



BISHOP KURT VISITS SAINT CHARLES BORROMEO SEMINARY

Hierarchical Divine Liturgy celebrated for seminary community

A Personal and Vocational Reflection by Maximilian Mukerjee



On April 15th, 2015, The Eastern and the Western sides of Our Lord's Church met at Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary in Philadelphia, PA. I had the distinct privilege to attend and serve at the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy which was celebrated. The seminary is an absolutely beautiful property, massive in expanse, and the beautiful Romanesque architecture gave the place a very pious and holy feeling where the study of God truly took place. The hallways were beautifully decorated with artwork from a local artist who had donated it to the seminary in the service of Our Lord. The general living quarters were kept simpler, but, nonetheless elegant and tasteful.

Our Chief Shepherd, Bishop Kurt, was the main celebrant of the Liturgy, along with many priests and two deacons from the Eparchy of Passaic. The rector of Saint Charles Seminary, Bishop Timothy Senior, Auxiliary Bishop of Philadelphia,

attended in choir. The Liturgy took place in the seminary's Immaculate Conception Chapel at 4 p.m. A portable icon screen was moved in by Father Edward Higgins, Master of Ceremonies and Pastor of Holy Ghost Parish in South Philadelphia, along with helpers, and was set up promptly before the Liturgy. The entire seminary was full of energy and the seminarians were eager to experience a Byzantine Catholic Liturgy, while the Eastern Catholic priests were eager to share our beautiful liturgical practices with the seminary community.

The Liturgy was an absolutely heavenly experience. I was assigned to the task of assisting Father Edward Higgins by instructing the seminarians in liturgical practice and etiquette during the service. We were serving with eight acolytes from the seminary. An acolyte is a minor ministry in the Roman Rite which is the equivalent of our subdiaconate. The acolytes performed as

if they had been Byzantine Catholic their entire lives. Raymond J Mastorberte served as cantor, assisted by other area cantors, and ably led the more than 150 seminarians in singing the praises of the Lord. I felt like I was surrounded by a choir of heavenly angels. An extremely powerful part of the Liturgy was when the time had come for the chanting of the Nicene Creed and the two bishops embraced for the Kiss of Peace. It truly was a powerful sign of the unity, the two Churches coming together in a symbol of fraternal unity: both sides of the One True Church, East and West, uniting in a gesture of true brotherhood in Christ.

After Liturgy, we were treated to a delicious meal in the seminary's refectory. One aspect of seminary life there that was quickly noticed is that they have the seminarians act as the serving staff! For the meal, we were seated amongst the seminarians and had an opportunity to discuss with them what seminary

life was like in the Western Church. The character and manners of the seminarians was so impressive: they were truly young men who lived and practiced the teachings of Jesus Christ. These young men came from parishes all across the United States and some were even from other countries. One young man had come all the way from Singapore to study at the seminary! The age range of the young men was greater than our Saints Cyril and Methodius Seminary, as they still had what they called the "collegiate program" where young men enter the seminary directly from high school.

At the conclusion of the meal, Bishop Timothy gave a final word of thanks to Bishop Kurt and the rest of the Byzantine Catholic priests and deacons for coming and sharing our Byzantine Liturgy with them. In turn, Bishop Kurt rose and thanked them for being so warm and hospitable towards us and hopes that we may return in the future. Then, in a

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I LIFT UP MY EYES...

Pastoral Reflections of Bishop Kurt

DAVID DANCED WITH ALL HIS MIGHT

“David went and brought up the ark of God. And when those who bore the ark had gone six paces, he sacrificed an ox and a fatling. And David danced before the Lord with all his might.” David, the mighty warrior king, was also a singer and played a harp that he made himself. His original introduction into the center of power was because King Saul suffered from severe depression, which the scripture attributes to an evil spirit, and his servants found the shepherd David to sing and play for him. The music of David must have been very sweet indeed to cure the depression of the king. As an aside, when Jesus walked on water it was on the Sea of Galilee. The Hebrew name for this lake is Kinnereth which means lyre. Some people believe it is named that because it shaped like a lyre; but no one knows for sure.

One thing that we know with certainty is that music and dancing and poetry have been an important part of our religion since at least the time of Moses some 3,000 years ago. The first song that is mentioned in the Bible is when Moses and all “the sons of Israel” sing a song of victory after God drowns the army of Pharaoh. Not to be outdone, Miriam, the sister of Moses, picks up a tambourine. All the other women get tambourines and Miriam leads the women in music and dancing. Moses sang another song at the end of his life, in which he sums up a little history and a lot of theology for the Hebrews.

The next large musical production in the Bible celebrates the victory of the prophetess and judge Deborah. Her victory was a turning point in the military history of the chosen people in the Promised Land. They mostly stayed in the hills and avoided the plains where the Canaanites held a military advantage with their horse drawn chariots. For thousands of years now victory often goes to the people with the more advanced technology. But Deborah called the general Barak and told him to gather an army for a great battle. God intervened in the battle when rain trapped the chariots in the mud. Deborah warned Barak that the final victory would be to a woman, and indeed, the opposing general was killed by Jael, a woman. According to the scriptures, Debo-

rah and Barak sang a song of victory together, a duet.

We sing the Song of Deborah in our Matins service, as well as the Song of Moses. Have you ever wondered why we sing “When Israel walked through the deep sea, as on dry land” at the Parastas? What does that have to do with funerals? Well, that hymn was written to go with the Song of Moses at Matins. These major songs that are recorded in the Bible we call “scripture can-



ticles” and they are supposed to be sung at Matins.

The great musician in the history of our religion, as mentioned above, is the warrior king David. In Psalm 151 (found in some bibles), David tells us that as he sat out on the hillside at night watching his sheep under the stars, he made a musical instrument with his own hands, and sang songs to the Lord. The Lord heard his singing and made him king. In the Bible we have the Book of Psalms, many of which mention musical instruments. Some psalms come with musical directions at the beginning. Because they were written so long ago, we don’t know what the directions mean anymore, but they are there. The end of the Book, Psalm 150 is all about music, and lists trumpet, lute, harp, timbrel, dance, strings, pipe, cymbal, and (for good measure) loud clashing cymbals. I quoted from this Psalm for my motto, “Praise him with sound of trumpets” because there is a hunting horn on the coat of arms

of the Burnette family.

Many of the great songs of the Old Testament take place after a delivery from danger, as in the songs of Moses and Deborah mentioned above. But sometimes they sing while they are in the middle of trouble. Jonah sings a song inside the belly of the fish. We don’t know whether the fish liked the song or not, but it vomited Jonah on the beach afterwards. And in the Book of Daniel, the three Hebrews Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego sang hymns while they were walking around in the fiery furnace.

In the Gospel of Luke, there are two of the most popular hymns in history. After Zechariah gets his speech back at the birth of Saint John the Baptist, he can’t control himself, and he bursts forth with a hymn describing not only the birth of his son John, but also the coming of God’s promised mercy in Jesus. This poem has many musical settings and is called the *Benedictus* in the West. And when the Mother of God meets her cousin Elizabeth, she composes a poem on the spot, “My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit takes joy in God my Savior.” The west calls this song the Magnificat, and in our church we call it the *Velicanije*. There is no doubt that the greatest patron of the arts in the history of the world is the Catholic Church, and according to music historians, the Magnificat has been set to music more than any other poem in history.

In the past 2000 years, the Bible has been the constant source of inspiration of musicians and composers. The so called “serious” composers such as Vivaldi, and Bach, and Handel, and Beethoven turned to the Bible for the texts of great compositions. Also the illiterate American slaves drank from the well of



Bible stories when they composed songs to lift their spirits and enkindle their hope of a better life. These natural geniuses invented new kinds of music inspired by their faith.

Even in the darkness of the twentieth century, cosmopolitan composers returned to the shepherd boy on the hillside singing to the Lord and playing his harp. Igor Stravinsky wrote a setting of Psalms 38, 39, 40, and 150, and called it “A Symphony of Psalms”. For some reason Stravinsky used Latin texts, even though he was Russian Orthodox. Rachmaninoff also turned to the songs of the scriptures for inspiration. In his great All Night Vigil (often called the Rachmaninoff Vespers) there are settings of Psalm 1, Psalm 102, Psalm 135, the Magnificat, and the song that Simeon sang when he met the newborn Messiah, “Now you shall dismiss your servant, O Lord”. Rachmaninoff asked that this last hymn be sung at his own funeral. Did you know Rachmaninoff is buried a few miles from our church in White Plains? He wanted to be buried in Switzerland, but the war prevented it. Stravinsky is buried on one of the islands of Venice.

This column began talking about the important place of music in our religion, but the music of the Bible alone has filled up the column. There was no time to mention the thousands of musical settings of the Mass by the greatest composers, and also in our tradition, the settings of the Divine Liturgy by Rimsky-Korsakov, Rachmaninov, and Tchaikovsky, nor the hundreds of sacred Cantatas by Bach. It’s worth mentioning that the end of the Bible, the Book of the Apocalypse contains a number of hymns yet to be sung, hymns to be sung at the end of time, after the final victory of the Lamb. “Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready!” And after the seventh trumpet, “The kingdom of this world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever!”

+Kurt Burnette

BISHOP KURT VISITS SAINT CHARLES BORROMEO SEMINARY Philadelphia, PA

Continued from page 1

final gesture of gratitude, we sang *The Angel Exclaimed* and a final *Mnohaja L'ita* for Bishop Timothy and the seminarians. Something else I found that stirred me to my core was that the seminarians and Bishop Timothy sang a traditional hymn for us and very specifically for Bishop Kurt.

At this point, the seminarians began to clean up the cafeteria and we began a nice leisurely walk towards the chapel, to collect our vestments and implements and began to travel back

to our respective homes. The rector sent some of the younger seminarians to assist us in packing our cars and it was now that I learned how powerful our presence had really been. While we walked, we were discussing the seminarians' thoughts on what they had experienced that day. One seminarian without hesitation, enthusiastically expressed, "I want to be Byzantine!" I felt very honored and proud, while at the same time humbled, that I was privileged to be a part of something that had such a profound impact on a person, especially one who was studying to be a future priest of God. After his explanation the young man continued to enquire about the possibility of *bi-ritual faculties*, or the permission from a bishop and from Rome for a priest to celebrate the liturgy in two rites of the Catholic Church.

As I rode home that evening I took the time to reflect upon the day, which had been absolutely glorious and blessed. It was very refreshing to know that there were still so many young people who were ready and willing to give their lives to God in such a profound and deep way. The seminary itself was a very holy and peaceful place; simply walking the grounds put one's mind into a mode of contemplation rarely experienced. The Hierarchical Divine Liturgy itself is a rare experience itself, lifting the soul to the heights of heaven in a setting like that, being surrounded with the beautiful singing and such a heavenly chapel. The seminarians themselves were the biggest inspiration to me personally. I look forward to the day when, God-willing, I am a seminarian like them, studying to love and serve the Lord.



Bishop Kurt with clergy and servers at the Great Entrance



Deacon Lewis Rabayda and Deacon Stephen Russo at the Little Entrance



Bishop Kurt offers the homily



Bishop Kurt exchanges the kiss of peace with Bishop Timothy



Bishop Kurt exchanges the kiss of peace with Father Patrick Welsh

CATECHISTS INDUCTED INTO THE ORDER OF SAINTS CYRIL AND METHODIUS Woodland Park, NJ

By Father Gregory Noga

On Saturday, June 6, 2015, what began as a somewhat cloudy day at the Cathedral Chapel of Saint Michael the Archangel soon turned into a bright sunny day as catechists from around the northeastern area of the Eparchy of Passaic began arriving for Catechist Recognition. His Grace, Bishop Kurt, instituted the *Order of Saints Cyril and Methodius* to which the attending catechists would be enrolled that day. The Order was established specifically to honor those men and women of our eparchy who have dedicated their lives to the spiritual and educational formation of our children enrolled in the Eastern Christian Formation Program of the parish schools of religion. Many of the catechists have been instructors from 1 to 50 years. Yes, one enrollee has been passing on the Faith of Jesus Christ for fifty years! What an outstanding commitment to Jesus Christ and the proclamation of His Gospel.

Bishop Kurt presided at the celebration of the Akathist Hymn to the Theotokos and ever-virgin Mary concelebrated by Father Gregory J. Noga, Director of the Eparchial Office of Eastern Christian Formation and Father Deacon Nicholas Daddona of Saint Andrew the Apostle Byzantine Catholic Church of Westbury, Long Island. They were assisted by Cyril Pinchak, SJ, summer pastoral intern at Resurrection and St. Andrew Byzantine Catholic parishes, Long Island and Alex Wynnnycki altar server at Holy Resurrection Church.

Following the Akathist Hymn, the bishop recited the Prayer of Enrollment followed by two prayers entrusting the Catechists' work to God, One in the Holy Trinity thereby encouraging the Catechists to remain faithful to Christ's Holy Church. Each catechist was then called forward

to receive a distinctive Medal of Saints Cyril and Methodius on a blue award ribbon placed upon them by the bishop and also received a certificate of Enrollment.

A special luncheon was held in honor of the Enrollees in the Chapel Social Hall. The Heritage Museum was opened and a tour conducted by Father Jody Baran, Associate Pastor of the Cathedral, concluded the festive day.

These ceremonies will be conducted at Epiphany of our Lord Byzantine Catholic Church, Annandale, VA, on Saturday, June 20, 2015, at 11 a.m. The third Enrollment will take place on November 21, 2015, at Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church, Orlando, FL.

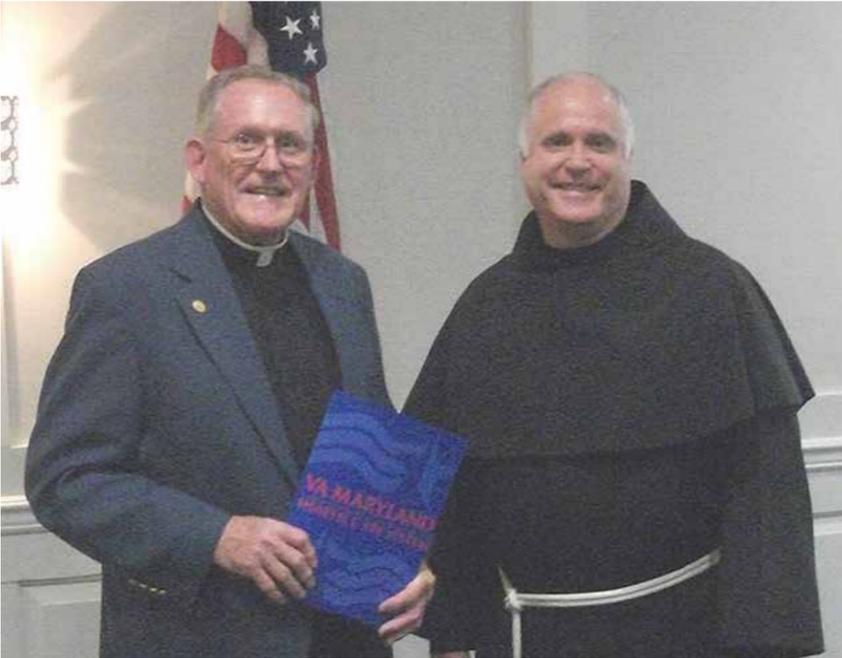




PEOPLE YOU KNOW

IN BALTIMORE...

At a recent meeting of the Catholic War Veterans (CWV) of Maryland, Father Conan Timoney was appointed as State Chaplain for the CWV and the Catholic War Veterans Auxiliary. Father Dennis Grumsey, OFM Conv., was appointed as Chaplain for the Saint Casimir Post of the Catholic War Veterans. The State Convention was held at Ocean City, MD.



Father Conan Timoney and Father Dennis Grumsey, OFM Conv.

IN CRESCO...

On May 1st, seventeen students from King's College in Wilkes-Barre, PA, arrived at Carpathian Village/Saint Nicholas Shrine to participate in a weekend "Spiritual Spring Break" offered by the Campus Ministry Department of the College under the Direction of the Father Thomas P. Looney, CSC, College Chaplain and Director of Campus Ministry, and Father Eric Schimmel, CSC, Assistant Director of the McGowan Hispanic Outreach Program. The program included a welcome and spiritual address by the Father Michael Salnick, Director of Carpathian Village. King's College is a liberal arts Catholic college founded in 1946 by the Congregation of Holy Cross from the University of Notre Dame. For more information go to www.kings.edu.



Retreat attendees

IN JESSUP...

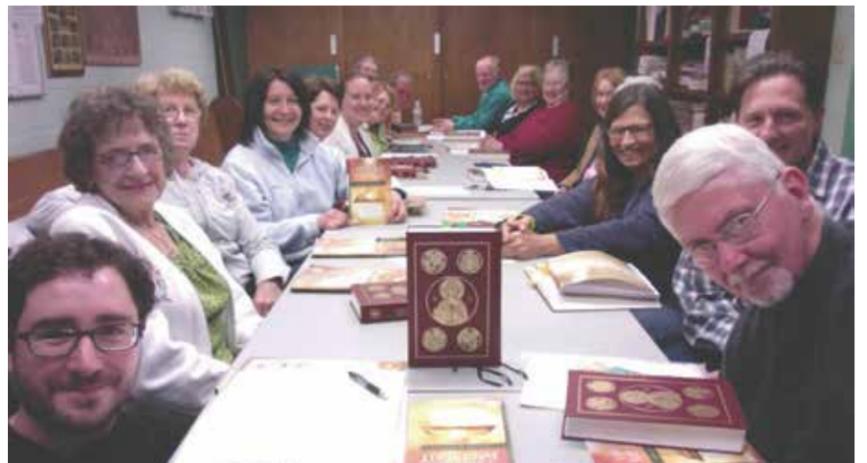
Ecumenical Meeting

On Wednesday, June 10, 2015, Christian Communities Gathering (CCG) of Northeast PA held its quarterly meeting at Holy Ghost Byzantine Catholic Church. A Moleben honoring persecuted Christians celebrated by Msgr. John Sekellick, Pastor, with Deacon Lewis Rabyada preceded the meeting. Topics under discussion included the traditional "marks" of the Church and plans for future ecumenical events. The meeting in the school gymnasium was followed by a luncheon and fellowship there. CCG of NEPA is an ecumenical group formed under the aegis of the Diocese of Scranton in 1999 to foster efforts at Christian unity. Current members represent various Church traditions and dicasteries, among which are: Assemblies of God, Episcopal, Lutheran, Methodist, Moravian, Presbyterian, Salvation Army, Eastern Orthodox, Byzantine and Ukrainian Greek Catholic, Polish National Catholic and Roman Catholic. The organization seeks ways to present a credible united Christian witness in and to the world, affirming commonalities and understanding differences while working together for the visible unity of the Church.



The Narrative Approach to Bible Study

This Paschal and Pentecost Season, the parishioners of Holy Ghost in Jessup, PA, Saint Michael in Dunmore, and Saint John in Forest City, met in Jessup for an 8 week Bible Study program from Ascension Press and Bible Scholar Jeff Cavins entitled "A Quick Journey Through the Bible". More than 15 parishioners, a happily large attendance, were guided through the material by Deacon Lewis Rabayda and Deacon Robert Behrens of Holy Ghost, Jessup. All those involved learned the narrative approach to reading Scripture and how God has interacted with His people for our salvation.



Making good use of Bibles given by Bishop Kurt

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AROUND THE EPARCHY

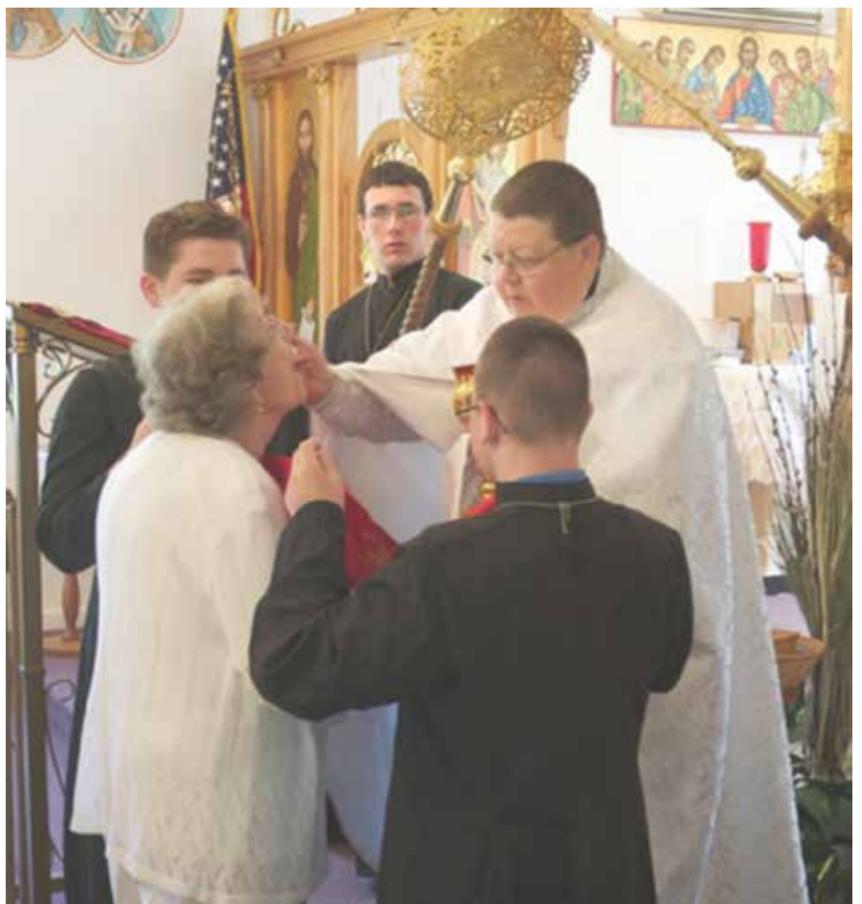


PASCHA IN THE POCONOS...

The parish family at Saint Nicholas of Myra Byzantine Catholic Church in Pocono Summit, PA, began their Paschal celebration with the traditional blessing of baskets on the Feast of the Resurrection and then completed their Paschal celebration on the Sunday of the Man Born Blind with a combination Paschal Fellowship Meal and Mother's Day Celebration.



The blessing of the Paschal Foods by Father Michael J. Salnick, Pastor



Parishioner Betty Stefura receiving the Holy Eucharist during the Mother's Day Divine Liturgy



Christian Fellowship and filled tummies lead to happy faces



Serving the altar is hungry work: James, Jonas, and Jessie W. need material as well as spiritual sustenance while mom, Mary, looks on

Now Open to All Ages

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**

SEPTEMBER 22-27

LOVE IS OUR MISSION THE FAMILY FULLY ALIVE



WORLD
MEETING OF
FAMILIES

2015 Philadelphia

REGISTER NOW!
REGISTER NOW!
REGISTER NOW!
REGISTER NOW!
REGISTER NOW!



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.

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

WORLDMEETING2015.ORG

EPARCHIAL SUMMER CAMPS 2015 AT THE CARPATHIAN VILLAGE

PRE-TEEN GIRLS CAMP

Sunday, June 28
through Wednesday July 1

The Camp Moderator is Father Richard Rohrer of
Saints Cyril and Methodius, Carey, NC

Go here for more information:
<http://www.eparchyofpassaic.com/camps.html>



ALTAR SERVER CAMP

Sunday, July 19
through Wednesday, July 22

The Congress welcomes Altar Servers
between the ages of 9 and 17

Deacon Stephen Russo of Saint Nicholas,
Danbury, CT will be the camp moderator

Go here for more information:
<http://www.eparchyofpassaic.com/camps.html>



WORLD MEETING OF FAMILIES IN PHILADELPHIA

“Do I Have A Vocation?” YES!

By Ann M. Koshute, MTS

Ann M. Koshute, M.T.S. is Adjunct Instructor in Theology at Immaculata University in Pennsylvania and Saint Joseph's College of Maine. 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. She is a writer and speaker, offering parish and retreat presentations on marriage and family issues, the Theology of the Body, and spirituality. Ann and her husband, Keith, are parishioners of Saint Ann Byzantine Catholic Church in Harrisburg, PA.

The Church places great emphasis on praying for vocations with good reason. In order to carry out Christ's mission on earth we need strong families, faithful lay people and, of course, priests, deacons and religious to care for our sacramental and spiritual needs. There is, however, a part of any discussion of vocations that is often left out: what is a vocation? This is an important question to answer because knowing what a vocation is will tell us who has one.

Before I met my husband, people would ask me if I was married, or seeing someone. As the years went by and my twenties turned to thirties and beyond, the question came with a twist: “Well, have you considered a vocation?” That really bothered me, I guess, because it felt like a reminder that I was “alone.” But it's actually a question based on a *misunderstanding* – namely, that as a single person I should only consider the religious life because I didn't already have a vocation. The truth is that each one of us has a vocation, and it is activated at our baptism.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (no. 1013) quotes Vatican II, saying: “All Christians in any state or walk of life are called to the fullness of Christian life and the perfection of charity. All are called to holiness...” The word “vocation” means a *call*, and this call comes from God and requires our response. The call to holiness is our responsibility and task as Christians. What does it mean to be holy? Scripture says God is holy, and that we are to be like God. According to Saint John, “God is love.” (1 Jn 4:8). If being holy is to be like God, and God is love, then our call from

God – our vocation – is to love! The answer to the question I heard repeated as a single person – “Have you considered a vocation?” – is, “I already have one. And so do you!”

The specific way we carry out our vocation to holiness and love is called our state of life. The states of life generally refer to marriage, priesthood and the consecrated life (religious sisters and brothers). We can spend many more articles just on the states of life, but the important point is that each one of us is called to holiness, to become like God: to love. Love is not a feeling, but a decision to do what's good for another. If love were simply a feeling, we couldn't count on it, because our emotions change all the time. As persons made in the image and likeness of God Who is Love, it's possible for us to love even when it's difficult – or when we don't particularly like someone. The way we love each day is enacted in our words, our actions, and in our very presence to another. We do this within our families, at work and school, at church, and in all of the encounters we have throughout our day.

Each of us is called to live out our vocation, regardless of our age or ability. For example, we wouldn't think an infant “has a vocation,” because he can't enact love in the ways we mentioned, much less make a decision to do so. Yet, even the baby of the family is living his vocation by his very presence in the home. Next time you're at church sitting behind a family with a baby, or see a mom or dad with a baby in a shopping cart, note your reaction. It's only natural to coo, make faces and try to make him laugh. His presence alone is

enough to draw out our love! God's love is made present to us through the innocence (and cuteness!) of a child, and that child draws us out of ourselves. The same thing happens when we care for a family member who is ill, or non-responsive. She may not be able to say the words “I love you,” but her presence, her vulnerability and her need for us draw out love. We forget ourselves and we desire only the good of someone else. Our vocation to love is enacted in the care for a loved one – or fussing over the baby. Their vocations are enacted when they provoke in us a response of love. This provocation comes directly through the grace and loving presence of God.

We should pray for vocations every day, that each one of us enacts his or her vocation to love as spouses, parents and grandparents, children, priests and religious, and single persons, regardless of our age or capabilities. How is God calling you to carry out your vocation to love?

The World Meeting of Families takes place September 22-25, 2015, in Philadelphia. The theme is Love is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive. Visit www.worldmeeting2015.org for information. Families from the Eparchy attending the World Meeting with children will receive a registration subsidy. For more information about eparchial subsidies and a special gathering with Bishop Kurt on Wednesday, September 23, please email Father Ed Cimbal: FREDSTMARY@aol.com “Like” us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/EparchyPassaicWMOF>

Byzan-Teen Rally: We Are Family!!!

Sponsored by the Eparchy of Passaic

JULY 26-29, 2015

Faith, Fun, Food, Fellowship, and, of course, Family! This year's Eparchial Byzan-Teen Rally will focus on knowing who we are as people of God, by engaging in personal prayer, loving ourselves, building self-confidence, building good relationships with others, and learning how we fit into God's family. An emphasis will be placed on how the Byzantine expression of Christianity experiences this understanding of family and calls us to focus our everyday lives on Jesus Christ. There will be a lot of fun activities, good food, a field trip, and new friends to be made by all.



The Byzan-Teen Rally will be held at the Carpathian Village in Cresco, PA.

For more information contact: Father Steven Galuschik
frstevengaluschik@gmail.com

Registration forms are on the Eparchial Website:
<http://www.eparchyofpassaic.com/camps.html>





TWO SUBDEACONS ORDAINED AT EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD

Roswell, GA

By Carol Evanko Photos by Mia McCorkle

Sunday, May 17, was indeed a sunny day in Georgia and a very special and joyous day for the parish family of Epiphany of Our Lord Byzantine Catholic Church in Roswell, GA. It was the first time in more than 30 years that the parish has had diaconal candidates. His Grace, Bishop Kurt, called to minor orders Michael Paul Tisma and James Smith; both men received tonsure and were then ordained to the orders of Cantor, Candle Bearer,

Reader, and Subdeacon. Since the repairs and restoration to the church were not yet completed after the December fire, members of the parish came together Saturday and early Sunday morning to set up a large outdoor tent and liturgical space on the parish grounds to celebrate the ordinations and Divine Liturgy.

Concelebrating the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy was Father Philip Scott, pastor; Bishop Kurt was

assisted by Deacon Ed Kleinguetl from Saint John Chrysostom Parish in Houston, TX, and Epiphany's altar servers. Also in attendance were Deacon Tom Gotschall of Saint Andrew Roman Catholic Church and Deacon Gerry Kazin of Saint Benedict Roman Catholic Church, friends of the ordinandi.

Afterwards, the clergy and parish family enjoyed a special luncheon at a nearby restaurant.

Subdeacons Michael and James have both recently completed their studies in the Diaconate Program at Saints Cyril and Methodius Byzantine Catholic Seminary in Pittsburgh. They are anxiously looking forward to the day when, God-willing, Bishop Kurt calls them to serve the parish family and community as deacons at Epiphany of Our Lord. Please remember both men in your prayers. Axios!



Mrs. Betty Smith, Subdeacon James Smith, Father Scott, Bishop Kurt, Subdeacon Michael Tisma and Mrs. Rose Tisma, Michael's mother



Ordinands James and Michael chant the Trisagion Prayers before Bishop Kurt



Subdeacon Michael Tisma with his niece, Carrie, and his brother, Stephen



Subdeacon James Smith with wife, Betty, and sons, Tony and wife Diem, and Eric

MOUNT MACRINA MANOR BREAKS GROUND FOR RENOVATIONS AND REFURBISHMENT

Uniontown, PA

On April 14, 2015, groundbreaking ceremonies took place at Mount Macrina Manor, which is undertaking the renovation and refurbishment of the entire facility. Mount Macrina Manor was built on the grounds of Mount Saint Macrina in 1971. Expanded and enhanced through the years, today, Mount Macrina Manor provides skilled and intermediate levels of nursing care for the elderly and infirm. The 139-bed licensed and certified facility features a Hospice Care Unit and a state-of-the-art Alzheimer Unit. The holistic person-centered approach to caring includes clinical, rehabilitation, and support services such as respite care, physical, occupational and speech therapies, and pastoral/spiritual care.



JoLynn Meyers, Mount Macrina Manor Nursing Home Administrator; Sister Seraphim Olsafsky, OSBM, then-Provincial, Sisters of Saint Basil the Great; Father Lawrence A. DiNardo, Board President; Metropolitan Archbishop +William, Archeparchy of Pittsburgh; Sister Susan Sisko, OSBM, Board Member; Sister Carol Petrasovich, OSBM, Board Member; Eric McRoberts, Architect, RPLS; Carmine Molinaro, Jr., Esq. (partially hidden from view); Martin Saunders, Esq. Board Member; newly-elected Provincial Sister Ruth Plante, OSBM, Board Member; Richard Dropik, Project Manager/Engineer, RPLS; Ted Stefancin, Sisters of Saint Basil Project Representative; Sister Barbara Jean Mihalchick, OSBM, Board Member; Sister Margaret Ann Andrako, OSBM, Board Member; and Joseph Massaro III, Contractor.

Next World Youth Day
Kraków, Poland
July 25 - July 31, 2016
Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

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

WHERE IS IT? Kraków, Poland	WHEN IS IT? July 24 – Aug 4, 2016.	WHO'S INVITED? Ages 19-35
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12-Day Pilgrimage with Airfare from New York^a - \$ 3,769

^aMinimum 15 pilgrims required for New York package with airfare.

12-Day Pilgrimage Land-Only Package^c - \$ 2,419

^c(does not include round-trip airfare from your departure city to Krakow)

Byzantine Catholic Intereparchial Youth Commission Custom Itinerary

July 24 th , 2016	Depart From New York
July 25 th	Arrive in Europe, transfer to accommodations, and prepare for WYD
July 26 th	Krakow City Tour, WYD Opening Ceremonies in the evening
July 27 th	Catechesis in the morning, WYD cultural events in the afternoon
July 28 th	Catechesis in the morning, Welcoming Ceremonies with our Holy Father in the evening
July 29 th	Catechesis in the morning, WYD cultural events and Stations of the Cross in the afternoon
July 30 th	Pilgrimage in the morning, Vigil with our Holy Father throughout the night
July 31 st	Morning Mass with our Holy Father, pilgrimage back to accommodations
Aug 1 st	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 nd	Day Trip to Czestochowa: Visit the Shrine of the Miraculous Icon of Our Lady of Czestochowa
Aug 3 rd	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 th	Depart Europe for home

First Payment of \$600 due by July 10th.

For information and reservations please contact:

Very Reverend Michael J. Salnický 570-650-3252 stnicpoc@earthlink.net



SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

Father Jack Custer, S.T.D.

THE MIXED BLESSING OF PERSONALITY: SAINT PAUL

Saint Paul may well have the most recognizable voice in the New Testament. We hear his dozen Epistles, Sunday after Sunday, for most of the year and his personality comes through them loud and clear. That personality certainly colored Paul's ministry for better and sometimes for worse, and his own growth into sainthood involved struggles with his own nature that are recorded clearly and honestly for our encouragement.

Unlike the four Evangelists, Saint Paul talks about himself often. Born Saul, a Roman citizen in Tarsus (southern Turkey; Acts 21:39), Paul (his Greek name) was an exceptionally pious Jew of the Pharisee party (Acts 23:6). He boasts of learning from the famous Rabban Gamaliel in Jerusalem (Acts 22:3). He claims: "I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers" (Galatians 1:14).

Saint Luke records three of Saint Paul's speeches in his own defense, before a mob in Jerusalem (Acts 22:39-21), before the Roman governor Felix (Acts 24:10-21), and before Felix's successor, Festus and King Herod Agrippa (Acts 26). In

these, Paul gives a complete account of his background, his conversion and his mission.

Paul was complicit in the stoning of Saint Stephen (Acts 7:54-8:1) and actively persecuted the Church in Jerusalem (Acts 8:3). He seems like a vigilante as he sets out for Damascus to arrest Jews there who accepted Jesus as the Messiah. Paul never hides these facts. His vision of the Risen Lord on the road, his sudden blindness, and his healing by a Christian named Ananias in Damascus marked a sudden and complete conversion. Paul immediately began to preach Christ as fervently as he had formerly persecuted Christians (Acts 9).

Perhaps too suddenly. The Jerusalem Church never really trusted Paul. Only the kindly Barnabas took him under his wing (Acts 9:26-30). Paul's experience of the Risen Lord (1 Corinthians 15:8) justified his claim that he too was an Apostle (1 Corinthians 9:1), an assertion he makes repeatedly and sometimes bitterly (2 Corinthians 11:5-33; 12:12; Galatians 2:6-13). While the original Apostles may have resisted this claim, the Church accepts it, placing Paul opposite Peter as the twelfth Apostle in icons (leaving out

Saint Matthias, Judas' successor) and celebrating him together with Peter on June 29.

Paul's ministry was marred by conflict with Barnabas and Mark (Acts 15:37-40) and especially with a more popular preacher named Apollos (Acts 18:24-28; 1 Corinthians 1:12; 3:4-6), whose eloquence Paul may well have envied (1 Corinthians 2:1-5; 2 Corinthians 11:6).

Every year we hear several selections from Paul's epistles in which he lists everything he has suffered to preach the Gospel (1 Corinthians 4:9-14; 2 Corinthians 11:22-33). From the comfort of our pews, we might be tempted to call Paul a whiner, but his sufferings were real and were accepted willingly as the price of spreading the Good News.

There are also hints of some other sort of suffering that plagued Paul throughout his ministry. The scant details suggest an affliction of the eyes (Galatians 4:15; 6:1) but Paul accepts his illness as a gift from God meant to teach him a valuable lesson. "I pleaded with the Lord three times that this might depart from me. And He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.' There-

fore I will gladly boast in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Corinthians 12:8-10).

These are not the words of a whiner. Paul's illness taught him humility and led him to understand the mystery of the Cross. It is certainly out of the insights of his own suffering that Paul wrote: "We preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men" (1 Corinthians 1:23-25).

"By the grace of God I am what I am", Paul wrote (1 Corinthians 15:10). This is no defensive reaction, no refusal of the challenge to change. This is Paul assessing his strengths, his weaknesses, his radical conversion and how God has been active in them all. We are only the prisoners of our own personalities if we refuse to follow the lead of God's grace. **ECL**

GRADUATION CEREMONY AT CARPATHIAN VILLAGE

Cresco, PA



On May 20th, the eight members of the senior class of Gregory the Great Academy celebrated their high school graduation at Carpathian Village/Saint Nicholas Shrine in Cresco, PA. Gregory the Great Academy is a private Catholic boarding school for young men grades nine through twelve that offers a classical education in the Catholic tradition in-

cluding Latin, Rhetoric, Poetry, and Holy Scripture as well as the usual high school curriculum of math, natural sciences, literature, and the social sciences. All students must participate in the sports programs that include Rugby and Soccer as well as the music and theatrical programs. Perhaps they are most well recognized for their excellent juggling troupe that regularly performs

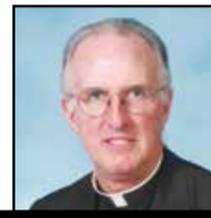


throughout the northeast including New York City and Washington, D.C. The Academy is operated through the Clairvaux Institute, a non-profit educational foundation dedicated to revitalizing society by returning to the sources of culture. Its students include Eastern and Western Catholics and the spiritual formation program includes a daily prayer life with services from both

Eastern and Western Catholic traditions. Father Michael Salnick, Director of Carpathian Village, has served the Academy as its Chaplain for the past two years. For more information on Gregory the Great Academy or the Clairvaux Institute go to clairvauxinstitute.org or gregorythegreatacademy.org.

CATECHETICAL REFLECTIONS

Father Robert F. Slesinski, Ph.D.



OMG: A SHOUT IN THE STREET?

Installment 6 of 6

If there has been a certain common characteristic of the articles to date of this column, it is possibly the interweavement of philosophy with poetry. No greater authority on this matter probably is there than Saint Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274) himself, who pronounced the following judgment (in his Commentary on Aristotle’s metaphysics): “The reason, however, why the philosopher may be likened to the poet is this: both are concerned with the marvelous.” His judgment on this matter is not too surprising knowing that one of his “philosopher heroes” of the ancient Christian past was a one Boethius (ca. 480–524), a scion of one of the most patrician of Roman families who were unmistakably Christian, but who lived at the borders of the glories of Ancient Rome and a nascent Christian Rome.

Of true historical and literary significance is Boethius’ probing work, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, notable for its being one of the classics of “prison literature” (others being Saint Paul’s Letters to the Colossians, Philippians, Ephesians, and to Philemon and Oscar Wilde’s *De Profundis* (not to mention the influence of a prison stay on Feodor Dostoevsky in his writing), among others—we will not deem Adolf Hitler’s *Mein Kampf*, written while he was justly jailed, under the category of “world literature.” And so, on this note, this classic tome of Christian literature was written while he was in prison for treason, allegedly for endeavoring to reconcile the “two” branches of Christianity at that time (Theodoric being the Arian emperor of the West with the Orthodox Zeno in the East). Whatever! Boethius was executed in Pavia, in northern Italy, where he is revered as a saint.

But his fame in world history is precisely his literary—philosophical—work of art, his *Consolations* in which this patrician agonizes with his God through a personified Lady Philosophy over his fate in life—having been put under house arrest (at best) only to be later executed. Boethius directly asks how evil can exist in a world governed by God and how can there be true happiness in face of injustice and the fickleness of fortune and fame. Under the guidance of Lady Philosophy, Boethius comes to understand how true happiness arises from within us in the context of personal virtue, grasping at the same time how the affairs of the mind hold ultimate superiority over worldly concern. Alternating between prose and poetry, he always gives the last word to poetry. Thus he pronounces:

But if to care and want you’re prey,
No king are you, but slave.

To the contrary, man’s true dignity lies in his being a creation of Almighty God. As Boethius waxes poetic,

From one beginning rises all mankind;
From one Lord rules and fathers all things born.
He gave the sun his light, the moon her horns,
And men to earth and stars to grace the sky;
He closed in bodies minds brought down from high,
A noble origin for mortal men.
Why then proclaim your kin and ancestry?
Look whence you came and see who made you, God.
No man degenerate is unless through sin
He leaves his proper source for meaner things.

To be true to himself man, Boethius argues, must make a turn toward interiority and allow

the inner impulse of his mind toward truth hold sway. In his own words,

Whoever deeply searches out the truth
And will not be deceived by paths untrue,
Shall turn unto himself his inward gaze,
Shall bring his wandering thoughts in circle home
And teach his heart that what it seeks abroad
It holds in its own treasure chests within ...
The seed of truth lies hidden deep within,
And teaching fans the spark to take new life;
Why else unaided can man answer true,
Unless deep in the heart the touchwood burns?
And if the muse of Plato speaks the truth,
Man but recalls what once he knew and lost.

But Boethius like all of us is cognizant of the finitude of the human mind. It is directed toward the true, but often comes up short in not understanding the true. It is infirm in other words, but this fact notwithstanding does not detract from its inherent dignity. As he himself puts it,

Is mind, oppressed by members blind,
In lesser brightness powerless
To see the slender links of things?
Why burns it then with love so great
To learn the secret signs of truth?...
Whence once the mind beheld the mind of God
Did it both sum and separate truths perceive?
Now hidden in the body’s density
It does not lose all memory of itself.
The many separate truths are lost, yet still
It holds the sum. Therefore who seeks the truth
In neither state will be: he does not know,
And yet he is not wholly ignorant. **ECL**

ECED HOLDS SPRING MEETING

Marriottsville, MD



Directors of eparchial Religious Education departments recently held their Spring Meeting at Bon Secours Retreat and Conference Center in Marriottsville, MD. The ECED [Eastern Conference of Eparchial Directors (of Religious Education)] is entrusted with the task of providing catechetical and related materials for use in all levels of instruction—pre-K through adult, whether in formal classes, discussion groups, or at-home study.

The three-day session addressed the many facets of the processes involved in planning, producing and distributing student texts, facilitators’ guides, pamphlets, books, DVDs, posters and other instructional aids, prepared in print, on discs, or on the Internet through God With Us Publications. During the course of forty years, ECED has seen to the details of maintaining an inventory of suitable resources for catechists, students, and anyone interested in learning more

about the faith and its practices. Planning also went into the annual resumption of classroom activity in conjunction with the observance of “Catechetical Sunday.”

The books and other items are mandated by the American bishops as instructional materials in parochial settings, and are also widely-used in Eastern Christian classes, study groups or individual growth internationally.



UNDERSTANDING ICONS

Father Joseph Bertha, Ph.D.

REPENTENCE VISUALIZED

Icons showing the life and deeds of Prophet Elijah frequently include the repentance of King Ahab.

Of all the Old Testament prophets, the most celebrated and renowned among the Slavic Byzantines is undoubtedly Holy Prophet Elijah. Commemorated annually on 20 July with a feast day of his own, an honor not accorded to any other figure from the Old Testament, Elijah, which in translation means "YHWH is my God," preached some nine centuries before the coming of Christ.

A Vespers verse succinctly summarizes his deeds:

"O prophet Elijah, lamp stand of the Church, which has no evening,/ having been enflamed with divine zeal,/ you closed up the rain from heaven you were fed by a raven,/ you reprov'd the king and put the priests to death;/ you commanded fire from heaven and slew two captains,/ you provided abundantly for the widow by means of a little oil and a small handful of meal/ you resurrected her son by your prayer/ you ignited the fire in water,/ you crossed the currents of the Jordan on foot./ Indeed, you were raised up to heaven by a fiery chariot. / You gave a two fold grace to Elisha/ Pray unceasingly to God for the salvation of our souls."

The Old Testament book of Kings abounds with the miracles of prophet Elijah, but there is one particular miracle found in the Life of the Prophet Elijah icons which is frequently portrayed: the repentance of King Ahab.

Icons of the Prophet Elijah

One of the earliest icons of the Holy Prophet Elijah is found in the Transfiguration apse mosaic of Saint Catherine Monastery, Mount Sinai, dating from the sixth century. In this particular mosaic, Elijah is shown as the Ancient of Days: with long flowing white hair, wearing a himation resplendent with radiating gold stripes. God the Father is typically depicted as the Ancient of Days with long white flowing hair, usually enthroned with large white flowing garments, a reference to the prophet Daniel's vision of heaven.

Both God the Father and Elijah are depicted in a similar manner,

and reflect the iconographers concept of eternal beings. The long flowing white hair not only indicates eternity, it also is a signifier of God's ever flowing mercies available to repentant sinners. The rays which radiate from within their garments also highlight the splendor of reconciliation with God.

The liturgical celebration of the Feast of the Transfiguration (August 6) which occurs sixteen days after that of Prophet Elijah shows Elijah together with Moses to either side of Our Blessed Lord on Mount Tabor surrounded by rays of light. Peter, James, and John are also present at the feast, shown tumbling down Mount Tabor from this enlightening experience.

Slavic Byzantines celebrate Transfiguration as the feast of the first fruits, blessing and distributing grapes and plums recalling a successful harvest. Delving deeper into the meaning of this feast, we see that what is being celebrated is the rays of God's mercy of repentance radiating through the world by the Old Testament prophets, including Elijah and Moses, and fulfilled and perfected in the Messiah Jesus Christ.

In the thirteenth century, an icon panel also found at Saint Catherine's Monastery shows Prophet Elijah as a much younger man with dark jagged black hair and clothed as an ascetic in a himation made of camel hair over a chiton (alb) with two vertical black stripes inscribed from either shoulder stretching to his feet. In this icon, the iconographers have depicted Prophet Elijah as a twin with the icons of Prophet John the Baptist.

In fact, they look identical in their portrayals. Iconographers link the two holy prophets, who are separated by some 800 years by the words of Jesus who likens John the Baptist to Elijah (Matthew 11:15). Our Lord's words are significant since Jews believed that Elijah would return to the earth just before the arrival of the Messiah. This parallel portrayal is also noteworthy because it occurs at a monastic center, Saint Catherine's at Sinai where monks were not only iconographers, but daily prayed the Scriptures intently searching for connections between the Old Testament figures and Christ. Not only

do Prophet Elijah and Prophet John the Baptist physically resemble one another in icons, they are also identical in their spiritual roles as well. Both deal with purifying sinners of corruption, both admonish evil kings, Ahab and Herod, and both prefigure the coming Messiah Jesus Christ who offers God's repentance to sinners.

As we can see, the single most important ministry of prophet is the reconciliation of sinners. The Old Testament is filled with many holy prophets, yet only one is given a feast day on the Christian calendar; Prophet Elijah.

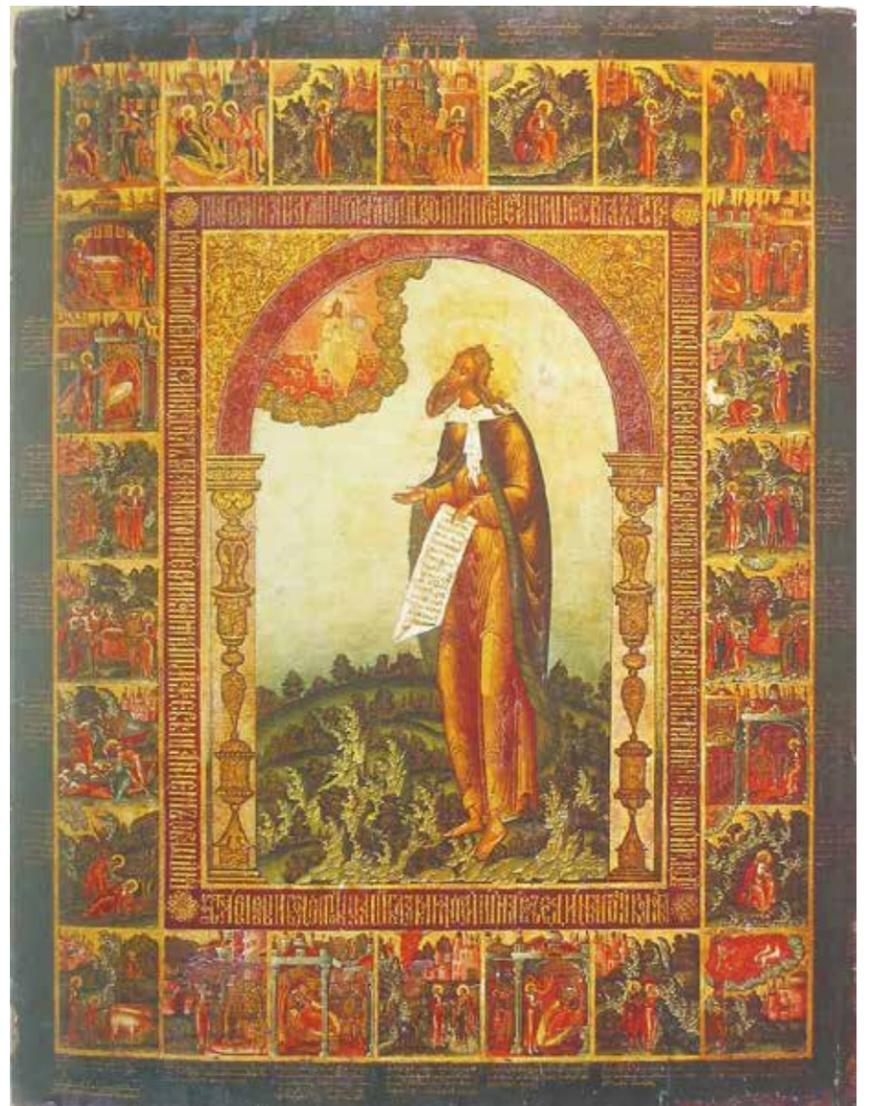
In a poignant scene in the Life of Prophet Elijah, we can view the Repentance of Ahab. This scene is an illustration of the account found in 1 Kings 21: 27-29:

"And when Ahab heard of these words, he tore his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh and fasted and lay in sackcloth, and went about dejectedly. And the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite saying, Have you seen how Ahab has humbled himself before me?

Because he has humbled himself before me, I will not bring the evil in his days, but in his son's days. I will bring the evil upon his house."

In the icon the haloed King Ahab bows at the feet of Prophet Elijah seeking forgiveness from YHWH and being granted it! This dramatic scene would certainly have not have escaped the attention of believers as they bowed themselves before this holy icon, perhaps in the Sacrament of Reconciliation to be restored to the good graces before God through the Sacrament of Holy Repentance before the holy prophet priest.

The repentance of King Ahab demonstrates the abundant mercy of God, in that no matter how seriously we have transgressed, God is always appealing to us through his prophets by kindness and forbearance to repent. Despite his intractable sins the Lord gives grants forgiveness of sins when Ahab repents before prophet Elijah. So too, we can experience God's mercy in the wonderful sacrament of reconciliation offered to us by the priest. **ECL**



Icon of the Prophet Elijah surrounded by Biblical Scenes



The Preamble of the Akathistos to the Theotokos sets for us the initial formation of the Holy Family, detailed in Saint Luke's Gospel, Chapter 1, verses 26-38: "As soon as the angel had received his command, he hastened to Joseph's house and said to the ever-virgin: "Behold, heaven was brought down to earth when the Word Himself was fully contained in you! Now that I see Him in your womb, taking a servant's form, I cry out to you in wonder: Hail, O Bride and maiden ever-pure!"

That Family, however, at its very beginning experienced a problematic start. Joseph, to whom Mary was only betrothed (not yet married), was going to terminate their espous-

al until he was advised in a dream that what was conceived in her "... is of the Holy Spirit" (Luke 1:20). We know only a few details of the infancy and early years of their Son's life: from His birth in a cave in Bethlehem, His circumcision eight days later, their escape into Egypt from the wrath of the jealous King Herod, His presentation in the Temple, and the account of His being found in the Temple at the age of twelve (Luke 2:41-52).

We also know He grew up in the relatively small and insignificant town of Nazareth.

In the 18 years intervening until His public ministry begins on the shores of the Jordan River, the Gospels are silent on Jesus' upbringing and education, except for His profession working as a carpenter with Joseph who, according to Tradition, died while Jesus was an adolescent. Much of His education and life-experience would have been guided by Mary, His mother.

SEASONAL REFLECTIONS

Monsignor John. T. Sekellick, JCL



THE HOLY FAMILY

We can readily see the challenges of family living in the life of the Holy Family, challenges experienced in various ways by many families in our own times. From September 22-27, the World Meeting of Families will take place in Philadelphia with Pope Francis attending. It is a once-in-a-lifetime event which occurs every three years since 1994 when it was first organized under Pope Saint John Paul II. Its intent is to strengthen the sacred bonds of the family which have come under so much pernicious attack.

The Second Vatican Council calls the family the "domestic Church" in which "...parents should, by their word and example, be the first preachers of the Faith to their children," (*Lumen Gentium*, No. 11) The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* tells us the family "...is the natural society in which husband and wife are called to give themselves in life and in the gift of life. Authority, stability, and a life of relationships within the family constitute the

foundations for freedom, security and fraternity within society. The family is the community in which, from childhood, one can learn moral values, begin to honor God, and make good use of freedom. Family life is an initiation into life in society." (No. 2207)

Moreover, the family is a community of faith, of hope and of charity. Saint Paul, writing to the Ephesians, urges husbands to love their wives (as Christ loves the Church); likewise, wives are instructed to be subject to their husbands as to the Lord (5:21,25). The Christian family is a sign and very image of the Father and the Son in the Holy Spirit—a call to holiness.

We see in the Holy Family a compelling example of that love borne out in good times and bad. May our families emulate that example and turn to the Holy Family to guide their lives and aid them in any need.

ECL



SCHOOL OF PRAYER

Father G. Scott Boghossian

THE PRESENCE OF GOD

Seek the LORD and his strength, seek his presence continually. - Psalm 105:4

When we settle down to spend time conversing with the Lord in prayer, it is important to start things right. The saints urge us, before doing anything else, to place ourselves in the presence of God. And even outside of our formal prayer time, one of the ways to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:17) is to keep ourselves in the presence of God as we do whatever needs to be done.

The essence of our future heavenly happiness will be the presence of God. There, we will see God as He is, love him with the entirety of our being, and be perfectly united to Him. We can have a taste of that future heavenly happiness here and now, if we learn how to place ourselves in His presence.

The saints advise several ways to place ourselves in the presence of God. The first is an act of simple faith in the truth of God's omnipresence. We know that God the Holy Trinity is fully present in every place, all the time. There is no place where God is

not! Just like a fish in the sea is surrounded on every side by water, so we are immersed in the presence of God. "He is not far from each one of us, for, 'In him we live and move and have our being'" (Acts 17:28). Simply by taking a few moments of silence to remind ourselves of this truth, and thanking God for his presence here and now, we can experience something of the peace and satisfaction that His presence offers.

Another way to practice the presence of God is to recall that God dwells within our soul as in a temple. When we were born from above through the waters of baptism (John 3:5), God the Holy Trinity came to dwell within us. If we had the misfortune to lose this new life through deliberate serious sin, it was restored to us through repentance, confession, and absolution in the Sacrament of Confession. Being in this state of friendship with God means that we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit. (While all three Persons of the Holy Trinity inhabit the soul in the state of grace, the Scriptures and the Fathers often attribute the divine indwelling to the Holy Spirit.) "Do you not know that

your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit...? (1 Cor. 6:19) The God who is infinite goodness, beauty, and truth, who is love, dwells within me now, enlightening my mind, empowering my will. Saint. John tells us, "Greater is He who is in you, than he who is in the world" 1 John 4:4.

We may also realize the presence of God when we remember that our Savior Jesus Christ is looking down on us from heaven right now at this very moment. From there he is observing our thoughts and actions and hearing our prayers. He is looking on us with the same love that compelled him to endure the sufferings of the cross for our salvation. This isn't saccharine sentimentality but the very truth of the matter as indicated by Saint. Stephen's vision at the moment of his martyrdom. "But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God" (Acts 7:55).

Saint Francis De Sales encourages us to use our spiritual imagination, and to picture our Savior as beside us, just as we might imagine an absent friend. Imagine the Lord in front of you, perhaps on the chair opposite you, where he is listening to you prayers, or simply sitting

silently with you. What a joy to spend time with Jesus.

Also, let's not forget that our Lord Jesus is truly present, body, blood, soul, and divinity in the Holy Eucharist. To be in the presence of the Eucharist, reserved in the tabernacle or on the altar during the Divine Liturgy, is to be in the very presence of Jesus Christ Himself. Why not get to church a few minutes early to spend some time talking to the Lord who is present in this very special and unique way? Here he is not only spiritually present or present in virtue of His divinity, but present in his humanity, body, blood, soul, and divinity!

Finally, can there be any way to be closer to the Lord Jesus in this life than to receive Him in Holy Communion? Saint Teresa of Avila says that when we receive Holy Communion, Jesus is sitting on the throne of our heart, asking us, "what do you want me to do for you?". These moments after Holy Communion should be a time that we are especially aware of and immersed in the presence of God.

People are searching for happiness, and pursuing things that ultimately will not satisfy or fulfill them. Let us seek and find our happiness in the Holy presence of God.

In your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore. - Psalm 16:11 **ECL**



FAITH AND COMMUNITY ISSUES

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

SUICIDE—WHAT ARE THE TRIGGERS?

The role of stress, events and situations

To this point, suicide has been defined by Comer (2011) as “a self-inflicted death in which one makes an intentional, direct and conscious effort to end one’s life” (p.236). Comer also identified four types of personality that would attempt to end their lives: “the death seeker, the death initiator, the death ignorer, and the death darer” (p.236). Comer also identified two major methodologies used to study suicide: “retrospective analysis and the study of people who survive suicide attempts” (236).

According to Comer (2011), Suicide is one of the highest causes of death in the Western World. The rates are variable among the countries and some reasons listed concerned the role of religion as a preventative in the lives of the people within the countries studied. Race, gender, social supports and marital status were also seen to play a part in the rate of suicide according to Comer’s research. With these results comes the question, what would trigger a response of the magnitude of suicide in the experience of a person?

Research reveals that among those who attempt suicide there is a marked increase in the levels of stress compared to those who have not attempted suicide (p.236, Comer, 2011, quoting Kessler et al., 2008). Although it appears obvious that stressors of enormity such as witnessing combat on the battlefields of places like Iraq or Afghanistan would cause attempted suicides, there exist other less horrific but acute stressors of an immediate nature that can and do bring about the act of suicide. Comer cites the loss of loved ones, with the experiences of death, divorce or rejection as the occasions for cause. He also sees the loss of gainful employment as another very real factor. Some stressors caused by natural phenomena, e.g. weather patterns, hurricane, tornado, tsunami can be overwhelming in nature and experience. Comer also posits the existence of long term stressors as valid causes of suicidal actions; he cites three in particular: serious illness, an abusive environment, and occupational stress (2011, p.236).

The roles of Illness, Abusive Environment and Occupational Stress in Suicide Attempts

Serious Illness

Illness that carries with it great and unremitting

pain and/or severe disability are found to bring about the choice of suicide in the sufferer. For Comer (2011) who quotes Schneider and Shennassa (2008), the intensity of the pain/disability becomes intolerable. Study suggests that as many as one-third of suicide victims make the decision to end their lives at the end of an extended period of declining health and increasing pain and disability.

Abusive Environment

People forced into living in an abusive or repressive environment and who perceive little to no hope of escape or reprieve may revert to suicide, according to Comer (2011). Comer cites prisoners of war, inmates of concentration camps, abused spouses, abused children and prison inmates are numbered among those attempting and too often succeeding at suicide attempts (Comer citing Lohner and Konrad, 2009; Konrad et al., 2007). Similar to those suffering chronic severe illnesses, the abused reach a point of utter saturation with the abusive situation and are convinced within themselves that there is neither hope of relief nor possibility of improvement in their dysfunctional system (Comer, 2011 citing Sansone and Sansone, 2009; Tanner 2008; Sadock and Sadock, 2007). Although the findings are convincing, Comer cautions against drawing quick conclusions about a direct correlation between these stressors and suicide. In Comer’s (2011) words, “Such findings do not necessarily mean that occupational pressures directly cause suicidal actions” (p.237). Comer indicates other causes such as possible job stress rather than financial insecurities can also contribute to suicidal attempt and he also makes an interesting comment upon suicidal psychiatrists and psychologists who rather than emotionally reacting to the strain of their work are in fact reacting to their own long-standing emotional or psychological issues which may well have formed the grounds for their career choice from the outset.

Mood and Thought Changes as instrumental in Suicide

According to Comer (2011), Attempts to commit suicide are often preceded by a change in mood. It may not be severe enough to have a full-blown diagnosis of mental disorder, but it is recognized as a major departure from the usual behaviors as experienced by friends and family of the individual. Comer (2011) states that most commonly recognized change is an increase in

sadness, followed by increase in anxiety as well as “tension, frustration, anger, or shame” (Comer, 2011 citing Fawcett, 2007; Werth, 2004). Continuing in the same line of thought, Comer cites Shneidman (2005, 2001) in suggesting that a key to understanding suicide is “‘psychache,’ a feeling of psychological pain that seems intolerable to the person” (Comer, 2011, p. 237). Recent studies gleaned from 88 clients, according to Comer (2011), reveal that those who registered high scores on a measure called the Psychological Pain Assessment Scale were far more likely than others to the commission of suicide (Comer citing Pompili et al., 2008).

In addition to feelings, Comer (2011) also sees shifts in thinking patterns as possible avenues facilitating suicidal ideation and action. Preoccupation with problems becoming obsessive causes loss of perspective and setting suicide as the only possible way out (Comer citing Shneidman, 2005, 2001, 1987). Often an overwhelming sense of hopelessness can push an individual over the brink to the choosing of suicide as the only viable alternative to the present experience of the victim.

Hopelessness and dichotomous thinking in suicide

Comer (2011) defines hopelessness as “a pessimistic belief that their (victim) present circumstances, problems, or mood will not change” (p. 237). Comer cites Van Orden et al. (2008), in stating that for some clinicians, the feeling of hopelessness is singularly the most likely indicator of the intention to commit suicide and that special care is taken to seek out high suicide attempt potential when the signs of hopelessness are presenting themselves within the context of therapy.

Another indicator for extremely high suicide probability is the act of dichotomous thinking. Comer (2011) cites Shneidman (2005, 2001, 1993) in stating that dichotomous thinking “viewing problems and solutions in rigid either/or terms” (p.237). Comer (2011) states: “Indeed, Shneidman has said that the ‘four-letter word in suicide is ‘only,’ as in ‘suicide was the only thing I could do’ (citing Maris, 2001).

In our next installment, alcohol, drug use, and mental disorders and their role in suicide will be examined, along with modeling and the role of the “Rich and Famous” in victims’ decisions regarding suicide. **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:

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Article Submission Requirements:

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- Article written in Microsoft Word
- Author’s name
- Photographer’s name
- Key people present in photographs
- Photographs preferred at a resolution of

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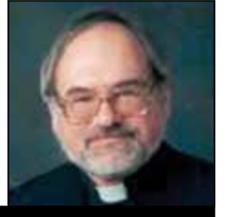
- Photographs must be attached to an email; they may not be embedded in the body of the text.

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THE BYZANTINE LITURGY

By Archbishop David Petras, SEOD



WHO IS GOD?

Part 2

That there is God is essential for our faith in the Resurrection. Here, however, I am not interested in proving the existence of God, but coming ourselves to a better understanding of who God is. In the last article I pointed out that disbelief is on the rise. This is for two reasons: many people today do not understand the question of God's existence, nor do they have a healthy concept of who God is. Since our public academic training today is strongly from a scientific viewpoint, we share these weaknesses in understanding with them. And if we do not understand God, we do not understand resurrection.

The God problem is often framed in a science vs. religion context. Terence Nicholas observed, "Naturalism as a world-view has subtly pervaded the media, books, universities, and school classrooms so that it is now the atmosphere in which we live." This is a clue to the first misunderstanding that occurs. There is really only one knowledge of truth. However, different realities are apprehended or grasped in different ways. For example, we do not learn history by physical experimentation. The question of God is ultimately a "why" question, not a "how" question. This is where most of the modern debate goes wrong. If we say, "God created the universe," we are not asking "how" the universe was made. Books denouncing the existence of God are usually about the mechanism of how the universe developed over its course of coming to be. David Bentley Hart, an Orthodox believer, writes, "One of the deep prejudices that the age of mechanism instilled in our culture, and that infects our religious and materialist fundamentalisms alike, is a version of the so-called genetic fallacy: to wit, the mistake of thinking to have described a thing's material history or physical origins is to have explained that thing exhaustively. We tend to presume that if one can discover the temporally prior physical causes of some object - the world, an organism, a behavior, a religion, a mental event, an experience, or anything else - one has thereby eliminated all other causal explanations of that

object." (*The Experience of God*) We don't know something simply because we know how it works. This is our technological bias. Knowledge exists to make our life better. If we understand how something works, we can make our life better. We may then draw the false conclusion: if we understand how the universe works, we can dispense with God. This is much like a mother answering her child's question, "Mother, why are we celebrating Bertie's birthday by baking a cake?" by handing her a recipe for the cake. This is not about how being works, it is about being itself.

It is at least quite clear that there is existence or being. The atheist may counter all that we have said, "The universe is 'just there,' the ultimate principle of being remains a mystery. It is not necessary to add another layer of 'mystery,' by claiming there is a 'God,' who is also 'just there,' even if you define him as being itself. Here is where faith comes into play. The point of arguments or apologetics is not to prove by some form of brain-compelling force that Yahweh is God, but to manifest the reasonableness of our faith. There is, indeed, a "principle of being," but this "principle" is not some mindless "Force," but a conscious, willing and loving Creator. After all, if we ourselves are "conscious," "willing," and "loving," how can we expect less of the Creator, who would himself be "wisdom," and "freedom," and "love." This was Saint John the Theologian's intuition, "Whoever is without love does not know God, for God is love. (1 John 4:8)" This is why we say we are made in God's image and likeness. David Bentley Hart wrote: "For to say that God is being, consciousness and bliss is also to say that he is the one reality in which all our existence, knowledge and love subsist, from which they come and to which they go, and that therefore he is somehow present in even our simplest experience of the world, and is approachable by way of a contemplative and moral refinement of that experience." (*The Experience of God*)

This brings us to the second fundamental error that arguments about God revolve around today: the image of God that atheists deny. There is, what people skilled in the debate call "straw men." The goal is to formulate an image of God that no one could believe in and then demolish that image, that "straw man." Human beings fall naturally into this trap. We often picture God as an old man with a beard, that is, as one being among others, as if you could put them in a line-up and say, 'Oh look, there's the president, there's Angelina Jolie, there's Santa Claus, there's O.J. Simpson, there's God, the second from the right. This idea is pervasive in contemporary culture. One of the legends is the story of the Russian cosmonaut, on the first flight into space in 1961, is reported to have said, "I don't see any God up here," as if God were a distinct individual with a location in space and time. The words actually seem to have never been said. Hart explains, "Yet the most pervasive error one encounters in contemporary arguments about belief in God - especially but not exclusively, on the atheist side - is the habit of conceiving of God simply as some very large object or agency within the universe, or perhaps alongside the universe, a being among other beings, who differs from all other beings in magnitude, power, and duration, but not ontologically, and who is related to the world more or less as a craftsman is related to an architect." He goes on, "At a trivial level, one sees the confusion in some of the more shopworn witticisms of popular atheism: "I believe neither in God nor in the fairies at the bottom of my garden," for instance, or "All people are atheists in regard to Zeus, Wotan and most other gods; I simply disbelieve in one god more." (*The Experience of God*) The point is that God is not one more being among others, but the foundation of all being. God is outside creation as the Creator (avoiding pantheism) but, as Creator, is, as the Fathers often reiterated, "closer to us than we are to ourselves." **ECL**



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SPIRITUAL REFLECTIONS

Deacon Lewis Rabayda

WE CANNOT BE TRUE CHRISTIANS WITHOUT CONVERSION

As Catholics who hold the orthodox beliefs of Christianity handed down to us by Jesus Christ, we believe and know that we become Christians at our baptism. This moment of cleansing, blessing, and sealing of the Gift of the Holy Spirit is a renunciation of a former life of sin and chaos. At our baptism, just like when God created the world “out of nothing” and He gave form to the void, so too God gives us direction, form, and order for our lives. We have been called out of the chaos of a nature ruled by Satan after the fall of Adam and Eve to be part of the Kingdom of Heaven and to be close to God. This is true whether we have been baptized as infants or adults.

When we are baptized as adults, the sacrament is a moment of total conversion into the life of Christ just as it was for the early Christians. This is known as the moment of conversion. This moment is one of formally rejecting our previous lives of sin and separation from God and now accepting a new life totally devoted to the Holy Trinity and to living out God’s commandments. It is this way of living that attracted so many people to the faith in the early Church. It is this seriousness of conversion that produces so many martyrs for Christ. When we live this type of conversion, we are no longer ourselves as we were, but we are beacons of Christ, reflections of Christ, and it is Christ Who lives in us and through us. This is the meaning of sainthood, and each baptized Christian is called to this life. We then put on a pure white garment which shows the purity of the soul after it has been cleansed in the waters of Baptism.

But if we do not have this conversion, if we do not dedicate our lives to Christ, than all of this language is mere theological musing. No. This language is a feeble attempt to articulate an alternate way of life known only by those who truly live according to the commands of God. Those who have converted may not know how to express their experience in words, but they know the love and peace they feel within their hearts. This is the same love and peace we receive from Christ, if only we make this commitment and give up everything that binds us to this world of chaos and flesh.

When we are baptized as infants, our godparents make this promise of conversion for us, and we should be grateful that our parents and godparents love us so much, that they want us to be initiated into the Christian community and to become members of the kingdom of heaven. What greater gift can we receive than to be washed clean of the results of a fallen world? But since we were infants, we did not accept this conversion as a life that we truly want to live. And now that we are grown—it is doubtful that an infant is reading this article—we have to reaffirm the promises made for us at our Baptism. We must accept an active conversion in our childhood, teenage, young adult, midlife, and twilight years.

But what exactly is this conversion? It is when we say to God in prayer, or at any moment with conviction, that we promise to follow Him and to devote our lives to Him in the way that He has revealed to us. One who is truly converted sees ev-

ery moment as an opportunity to do good, show love, and to resist temptations to do evil. Those who have converted strive to learn all they can about God and His Church through constant reading of Scripture and other spiritual reading. They are warriors against overt and subliminal evil in the world and are saddened when they experience people or expressions which fail to recognize God’s love. They also do not tolerate evil in their own lives and show others by example that they should not

tolerate it in their lives. One who undergoes conversion to become a disciple of Jesus Christ lives in a state of purity that they continue from their baptism. When they fall short of that purity, they strongly desire to regain it again by availing themselves of the forgiveness of God through the Holy Mystery of Reconciliation, because they know that spending eternity with God in heaven is worth more than any earthly pleasure. **ECL**

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UPCOMING EVENTS FOR JULY

Eparchial and Parish Events

- 1 Pre-Teen Girls' Camp ends
Carpathian Village, Cresco, PA
- 3 Independence Day Holiday
Chancery closed
- 4 Independence Day
- 19-22 Altar Server Congress
Carpathian Village, Cresco, PA
- 20 Holy Prophet Elias
Simple Holy Day
- 21 Hierarchical Divine Liturgy with Bishop Kurt for Saint Ann Novena
Basilica of Saint Ann, Scranton, PA, 4:30 p.m.
- 26-29 Eparchial Teen Rally
Carpathian Village, Cresco, PA