sale.

But there is more yet to come and in the planning at Saint Michael Church! An event for the community is on track for early October, a presentation by members of the Carpatho-Rusyn Society, headquartered in Munhall, PA. This will be a focused educational program exploring the rich ethnic heritage and history of many of our ancestors. This program will interest anyone who enjoys genealogy research,



Standing from left to right: Mike Moran, Felix Zelenowski, Judy Smith, Joseph Cigan, Irene Cigan, Father Gary Mensinger, Joe Sabach, Margaret Brozzoski, Joe Halat, and Dan Fetch. Also present at the meeting, taking photo: Mary Anne Fedor. Pictured around the table from left to right: Betty Davenport, Beatrice Girman, Linda Hando, Jerry Dziak, Mary Ann Matosky, Mary Colwell, and Pat Stout.

social and cultural history. It presents a great opportunity for those of other ethnic backgrounds, as well, to appreciate and learn more about the diversity within our community. More details will be announced closer to the event date. This will be a "not to miss" event.

With all of these activities condensed into the next few months, and other ideas and goals in the works, we can say that the parishioners of Saint Michael Parish are not only ambitious, but also determined to make this anniversary year a success. It is the kind of dedication built upon the mission of the original parish founders and passed

along to those in the present. Even as the appearance of physical buildings change inside and out (and Saint Michael Church has had many transformations), the one thing that never changes is faith. And with faith as the central focus, Saint Michael Parish is resolved to meet all challenges.

Father Gary Mensinger, the pastor, and all the parishioners welcome everyone to "come and see" and enjoy what's happening on August 1st and 2nd and in the months ahead. You might find something new to enjoy in a community landmark turning 100.

## MOUNT MACRINA MANOR RENOVATION PROJECT

Glory to Jesus Christ!  
Dear Friends,

Perhaps you know someone who hesitates to visit a loved one in a hospital or nursing home. You are not alone. In our American culture, illness, infirmity, and death are not exactly "hot topics" for social conversations.

On the grounds of Mount St. Macrina, we Sisters sponsor a cherished ministry following in the footsteps of our founder, St. Basil the Great, whose legacy included a unique concern for the frail and infirm. I prefer to view this site as one of the "thing

spaces" on our grounds where the boundaries between this world and the heavenly one are very fragile. Hospitals and long term care facilities are more than functional buildings, they are sacred places where the most profound decisions of life are being made. I believe that within our final moments, we have the opportunity to wholeheartedly choose our loving Lord in life everlasting.

We continue to sponsor this vital ministry in a society where illness and limitation are often negatively viewed. We are committed to providing quality care, validating that life at every age and every stage is sanctified. In or-

der to achieve this, we must provide a comfortable and safe atmosphere for body as well as for soul. Our present facility is "showing its age," and needs renovation in many areas, particularly in the essential mechanical systems which provide comfort and safety for both our long term residents, and for those who require temporary rehabilitation prior to returning home.

We are calling upon you once again to offer your support whether in prayer and/or in monetary donations. Be assured that all monies received will be used exclusively for the Mt. Macrina Manor Nursing Home renovation project. We have made a

mindful choice to appeal directly to you rather than to incur the expense of an outside development company.

We are grateful for your benevolence, and we trust that with God's help and yours we will be able to continue to provide a hallowed place where many residents, whether temporary or long term, may live in the peace of His loving care.

In the love of the Lord Jesus,

Sister Seraphim Olsafsky, OSBM  
Sister Ruth Plante, OSBM  
Provincial

**I am pleased to support the Mt. Macrina Manor Renovation Project.**

I am aware this is a declaration of intent and is not legally binding.

**Please return in provided envelope.**

### 3-Year Gift Plans

<b>Total Pledge</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> \$5,000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$4,000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$3,000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$2,500	<input type="checkbox"/> \$2,000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1,500	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1,000
<b>36 Monthly Payments</b>	\$139.00	\$112.00	\$84.00	\$70.00	\$56.00	\$42.00	\$28.00

**Or a One-Time Donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_.**

**I wish to donate toward:**

1<sup>st</sup> choice \_\_\_\_\_

2<sup>nd</sup> choice \_\_\_\_\_

Please use my donation toward any project needed.

*Please make checks payable to Mt. Macrina Manor Renovation Fund.*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Amount Enclosed \_\_\_\_\_ Balance Due \_\_\_\_\_

# 81ST ANNUAL PILGRIMAGE IN HONOR OF OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP

## Mount Saint Macrina, Uniontown, PA

A Personal Invitation by Sister Elaine Kisinko, O.S.B.M.

I am part of a very great number of people who grew up with the Pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Perpetual Help at Mount Saint Macrina in Uniontown, PA. As this wonderful event changed, evolved and grew during the years, I too absorbed the differences and moved forward with them.

As a small child, I envied the little girls in white dresses who walked in procession and I so wanted to be one of them. It was very lovely, orderly, and precise, and I remained but an admiring spectator. But for the past thirty years, I have been honored and privileged to walk in a different kind of procession with children. When the group assembles, it looks like unorganized chaos, but once they begin to move, everyone falls into place. One would think they had practiced. There is no more uniformity in dress. Now we have all the vibrant colors reflecting the energy and exuberance of the young. Bright gold crowns shine with all of the love that is showered on the small participants. Parents and others proudly walk with their children, making it even a family event. Some of the little ones ride in strollers and wagons. Each one presents a flower to the Mother of God and receives a blessing from the archbishop or a bishop.

Before I became a Sister of Saint Basil, my Pilgrimage was that of every young woman of that day, even with concern as to what to wear because we were dressed in our best then. I walked the grounds, prayed, participated in the services, bought a medovnik and shopped at the very much smaller and different Religious Gift Store. Prior to those big days, I had spent time helping the Sisters clean the Pilgrim Homes and make beds. I also learned how to fold cabbage leaves into holupki, taught by a group of blessed women volunteers, all of them gone from us and now smiling down on us from their eternal happiness.

Once I entered, the early years were busy with various tasks. The best part then was that a novice got to visit with her family for a little while! Then came years of teaching school in sometimes far away parishes. So Pilgrimage was a homecoming with a sad Labor Day leaving as we Sisters parted to travel to our appointed schools.

For many years, my responsibility was again at the Pilgrim homes. My charge was here because a lot of the women did not speak English, and I knew the Zemplin Slovak of my grandparents. These were the big years, when bus after bus rolled onto the grounds bringing pilgrims from near and far. It was an exciting and inspiring

time, and ladies looked forward to being together every year, exchanging stories of their lives from the past year, praying and singing hymns together sometimes all night. After all, this was Odupust – Pilgrimage – for many of them the highlight of their lives.

Recently I have worked at communication and information, which is very nice because I get to talk with nearly everyone. Occasionally I even get to use my Slovak again! Just as for the women mentioned above, the Pilgrimage is a highlight in my life. Perhaps you too are a long time pilgrim, and reading this has evoked some memories in you.

Because no matter how the years bring changes, the Pilgrimage continues to be such a beautiful, unique event that is so significant to our Byzantine Catholic Church. Please consider coming, whether for the first time or for a return after many times. For these few special days, we Sisters, our Hierarchs, Clergy, and people young and old, are pilgrims united together as at no other time, giving glory to God and honoring His Mother as Our Lady of Perpetual Help.

### FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 4 & SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 2015

#### Friday, September 4

7:00 p.m. - Office of Small Compline at Shrine Altar

#### Saturday, September 5

7:00 a.m. - 12 noon MYSTERY OF RECONCILIATION (Confessions) House of Prayer Patio

#### OPENING OF PILGRIMAGE

8:00 a.m. MATINS at Shrine Altar

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

#### 10:00 a.m. DIVINE LITURGY

Welcome: Sister Ruth Plante, OSBM

Divine Liturgy to be followed by procession to Lourdes Grotto for the Solemn Blessing of Water: procession to return to the House of Prayer at the conclusion of the Blessing.

1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. MYSTERY OF RECONCILIATION (Confessions) House of Prayer Patio

1:00 p.m. MOLEBEN at Shrine Altar

2:00 p.m.

CHILDREN'S PILGRIMAGE at Children's Tent  
ORIENTATION for TEENS at Prayer Garden  
ENRICHMENT SESSION at Trinity Center

3:00 p.m. TEEN PILGRIMAGE at Prayer Garden

#### Saturday, September 5 (Continued)

4:00 p.m. VESPER with DIVINE LITURGY at Shrine Altar

6:00 p.m. ENRICHMENT SESSION at Mausoleum

7:15 p.m. Procession from House of Prayer to Mount Macrina Cemetery

7:30 p.m. PARASTAS at Mount Macrina Cemetery  
CANDLELIGHT PROCESSION (Mount Macrina Cemetery to Shrine Altar)  
AKATHIST to OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP

Following Akathist:

TEEN SOCIAL at Prayer Garden  
YOUNG ADULT SOCIAL at Trinity Center

**Please note:** Curfew is 1:00 a.m. for those youth participating in Chaperoned Youth Activities. For all other youth, the curfew is 12 Midnight.

Although casual attire is acceptable, participants are asked to be mindful of the religious nature of the services and activities that take place and to dress accordingly to traditional Christian values and standards of modesty. Thank you!

### SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 6

7:00 a.m. MATINS at Shrine Altar

7:00 a.m. DIVINE LITURGY in House of Prayer Chapel

7:30 a.m. - 12 noon MYSTERY OF RECONCILIATION (Confessions at House of Prayer Patio)

8:30 a.m. DIVINE LITURGY - Slavonic at Shrine Altar

10:30 a.m. DIVINE LITURGY at Shrine Altar

11:00 a.m. MYSTERY OF ANOINTING at Trinity Center

12:30 - 5:00 p.m. MYSTERY OF RECONCILIATION (Confessions at the House of Prayer Patio)

1:00 p.m. CHILDREN'S PROCESSION with Special Blessing for Youth & Young Adults - from House of Prayer to Mother of God Shrine

1:30 - 2:30 p.m. MYSTERY OF RECONCILIATION (Confession for the infirm, sick and physically challenged at Manor Gazebo)

2:00 p.m. CHILDREN'S PILGRIMAGE at Children's Tent  
ENRICHMENT SESSION at Trinity Center  
TEEN PILGRIMAGE at Prayer Garden  
MYSTERY OF ANOINTING at Shrine Altar

3:45 p.m. Procession from House of Prayer to Mother of God Shrine

4:00 p.m. DIVINE LITURGY at Mother of God Shrine  
Words of Gratitude: Sister Ruth Plante, O.S.B.M.

7:15 p.m. Procession from House of Prayer to Mother of God Shrine

7:30 p.m. CANDLELIGHT PROCESSION (Beginning and ending at the Mother of God Shrine)

#### CLOSING OF THE PILGRIMAGE

Following the Candlelight Procession::

TEEN SOCIAL Prayer Garden Area  
YOUNG ADULT SOCIAL Trinity Center

### MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 7

9:30 a.m. DIVINE LITURGY at Shrine Altar



**The Sisters of St. Basil the Great**  
*warmly invite you to the*  
**81st Annual Pilgrimage in honor of**  
**Our Lady of Perpetual Help**  
**September 5 & 6, 2015**



*Mary, Model of Consecrated Life*

**Come and participate in:**

- *The beautiful Divine Liturgy*
- *Mystery of Reconciliation*
- *The popular Children's Procession*
- *The inspiring Candlelight Vigil*
- *Adult Enrichment Sessions*

**Mount Saint Macrina • Uniontown, Pennsylvania**

**724-438-8644**

**[www.sistersofstbasil.org](http://www.sistersofstbasil.org)**



# 61ST ANNUAL HOLY DORMITION PILGRIMAGE ST. MARY'S VILLA, SLOATSBURG, NY

SATURDAY, AUGUST 8TH & SUNDAY, AUGUST 9TH  
SISTERS SERVANTS OF MARY IMMACULATE

Theme: *Mary, Our Model of Perfect Commitment*



## Saturday, August 8th

12 Noon Food Available at Pavillion

1:00 PM Akathist to the Mother of God  
FATHER EDWARD CIMBALA

2:00 PM Presentations (listed below)

5:00 PM **Divine Liturgy**  
FATHER EDWARD CIMBALA, CELEBRANT/HOMILIST  
(GROTTO—ENGLISH)  
CHOIR: SAINT MARY'S, HILLSBOROUGH, NJ  
Blessing of Water (front of Villa)

8:00 PM **Moleben to the Mother of God**  
with Candlelight Procession (grotto)  
BISHOP KURT BURNETTE—CELEBRANT/HOMILIST

PANAKYHDA—SAINT MARY'S VILLA CHAPEL

\*\*\*TEEN CAMP OUT BEGINS SATURDAY AT 5:00 PM  
DIVINE LITURGY THROUGH SUNDAY\*\*\*

## Sunday, August 9th

8:00 AM **Akathist to the Mother of God**—Father Roman Malyarchuk, Rector of Saint Basil Seminary

10:30 AM **Pontifical Divine Liturgy with procession to the grotto**—followed by blessing of flowers. Archbishop Stefan Soroka, Metropolitan Archbishop of Philadelphia; Bishops Paul Chomnycky, OSBM, Bishop of the Eparchy of Stamford, CT; Bohdan Danylo—Bishop of the Eparchy of Saint Josaphat in Parma, OH—Homilist; Basil Losten, Bishop Emeritus of the Eparchy of Stamford, CT; Choir: Holy Family Ukrainian Catholic Church, Lindenhurst, NY

12:00 PM **Youth Liturgy** Father Walter Pasicznyk, main celebrant/homilist (chapel—English)

1:00 PM **Activity for youth/children**

1:30 PM **Blessing of the Sick** (Saint Mary's Villa Chapel & grotto steps) **Blessing of Religious Articles** (in front of Saint Joseph's Home) **Presentation**—Father Ivan Kaszczak—“Sheptytsky as Metropolitan and Pastor”

2:00 PM **Stations of the Cross**—Father Maxim Kobasuk, OSBM

3:00 PM **Moleben to the Mother of God**—Bishop Paul Chomnycky, OSBM—Celebrant and Homilist  
**Blessing of cars and buses**—Ivan Tyhovych

## ALL INVITED TO ATTEND!

### Presentations - Saturday (English)

2:00 PM Rt. Rev. Mitred Msgr. John Terlecky – “Mary’s Commitment Expressed Through Her Icons”  
2:45 PM Sister Kathleen Hutsko, SSMI – “The Heartbeat of the SSMI’s – “The Charism of Bl. Josaphata  
3:15 PM Father Ivan Kaszczak – “Sheptytsky as Metropolitan & Pastor”

### Presentation - Sunday (Ukrainian)

1:30 PM Father Ivan Kaszczak – “Sheptytsky as Metropolitan & Pastor”

EXHIBITS OF WOMEN/MEN RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES OF THE EASTERN CHURCH WILL BE ON DISPLAY

CONFESSIONS THROUGHOUT THE WEEKEND

# BISHOP KURT AND AREA CLERGY CELEBRATE FIRST FEAST DAY OF BLESSED MIRIAM TERESA DEMJANOVICH

Convent Station, NJ

On Friday, May 8, 2015, Bishop Kurt presided at a prayer service with readings to celebrate the very first feast day of Blessed Miriam Teresa Demjanovich. It was held at the Holy Family Chapel of the Sisters of Char-

ity in Convent Station, NJ. A brief reception followed the prayer service. In addition to Bishop Kurt, Bishop Emeritus Rodimer of Paterson, NJ, and members of the clergy of Eparchy of Passaic were in attendance..



# NEW ULTRASOUND MACHINE FOR LIGHTHOUSE CENTER

Paterson, NJ

In May, Bishop Kurt met with members of the State of New Jersey and Paterson Federation Knights of Columbus to present checks totaling more than \$25,000 to Debbie Provencher, Director of the Light House Pregnancy Center, located on Ellison Street in Paterson. These checks were presented for the purchase of a new ultrasound machine for the new center that is currently being built. The Knights of Columbus Supreme Council has already placed over 532 ultrasound machines in the US and Canada. In New Jersey, this marks the placing of the 19th ultrasound machine.

Bishop Kurt was the sponsor for this 19th machine and he and the others hold plaques received from the Director for their sponsorship.

Through the donations from the Supreme Council, local councils, and private individuals the Knights of Columbus have been able to save thousands of babies' lives through this program. Through these donations they hope to place many more ultrasound machines.





# SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

Father Jack Custer, S.T.D.

## “AT YOUR RIGHT HAND STOOD THE QUEEN:” PSALM 45

If you’ve ever been an altar server, you have seen the rite of Proskomidija, the preparation of the Eucharistic bread and wine before the public portion of the Liturgy begins. You would have seen the priest cut a particle of the prosfora and place it on the diskos while saying: “The Queen stood at your right hand vested in robes adorned with gold.” Those words are taken from Psalm 45: and they are applied here and elsewhere in our Tradition to the Mother of God.

Psalm 45 was composed to celebrate a wedding. Jews and Christians have always identified the original groom as King Solomon, who is also the groom in the biblical Song of Songs. But any mention of a wedding in the Bible should remind us of Christ the Bridegroom (Matthew 9:15; John 3:29) and the Wedding Banquet in the Kingdom of Heaven, the subject of several of Jesus’ parables (Matthew 22: 1-14; 25:1-13) and the glorious ending of God’s plan of salvation. Revelation 19:7-9; 21:9; 22:7).

When the psalmist says to the royal groom, “Your throne, O God, is forever” (v. 6) he can only be speaking to Jesus Christ, as the Epistle to the Hebrews (1:8-9) makes clear. But who is the royal bride? Thirty years before Saint John wrote the book of Revelation and described the heavenly wedding banquet, Saint Paul clearly identified Christ’s bride to be the Church: (Ephesians 5:25-32). Psalm 45 begins by praising Christ the Bridegroom (vv. 1-8) and then describes the

procession that brings His Bride, the Church, to Him (vv. 10-17). In the middle, stands v. 9: “At your right hand stands the queen.” This cannot refer to the bride who is processing in; this can only be the queen mother, the mother of the reigning king, who stands beside her son on his wedding day. This queen mother is Mary, the



Mother of God and her Dormition and bodily Assumption into heaven mark the moment when she took her place at her Son’s right hand.

Because v. 9 can only apply to Mary, our Tradition has read the whole second half of Psalm 45 in Marian terms as well. There is no confusion here between Bride and Queen Mother. Mary is, after all, an original member of the Church (John 2: 12; John 19:26-27; Acts 1:14) and, in her Dormition and bodily Assumption, she becomes the first to experience what the whole Church hopes for: “the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.”

So, the call to “listen, O daughter” (v. 10) points immediately to Mary’s experience at the Annunciation (Luke 1:26-38). “The king will desire your beauty” (v.11) is understood by various Fathers of the Church to express God’s specific choice of Mary, while her beauty, the result of her cooperation with God’s grace (Luke 1:28) in her life, can be seen as an indication of Mary’s personal sinlessness or her incorruption after death.

Psalm 45 figures prominently in the Vespers, Matins and Divine Liturgy for all the feasts of the Mother of God. At the feast of her Entrance into the Temple (November 21), the spotlight falls on v. 14-15: “She is led to the King with her maiden companions . . . they shall enter the King’s palace.” As we celebrate the Dormition of Mary this month, we can find in v. 9, “At your right hand stands the queen,” the prophecy of her bodily Assumption into heaven and reassurance of the hope God holds out for us all. [ECL](#)

**Next World Youth Day**  
Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

**Kraków, Poland**  
**July 25 - July 31, 2016**

**WILL YOU BE P.O.P.E?**  
**(Part Of the Pilgrimage Experience)**

<p><b>WHERE IS IT?</b> Kraków, Poland</p>	<p><b>WHEN IS IT?</b> July 24 – Aug 4, 2016.</p>	<p><b>WHO’S INVITED?</b> Ages 19-35</p>
---	--	---

**12-Day Pilgrimage with Airfare from New York<sup>a</sup> - \$ 3,769**  
<sup>a</sup>Minimum 15 pilgrims required for New York package with airfare.

**12-Day Pilgrimage Land-Only Package: - \$ 2,419**  
(does not include round-trip airfare from your departure city to Krakow)

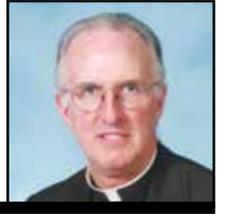
**Byzantine Catholic Intereparchial Youth Commission Custom Itinerary**

July 24 <sup>th</sup> , 2016	Depart From New York
July 25 <sup>th</sup>	Arrive in Europe, transfer to accommodations, and prepare for WYD
July 26 <sup>th</sup>	Krakow City Tour, WYD Opening Ceremonies in the evening
July 27 <sup>th</sup>	Catechesis in the morning, WYD cultural events in the afternoon
July 28 <sup>th</sup>	Catechesis in the morning, Welcoming Ceremonies with our Holy Father in the evening
July 29 <sup>th</sup>	Catechesis in the morning, WYD cultural events and Stations of the Cross in the afternoon
July 30 <sup>th</sup>	Pilgrimage in the morning, Vigil with our Holy Father throughout the night
July 31 <sup>st</sup>	Morning Mass with our Holy Father, pilgrimage back to accommodations
Aug 1 <sup>st</sup>	Day Trip to Zakopane: Visit the High Tatras where Saint Pope John Paul II hiked and skied in the mountains and made retreats. Take the cable car to the top of the mountain where you can see four countries from one spot.
Aug 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Day Trip to Czestochowa: Visit the Shrine of the Miraculous Icon of Our Lady of Czestochowa
Aug 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Day Trip to Auschwitz/Birkenau & Wadowice: Experience the site of the Jewish Holocaust in WWII, and then visit Wadowice, birthplace of Saint Pope John Paul II.
Aug 4 <sup>th</sup>	Depart Europe for home

**First Payment of \$600 due by July 10<sup>th</sup>.**  
**For information and reservations please contact:**  
**Very Reverend Michael J. Salnicko 570-650-3252 stnicpoc@earthlink.net**

# CATECHETICAL REFLECTIONS

Father Robert F. Slesinski, Ph.D.



## OMG: A SHOUT IN THE STREET?

*Installment 5 of 6 Inadvertently omitted*

The downcast words of William Wordsworth seem to tarry in my mind:

It is not now as it hath been of yore;—  
Turn wheresoe'er I may,  
By night or day,  
The things which I have seen I now can see no more.

One may well ask whether he is just melancholic or genuinely nostalgic for a past that has really passed with the coming of the Industrial Revolution. Has wonder before the beauties of nature now been truly eclipsed by a new order of things? This question is not a vain one as it was posed during a time of unquestionable change that was also accompanied by dramatic social movements.

On this note, we can directly ask whether Wordsworth, the romantic poet that he was, may have harbored any pro-Luddite sympathies. The Luddite Movement, after all, was at its heyday over the years 1811–1817 with the pronounced opposition of English textile artisans to the newly developed labor-replacing machinery like stocking and spinning frames and power looms, which could now replace skilled artisans with low-skilled, low-wage laborers. That physical acts of vandalism—industrial sabotage in other words—were perpetrated by the Luddites comes as no surprise.

Curiously in our own time, we sometimes encounter the term “Neo-Luddism” as some of our own contemporaries also bemoan advances in technology, especially in computer science, as being injurious to a vibrant workforce. Be that as it may, economic interests per se do not constitute a driving force inimical to philosophic wonder, which is of a different order. To the contrary, technological progress, it could be argued, can

even be enlisted as a means for fostering philosophic wonder insofar as it frees up society from mundane concerns and daily drudgery in favor of more leisure that in turn can only facilitate greater detachment from worldly concern that can serve to impede philosophic engagement with the world of being.

That sort of wonder is found in the verbalized angst of Hamlet as articulated in the opening line of his tortuous soliloquy in Shakespeare's play of the same name (Act III, Scene 1) in which he contemplates death and suicide: “To be, or not to be, that is the question—”. The dilemma of being is, indeed, uppermost in his mind. As he continues,

Whether 'tis Nobler in the mind to suffer  
The Stings and arrows of outrageous Fortune,  
Or to take Arms against a Sea of troubles,  
And by opposing, end them? To die, to sleep—  
No more; and by a sleep, to say we end  
The Heart-ache, and the thousand Natural Shocks,  
That Flesh is heir to? 'Tis a consummation  
Devoutly to be wished. To die, to sleep,  
To sleep, perchance to Dream; Aye  
For in that sleep of death, what dreams may come ...

In Hamlet's instance, we find ourselves before a tragic existence. But tragedy is not the sole purview of philosophic reflection whose object truly is at one with being itself—in its heights, depths, and expanse—in all that is true, good, and beautiful.

For the man/woman of action the thought of being an “armchair philosopher” does not conjure up much excitement. But in its own way philosophy truly is an adventure in ideas that ultimately engages its practitioner to the depths of

his or her being. But to philosophize truly one must be willing to step out of the workaday world, as it were. Even in contemplating the “ordinary” in this world a certain detachment is required—oddly enough to eventually effect a genuine engagement with the world, but at the level of being and ultimate importance.

As a venture into the realm of ideas, the philosophical act entails an act of transcendence, the daring to get outside of ourselves and our daily concern in order to give ourselves over to a higher task, namely, to put the domain of functional knowledge behind us in order to enter into a world of genuine freedom beyond being at the disposal of the external factors of everyday life that impede growth in interiority. In this fashion, the philosophical act concerns not the exploitation of external phenomena, but rather a participation in the world order itself, meaning therefore that our knowledge of the world in being is not just a “knowledge to be thought,” but one to be lived. That, in fine, is what it means to enjoy wisdom, the impulse toward which begins in wonder before the face of being and in our love for it, the very meaning of philosophy.

For the religious philosopher (an atheistic philosophy, I would maintain, is a contradiction in terms), the love of wisdom cannot but lead to a love of Wisdom the very Word (the Logos, i.e., Jesus Christ) of which to us enables us to grasp that “I am” and makes us exclaim along with the Russian symbolist poet Viacheslav Ivanov (1866–1949) in an ultimate word of recognition: Ty Esi (“Thou Art”), i.e., OMG! Thou Art truly the source and sustenance of my—our—existence. [ECL](#)

## HOLY GHOST CHOIR OFFERS ALL NEW CDs AND DVDs

*It's time to update your collection of traditional music with re-mastered CDs and first time offered DVDs.*

1. **“Holy Ghost Choir in Concert”** – Selections of Slavonic and American Folk Tunes.
2. **“Divine Liturgy in Old Slavonic”**
3. **“Special Collection of Choral Music”** – Selection of Ruthenian, Slovak, Croatian, Russian, Ukrainian, and Hungarian Folk Songs
4. **“Traditional Byzantine Carols”** – Collection of Christmas Music in Slavonic, Hungarian and English.
5. **“Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom in English”**
6. **“Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom in Church Slavonic”** – Original Soundtrack from the 50th Anniversary Commemorative Video
7. **“Passion and Resurrection of Christ”** – Traditional Byzantine Lenten and eastern hymns in Slavonic and English
8. **“Marian and Eucharistic Songs of Praise”** – Collection of Byzantine BVM and Communion Hymns in Slavonic and English
9. **DVD Video “Gubi – Jaslickari”** – Male Chorus presentation of The Bethlehem Carolers in Slavonic – Carpatho Rusyn. (\$16.95 each DVD).
10. **DVD Video “The Byzantine Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom in Church Slavonic”** church Slavonic Commemorative Production with Four Concelebrants (English Liturgical subtitles included), 90 minutes (\$21.95 each DVD)

*Please add \$3.00 Shipping and handling for each order. Items 1 through 8 are offered digitally re-mastered \$12.95 CD format. Make checks payable to: Holy Ghost Choir, 2310 South 24th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19145-3207.*



## UNDERSTANDING ICONS

Father Joseph Bertha, Ph.D.

### ICON OF CHRIST: IMAGE MADE WITHOUT HUMAN HANDS

The Holy Mandylion, sometimes mistranslated into English as the holy napkin, also known as Veronica's Veil, is considered by many to be the first icon. The image shows Christ as the expiator of sins, refulgently radiant the Mercy of God on His countenance. On the Byzantine liturgical calendar the conveyance of the icon to Constantinople is commemorated on August 16th, in order to recall the icon's transference from Syria to the Byzantine Capital.

#### Art History

This icon shows only the head of Our Lord traced or superimposed upon a suspended cloth, sometimes shown as an ornamental Jewish tallit (prayer shawl), alternately as a piece of linen. Our Lord's head is surrounded by a cruciform halo inscribed with the three Greek letters (o wv) literally "the Being" or "I am Whom Am." His gaze is usually off to one side, neither of the eyes encounter the viewer. The icon depicts the imprint of Our Lord's face as He is on the way to Golgotha and preserves this moment of His sacrifice as the Lamb of God.

*The Portrayal of the countenance and Father Pavel Florensky.*

In his wonderful book called *Iconostasis*, the martyr to atheistic communism, Father Florensky, distinguishes between the face and countenance when discussing the icon. He writes that the face is what we show to the world, and unfortunately many times it is disguised or disfigured. Conversely, the icon radiantly shines forth with a countenance, the likeness of God which can be perceived in a human face. The countenance of God's Mercy appears refulgent in the icon not made by human hands.

Since there is only the Head of Our Savior the icon depict four out of the five senses. Interestingly, this icon thought to be painted without human agency does not depict the hands of Our Lord! The gaze of Our Lord is the most compelling sense depicted. Only in

this icon of Our Lord are the eyes depicted in a very unique manner; they are both usually looking off into the distance surveying the horizon for the return of the Prodigal Son(s) in repentance returning to the Father.

This icon captures and freezes an extremely important moment in the life of Our Lord, it is the Lamb of God on his journey to be sacrificed for the love of sinners



"Image Not Made by Human Hands" by Yvonne Anne Hajdu-Cronin.

on the Cross. Every detail in the icon highlights and emphasizes the mercy of God.

#### Scriptural antecedent

Our Lord is called "Lamb of God" by Saint John the Baptist in the gospel of John: he cries out, "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world!" Saint John recognizes the expiatory nature of the Messiah as he quotes from Isaiah referring to Our Lord as the Lamb of God. He preached as Isaiah from ancient times about the journey of the lamb to His death, which the Church celebrates on Great and Holy Friday. In the Vespers for Great Friday, Isaiah 53:2-7 is read:

"For he grew up before him like

a young plant, and like a root out of the ground. He had no form or comeliness that we would look at him and no beauty that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he has borne our grief and carried our sorrows, yet we esteemed him stricken, struck down by God and

the square piece of bread (*ahnets* or "Lamb") cut out of the loaf by the priest while praying the words of Isaiah and making the sign of the cross over the piece of bread.

#### Liturgical celebration

Two hymns from Vespers for August 16th describe the event:

"With what earthly eyes shall we behold Your icon, glistening with divine light, upon which the angelic hosts cannot easily gaze? Today it is departing from the land of unbelievers, and at the divine bidding, it is going to the capital city of the God-fearing people. O Christ, kings are seen bowing down before Your icon, filled with faith and awe at its arrival."

"O Word, with what earthly hands shall we touch Your icon, O Savior, the image of our sinless God and Lord beyond all reach, for our sins have made us defiled and impure. The cherubim cover their eyes and tremble, the seraphim dare not gaze upon Your glory. Creation serves You in fear. Do not condemn us even though we are unworthy, O Christ, for we kiss Your awesome image in faith."

Even though Byzantines are unique in their liturgical calendar by memorializing the journey of an icon, we cannot overlook the significance and meaning of this particular icon or relic, thought by many to be the cloth sent by Our Lord to King Abgar of Syria which brought about his healing and conversion to Christianity.

#### Spiritual meaning

The Image Not Made by Human Hands is an appropriate image to be placed in the area where the Sacrament of Reconciliation is celebrated, so that penitents might be moved to repent of their sinfulness. This is especially referred to in the icon by the aversion of Our Lord's eyes off into the distance, and not directly gazing at the sinner. He bestows God the Father's great Mercy to the repentant sinner! **ECL**

afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole; and with his stripes we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray. We have turned everyone to his own way, and they Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearer is silent, so he opened not his mouth."

The Old Testament prophets all preached on the need for repentance, fulfilled in Christ our Savior. Even during the Rite of Preparation for the Divine Liturgy, Jesus as Lamb is referenced by



Icon of Pentecost

As we continue through the eparchial “Year of the Epistle,” we have reached the conclusions of Saint Paul’s epistle to the Romans, followed by his first epistle to the Corinthians and turn now in August to his second epistle to the Corinthians. Many people are familiar with a well-known verse taken from Chapter 13, verse 13: “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God and Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.” This is Saint Paul speaking his

farewell to that community.

Among the mysteries of our Catholic Faith, none is perhaps more practically important for our personal and spiritual lives than the doctrine of grace which is at the very core of Christianity because it bespeaks of the existence of a supernatural order. The Catechism of the Catholic Church tells us grace is “a participation in the life of God” (No. 1997). Grace gives heaven its only meaning as a prolongation of life in God’s friendship here on earth. To be in God’s friendship requires that our soul not be darkened by the stain of serious sin.

Grace is a gift freely bestowed by God as we cooperate with Him in the salvation of our immortal soul. It is infused into our soul at the moment of Baptism which is the door opening for us supernatural life, that is to say, grace raises our natural ex-

istence to a supernatural level. Baptism is the only sacramental means for conferring the life of grace, recalling our Lord’s words to Nicodemus, “Unless a man be born again of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.” (John 3:5)

Grace is then merited through prayer, reception of the Sacraments and good works. The gift of grace is the fruit of the blood of Christ shed for us on Calvary and re-presented in the unbloody Eucharistic sacrifice. To make our supernatural life possible, the pristine state of our soul once deadened by the sin of our first parents, Adam and Eve, was redeemed not with perishable things such as gold and precious stones but with the precious blood of Christ. We can then identify grace with divine love, truly a dynamic power that God has grown and mature under His all-providing hand.

## GRACE

Saint John the Evangelist tells us that “...God is love. In this has the love of God been shown in our case, that God has sent His only-begotten Son into the world that we may live through Him. In this is love, not that we have loved God, but that He has first loved us, and sent His Son a propitiation for our sins.” (I John 4:8-10) The price paid to make our supernatural life possible was the life of His own Son Who became one of us, taking on our human nature, in all things except sin, destroying death – the penalty of sin – by His passion and death.

In the words of the Catechism of the Catholic Church: “The grace of Christ is the gratuitous gift that God makes to us of His own life, infused by the Holy Spirit into our soul to heal it of sin and to sanctify it.” (No. 1999). **ECL**



Monsignor John T. Sekellick, JCL



## SCHOOL OF PRAYER

Father G. Scott Boghossian

### Prayer is Talking to God

Prayer is simply talking to God. There are many ways to pray, but the essential thing is to communicate with God. Some people say their prayers from the prayer book, or the Divine Office, or the Psalms, or use prayer beads, but don’t often converse with God. All of these forms of prayer are good and serve an important purpose. Nevertheless, we must learn to talk to God. Saint Gregory of Nyssa says that prayer is a conversation with God. Saint John of the Ladder says that to pray is to converse with God. Do you talk to God? Yes, you “say your prayers,” but do you talk to God?

Saint Alphonsus de Liguori, Doctor of the Church and Patron Saint of priest-confessors and moral theologians, wrote a short book called “How To Converse With God.” In this famous work of Christian spirituality he tells us how important this type of prayer is and urges us to engage in it. Speak to God as though you were alone with Him, speak familiarly, in your own words. In this type of prayer, there is no need for archaic English, words like “Ye, Thee, Thine and Thy,” or perfect grammar. Talk to God with

confidence and with love, just like you speak to your closest confidant. For some people it may seem wearisome and perhaps boring to read prayers from a book, or recite them from memory, but praying to God by simply talking to Him is usually easy and pleasant.

Remember that God is always near. “In Him we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28). He is pleased to hear us talking to Him. “But I don’t know what to say to Him,” you say. Tell Him about the events of your day, of your plans for the future, your trials and struggles, your fears, and whatever else is on your mind. Psalm 62:8 says “Trust in Him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us.” Pour out your heart before the Lord.

Does it show a lack of respect and reverence to speak to the Almighty in such a familiar way? It is true that God is Almighty, and Holy, and that He inspires awe and fear in the hearts of His creatures. Psalm 97 says “Fire goes before Him, and burns up his adversaries round about” and “the mountains melt like wax before the LORD.” But because of what Our

Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ has accomplished for us by His death and resurrection, we are now God’s children. Through faith, repentance, and baptism, we have become members of God’s family, His intimate friends.

Postures often used in prayer, such as kneeling or standing, are good because they show God the reverence He deserves and help us to concentrate, but these postures are not always absolutely necessary. It is not wrong to talk to God while we are waiting on line, walking, driving, or lying in our bed. If we are in a public place, God knows our thoughts, and we can speak to Him silently without disturbing anyone. No matter where we are, God is present and hears us talking to Him in prayer.

It is essential to have some time set aside every day to pray. We might get busy and miss our allotted time to pray and read the Scriptures. Even so, we can talk to God anytime. When we get up in the morning, when we lie in bed at night, when we are at work or running errands during the day, it is always time to converse with the God who loves us.

What a gift it is to be able to talk with God. Let’s not forget it! Talk to Him as often as you can. He won’t get tired of your conversation. Tell Him whatever occurs to you as you would tell your best friend.

You may object, “what’s the point in telling God all about myself and my affairs, since He, being Omniscient, already knows all about me!?” Yes, you are correct, God already knows everything about you, but Saint Alphonsus tells us that God will deal with us as though He were ignorant of us and our affairs, if we don’t speak to Him and request His help.

Talk to God when you experience troubles and trials, heartaches and pain. He will hear your prayer. He will remove the trial from you or give you the strength and courage to endure it. Tell Him of the fears and sadness that oppress you and He will give you peace. “...Let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:6,7). Continue to “say your prayers” but make sure you never forget to talk to God. **ECL**



## FAITH AND COMMUNITY ISSUES

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

### THE ROLES OF DRUGS AND ALCOHOL IN SUICIDE

#### *Effects of Drugs and Alcohol in the Suicide attempt*

Comer (2011) uses the studies of Crosby et al., (2009); Lejoyeux et al., (2008); and Mc Cloud et al., (2004) as examples of studies that reveal the number of people who imbibe alcohol immediately prior to committing an act of suicide number as high as 70 percent. Autopsies as part of the forensic examination reveals twenty-five percent of these individuals are legally intoxicated (Comer, 2011 citing Flavin et al., 1990). The thinking is that the ability of alcohol to lower the inhibitory factors in human personality traits comes into play. The fear factor around committing suicide is sufficiently anesthetized, allowing more aggressive qualities and emotions to surface while at the same time, preventing the problem-solving, judging centers of the brain to function appropriately with the result being an attempt and in many cases the successful carrying out of a suicide.

According to Comer (2011), the role and effect that Drugs play is very similar to that of Alcohol in the carrying out of suicide, the drug scene being more attractive to the younger set, teens and young adults (Comer 2011, citing Darke et al., 2009, 2005; and Lester, 2000). Comer posits the heroin overdose of Kurt Cobain a musician as a possible example of drug-induced suicide back in 1994 (Comer citing Colburn, 1996).

#### *Mental Disorders and their role in Suicide*

While anxiety and a troubled mind may be present in the person about to commit suicide, it does not necessarily follow that they concomitantly suffer a diagnosable psychological disorder as defined by the latest edition of the DSM. Comer (2011) on the other hand, cites Berman (2009) and Tatarelli et al. (2007) in making the observation that the majority of all people who commit suicide do display symptoms that strongly correspond to diagnosable psychological disorders. Comer makes the point that according to research as many as 50% of suicide victims were victims of severe depression with about 20% in the throes of chronic alcoholism with 10% diagnosed schizophrenia. According to Comer (2011) who cites Sadock and Sadock (2007), "as many as 15 per cent of people with these disorders try to kill themselves

People who are both depressed and dependent on alcohol seem particularly prone to suicidal impulses" (Comer, 2011, p. 238).

Comer (2011) citing Weinberg and Maltzberger (2007), makes the case that people with borderline personality disorder, will also attempt to harm themselves or threaten to do so as part of their personality disorder profile. People with a history of major depressive disorder will find themselves in the throes of suicidal ideation. Comer cites Rihmer et al., (1995) in presenting a program of teaching doctors recognition of early stage depression and aggressively treating the symptoms. Conversely, it is precisely when a depressed individual begins to come out of depression that the chances of the individual committing suicide radically increase. Comer cites Sadock and Sadock (2007) that upon coming out of a depressed state the burst of energy that comes about gives impetus to act upon the suicidal ideations thought out during the depressive phase.

Comer cites Werth (2004) in making a case for a connection among serious physical illness, severe depression, and suicide attempts. Comer states that, "a study of 44 patients with terminal illnesses revealed that fewer than one-quarter of them had thoughts of suicide or wished for an early death and that those who did were all suffering from major depressive disorder (p. 238, Comer 2011, citing Brown et al., 1986).

#### *Substance abuse connections to suicidal ideation and activity*

Comer cites Buri et al. (2009); Clay (2009); and Roy (2009) in connecting people taking alcohol immediately prior to a suicide attempt with long histories of substance abuse. There is no clear link, according to Comer between substance abuse histories and suicide, but there may be some connection between the lifestyles, tragic as they present themselves who suffer from substance abuse and experiencing a sense of being trapped by the offending substance with no exit leads to suicidal ideation.

Another consideration Comer (2011) raises is the factor of psychological pain, or a heightened sense of desperation that may bring about simultaneous substance abuse and suicide (Comer citing Sher et al. 2005). The downward spiral of substance abuse and psychological pain

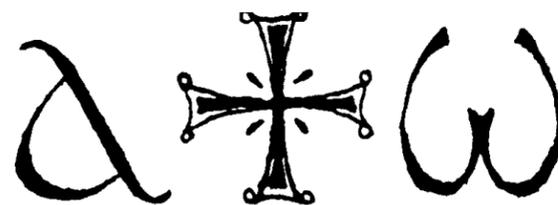
can develop a situation that aggravates rather than alleviates the problems (Comer citing Maris, 2001).

#### *The Role of Schizophrenia in Suicidal ideation and activity*

The sufferer of schizophrenia may experience audio hallucinations (hearing voices) or delusional thinking (having thoughts or beliefs that are bizarre or clearly wrong). According to Comer (2011), the common belief leads the public to opinion that when sufferers of schizophrenia commit an act of suicide they are guided to do so by voices, "commanding hem to do so or to a delusion that suicide is a grand and noble gesture" (Comer, 2011, p. 238). According to the research conducted by Heisel, (2008); and Pompili and Lester (2007) and cited by Comer (2011) people suffering from schizophrenia are more prone to reflect demoralization or fear that their mental situation will only get worse with the passage of time.

Relapsing, unemployed sufferers of younger ages tend to develop the belief that the schizophrenia will only continue to disrupt their lives more and more with the passage of time and without an end to the disruptive cycling. The substandard living conditions many sufferers are condemned to live out becomes a hopeless situation the situations notwithstanding, Comer cites both Pompili and Lester (2007) that among sufferers of schizophrenia, suicide is a leading cause of death.

In the next installment, we will consider the role model as a contagion of suicide particular to the teenage subculture: how powerful an influence do rock stars and actors have on the minds and feelings of the young where suicide is concerned, as well as the role of music as a cause for inspiring suicidal ideation and activity. **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@eparchyofpassaic.com**

#### **Article Submission Requirements:**

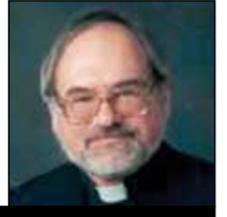
- Article must be approved by the pastor
- Article written in Microsoft Word
- Author's name
- Photographer's name
- Key people present in photographs
- Photographs preferred at a resolution of-

300ppi, 150ppi minimum

- Photographs must be attached to an email; they may not be embedded in the body of the text.

# THE BYZANTINE LITURGY

By Archbishop David Petras, SEOD



## WHO IS GOD?

### Part 3

That God is has meaning for our faith in resurrection. God is not some distant clock-maker, but the intimate Giver of Life, for “it is the spirit that gives life. (John 6:63)” This title is one of the most frequently used in the Liturgy of the Church. Our experience of God is rooted in our experience that we exist. We are here because God has brought us into existence and sustains us in being. We profess that twice in the Divine Liturgy, in the Prayer of the Trisagion, “Holy God ... you brought all things from nonexistence into being,” and in the Anaphora itself, “You brought us out of nonexistence into being.” Because of this, we can have hope in the Resurrection, “[Moses] called ‘Lord’ the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, and he is not God of the dead, but of the living, for to him all are alive. (Luke 20:37-38).”

The most ardent monotheists, the ancient Jews knew this: “You are mighty, humiliating the proud; strong, judging the ruthless; you live forevermore, and raise the dead; you make the wind to return and the dew to fall; you nourish the living, and bring the dead to life; you bring forth salvation for us in the blinking of an eye. Blessed are you, O Lord, who bring the dead to life.”

God is unity. This is why it is so crucial to confess the oneness of God. God is not “dispersed” in space and time, but is the one ground from which all being exists, explaining our hope for “being in God.” Jesus taught: “I pray not only for them (the disciples), but also for those who will believe in me through their word, so that they may all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us, that the world may believe that you sent me. And I have given them the glory you gave me, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may be brought to perfection as one, that the world may know that you sent me, and that you loved them even as you loved me. (John 17:20-23)” This helps also to explain the nature of our consciousness and the possibility of deification, we find our center in the one God, who is closer to us than we are to ourselves.

Why, one might ask, if we are truly in the image and likeness of God, did he not create us immediately immortal. The human condition is that we are, indeed, intelligent, free, conscious creatures. We can measure the universe in which

we live and reason to and praise its Creator. This is a kind of an ascension. From the dust of the earth, to a living creature, to a sentient, worshipping creature of faith and hope, to eventually a divine creature. St. Paul understood this, when he said that what is corruptible must become incorruptible, what is natural must become spiritual. (1 Corinthians 15:44). He concludes: “Just as we have borne the image of the earthly one, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly one. (1 Corinthians 15:49)” We should not see his contrast natural-spiritual according to a certain present-day category. He does not mean body-soul. St. Paul was Jewish, he did not think in dualistic terms. “Natural” or “psychicon” meant the whole human being, but in this mortal life. “Spiritual” likewise meant the whole human being, but not a disembodied soul, but in a risen, glorious body. Ancient Jewish categories were not Greek, but also not so simple. There was a concept of “life after death” and some continuous existence between physical death and “spiritual” resurrection, but the human being could not be complete until the body was restored.

There will be a “new creation,” but we must pass through the door of the mortal body. The process is the same for us as for Jesus: conception, birth, death, resurrection, ascension. But if we do not pass through a mortal life, then there is not a human creature that is deified. On Mt. Sinai, when Moses asked to see God, he was told, “no one can see me and live, (Exodus 33:20)” and St. John wrote, “No one has ever seen God. (1 John 4:12)” We can “see” God only when we have passed through death. Our mortal lives are “book-ended” by nothingness before conception and eternal life after death. They are a thin line between two infinities. The Liturgy tells us, “Our life vanishes like smoke; like ash and dust, it exists for an instant, then quickly disappears” (Aposticheron, Tone 3, Saturday Matins) This does not mean that our earthly lives are insignificant. In fact, if we believe in the Resurrection, then each moment of our lives are a foreshadowing of eternity. Only when we do not believe, then life becomes insignificant and meaningless. Ultimately, this is why the Church condemned the idea of a pre-existence of souls as a heresy (Second Council of Constantinople, 553). If that were so, then the human person would be essentially a soul, which descends for a while into a body and then returns to spiritual existence. The human person

in its completeness has a spiritual and bodily existence necessary to its nature. Our mortal lives are not a detour from eternity but a necessary step in the process.



No one comes back from the dead. It is clear that this “journey” is made but once and in one direction. No one can tell us of “life after death,” because we can understand it only by dying ourselves. Likewise we cannot understand the inner nature of God, for to do this, we would have to be God by nature. St. Gregory the Theologian once said that it is insanity to inquire into the inner life of the Trinity. Likewise, a “life after death,” is incomprehensible to one who is alive. In the parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man, Father Abraham refuses to send Lazarus back to warn the rich man’s brothers about Gehenna. This was not out of uncharity, but simply because it would be futile: “If they will not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone should rise from the dead. (Luke 16:31)” There was one resurrection that did change the world profoundly: the resurrection of Christ. Jesus said, “An evil and unfaithful generation seeks a sign, but no sign will be given it except the sign of Jonah the prophet. Just as Jonah was in the belly of the whale three days and three nights, so will the Son of Man be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights. (Matthew 12:39-40)” **ECL**

## 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:  
Saint Mary Choir  
231 Pacific Avenue,  
Jersey City, NJ 07304



## SPIRITUAL REFLECTIONS

Deacon Lewis Rabayda

### THE PROGRESS OF ABSOLUTE LOVE

As humans, we look forward to a good future—we want progress in our lives. We don't always want things to stay the same, and sometimes we want to live better and more rewarding lives. But what do we mean when we say progress? Could it be possible that a better future for me is different than a better future for someone else? Could it be that my understanding of the world is different from how someone else understands it? The short of it is: yes. We are experiencing a clash of world views today. We find ourselves divided because we are not speaking from the same perspective.

The perspective of the true Christian is a constant perspective. But, if we are well formed in our understanding of Scripture and Church teaching, then our perspective will be the perspective of God through the Holy Spirit. We will see the world through the eyes of the One who created it, we can see the good in it, and we can see those aspects of it which oppose the good. This perspective will help us to understand what is good and helpful for us and likewise what will harm us. God wants us to be happy, but happiness according to God is to follow His commandments. God gave us these commandments because He knows that if we follow them, we will indeed be happy.

God knows the results of sin and of rejecting His love. Lucifer was the first to fall because of the vice of Pride, he thought that he knew better than God and that he did not have to follow what God wanted. Lucifer is the prime example of what Love is

not. Love is not spiteful, hateful, malicious, nor destructive. Love does not lead others into sin, nor does it lead others away from God. These actions are brought about by the rejection of God's love. The fruits of love are a movement towards God, they are a building up of person and society by conscious acts of goodness.

The great saints through time have shown us what true love looks like in a human being, for they have shown us the unmistakable joy that comes from following the will of God. A modern example is Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta who showed us on the television screens in our living rooms the joy and happiness that fol-

lowing God provides. This happiness does not come from rejecting God's will and from rejecting His notion of love. It is this perspective that helps us to see the world through the eyes of our creator.

Progress for the true Christian, then, is to move towards a union with God. A society would exhibit progress if it were directed towards salvation, and likewise be diverted from damnation. Progress is when we overcome the passions of our bodies and the vices of this world, it is when we overcome temptation. Progress itself does not change, even though it may seem that our notion of progress is different from someone else's. It is this constant

perspective of God's love, a love that is absolute, unchanging, that helps us to see the difference between the progress of the spiritual life and the progress of the world. Throughout our liturgical worship, we pray over and over again the phrase, "now and ever and forever," and other English translations of the same phrase say, "unto ages of ages." In the Book of Revelation, Jesus says, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end" (22:13). From these words of Jesus, it does not seem that His perspective is subject to change. The source of true love, the source of our existence, is unchanging in His desire for us to progress towards our union with Him, until we are partakers of the Kingdom of Heaven. **ECL**



#### Eastern Catholic Life

Circulation Department  
445 Lackawanna Avenue  
Woodland Park, NJ 07424

Next Issue:  
September, 2015

Copy Deadline:  
August 14th

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.

## UPCOMING EVENTS FOR AUGUST

### Eparchial and Parish Events

6 Transfiguration of Our Lord  
*Solemn Holy Day \* Chancery closed*

8-9 Holy Dormition Pilgrimage  
*Sloatsburg, NY*

15 Dormition of the Theotokos  
*Holy Day of Obligation*

16 Re-dedication of Saint Nicholas Church building with consecration of the new altar and church  
*Danbury, CT \* 3:00 p.m.*

29 Beheading of the Holy Prophet, Forerunner, and Baptist, John  
*Simple Holy Day*  
Dedication of Our Lady of Hungary Chapel, Crypt Church of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception  
*Bishop Kurt in attendance*  
*Washington, DC. Mass at 2 p.m.*