

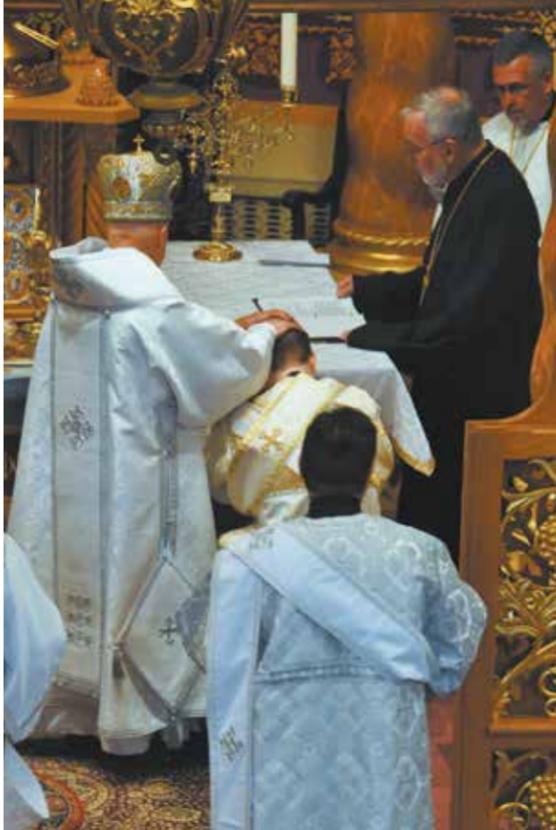


EASTERN CATHOLIC LIFE

Official Publication of the Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Passaic

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JULY 2019



"Divine grace, which heals all ills and supplies what is lacking..."

On Sunday May 19, 2019, I did something that I have done countless times in my life: I walked through the doors of Saint Michael the Archangel Cathedral in Passaic, NJ. Almost habitually, I entered into the church, blessed myself, walked up the side aisle and headed directly toward the altar server's sacristy, just as I did when I was a child. On my way through the church, I took a deep breath and smelled the familiar smell of the cathedral and reflected on the thought that the last time I was in that building it was for Baba's funeral a year and a half ago. Upon entering the

sacristy, I met up with Father Jack Custer and we headed directly into the Holy Place. Once again, I instinctively stood to the right side of the altar in the position that I was accustomed to, having served at that altar for so many years. Father Jack then brought over the book of the Holy Gospels in preparation for me to make my *Declaration of Freedom and Profession of Faith* as I prepared to be ordained to the Holy Order of the Diaconate. Standing there in my usual place, having gone through my usual routine, as I placed my hand upon the Gospel Book, I was overcome with the notion that there was absolutely nothing at all usual about this day. Here I was, standing in the place where I first encountered serving the Divine Liturgy, with my hand on a Gospel Book dedicated to the memory of George and Mary Varchola (my Dido and Baba), professing my faith and belief in Christ about to be ordained to Holy Orders: what a

SUBDEACON PAUL VARCHOLA WEST ORDAINED TO THE SACRED DIACONATE

by Deacon Paul Varchola West

unique and blessed experience! It was almost as if God were telling me that, despite all the twists and turns in my life, all the journeys I've taken, all the mistakes I've made, all those choices have lead me back home where I belong, that this path of discernment toward the priesthood is not merely another adventure, but God's way of bringing me back to where I truly belong: serving His Holy Altar and His people.

As we processed into the Cathedral at the beginning of the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy, I was overcome with a sense of awe seeing people from various points in my life occupying the pews: family, friends, parishioners of Saint Michael Cathedral whom I have known my entire life, parishioners from Saint Mary Parish in Hillsborough, NJ (my grown-up home!), and the list goes on and on, almost too long to recount. The Hierarchical Divine Liturgy commenced with the vesting of Bishop Kurt in the church and what proceeded was one of the most beautiful Liturgies I have ever attended. The Liturgy was celebrated by Bishop Kurt along with two concelebrant priests, two deacons, two subdeacons, and a rather sizeable battalion of altar servers, not to mention the many priests and deacons in choir! To top it all off, the Saint Michael Cathedral Choir welcomed several cantors and singers from Saint Mary Parish in Hillsborough

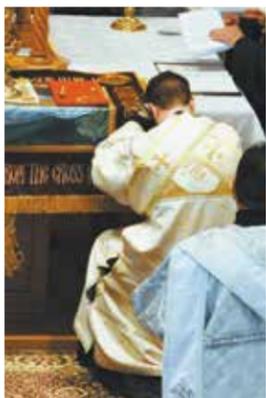
and sang in a beautiful manner befitting such a blessed day. As the Liturgy progressed and the ordination itself took place, hearing Bishop Kurt exclaim *Axios!*, and the congregation replying the same, filled my mind with a sense of wonder at God's mysteries, and filled my heart with joy that I was able to share this moment with all those present. I would be remiss if I did not mention that the Divine Liturgy was followed by an amazing reception hosted by the cathedral parish at which I was able to socialize with all those who came, which meant a great deal to me. Being able to talk with people from my childhood, to hear their stories about me, my mom and dad, my uncles, and my Baba and Dido, made me realize that my formation did not begin when I entered seminary, but rather, it began the day I was born and has been fostered by multiple generations. This, I must say, is a true blessing!



Bishop Kurt with newly-ordained Deacon Paul Varchola West and concelebrating clergy and altar servers.

I would like to express my thanks and gratitude to Almighty God and to Bishop Kurt for calling me to Holy Orders and for supporting my vocation; to Father Jack Custer for all the legwork he put in behind the scenes to get the event off the ground; to Father Ed Higgins for his liturgical support on that day and always; Father Jim Badeaux and our entire parish family at Saint Mary Parish in Hillsborough, NJ, for their unending support; to all those clergy and religious who traveled to Passaic to attend the ordination; to the cantors and singers for lending

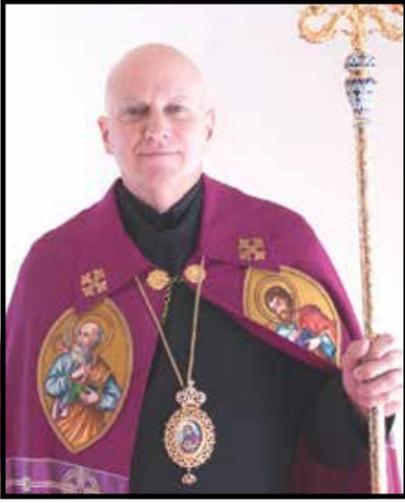
their talents; to the parishioners of Saint Michael Cathedral for welcoming me back home with open arms on such a blessed occasion; and to all those who worked behind the scenes to make the day so beautiful. I would also like to thank my entire family for their constant support and for raising me to love Christ and His Church. Finally, to my wife Alissa and our two children, Addie and Nick: I love you and thank you for always being by side because, we all know that I would not be here today if it were not for your love. *Slava Bohu!*



Subdeacon Paul Varchola West kneels before the imposition of hands.



The newly-ordained Deacon Paul Varchola West with his family and friends.



I LIFT UP MY EYES...

Pastoral Reflections of Bishop Kurt



TRUST AND BETRAYAL

Have you ever lost faith in someone? Have you ever lost your trust in someone? Depending on who it is and what happened, and on your own personality, it might take a long time to return to trust. In fact, you might never trust him or her again. I read a biography recently of one of the most evil Soviet spies of the cold war. He rose to the top of British intelligence and supplied the Russian government with the names of many men and women over decades of years who were killed and tortured by the Russians. He rationalized his actions on the grounds that it was a war, and the people on both sides knew the risk they were taking. However, one example of his betrayal was that many Germans during the Nazi rule were working against their government. They supplied their names to the English government. This monster supplied all of those names to the Russian government, and all of them were killed by the Russians when they invaded the eastern part of Germany. What did these people do to hurt this Englishman? They were allies in saving England from Hitler. Yet he sold them to the communists for his own advancement. One of the more discouraging parts of the story is that he never faced justice in his own country. He was eventually discovered by the

Americans. Other traitors were captured and punished by the British government, but this particular spy had attended the best aristocratic schools and was considered a friend of aristocrats. The British government didn't want to execute one of their own, so they allowed him to escape to Russia where he was treated as a war hero. His wife, who hadn't known he was either communist or a spy, followed him to Russia, faithful to her husband over modern ideologies, choosing her husband over her nation. In Russia, he began an affair with the wife of one of his fellow expatriates, betraying both his long-time friend and his heroically faithful wife. His wife finally divorced him over that. She learned at the time that he had been unfaithful many times before as well. She said later, "You never really know another person."

In fact, we never really do know another person. Saint Paul says, "No one ever knows the thoughts of a man except his own spirit." And in the Book of Proverbs it says, "The spirit of man is the lamp of the Lord, searching all his innermost parts." I've learned with experience that most people don't even know their own thoughts entirely, but at some deep level they do know, and so Saint Paul is right (as always) when he says that it is your spirit that knows your own thoughts. As the wife of that spy discovered, when someone speaks, we never know if the truth is on the surface, or if there is some hidden motive—even truthful statements can be manipulative. Truly deceptive people have a lifetime of practice at their art,

but all of us who are descended from Adam and Eve have some level of deception lurking in our words or actions.

Trust is essential for human relations, yet trust is as delicate as a spider's web. Trust is the foundation of the abundance in our American society. I first realized this in graduate school when my close friends were from a communist country. They were astonished at how the professors trusted their students. Our comprehensive examinations determined our future. They said that in their country, if the professors weren't in the room watching them, the students would use every conceivable method to cheat. I also learned when teaching at a university that in some countries, lying is expected and respected. In that country, they consider you a complete fool if you wouldn't lie or steal when you have the opportunity. Over time, I came to see how our economic system, based on trust, produces so much wealth for everyone. Of course, we have our share of thieves and liars, often in high places, but we don't believe that lying and stealing are virtues. Most Americans believe that if you borrow money to buy a car, that you should make your payments and make them on time. If you borrow money to buy a house, you should pay back the money, and pay on time. If you sign a contract, you should do what you promised to do. This mutual trust and these promises are what make our country the richest in the history of the world, and our dollar the standard for international trade. That other country, the one I mentioned where lying and stealing are considered clever, no one wants their currency, and no one tries to protect assets by putting them in that country. In fact, the residents of that country try to keep their savings somewhere else. As a pastor, I teach and believe that all good things come from God. It is no contradiction to say that our wealth comes from our virtue, because God does promise abundance as a reward for keeping his laws. I mentioned my friend from a communist country who first pointed out to me how much Americans trust each other. In fact, he said, "I think this is a society based on trust." It's no surprise that he chose to stay here for his career.

Life isn't here just for money and property. We were made for more important things, and that's why we are Christians. Saint John taught us that, "God is love. And he who abides in love, abides in God, and God in him." We were created to love and be loved, and trust is natural to us as children. As life proceeds, each betrayal destroys our ability to trust and strikes at the root of our soul. A root reaches down into the earth and provides a plant with the necessities of Life, and the root of our soul reaches down into spiritual depths reaching out to the source of eternal life, the Creator Himself. As trust and

love are destroyed in our lives, our very friendship with God is threatened. In his great passage on gossip, Saint James writes, "You cannot get clean water and dirty water from the same spring. How can you bless your Lord and Father with your mouth, and then curse your brother who was created in His image?"

In 1138, Saint Bernard of Clairvaux joyfully returned to his monastic life after being called away to Rome for the third time to help heal a schism in the Church. On his return, he restarts a series of sermons on the Song of Songs—a great love poem you can find in your Bible. He picks up at Sermon 24 reaching the verses, "The righteous love you. I am black but beautiful, Oh daughters of Jerusalem." Saint Bernard believes that these verses refer to the envy of the other maidens and their gossip. His lengthy attack on gossip is quite thorough. First, he describes some bridesmaids at a wedding feast: "in almost any group of young maidens I find some who curiously watch the bride's actions, not to imitate but to disparage them. They are embittered by their elders' good deeds, they feed on what is evil. You may see them walking apart, banding together, tongues in odious gossip. They are linked, one to the other, without air space between them, so great is their desire to smear or listen to the smear. They combine in intimate groups whose end is slander, their unions promote disunion." By the way, when Saint Bernard says "the bride", he means the Church! He compares gossips to Herod and Pilate who became close friends after plotting the death of Jesus.

Further on, Saint Bernard gives a description of how we spread gossip while pretending otherwise. Although he first says, there are those who repeat every damaging story brazenly. He almost seems to believe they are not as evil as the ones who pretend otherwise. Saint Bernard says, "See the prelude of the deep sighs, the mingled gravity and reluctance blazoned on his unhappy face, the downcast eyes and somber tones, as the slanderer tells his tale, all the more persuasive the more the audience believes that he speaks with regret and with sympathy rather than malice. 'I am really sorry for him,' he says, 'because I like him so much, but I could never induce him to set himself right in the matter.'" Then Saint Bernard describes how others now join in the gossip. "Another says, 'I knew well that he was guilty of that fault, though I should never have been the one to reveal it. But now that it has been divulged by another, I cannot deny that it is true; it pains me to say it, but facts are facts.' And he goes on: 'It is a great pity, he has so many good qualities; but if we are candid, he cannot be excused in this particular thing.'" How well Saint Bernard describes the hypocrisy of gossip! I can imagine that Saint Bernard was a

A pilgrimage to

GREECE

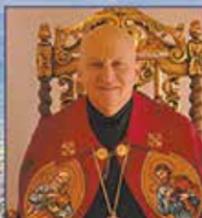
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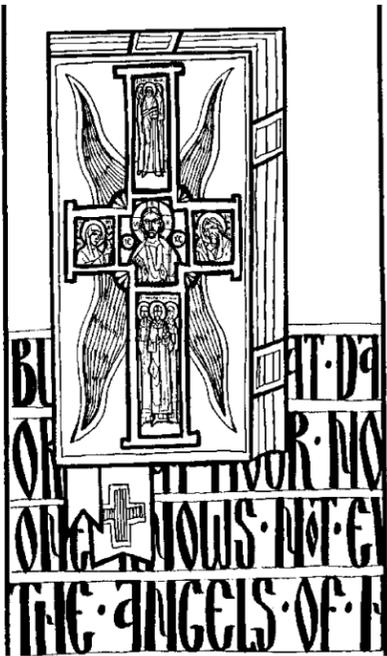
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stern father in his monastery as far as that vice is concerned.

As the winds of time disrupt the delicate web of trust in our lives, is there anything we can do to nurture this essential part of life? God gave us several books of good advice in the Bible, and in the Book of Sirach, also called Ecclesiasticus, there is some guidance on this subject. It's important first to think about what is possible and what is within our power. Should you trust everyone on earth? Not on your life. You should use all your life experience to patiently decide who can be trusted. Can I make other people trust me? Of course not. They must make their own decisions. And if I betray a trust, I cannot undo it. As the scriptures warn, "Whoever betrays secrets destroys confidence, and he will never find a



congenial friend. Love your friend and keep faith with him; but if you betray his secrets, do not run after him. For as a man destroys his enemy, so you have destroyed the friendship. And as you allow a bird to escape from your hand, so you have let your friend go and will not catch him again."

Nevertheless, the scriptures contain valuable advice on what I can do to be a person worthy of trust. The first thing that Ben Sirach says is "Never repeat a conversation, and you will lose nothing at all." Is it true that you should never repeat a conversation? I'm the sort of person who usually gives the source for any information I repeat—it's my scientific training. So, I do repeat conversations. I think the verse refers to a conversation that someone would not want repeated. Sometimes we repeat conversations that contain confidential

information. Sometimes we repeat a conversation in a way that makes someone else seem foolish. The question is this, would I want the other person to hear me repeating the conversation? These betrayals happen because we want to be part of whatever is happening. Other people are talking about someone, and we want to show off our own knowledge, our own importance. As Ben Sirach says, "Never repeat a conversation, and you will lose nothing by it." Truly, what will I lose if I keep my mouth shut? Usually, the gossips don't hold me in esteem if I repeat something. Not only will they use it later to hurt you, but they don't even like you at the time because you are stealing their spotlight. Ben Sirach goes on to say, "With friend or foe, do not report it, and unless it would be a sin, do not disclose it." So it isn't an absolute rule, as the scripture says, sometimes it might be a sin to withhold information.

"For someone has heard you and watched you, and when the time comes, he will hate you." As Ben Sirach says, repeating confidences is one of the things that destroys trust, destroys love, and destroys friendships. After all, the point of repeating something is spreading information. Who can control the spread once it starts? Sooner or later it will get back to the confider, whether by chance or by malice is unimportant, "he will hate you."

The urge to be accepted, the urge to seem important, the desire for attention is so strong, that Ben Sirach mocks it. He says, "Have you heard a word? Let it die with you. Be brave! It will not make you burst!" Imagine that you enter into a conversation, promising yourself ahead of time that you will say only good things. Then the topic turns to something of current interest where you have a little inside information, or think you do. How difficult it is to restrain the tongue! As Ben Sirach says, "Be brave! It will not make you burst!" As we wait for the opportune time to add to the conversation, it does seem like we might burst. If you can remember that verse at the time, you might laugh instead of gossiping. Everyone will ask you why you are laughing.

After telling us we won't burst, the scripture describes the gossip in more severe language, or perhaps more amusing depending on how you look at it. "With such a word a fool will suffer pangs like a woman in labor with a child. Like an arrow stuck in the flesh

of the thigh, so is a word inside a fool." I remember one situation I lived in, there was a man who was a true gossip. He would get confidences from others, and then repeat them wherever he could cause damage, or trying to win new friends. Another man used to laugh and say, he was truly like a woman in labor. He was in pain until he gave birth to the gossip. Like a man with an arrow stuck in his thigh, he couldn't think about anything else until he pulled the arrow out.

Not all gossip is true, and sometimes, even if it is true, it is innocent but malicious people can repeat in a way that causes damage.

The scriptures admonish us not to be gossips ourselves, but that doesn't mean we won't be hurt by gossip. Wisely, the scriptures go on to give us advice on how to heal the wound. One thing you can do is to nip gossip in the bud. If someone says, here is what people are saying about you behind your back, you should stop them in their tracks. A woman came to me in my first parish with a conspiratorial smile and said, "Do you know what people are saying about you behind your back?" I said, "If they don't say it to my face, I don't care." She looked stunned and never came to me again with gossip. If someone says they heard a criticism about you behind your back, ask him where he heard it. If he won't tell you, then you know that he is trying to hurt you "passive aggressively," that is, he is trying to hurt you sadistically while making it seem that someone else is guilty. That kind of behavior is both passive aggressive and cowardly, but then most gossips are cowards.

After the damage is done, is there anything we can do to heal the wound? Ben Sirach has much wisdom, and first he says, "Question a friend; perhaps he did not do it, but if he did anything, so that he may not do it anymore." In other words, if you hear something about a friend, instead of repeating it, go to him and ask him if it is true. If it isn't true, then you have built trust. If it is true, perhaps he will be chastened by the question. Often people with problems think that it is a secret and are happy to have someone to talk to about it.

"Question a neighbor; perhaps he did not say it; but if he said it, so that he may not say it again." If someone repeats gossip to you, the scripture says to go to the source and ask about it. As the

scriptures say, perhaps it isn't true. On the other hand, people might be more careful about gossiping if they find out that you aren't a player in the secret game.

"Question a friend, for often it is slander; so do not believe everything you hear." It seems like we live in an era of accusations. Perhaps it has always been like this, but it certainly seems to me that it is the worst I have ever seen. Whatever the rest of the world does, we can't allow these evils to destroy our own friendships and lives. One thing we learn from the scriptures is that there has always been gossip, there have always been accusations, there has always been slander. So the scriptures say, if you hear something about someone you know, don't believe it just because you heard it. If it seems important, than go ask your friend.

The scriptures wisely say that not every false statement is malicious. "A person may make a slip without intending it. Who has never sinned with his tongue?" Even when someone repeats false information, sometimes it is an honest mistake. Who has never made a mistake?

This passage ends with, "Question your neighbor before you threaten him; and let the law of the Most High take its course." Everyone knows a hot head who threatens first and investigates later (if at all). Hot heads don't usually get very far in life. So the scriptures say, look into a matter before you make accusations. Even if someone has done something wrong, remember that we all will face the Judge who knows everything, including the secrets of our hearts, the Judge who knows the truth of every word, and the intention hiding behind every word and every action. When the scriptures say, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord," that doesn't mean that God is vengeful, it means that those who escape justice in this world will find it in the next, so we don't have to avenge every wrong ourselves. We don't have to track down every rumor. We don't always have to be right, nor be seen to be right. We don't always have to be heard. We don't always have to seem clever. "Let the law of the Most High take its course."

"All wisdom is the fear of the Lord, and in all wisdom is the fulfillment of the Law."

+Kurt Burnette

THE BYZANTINE CATHOLIC EPARCHY OF PASSAIC subscribes to the
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PEOPLE YOU KNOW AROUND THE EPARCHY

IN ANNANDALE...



Above: 2019 Father Son Night: The fathers and sons of Epiphany Parish in Annandale, VA, gathered for the annual Steak Night at the June Epiphany Men's Club meeting.

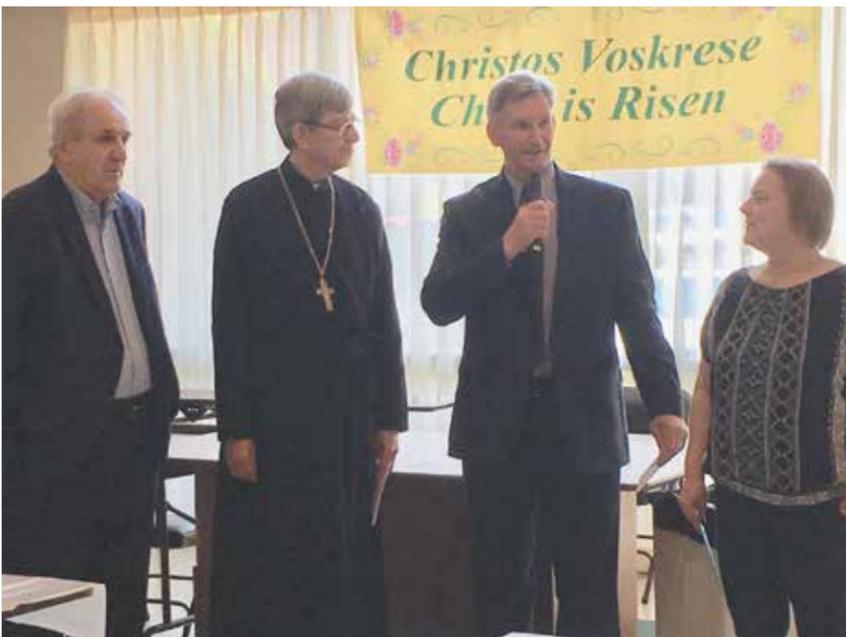
Right: WWII Vets: This year's Father-Son steak night coincidentally took place on the 75th anniversary of D-Day. Among the members present were two World War II veterans, John Onufrak (left) and Daniel Palenski.

Below: Fr. John 40th: Jeff Nash-winter, president of the Epiphany Men's Club offers remarks at the parish celebration for the 40th Anniversary of Father John Basarab's ordination. Looking on are (left) Men's Club Treasurer Tony Fazio, and (right) Epiphany Ladies Guild President Marsha Puhak.



Above: That Others May Live: Air Force Major Christian Braunsch, who grew up at Epiphany and now attends Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church in Anchorage, AK, spoke on his job as a combat rescue officer assigned to the Alaska Air National Guard, which has included three tours of Afghanistan, and assignments in Djibouti and Mongolia.

Below: Subdeacon Tim Farris: The Epiphany Men's Club also heard from two speakers at their Father-Son Steak Night dinner. Newly-ordained Subdeacon Timothy Farris spoke on "Praying Like Jesus" as part of his summer tour of the Eparchy of Passaic. He also attended the Ladies Guild's Spring Dance and spoke to the parish's School of Religion classes the following Sunday.



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IN CARY...

One of our Eparchy's seminarians, the newly-ordained Subdeacon Timothy Fariss, is traveling South this summer to experience the diversity of parishes that make up the Eparchy of Passaic. While visiting these parishes, Subdeacon Timothy is also giving talks about vocations to the clerical and monastic life. He visited Cary, NC, on Sunday, June 16, where he met with the children as well as the adults.



IN FOREST CITY...

Couple celebrates 70 years of marriage

Thomas and Agnes Susco, Forest City, PA, celebrated their seventieth wedding anniversary, on Tuesday, May 28, 2019. To mark the occasion, a Divine Liturgy was celebrated by Father John Cigan, administrator of Saint John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church, Forest City. The vestments which Father John wore were a gift by the jubilarians' children and their families. A family celebration was also held in their honor.

Thomas and Agnes are the parents of four boys, Thomas (Nancy), Reston, VA; Mark (Barbara), Pittsburgh, PA; Dr. David, Durham, NC and Joel (Dr. Michelle), Clifton, VA. Ten (10) grandchildren, Dr. Thomas, Dr. Benjamin (Dr. Catherine), Tim, Dr. Lauren, Jennifer (Joe), Douglas (Liz), Scott, Catherine, Christopher and Caroline and 4 great-grandchildren, Nathan, Matthew, Victoria and Grant.

IN MONT CLARE...

"Icon" Do It!

Last January, Father Andriy Kolvach, Parochial Vicar of Saint Michael Parish in Mont Clare, PA, offered the parishioners an iconography class every Friday evening for six weeks. The participants learned a great deal about the process of writing an icon, prayerful reflection while writing icons, and the importance of these sacred images to our heritage and our faith.



For this particular class, the participants focused on writing the icon called *Christ Pantocrator* or "ruler of all." Each class began with a prayer and continued by bringing the students into a deeper appreciation for what is required mentally, emotionally, and spiritually, to write an icon. It also encouraged a lot of prayer and patience throughout the process.

Father Andriy was a patient and wonderful teacher, and those who participated were able to go home with a beautiful icon they had personally written to display in their homes.

At the end of the class, the students gave Father Andriy an award for his

teaching excellence and his personal attention "behind the scenes" to any student's mistakes so that each icon looked polished and lovingly written. His ability to fine-tune the images in the untrained hands of their writers was tremendously appreciated.

Upon their completion, the icons were blessed during Liturgy before being taken home by the artists.

The parishioners of Saint Michael Church look forward to Father Andriy offering another iconography class later this year or early in 2020. Father Edward Higgins is the Administrator of Saint Michael Parish.

IN ROSWELL...

Eastern Catholic Pastoral Association of Georgia Meets

There are several different Eastern Catholic Churches in the Atlanta, Georgia area including 6 different Rites: Eritrean, Maronite, Melkite (Byzantine), Ruthenian (Byzantine), Syro-Malabar, and Ukrainian (Byzantine). Father John Azar (Melkite) is again organizing a clergy group for mutual support and fellowship between both the clergy and the parishes. They recently met at Mother of God Ukrainian Catholic Church in Conyers, GA. Pictured below are from left to right: Abba Kidane Mariam (Eritrean), Father Lewis Rabayda (Ruthenian), Father John Azar (Melkite), and Father Volodymyr Petrytsya (Ukrainian).



PHOTO SUBMITTED TO ECL WINS AWARD

A photo that was submitted for an article in the March edition of the *Eastern Catholic Life* was recently given a special honor. The photo shows Father Mykhaylo Prodanets dispersing blessed water into the Susquehanna River in Wilkes-Barre, PA, on February 10, 2019.

It was awarded the Leonard A. Nakajaka Memorial First Place Photography Award in the 64th Sandra Dyczewski Maffei Juried Art Exhibit of the Wilkes-Barre Fine Arts Fiesta, May 16-19. Mary Anne Fedor, a parishioner of Saint Michael Church, Pittston, PA, captured the photo during the annual river blessing service.

The blessed water release occurs quickly at the conclusion of the service. In the second that Father Mykhaylo threw the water into the river, Mary Anne took one single shot. She recalls, "I didn't have the camera set on continuous frame shooting like most photographers do for action photos. But I could see I captured the flow of water midair. It wasn't until 7:30 p.m., when I uploaded that single frame, that the beauty of it all was revealed and I

realized what a blessing from the Holy Spirit it was."

Encouragement to "do something with it" came from friends in Mary Anne's workplace. In spite of a few small obstacles, and with permission from Father Mykhaylo and her own priest, Father Gary Mensinger, she registered a framed print on April 13 for review. It was the first time she entered a photo exhibit or any form of art in many years. On the Wednesday after Pascha, the juried notice arrived in her mail. Not only was the photo accepted, it received the award!

The Fine Arts Fiesta is a community-oriented four-day event with several thousand people attending. An award for a photo of a religious service does not commonly happen and to have it displayed in such a public format was a blessing in itself. The two judges were art gallery directors of local universities. Aside from whatever qualities caught their attention, it seemed factors related to the river blessing and the photo were providential. Even the choice of where Father Mykhaylo approached the river bank seemed more than coincidental.



Photographer Mary Anne Fedor stands by her award-winning photo

Father Mykhaylo Prodanets is the pastor of Saint Mary Church, Kingston, and Saint John the Baptist Church, Wilkes-Barre Township, PA. Father Gary Mensinger is the pastor of Saint Michael Church, Pittston, and Saint Nicholas Church, Swoyersville, PA. Mary Anne began taking photos in 2015 with minimal experience responding to a

need for images for the parish website and with the goal of showing the beauty of the Byzantine Catholic faith. The awarded photo and others can be found by searching keywords "river 2019" on the Saint Michael, Pittston, PA, website.

PASCHA, THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD, CELEBRATED IN THE VILLAGES, FL

By Dr. Barbara Y. Lutz

Amidst crystal blue skies, brilliant sunshine and gentle breezes, the faithful arrived for the very first Vigil Divine Liturgy for the Resurrection of Our Lord—Pascha, on Saturday, April 20, 2019. The location was the large chapel of Saint Mark the Evangelist Roman Catholic Church, Summerfield, FL (the northern point of The Villages). The chapel was decorated beautifully by the women of the parish, and we added our traditional touches—the grave and shroud of our Crucified Lord, and large icons of Christ the Teacher and the Holy Theotokos gracing the Holy Table. We offer our sincere gratitude to Father Mariuz Dymek, OSPPE, pastor of Saint Mark, for his friendship, support and generosity in offering the Holy Place for the Divine Liturgy as

well as the parish staff who assisted in advertising, preparing the chapel and sharing our joy.

The Divine Liturgy was concelebrated by Father Robert Evancho, pastor of Saint Therese, Saint Petersburg, FL, and Syncellus of the Southern States, and Father Oleksy Nebesnyk, of Saint Anne, New Port Richey, FL. Along with the two priests assisted a deacon, two altar servers, three cantors and fifty-five faithful, the hymns of the Liturgy were raised gloriously to our God. Moments not to be forgotten were the faithful "walking on their knees" and bowing their heads to the floor in veneration of the Plaschanitsa (shroud), the procession with beaming smiles and tears of joy at the first singing of



"Christos Vokrese," the blessing of the baskets of paschal foods and the cheerful camaraderie. Expression of our love of God through worship according to the Byzantine Catholic tradition was so missed and now so appreciated by all who attended. The Divine Liturgy on this day was truly "divine"! We all arrived strangers, became a community worshipping and singing with one voice, and left as family, vowing to return in faith, hope and love in establishing a Byzantine Catholic Community in and near The Villages, located in Central

Florida. An "Awareness Campaign" to seek and find additional Byzantine Catholics within the area is ongoing, and a schedule of future Divine Liturgies and gatherings will be announced. If you live in or have friends or family in the area of The Villages, please call local contact Dr. Barbara Yastishock-Lutz, 352-530-9631 to introduce yourself and for more information. Your support in prayer as we 'build-up Christ's church on earth' is greatly appreciated. Thank you. Christ is Among Us!



CANTOR INSTITUTE OFFERS ONLINE CLASSES, SUMMER SCHOOL

The Byzantine Catholic Church has a unique place among the Catholic and Orthodox churches in the United States: it is the only place where all liturgical services are routinely sung, from beginning to end, by the entire congregation. To do this, the church needs **cantors**: men and women who know our liturgy and plain chant and can begin the singing of the faithful and guide it as each service progresses.

Online classes

The range of skills needed by a cantor is broad. Based on the experience of fifteen years teaching cantors in the classroom, in 2015 the Metropolitan Cantor Institute in Pittsburgh launched an Internet-based program to teach the liturgical and musical knowledge that a cantor needs. These classes can be accessed at <http://mci.archpitt.org/classes>.

The initial classes in the program are FREE, and can be taken at any time:

- Introduction to Liturgy*
- Introduction to Church Singing*
- Introduction the Typikon*

Each class consists of guided lessons, listening assignments, and easy quizzes and reviews. In the church singing course, students record the chants they have learned, at home, and instructors help each student improve his or her singing. Classes can be taken on any

internet-connected computer, tablet, or smartphone, and are open to ALL members of the Byzantine Catholic Church. (Because the Church Singing course involves significant instructor time for feedback, there is a registration fee for non-members.)

Further courses cover reading in church, the Divine Liturgy and Vespers, and singing in the Eight Tones, as well as special services throughout the church year. They also include material on leadership skills for cantors, as well as integrating the liturgy and church singing into one's own prayer life. The entire program can be completed in two years, for less than \$35/month per student.

Summer School

Of course, some things can only be learned and practiced through actual singing in church! So, the Cantor Institute also provides an annual summer school and occasional regional classes.

This year, the Summer Cantor School will be held on July 18-19 at Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church in Hillsborough, NJ. It is open to both new and experienced cantors and is being offered on a Thursday and Friday to allow serving cantors to return to their home parishes for weekend services. We also hope that older teens and young adults will consider attending as well, to investigate a potential vocation as cantor.

Note that NEW or prospective cantors should take the free online class, Introduction to Church Singing, BEFORE attending the summer school. For details, see the MCI website!

Hymnal Project

Renewing our parish singing has to focus on the music of the liturgical services – but our church also has a strong tradition of singing so-called “paraliturgical hymns” and spiritual songs outside of the Liturgy, especially in honor of the Mother of God and the saints. At the request of the Inter-Eparchial Music Commission, the Metropolitan Cantor Institute is currently preparing a new and expanded hymnal for our church. All discussion for this project is conducted online, and cantors and others are warmly encouraged to participate.

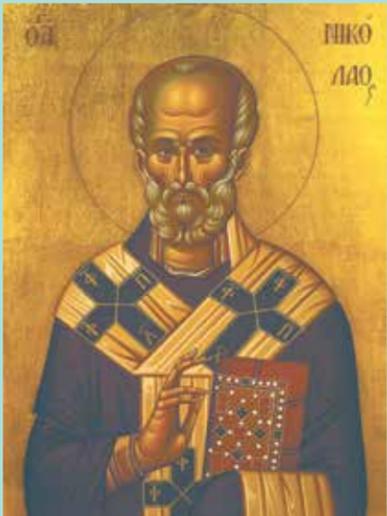
Future projects being planned include a basic set of harmonized plain chant, a “core repertoire” in Church Slavonic for parishes which still sing occasionally in this language, and materials to teach the skill of singing plain chant in harmony “by ear,” as has been done in our church for many years. We are also looking for opportunities to give more regional classes, and to help parishes document and celebrate their own local history of church singing.

For more information, check out the Metropolitan Cantor Institute website, <http://mci.archpitt.org>. You can also contact the MCI director, Deacon Jeffrey Mierzejewski, at (412) 735-1676 or mci@archpitt.org

The Saint Nicholas Pilgrimage

Carpathian Village
Cresco, PA

August 4,
2019



Summer School for Cantors

Two-day workshop for cantors in the Eparchy of Passaic

When: July 18-19, 2019

Where: Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church
1900 Brooks Blvd.
Hillsborough, NJ

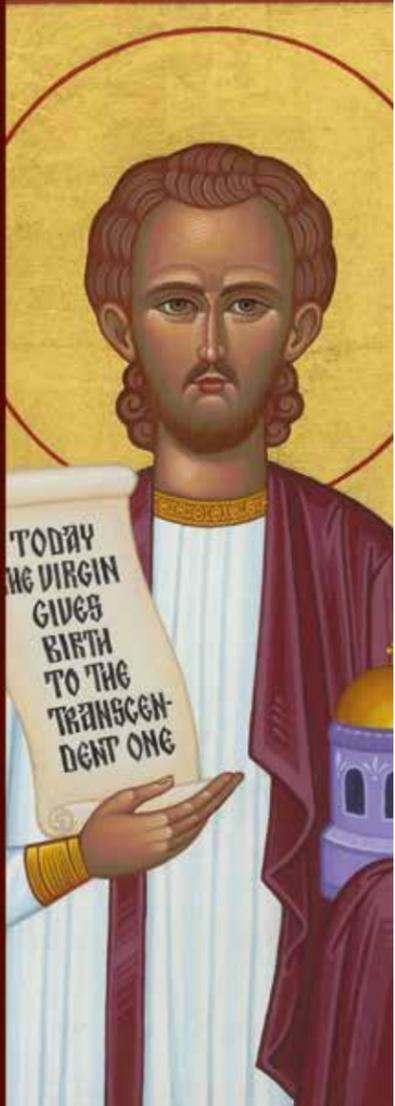
Who: Cantors of the Eparchy of Passaic
New and experienced cantors of any age welcome

Cost: \$100

TOPICS WILL INCLUDE:

- The cantor's role
- Confidence: The first three notes
- Pitch choice and matching
- Parish feast days
- Funeral service and parasas
- Baptismal and wedding services
- The “spirit” of plain chant
- And more!

For more information, or to register, contact Deacon Jeffrey Mierzejewski - mci@archpitt.org or (412) 735-1676.



CHURCH SLAVONIC DIVINE LITURGY

With Homily Ponašemu

Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church at 8:30 AM
(Saint Mary's Ruthenian Greek Catholic Church, Inc.)

246 East 15th Street, New York, New York 10003

Telephone: 212-677-0516

Email: Fredcimbala@gmail.com

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

Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church, 246 East 15th Street, New York, NY, will offer the Divine Liturgy celebrated in Church Slavonic with the homily preached ponašemu. The celebrant and homilist will be Father Gregory Lozinsky, parochial vicar of Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church in Jersey City, NJ. This Divine Liturgy is being established as an outreach for people from Eastern Europe with the blessing of Bishop Kurt Burnette, Eparch of Passaic, NJ, at the request of Bishop Milan Šašik, Eparch of Mukachevo, Ukraine. Saint Mary Parish is located on the corner of East 15th Street and Second Avenue and is easily accessible by subway. The 14th Street-Union Square Subway stop is less than a ten-minute walk. Everyone is invited. For more information, please contact Father Gregory Lozinsky at 201-333-2975.



Visiting New York City? Come Worship With Us!

Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church
Father Edward G. Cimbala, D.Min.—Pastor

246 East 15th Street, Manhattan, New York
212-677-0516

Sunday Divine Liturgy

8:30 AM – Church Slavonic & Homily Ponašemu

10:00 AM

6:00 PM



LIFE, LOVE, AND THE HUMAN PERSON

By Ann M. Koshute, MTS

FEAR THE LORD, BUT DON'T BE AFRAID

When I was a kid my mother usually meted out the punishment for “bad behavior” – though my brother and I were generally good kids. It fell this way likely because, as a stay-at-home-mom, she was with us during the day when we were small, and she always had an eye on us when we were out playing in the summer. If you did something wrong, mom let you know! Our father was very loving and involved in our lives, but as the main provider he was busy at the office all day, and as we got older, he travelled for work. On those rare occasions when my brother or I did something that warranted punishment (or a good talking-to), it was our dad’s form of discipline that was somewhat more frightening. When mom said, “Go see your father,” we knew what was coming. He didn’t yell and he never laid a hand on us, but the sting of four small words, spoken calmly but firmly, lasted longer than a quick smack on the behind: *I’m disappointed in you.* Small children don’t understand the world around them, or their own impulses, so lengthy explanations of why a behavior is undesirable (and potentially harmful) don’t resonate. But as we grow and our ability to reason (and rationalize) develops, so does our conscience. The fear of being scolded or even spanked is superseded by something greater and less tangible. Disappointing the ones we love is more

than failing to meet some expectation they held for us, falling short of what they thought we could achieve. As a child I had a nascent sense that disappointing my mom and dad was more than making them mad at me, and as I grew, I came to understand what it really meant: that I was not living up to the good in myself. I was not acting (or thinking) like the young woman they were raising me to be – or the person God created me to be.

Fear of the Lord is one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit (Isaiah 11:1-2), and it is to be desired and cultivated. That may seem counter-intuitive, especially because we know that *God is love* (1 John 4:7-8), and love is not compatible with harming or frightening another. We may be tempted to think, “That line about ‘fear of the Lord’ comes from the Old Testament, so it was the *mean God* who instilled fear. Jesus is compassionate and accepting, and we don’t have to fear Him.” This is a misunderstanding of what fear of the Lord actually means, and a grave misunderstanding of God in the Old and New Testaments. God is the same today as He was 2,000 or 5,000 years ago. He is our Father, and the Ultimate Teacher, bringing us along in our stubborn sinfulness as any good parent would by teaching, disciplining, leading, comforting, and allowing us to grow and mature. Fear of the Lord is a

virtue we all need.

In biblical and theological terms, the “fear” we’re speaking about here is different from the emotion and physical responses we experience from day to day. For example, living near a popular amusement park I often hear people scream as they’re plunged into oblivion (that’s the sound it makes to me) in the cars of roller coasters. I’d be in *fear* for my life, so I don’t ride them. Some of us fear water or spiders. Some of our fears are irrational, while others are healthy and keep us safe. Fear is part of the human experience. The difference between the fear of spiders, failing a test or a really creepy horror movie and *fear of the Lord* is simple but important: movies and bugs and things that may be threats to us make us afraid. *We should never be afraid of God.*

Saint Maximos the Confessor very clearly expresses what it means to “fear God”:

Fear of God is of two kinds. The first is generated in us by the threat of punishment. It is through such fear that we develop in due order self-control, patience, hope in God, and dispassion; and it is from dispassion that love comes. The second kind of fear is linked with love and constantly produces reverence in the soul, so that it does not grow indifferent to God because of the intimate communion of its love.

Our “fear of God” is irrational if we think that He is out to get us, waiting for the smallest mistake so that He can bring the force of His might down on us. If we believe that “God is love,” then we must believe that He wants what is good for us. God does not want us to cower in fear before Him as if He is a threat to us and our well-being. To do so is to *be afraid*, and it is a twisted understanding of our relationship with God. Take another look at how Saint Maximos defines the “fear” that is a gift, and then think of how we teach

children right from wrong, appropriate behavior, and how to treat others. When they are small and don’t yet have developed powers of reason and understanding, we may use fear of being punished among other tools to teach them. Over time children learn that with bad behavior comes consequences, and they begin to alter that behavior. As they mature, they learn how to exercise *self-control*, to be more *patient*, and (hopefully) begin to *detach* from the behavior that is inappropriate or harmful. The parent uses the consequence of punishment as a teaching tool to bring the child along in his understanding and maturity. Eventually, if the parental relationship is healthy, the child learns that parents don’t mete out punishments for their own pleasure, but to keep him safe and to teach important lessons. The child strives to behave rightly out of *reverence* for the parents, who don’t want the child to be afraid, but are creating a *communion of love* within the family. So it is with each of us, who are *God’s children*.

Like any child I feared getting caught doing something wrong and facing punishment, but I was never *afraid* of my parents. Though I didn’t fully understand the upset I sometimes caused when I was small, I learned that every look of disappointment or scolding was not a threat, but an expression of love. I know that not everyone enjoys a healthy relationship with their parents, and that for some growing up in a dysfunctional or abusive home is a frightening experience. Whatever our personal experiences of childhood punishment or mistreatment we may suffer as adults, we must know that God is our perfect Father who loves us beyond measure. The “fear” we must nurture should motivate us to do His will, be sorry for our sins, do what is good, and enter the communion of love into which He invites us. Because after all, *Perfect love drives out fear.* (1 John 4:18)

ECL

The Sisters of St. Basil the Great warmly invite you to the 85th Annual Pilgrimage in honor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help August 31 & September 1, 2019

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Women in the Bible and in the Church Today —Byzantine Woman’s Day of Recollection—

Saturday, July 13, 2019

Holy Dormition Byzantine Franciscan Monastery,
Sybertsville, PA

Father Jerome Wolbert, OFM—Celebrant and Speaker

Beginning at 8:30 AM with Divine Liturgy Activities concluding at 3:00 PM
Fee: \$40.00 includes pastry and coffee in AM & a light lunch. For Information or Reservations call: Carol Soemer (570) 969-1756 or Gina Romancheck (570) 956-9272 or email Gina at: gmr7@ptd.net

Deadline: July 6, 2019



SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

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

PATIENCE AND COMMITMENT

The Byzantine Tradition gives significant attention to the great men and women of the Old Testament but only Saint Elias the Prophet gets remembered in a major holy day every year (July 20). If you read the story of Elias' prophetic ministry (1 Kings 17ff; 2 Kings 1-2), the very first thing you'll notice is that he is a prophet of deeds, not of words. His prayers could bring rain or drought, abundant harvests or famines. He boldly confronted corrupt leaders and even raised the dead, but he also had his moments of doubt and despair when the Lord seemed very far away and that serving Him was a thankless job.

All this happened nearly 900 years before Christ our Lord was born. What can we learn from the holy prophet Elias today? The Epistle of Saint James holds Elias up as a model of fervent prayer (5:17-18) in a passage that begins with an exhortation to be patient. Actually there's no one English word that expresses everything Saint James means. He means putting up with difficulties, inconvenience, uncertainty even suffering now because we are confident in the much better things that are part of God's plan for us in the end. In all his struggles, that kind of patient endurance doesn't come naturally to us. We want what we want and we want it now. We want all our problems solved now; all our prayers answered now; all our desires fulfilled now; and we rarely stop to think that God may be trying to teach us or heal us or perfect us through life's inconveniences. Patient endurance is the virtue that allows us to keep making progress in our lives. Patient endurance shows that we really *do* long for Christ's Kingdom to come.

There's another thing we can learn from Saint Elias. All of his mighty deeds of stopping rain and raising the dead were signs meant to demonstrate to the people of Israel that there was no other God but the Lord, no other power that could help them or save them or make them truly happy. In Elias' day, economics, politics, and fashions all tempted the Israelites to hedge their bets. They went through the motions of worshipping the Lord—and maybe they even meant it sincerely—but they also prayed to the idols of the powerful pagan neighbors, gods and goddesses who supposedly specialized in making crops and animals more fertile, idols who were fashionable and politically correct. The false gods promised them what they wanted now.

Aren't we tempted like that? Don't you find yourself wanting to have it both ways? We want to be comfortable, successful, popular, fashionable, *and* we want to go to heaven too. We turn to God in prayer for some things, for the big things, but aren't we tempted to trust other guides to help us get what

we want right here and right now? We may do our religious duty, but aren't we tempted to keep to the minimum, so we don't become fanatics, so we stay "normal", so we look and live and act just like everybody else? It's so easy to become divided: to trust God some of the way, even most of the way, but to look to some other authority, some other expert, some other system for the things we're not quite sure God really wants to give us?

Some of Elias' very few recorded words (1 Kings 18:21) hurled this challenge in the face of Israel and their corrupt leaders. Maybe we need to hear those words too: How long will you sit on the fence? If some other god is real, then worship that. But if the Lord is truly God then worship him alone.

That decision to get off the fence will cost us. It will take patient endurance to worship the Lord alone, in all we do. But the real life example of Elias and of

all the righteous men and women of the OT confirms again and again that no one else and no thing else but the Lord can give real peace, real joy, real meaning to our live because life—real life—belongs to the Lord and Him alone.

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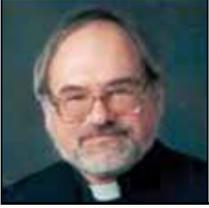



WITH HIS GRACE
Metropolitan Archbishop
BORYS GUDZYAK

*and bishops of the Ukrainian
and Byzantine (Ruthenian)
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THE BYZANTINE LITURGY

By Archpriest David Petras, SEOD

THE ANAPHORA: GOD LOVES THE WORLD

In the Anaphora, the first part of the prayer – we might say the first strophe – is to direct our prayer to the Father, and to proclaim God as the Creator, Redeemer and Ruler of all. The people respond to this strophe with the hymn of victory. The second part of the Anaphora, which is read between the Hymn of Victory (“Holy, holy, holy...”) and the Words of Institution (“Take, eat, this is my body...”) recounts the mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God and Son of Man, our Lord Jesus Christ. It tells us of God’s loving plan for our salvation, which is to “come to share in the divine nature, after escaping from the corruption that is in the world because of evil desire.” (2 Peter 1:4) By God’s power and grace we are able to become what He has created us to be – His children made in the image of God.

We pray the Anaphora to fulfill the command of God: “do this in memory of Me.” (Luke 22:19) The Liturgy, therefore, is a commemoration of God’s saving acts in our behalf. However, it is more than a human memory. Human beings can only reminisce about the past, and what they remember is only nostalgia. Our worship, though, is a “Divine” Liturgy. We are not remembering alone, but we are remembering together with God. Since God is eternal, what He has done for us, and what we “remember” becomes present for us, because God breaks through the limita-

tions of time. This does not mean that the crucifixion takes place again, but that what happened in the crucifixion, the outpouring of God’s saving power and His victory over death, becomes present for us now. Our Lord incarnated this reality in a meal. At the Last Supper He proclaimed the bread and wine to be His body and blood, and so made them present every time we share in the meal of the Divine Liturgy.

There are two Anaphoras in use in the Byzantine Church: that of Saint Basil and Great and that of Saint John Chrysostom. That of Saint John Chrysostom is used much more frequently. In this anaphora, the mission of our Lord is summed up as the celebrant verbally recites a passage from the Gospel of Saint John the Theologian: “You so loved Your world that You gave Your only-begotten Son so that everyone who believes in Him should not perish, but have life everlasting.” (John 3:16) In today’s piety, the world is often labeled as evil without compromise, but the world is evil only insofar as it opposes God’s plan. God created the world, and God is acting to redeem and sanctify the world. When we read aloud this verse from the Gospels as a part of our “commemoration,” God’s love for us today and here and now becomes the ultimate reality. In the Liturgy, our whole lives are sanctified and made eternal.

The origins of the Anaphora of Saint John Chrysostom are in the Church of Antioch, and Saint John possibly brought this anaphora with him when he was elected Archbishop of Constantinople in 398. The Eastern Church has always seen the Gospel of the Holy Apostle John as the primary good news of the salvation announced by our Lord Jesus Christ. Saint John clearly taught that God sent His only-begotten Son to give us life, as Jesus said, “I am the gate. Whoever enters through Me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture... I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd.” (John 10:9-11) Because of his Gospel, Saint John was given the title “the Theologian,” for he taught us truly of God’s Son.

Since Christ came to give us life, He is the very image of God’s love. As the Epistle to the Hebrews tells us, “[The Son] is the refulgence of [God’s] glory, the very imprint of His being, and who sustains all things by His mighty word.” (Hebrews 1:3) Saint John, in his letters, tells us, “God is love. In this way the love of God was revealed to us: God sent His only Son into the world so that we might have life through Him.” (1 John 4:8-9) It is this love, then, which we proclaim in our Divine Liturgy. Through our celebration in worship, “We ... come to know and to believe in the love God has for us.”

“God is love, and whoever remains in love remains in God and God in him.” (1 John 4:16) Of course, when we speak of God’s love, we are not speaking of carnal emotional love, but of God’s intense and infinite spiritual love that is the model of every human love. In this love God sent His only-begotten Son, who revealed His love by dying for us on the Cross and rising from the dead to give us a new and eternal life. This begins to happen in every Liturgy.

When we proclaim the love of God for us in the Anaphora, therefore, we are not simply recalling a past event, but the truth that God loves us always. Saint John, then, teaches us that this love must be a model for the community of believers in faith. The letter of John reads, “We have come to know and to believe in the love God has for us. God is love, and whoever remains in love remains in God and God in him” (1 John 4:11), and then, a little later, “In this is love brought to perfection among us, that we have confidence on the day of judgment because as He is, so are we in this world.” (1 John 4:17) We must imitate the life of Jesus not in the same details, but in this pattern of love of God with our whole heart and mind and soul, and of our neighbor as ourselves. Therefore, when we celebrate the Divine Liturgy, we make our unity with Christ a reality, and we transform the way we live, as Christ remains in us. **ECL**

“Take heed lest you forget the Lord your God, by not keeping His commandments and His ordinances and His statutes, which I command you this day: lest, when you have eaten and are full, and have built goodly houses and live in them, and when your herds and flocks multiply, and your silver and gold is multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied, then your heart be lifted up, and you forget the Lord your God, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, Who led you through the great and terrible wilderness, with its fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where there was no water, Who brought you water out of the flinty rock, Who fed you in the wilderness with manna which your fathers did not know, that He might humble you and test you, to do you good in the end. Beware lest you say in your heart, ‘My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.’ You shall remember the Lord your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth; that He may confirm His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as at this day.” –Deuteronomy 8:11-19

I love our liturgical year, in all its richness; how it guides us in all the things of God. We have been led through so much so far this year in the things of the

“TAKE HEED LEST YOU FORGET THE LORD...”

salvation of God given to us: we have witnessed His incarnation at the Feast of the Nativity; we have been brought successfully through the Red Sea of the Great Fast; we have wept at His betrayal, arrest, at the foot of His cross and as He was laid in His tomb. We have also risen early on the first day of the week and gone out with the Myrrh-bearers and found the huge stone rolled away, and the words of the angel, “Why do you seek the living among the dead?” We have seen our Lord risen from the dead; placed our fingers in the nail-prints and our hand in His side and believed. We have watched as He ascended to His Father and our Father. And we have received the heavenly Spirit.

Now, though, we may feel spiritually exhausted, and just want to “get on” to other things in our lives. All the “heavy stuff” is behind us, and it is the traditional time of year for vacations, cook-outs, and just enjoying the warmth of summer. And yet, we have to remember that, as our Lord’s earthly ministry

has ended, our ministry as Church has begun. At His ascension, our Lord told us, “It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has fixed by His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:6-8). We are so wont to set aside all *spiritual* cares, to paraphrase the words of the Cherubic Hymn, but the Church reminds us at this season that we are to be about our Father’s business, and to now put into action all that the Lord has taught us over these past months. We have received our Lord’s teachings and are now to put them into practice. It is not enough to have dutifully attended all the services and done all the prostrations and sung all the praises: we must now follow through on our promises to God: “Make vows to the Lord your God, and fulfill them” (Psalm 75 [76]) we sing in the Sunday Prokeimion for Tone 8. At our Baptism, our sponsors made vows in our name, or we

made those vows ourselves: “Have you united yourself to Christ?” “Yes, I have united myself to Christ.” “Then worship Him.” During this season, we have been given the time to worship Him, and to do all things in His name and to His glory. As much as we want to leave all this aside for the summer, we are obliged to continue on the path we are on; we are still to take up our cross daily and follow Christ. “But Jesus answered them, ‘My Father is working still, and I am working’” (John 5:17). God does not cease His work during this season, and we, in concert with Jesus, are not to cease doing good, being there for one another, and gathering together in our local parish (or the nearest parish to where we are vacationing) at least every Sunday to worship Him and sing His praises. “Take heed lest you forget the Lord your God, by not keeping His commandments and His ordinances and His statutes, which I command you this day.” **ECL**

SEASONAL REFLECTIONS

Father Ronald Hatton



I recently went on a mission trip to the Dominican Republic with a Catholic organization called Mustard Seed Communities. They care for the *most vulnerable* in countries that do not have advanced health care systems like first world countries do. The residents at this facility have physical and mental handicaps and were either given up by their parents, severely neglected, or abandoned. While economic resources could be a major factor in why these children were abandoned, the underlying reason for discarding them is the absence of a Great Love and an unwillingness to sacrifice for the other.

When Jesus Christ asks us to “come, follow Him,” and tells us that He is “*the way*, the truth, and the life,” and when He assures His disciples that they would drink the same cup of torture and crucifixion that He would drink, He asks us to follow His example of self-sacrificial love for the other. There are many situations in which we can imitate this self-sacrificial love, but one aspect of life that effects all of us is our human sexuality.

God teaches us in Genesis that we are made for each other, and that we are to be fruitful and multiply. But God expressly mentions in specific order that “a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife,” *then*, “the two shall become one flesh.” God clearly states that the joining of the two is to occur *before* the two become one flesh.

SPIRITUAL REFLECTIONS

Father Lewis Rabayda



IT TAKES GREAT LOVE

This “joining” is seen as a sacramental marriage, a permanent bond between a man and woman in the presence of God. This act of becoming “one flesh” is seen in several ways. It is the physical expression of their marital union, it is the now-inseparable link between their two persons in the eyes of God, and it is the fruit of their marital union in the bearing of children. These children are a gift from God and a blessing for following His commandments.

Those of us who have turned countless calendar pages will know how difficult it is to maintain any relationship. We have parents, spouses, children, friends, neighbors, and co-workers who we are responsible to, and for. We cannot maintain these relationships if we act selfishly and if we expect to always receive from the other without ever giving anything of ourselves. When two people enter into a relationship, they subconsciously agree to give something of themselves, they offer something to the other, and in return, they receive what the other has to offer them. We have received the gift of salvation from Jesus Christ, we have been inspired and guided by the Holy Spirit, and we have been given the gift of life from God the

Father. The question is: what do we offer of ourselves to God in our relationship to Him? What do we offer to those who give so freely to us?

It took a great amount of love for Jesus Christ to accept His Father’s Will to sacrifice Himself on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins. It takes a great amount of love for us to offer ourselves to our parents, our spouses, our children, and our friends and neighbors. It takes a great amount of love to accept God’s will for our own lives, and for us to freely offer ourselves to His service, and to the service of His One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. It takes a great amount of love to offer ourselves to our spouse in the marital union, and likewise, it takes a great amount of love to care for the fruit of that marital union everyday of their lives.

But too often people enter into sexual unions with each-other outside of the sacramental union of marriage. Too often people either inside or outside of that sacramental union use contraception to prevent the purpose of their union. In essence, they are preventing themselves from receiving and from giving this great love. These perversions

of our sexuality do not have the love of Christ as their motivator, rather, they stem from selfishness, greed, pride, and the disordered passion of seeking pleasure. When we place pleasure as our highest good and seek comfort at all costs, we end up distorting life and believing in all sorts of lies that protect this disordered point of view. But when we “seek first His kingdom, and His righteousness,” then the affirmation and love that we are so desperately searching for will be given to us as well (Matt 6:33).

God may not always grant us the perfect life we are hoping for. God did not grant the request of His own Son, that He “take this cup away from” Him while praying in Gethsemane. But we are assured, that when we mimic the great self-sacrificial love of Christ and decide to first give of ourselves before we receive from others, that we will find the strength to overcome any challenge. We may be faced with tasks that seem too impossible to complete and achieve, but we are assured these challenges are a blessing from God, and not an accident. **ECL**



SCHOOL OF PRAYER

Father G. Scott Boghossian

MEMORIZATION IN THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

Albert Einstein said, “Never memorize anything that you can look up.” Perhaps no worse advice has ever been given! Since the beginning of time, God’s people have shown reverence for and internalized the Word of God by memorizing it.

The Bible encourages us to memorize. In Psalm 119:11, the psalmist prays, “I have stored up Your word in my heart, that I might not sin against You.” Jeremiah speaks of internalizing the Word of God when he says, “Your words were found, and I ate them, and Your words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart... (15:16).” Our Lord promises, “If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you” (Jn. 15:7). Saint Paul writes, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly...” (Col. 3:26).

In the earliest day of the Church, very few people had access to the written text of the Old Testament. Before the middle of the third century, the official list of Apostolic writings that would become the New Testament hadn’t yet been entirely determined and collected into one book. At this time, many of the

words of Jesus, early church hymns, and Apostolic writings were memorized.

The early monks memorized the Scriptures. Palladius (d. 420) tells us that Abba Ammonios and Abba Mark, as well as the monks who gathered around Saint Pachomius, memorized the entire Bible. Palladius describes how Abba Heron during a forty-mile journey, recited by heart “fifteen psalms, then the long one (Ps. 118), the Epistle to the Hebrews, and after that Isaiah and a part of Jeremiah, and thereupon the Gospel of Luke and Proverbs.”

We memorize the Bible and other spiritual texts out of love and devotion for God. All Scripture is inspired by God, *theopneustos*, God-breathed (1 Tim. 3:16). The Holy Spirit is the author of Holy Scripture. By memorizing, we express our faith in the divine grace contained in the written Word and demonstrate our love for its Author.

To memorize the Word is to internalize it. It becomes a part of us and imparts its grace to us. Do you want to overcome anger? Then memorize what the Bible says about anger. Do you want to have more faith? Then memo-

rize what the Bible says about faith. By memorizing and internalizing the text, a particular grace is imparted to our soul.

Our Lord demonstrated the utility of memorization during His temptation in the wilderness. When Satan tempted the Lord, He responded with, “It is written...” (Mt. 4:4). Are you ready for battle? In our spiritual warfare against Satan and the demons, our weapon is “the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God” (Eph. 6:17).

Often unbelievers and non-Catholic Christians present us with objections to our Faith. Saint Peter tells us, “always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect...” (1 Pt. 3:15). What better way to be prepared to make a defense than to have memorized Bible verses and passages from the Church Fathers to defend the teachings of the Catholic Church?

Our memorizing shouldn’t be strictly limited to the Holy Scriptures. It’s a great help to have our regular prayers memorized, especially when we are

going to Confession, or in an urgent situation where there is no time to go and look something up. Memorizing the words of the Divine Liturgy and the other services can make our time in church more prayerful and engaging. Memorized quotations from spiritual authors and great saints can be recalled at any time for our own encouragement and comfort. Saint Therese of Lisieux memorized large parts of the *Imitation of Christ* as a young girl, which may explain why she was so advanced in the spiritual life at a such a very young age.

There are many different methods of memorization. One technique is to memorize by rote. That is to say, merely repeating a text over and over, until it stays in your memory. Try writing a short phrase or sentence down on an index card and repeating it over and over for a few minutes every day. You’ll find that in most cases, in a few days or weeks, you’ll know it by heart. There are also many different mnemonic techniques that you can use that will speed up the process. But the most important thing is to get started. By memorizing Scripture, prayers, and other important texts, you’ll find that your prayer life is greatly enriched. **ECL**

NEW BYZANTINE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY FORMING IN GREATER CHARLOTTE, NC, AREA

A Byzantine Catholic community is forming at Saint Philip Neri Church, 2922 Munn Rd., Fort Mill, SC. Please join us as we grow our community and celebrate the Byzantine Divine Liturgy. Father Steven Galuschik of All Saints Byzantine Catholic Church in North Fort Myers, FL, along with bi-ritual Deacon Ron Volek are now offering weekly Divine Liturgy in the area. This community will serve the northern part of South Carolina as well as Charlotte, NC. Please share this information with your friends and family – especially those who have moved “down South.” We will be celebrating the Byzantine Divine Liturgy on Saturdays at 4:00 PM. If you would like to participate in any way, or have questions please contact Ron Somich at 440.477.6389 or ron.somich@gmail.com. Please check the website for news, upcoming gatherings, and service times at <https://carolinabyzantine.com/>

July: 6, 13, 20, 27

When traveling to the South, please visit our churches

All Saints

10291 Bayshore Road
North Fort Myers, FL 33917
1-239-599-4023

Saint Anne

7120 Massachusetts Ave.
New Port Richey, FL 34653
1-727-849-1190

Epiphany of Our Lord

2030 Old Alabama Road
Roswell, GA 30076
1-770-993-0973

Saint Basil the Great

1475 N.E. 199th Street
Miami, FL 33179-5162
1-305-651-0991

Holy Dormition

17 Buckskin Lane
Ormond Beach, FL 32174
1-386-677-8704

Saints Cyril and Methodius

1002 Bahama Avenue
Fort Pierce, FL 34982
1-772-595-1021

Our Lady of the Sign

7311 Lyons Road
Coconut Creek, FL 33073
1-954-429-0056

Saint Nicholas of Myra

5135 Sand Lake Road
Orlando, FL 32819
1-407-351-0133

Saint Therese

4265 13th Avenue North
Saint Petersburg, FL 33713
1-727-323-4022

Registration open until July 15!

THE EPARCHY OF PASSAIC & THEOSIS IN ACTION PRESENT

2019 BYZANTINE CATHOLIC YOUNG ADULT CONVOCATION

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AUGUST 1-4, 2019

ST. MARY'S BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH

NEW YORK CITY

"If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."
-Mat 16:24



Altar Server Camp at the Carpathian Village

July 21-24, 2019

Come join altar servers from around the Eparchy for fun activities, and opportunities to learn about our faith.

Registration forms are on the Eparchy's website at: www.eparchyofpassaic.com

Carpathian Village 802 Snow Hill RD, Canadensis, PA 18326



UPCOMING EPARCHIAL AND PARISH EVENTS

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JULY, 2019

- 4-5 Independence Day
*Civic holiday *Chancery closed*
- 20 Holy Great Prophet Elias
Simple Holyday
- 21-24 Altar Server Camp
Carpathian Village, Canadensis, PA
- 23 Saint Ann Pilgrimage Divine Liturgy
Saint Ann Basilica, 1233 Saint Ann St., Scranton, PA, 4:30 PM
- 28-31 Eparchial Teen Rally
Carpathian Village, Canadensis, PA

AUGUST, 2019

- 1-4 Young Adult Convocation
New York City
- 4 Annual Saint Nicholas Pilgrimage
Carpathian Village, Canadensis, PA

- 6 Holy Transfiguration of Our Lord
Solemn Holyday
- 15 Holy Dormition of the Theotokos
*Holy Day of Obligation *Chancery closed*

