



EASTERN CATHOLIC LIFE

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AUXILIARY BISHOP FROM SLOVAKIA NAMED APOSTOLIC ADMINISTRATOR OF EPARCHY OF PARMA

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Pope Francis has named Auxiliary Bishop Milan Lach of Presov, Slovakia, as apostolic administrator of the Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Parma, Ohio.

The appointment was announced in Washington June 24 by Archbishop Christophe Pierre, apostolic nuncio to the United States.

Until now Archbishop William C. Skurla of the Byzantine Catholic Archeparchy of Pittsburgh has had pastoral governance of the Ohio-based eparchy. Bishop John M. Kudrick, who headed the eparchy, retired in May 2016.

Bishop Lach, 43, was ordained an

auxiliary bishop for Presov in 2013. A native of Kezmarok, Slovakia, he entered the Society of Jesus in 1995 and was ordained a Jesuit priest July 1, 2001. He is fluent in several languages, including English.

The Byzantine Catholic Jesuit is the first European-born bishop to be appointed to oversee the Eparchy of Parma since its founding in 1969.

Born in 1973, he entered the Eastern Catholic Church's seminary in Presov in 1992. Three years later, he entered the Jesuit novitiate in Trnava, Slovakia. He continued his studies at University of Trnava and also studied at the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome, where he obtained a master's degree in Eastern

Church Sciences and later, a doctorate degree.

He was ordained a deacon of the Society of Jesus in November 2000, followed by his priestly ordination a year later.

From 2001 to 2003, he worked in the scientific area of the Center of Spirituality East-West of Michal Lacko in Kosice, Slovakia, and from 2009-2011, he was superior of the same center.

The Eparchy of Parma encompasses the geographical area of most of Ohio as well as Indiana, Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Missouri, Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota.



Bishop Milan Lach, S.J.

STATEMENT BY BISHOP KURT BURNETTE ON THE APPOINTMENT OF HIS EXCELLENCY MILAN LACH, S.J.

Woodland Park, NJ, June 24, 2017



Bishop Milan Lach, S.J., during the ordination of Bishop Kurt Burnette in 2013

Today, on the Nativity of Saint John the Forerunner, our Holy Father Pope Francis has shown his pastoral concern for our Ruthenian Church by appointing an Apostolic Administrator for the Eparchy of Parma, relieving our Metropolitan Archbishop of the burden of caring for two eparchies. Most Rev. Milan Lach is only 43 years old, born on November 18, 1973, and was appointed auxiliary bishop of Presov in April of 2013. When I was studying canon law at the Oriental Institute in Rome, he was studying Eastern Spirituality at the same institute. I remember him vividly as a perpetually bright and happy presence. I was a bit of an outsider there as the only American priest studying at the time, and whenever he saw me he welcomed me with warm words and an infectious smile. Many of you may remember him as the enthusiastic young bishop who

made a joyful speech at my banquet in December 2013 telling all of us to experience the love of God and to tell everyone else about God's sublime love for them. He told us to share the Good News wherever we go. It was a brave thing to do in a foreign language, but he trusted in the love of Jesus. I welcome him to our Ruthenian American Church, and I look forward to working with him and learning from him. I believe God has favored the people of our sister eparchy in Parma, Ohio. I am certain the people in the Eparchy of Parma will develop the same warm affection for Bishop Milan that I have, and more importantly, grow in their love of God. May God grant him many happy and blessed years.

And you, child, shall be called prophet of the Most High;

for you will go before the Lord to prepare the way for Him,

to give His people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins,

by the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high

to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death,

to guide our feet into the path of peace.

—Luke 2:76-79

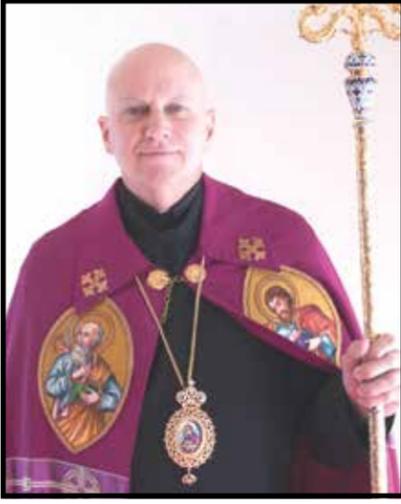
+Kurt Burnette

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I LIFT UP MY EYES...

Pastoral Reflections of Bishop Kurt



GOD LOVES A CHEERFUL GIVER

On the feast of Saint John the Baptist, or as we call him, Saint John the Forerunner, I had the opportunity to attend the rededication of the Cathedral of Saint John the Baptist in Paterson, NJ. The Cathedral is over a hundred years old and was falling apart. It took seven years and a vast amount of money and the work of many, many people to finish the restoration. The restored Cathedral is a great work of art. The harmonious shape and the vast and beautiful stained-glass windows are filled with breath by the restored pipe organ with pipes at both ends of the church. The latest issue of the newspaper for the Diocese of Paterson was dedicated to the restored cathedral, and it took several pages just to describe the stained glass. The stone and timber and glass and the breath of the organ combine to make what seems to be a complex harmonious living body.

In order to help us understand the Church, and to help us get along with one another, Saint Paul uses three ideas to explain the Church: he calls it the Body of Christ and we are the members, then he says that we all have different gifts, and finally he compares the Church to a building made out of different stones that fit together and support each other. At first it seems that the idea that we are stones is the least appealing of the three images, but Saint Paul uses that to make a very important point: he says that there is only one foundation, and that foundation is Jesus Christ. "For no one can lay any foundation except that which has been laid, and that foundation is Jesus Christ."

Archbishop Christophe Pierre, the representative of Pope Francis, spoke at the rededication, and reminded us that the building is only a building—but the real Church is the people. He also reminded us of the words of Saint Paul, the only foundation for the living Church is Jesus Christ. Saint Peter even calls Jesus a "living stone, though chosen and rejected, yet precious in God's eyes." Saint Peter then calls us also "living stones" and tells us "like living stones let yourselves be built into a spiritual house." In a different place, Saint Paul says the household of God is "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone."

In many places, the Old Testament calls God a Rock. Calling the Messiah a stone or a rock did not begin with the apostles, but was already prophesied over 700 years earlier by Isaiah and also in the Psalms.

In Isaiah, we read, "thus says the Lord God, 'Behold, I am laying in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation: 'He who believes will not panic.'" And in another place, Isaiah says, "But the Lord of hosts, Him you shall regard as holy; let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread. He will become a sanctuary, a stone one strikes

against; for both houses of Israel He will become a rock one stumbles over—a trap and a snare for the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many among them shall stumble; they shall fall and be broken; they shall be snared and taken." We start to see that the Rock has two meanings. For those who accept the Messiah, He is a sure foundation, and a comfort, cornerstone that protects us from panic, and Saint Peter says, "precious." But for those who reject Him, He is a rock to trip over, or even to be crushed by.

Even Jesus Himself says these things in the Gospel of Luke, when He quotes the Psalm to his enemies, "The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes." But then Jesus adds this frightening saying, "Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces; and it will crush anyone on whom it falls." Saint Luke goes on to tell us that His enemies knew He was talking about them, and would have laid hands on Him but were afraid of the people.

In our Eparchy, we have many beautiful old churches. I think there must have been a major immigration about 125 years ago and another one about 100 years ago, because I keep going to 125th anniversaries and 100th anniversaries. We love our beautiful churches, and they remind us of the brave and God-fearing people who moved to a strange land, worked hard at the most difficult labor, and gave generously of their limited money and free time to build these amazing structures. On the other hand, these building will not last forever, but the real Church is the people inside the building, the living stones, and they will live forever if they accept the foundation of Jesus Christ, and for them He is precious. He says that those who reject him will be crushed and broken in pieces.

Will all of our current parishes be alive in fifty years? Only God knows. Some of our most beautiful building have very few young people in the congregation. I believe that a lot depends on the living stones in the congregation. The priests and bishops can only do so much to keep a church alive. When I first came to the eparchy, I visited one of the established parishes for the first time. Like many churches, it was not very full and had only a few young people. After the Divine Liturgy, I went into the social hall to meet people. Closest to the door was a middle-aged man and his son. They told me that it was their first visit to our church. The son was college age and was half-western and half-eastern by heritage, that is, his father was Roman Catholic and his mother was Greek Orthodox. The young man was hoping to be a Catholic priest, married if possible. I told them that in our part of the Catholic Church it is the tradition to have married priests. It seemed that God had sent us an answer to our prayers. Not long after I started talking to them, an elderly woman walked over and interrupted us sharply, "Bishop, you're not supposed to be talking to them! You're supposed to be talking to us!!" Not surprisingly, the visitors never came to our church again. I hoped they would contact me later, but they never did. That woman drove visitors out of the social hall with her selfish attack,

and perhaps also lost us a young priest. Will that parish be alive in 50 years? I doubt it.

Interestingly enough, that woman was described in the scriptures. In the Acts of the Apostles, we read that Saints Paul and Barnabas went to Antioch of Pisidia and went first to the Synagogue on the Sabbath. The Jews listened eagerly as Saint Paul explained why Jesus was the fulfillment of the prophecies, and asked him to return the following Sabbath. The next week, most of the city showed up, and the members of the Synagogue were so jealous of their private club that they rejected Jesus rather than accept outsiders into their group.

If the living stones in some of our churches are selfish, and see the church as their own private club, there is no hope for the future of those churches. The stones in those buildings are tombstones. When we close that church, instead of tearing it down, we may pay a stonemason to carve epitaphs on the stone walls, "Here lies a social club, cause of death—suicide."

On the other hand, I recently visited a parish in which a woman not only welcomed me with joy, but she told me she always sits by the door to the church so that she can make certain to welcome any strangers who enter the church. That church has a future, and in fact, it is growing.

God did not give us our faith to keep for ourselves. He gave us our faith for us to give away. With earthly treasures, we guard them in safes behind stone walls, but with heavenly treasures, the more we give away the more we have. As the saying goes, "God will not be outdone in generosity." The people who built our beautiful churches were generous, generous people. I believe that our Christian faith is our most valuable treasure, and furthermore that no church expresses that faith as beautifully or as deeply or as truthfully as our church. Americans are hungry for news about God and about their own spirits and their immortal souls and their fate. We have what they are looking for. If we give it away freely, even foolishly, God will bless us beyond anything we can imagine. If we turn people away from our church, and horde our spiritual treasure behind stone walls, God warns us that we will be broken even crushed by the Rock that others recognized as precious. Please my friends, give our precious faith away. Give it away freely. Give it away foolishly. We won't go broke. God will make us even richer than before.

+Kurt Burnett





+SISTER LEONORA KONDRACH, OSBM, ENTERS INTO THE FULLNESS OF LIFE

Through her sweet smile and gentle ways, she was a blessing to all she encountered

As peacefully and quietly as she lived, so was Sister Leonora's departure from this life into the embrace of the Lord in the evening of the first of June. Her gentle spirit, her quiet ways, and her sweet smile are how one will always remember her.

The daughter of the late Michael and Margaret (Havrilla) Kondrach, Sister Leonora (Irene) was born in Hazleton, PA. She entered the Sisters of Saint Basil the Great from Saint Mary Church in Freeland, PA, on July 4, 1946 and made her Final Profession of Vows on Aug. 28, 1953.

Sister Leonora dedicated over fifty years of her religious life to the ministry of teaching on the primary level, and her love of teaching is one of the ways she wanted to be remembered. In addition to being a teacher, Sister also served as principal. This much-loved ministry was interrupted

by a span of five years, when Sister Leonora went on to serve in parish ministry. Teaching, however, was still in her heart, and she readily went on to serve as a teacher's aide at Saint Mary School in Cleveland.

One would think that after a half-century, Sister would be ready to sit back and relax, but this was not so. On returning to the Monastery in Uniontown, Sister Leonora volunteered to help Sister Petronilla in pastoral ministry at the Manor. Here, her cheerful countenance, her pleasing personality, and her encouraging words were welcomed by the many residents she visited or with whom she prayed. Even when she herself became a resident, she continued to visit and spread cheer until serious illness prevented her from doing so. Another way for which she wanted to be remembered was a spirit of trust and compassion, and this Sister surely expressed not only at the Manor but during her many years as a teacher.

Sister Leonora also had a love for music, and one of her favorite ways of relaxing was to play the piano. On any given day, she could be found or heard indulging in this recreation. In her later years, she also took up learning to play the violin, and her teacher in the Hazleton area has fond memories of the enjoyment both Sister Leonora and Sister Leona took in this activity.

In his homily at the Funeral Divine Liturgy, Father Andrew Deskevich noted that in life there are heroic people whose vision of life has been different from that of many of us. Their way of life and their work has brought blessing on sick

people, on old people, on young people. This was Sister Leonora, a sign of hope for us, now experiencing the fullness of life for which we all hope. In closing, Father prayed, "Thank you, Lord, for giving us such a faithful example of what it means to be Your follower. Thank you for giving us a faithful servant; thank you for giving us a gentle, courteous, prayerful woman. Thank you for the privilege that was ours of knowing her and living in the same family, the same community, the same world with her." This prayer and these words were borne out in the many stories shared at Sister's wake and funeral as well as by those who cared for her at the Manor, her final place of ministry.

Sister Leonora was preceded in death by her parents and her brother, John. In addition to her members in community, she is survived by her sister Dolores (John) Kanuck, her sister-in-law, Susan Kondrach, a nephew and several nieces.

The Parastas Service was celebrated by Father Michael Huszti, Monastery Chaplain. In attendance were Very Rev. Archpriest John G. Petro and Father Ronald P. Larko. The Funeral Divine Liturgy was celebrated by Father Andrew Deskevich with Father Michael Huszti as concelebrant. In attendance were Very Rev. Archpriest John G. Petro; Very Rev. Archpriest Michael Hayduk (who was her student back in 1957); Father James A. Spontak; and Father Stephen J. Wahal.

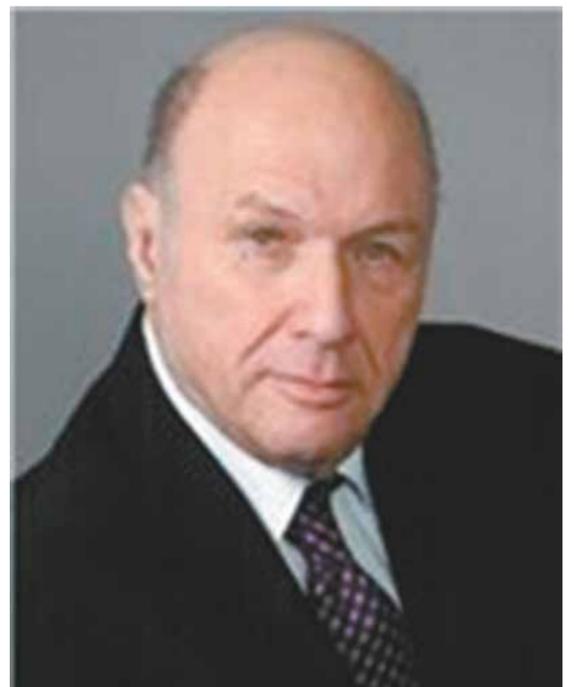
May God grant to his handmaiden, Sister Leonora, eternal memory and peaceful repose.

+JAMES N. BADEAUX, FATHER OF EPARCHIAL PRIEST, FATHER JAMES E. BADEAUX, REPOSES IN THE LORD

Published in TheNewOrleansAdvocate.com from May 19 to May 22, 2017

James N. "Jim" Badeaux passed away on Thursday, May 18, 2017 in Covington, LA. He was born on July 20, 1935, in New Orleans, LA, to the late Marshall Frank Badeaux, Sr., and Lillian Davenport Badeaux. Jim is survived by his beloved wife of 51 years, Elizabeth "Betty" Hutcheson Badeaux. He was the loving father of Father James E. Badeaux of Hillsborough, NJ, and Elizabeth B. Myers (Robert) of Baton Rouge, LA. He was the brother of the late Marshall "Sonny" Badeaux, Jr., Alice B. Stein, and Robert G. Badeaux. Jim is also survived by numerous nieces and nephews. Jim was a veteran of the United States Marine Corps and attended Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, LA. After LSU, Jim began his career as an electrical engineer working in the aerospace industry. He retired in 1993. Jim loved opera and

classical music and was the leader of "The Old Codgers" of Covington Presbyterian Church. He will be dearly missed by his family and friends. Relatives and friends were invited to the funeral service at E.J. Fielding Funeral Home, 2260 W. 21st Avenue, Covington, LA 70433 on Monday, May 22, 2017 at 2:00 PM with visitation from 12:00 noon until service time. Interment was at Theodore Dendinger Cemetery, Madisonville, LA. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to Covington Presbyterian Church, 222 S. Jefferson Ave., Covington, LA, 70433, or to Madisonville Presbyterian Church, 705 Pine St., Madisonville, LA, 70447. *May his memory be eternal!*



FROM THE OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

On Sunday, July 9th, at the Saint Nicholas Shrine at the Carpathian Village, the following men will receive clerical tonsure and minor orders from the hands of Bishop Kurt:

- Richard Ballard
- Anthony Blair
- James Fraser
- John Harden
- Robert Knapp

- Ryan Liebhaber
- John Reed
- Richard Terza
- Jens Vargmann





PEOPLE YOU KNOW



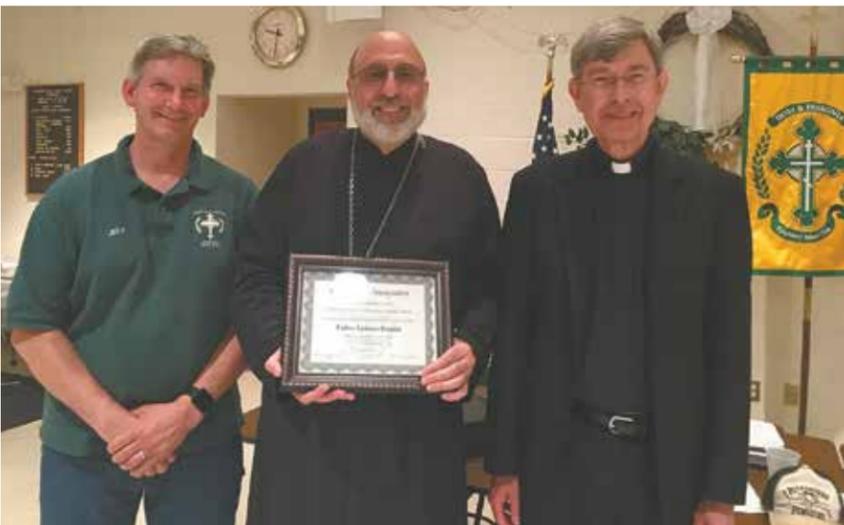
IN BALTIMORE...

Female parishioners of Patronage of the Mother of God Church with Father Conan Timoney and Seminarian Timothy Farris

Patronage of the Mother of God Byzantine Catholic Church in Arbutus, MD, held a women's prayer breakfast on Saturday, June 3rd. The theme of the event was "Come Holy Spirit" in line with the feast of Pentecost that weekend. It was a wonderful morning filled with fellowship, friendship, and spirituality...as all the smiling faces will attest.

IN ANNANDALE...

Father Ephrem Handal, Associate Pastor of Holy Transfiguration Greek Melkite Church in McLean, VA, spoke to the Epiphany Men's Club Father-Son Steak Night. As a Father (a priest), who is also a father to his two sons, Father Ephrem spoke to both the fathers and sons present about their roles based in the wisdom and teaching of the Sacred Scripture. During the Q and A period which followed, Father Ephrem responded to a question about his experience with the current persecution of our Church in the Middle East, with a compelling narrative that captured the attention of all.



Jeff Nashwinter, president of the Epiphany Men's Club, Father Ephrem, and Father John Basarab, pastor of Epiphany of Our Lord Byzantine Catholic Church in Annandale, VA



Nearly 50 fathers and sons attended the Epiphany Men's Club Annual Father-Son Steak Night at Epiphany of Our Lord church in Annandale, Virginia.



IN KINGSTON...

Saint Vincent de Paul Kitchen receives donations

Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church in Kingston, PA, and Saint John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church in Wilkes-Barre Township, PA, recently made donations to the Saint Vincent de Paul Kitchen. Saint Mary Parish made a \$1,350 donation and Saint John Parish made a \$700 donation. The donations came as a result of the "Great Lent" collection held at each church. Shown, from left: Richard Wodarczyk, trustee, Saint John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church; Father Mykhaylo Prodanets, pastor, Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church and administrator, Saint John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church; Mike Cianciotta, program director, Saint Vincent de Paul Kitchen; and William Zdancewicz, council president, Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church.

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**WALK IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF JESUS!!
DON'T MISS THIS TRIP OF A LIFETIME!!**

AROUND THE EPARCHY



IN NEW PORT RICHEY...

On Sunday, June 18, Saint Anne Parish not only honored fathers with a parish dinner, but their spiritual fathers as well, as they bid a fond farewell to Father Timothy Clegg, who was retiring, and gave a joyous welcome to Father Oleksiy Nebesnyk, their new shepherd, and his family, Pani Zoriana and daughters, Ahnesa, Edita, and Tereza.



Father Oleksiy Nebesnyk and Father Timothy Clegg



Father Oleksiy Nebesnyk, Pani Zoriana, and daughters, Tereza, Ahnesa, and Edita



Father Oleksiy meets Saint Anne Parish's oldest parishioner, Frances Thomey



Flowers of welcome for Pani Zoriana and daughter, Tereza, from parishioner, Frank Vasile

SUNDAY AFTERNOON DIVINE LITURGY IN BAYONNE PARISH

SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST

15 EAST 26TH STREET, BAYONNE, NJ

All Welcome to Attend!

For the convenience of the area faithful, Bishop Kurt has introduced the celebration of a Sunday afternoon Divine Liturgy at Saint John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church, Sundays at 4 PM

Father Marcel Szabo, Pastor, together with Byzantine Catholic clergy from Northern and Central New Jersey, will provide a weekly schedule of service which will include:

- The Holy Mystery of Reconciliation prior to services
- 3:30 PM - Prayer Service (Moleben) to Blessed Miriam Teresa
- 4:00 PM - Celebration of the Sunday Divine Liturgy.

Saint John Church is the baptismal parish of Blessed Miriam Teresa Demjanovich.

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President and Publisher

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

E-Mail us at:
ECL@eparchyofpassaic.com
Eparchial Website:
www.EparchyofPassaic.com



FROM THE OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

February, 1977.

Feast of Saint Isaac the Venerable Tuesday, May 30, 2017

Today marks the tenth anniversary of the falling asleep in the Lord of our second bishop, Most Rev. Michael Joseph Dudick of Saint Clair, PA. Bishop Dudick was born on February 24, 1916, during the "Great War." He was ordained a priest on November 13, 1945, at the age of 29, during World War II. He was incardinated in the Eparchy of Passaic at its creation in 1963 and appointed its second bishop on July 29, 1968, and consecrated a bishop on October 24, 1968 according to the Holy Mysteries of our tradition, at Saint Michael Cathedral in Passaic. He served faithfully until his resignation was accepted by Pope Saint John Paul on November 6, 1995, just a few months before his eightieth birthday. He fell asleep in the Lord then on this day in the year of Our Lord 2007 at the age of 91, serving faithfully till his death as the chaplain at Holy Annunciation Monastery in Sugarloaf, a Monastery that was formed at his own request in

I often joke that our Latin Rite friends have John Paul the Great and we have Dudick the Great, and indeed Saint John Paul served as Pope of Rome for less than 27 years, while Bishop Michael served as our Bishop for more than 27 years. The reason that I make that joke is that so much of what we have as an eparchy we owe to the hard work and forward thinking of Bishop Michael. Many of our newer churches, our younger thriving churches, were started by Bishop Michael. Most of our parishes in Maryland, Virginia, Georgia, North Carolina, and Florida began from his vision for the future of our Church. Bishop Michael also built our Chancery building in Woodland Park and the Cathedral Chapel. He insisted on taking care of the grounds in Woodland Park himself. He began the popular bulletin series still used in our churches all over the country and other churches, and he did most of the creative work himself. He created Carpathian Village in the Poconos. He created and filled the Heritage Center in Woodland Park. He reinstated the order of the permanent dia-



+Bishop Michael J. Dudick

conate in our eparchy.

While most of the institutional Church was blindsided by our Supreme Court's arrogant intrusion into family life and initiation of the culture of death, Bishop Dudick was an early and energetic leader in the formation of the pro-life movement, for which reason our eparchy sponsors its own service at the March for Life every year, while other dioceses take turns. Bishop Dudick led the creation of our chapel at the National Shrine in Washington, D.C. over forty years ago with the assistance of his artist friend, Mme Christine Dochwat. Bishop Dudick initiated the canonization of Father Walter Cizek, a process that continues under the sponsorship of the Diocese of Allentown, and he began the canonization process of Sister Miriam Teresa, a process that continues under the sponsorship of the Diocese of Paterson.

Bishop Michael Dudick loved being a priest and loved being a bishop and he loved the Eparchy of Passaic. As a good father, he loved the people of his eparchy, and the priests and deacons and religious men and women. He was a good shepherd, an evangelist, and a visionary. I ask all of our priests to offer some prayers for his soul this week, and this Pentecost Sunday, say a few words to your people about him on the tenth anniversary of his departure from this life.

Yours in Christ,

+Kurt Burnette

Most Rev. Kurt Burnette Bishop of Passaic

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63rd ANNUAL HOLY DORMITION (ASSUMPTION) PILGRIMAGE

AUGUST 12 – 13, 2017

SISTERS SERVANTS OF MARY IMMACULATE
ST. MARY'S VILLA / SLOATSBURG, New York

**Theme: Sisters Servants of Mary Immaculate
Celebrate 125 Years
Glory to God! Honor to Mary! Peace to Us!**

CONFESSIONS ARE AVAILABLE
THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE WEEKEND

Saturday, August 12

- 12:00 p.m. Food Available at Pavilion
1:00 p.m. Akathist to the Mother of God – Rev. Jack Custer, SSL, STD,
Rector of St. Michael's Cathedral, Passaic, NJ
2:30 pm Presentation – Sr. Janice Soluk, SSMI (St. Mary's terrace)
former SSMI Superior General – theme: "Glory to God! Honor to Mary! Peace to Us!"
3:15 p.m. Children's Activity – Sr. Eliane, SSMI (St. Mary's terrace)
3:30 p.m. Blessing of the Sick (Grotto steps and St. Mary's Chapel)
Blessing of Religious Articles (front of St. Joseph's Home)
5:00 p.m. Divine Liturgy – Fr. James Spera, main celebrant/homilist (grotto – English)
Choir: St. Mary's Byzantine Catholic Church, Hillsborough, NJ
Divine Liturgy followed by Blessing of Water at St. Mary's Fountain
7:30 p.m. Panakhyda (Blessed Mother's circle in front of St. Mary's Villa)
8:00 p.m. Moleben to the Mother of God with candlelight procession (grotto – English)
Most Rev. Kurt Burnette – Bishop of Passaic Eparchy – main celebrant / homilist

Sunday, August 13

- 8:30 a.m. Materi Molitvy / Mothers in Prayer – Rosary / Singing (St. Mary's chapel)
10:30 a.m. Pontifical Divine Liturgy with procession to the grotto
Most Rev. Stefan Soroka, Metropolitan Archbishop of Philadelphia
Most Rev. Paul Chomnycky, OSBM, Bishop of the Eparchy of Stamford (homilist)
Most Rev. Bohdan Danylo, Bishop of the Eparchy of Parma
Most Rev. John Bura, Auxiliary Bishop for the Philadelphia Archeparchy
Most Rev. Basil Losten, Bishop Emeritus of the Eparchy of Stamford
Choir: Holy Ghost Ukrainian Catholic Church, Brooklyn, NY
Divine Liturgy followed by Blessing of Flowers
12:00 p.m. English Divine Liturgy - Rev. Bohdan Hedz, main celebrant / homilist (St. Mary's chapel)
St. John the Baptist Ukrainian Catholic Church, Riverhead, NY
1:30 p.m. Blessing of the Sick (Grotto steps and St. Mary's Chapel)
Blessing of Religious Articles (front of St. Joseph's Home)
2:00 p.m. Presentations -
Sr. Telda Gnatyuk, SSMI (St. Mary's terrace - Ukrainian)
Sr. Janice Soluk, SSMI (Our Lady of Perpetual Help Shrine - English)
2:30 p.m. Stations of the Cross – Basilian Fathers
2:45 p.m. Children's & Teens' Activity - Sr. Eliane, SSMI, Sr. Natalya, SSMI (St. Mary's terrace)
3:30 p.m. Moleben to the Mother of God (Grotto)
Rev. Andriy Dudkevych - St. Nicholas, Passaic, NJ – main celebrant / homilist
Blessing of cars and buses – Rev. Ivan Tyhovych - Holy Ghost Parish, Brooklyn, NY

**A DVD of the Life & Ministry of the SSMI's will be showing
throughout the weekend in the Gallery**

Rt. Rev. Mitred Msgr. John Terlecky, Pilgrimage Spiritual Moderator

2018 SYNOD OF BISHOPS ON YOUNG PEOPLE, THE FAITH AND VOCATIONAL DISCERNMENT

from Archbishop William C. Skurla

When I have visited our parishes across the country and met with the bishops, clergy, and people of our Byzantine Catholic Church in the United States, the number one concern shared is the addressing of the need to reach out to our children, youth, and young adults in our churches. We are not alone in this concern. At meetings for the Catholic and other Christian churches, all churches mention looking for ways to speak to and teach the next generation.

The October 2018 Synod of Bishops will focus upon the topic, "Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment." Cardinal Lorenzo Baldisseri has presented the document, which includes the questions that will be considered, the procedures which will guide the process of preparation, and the ways in which the Synod will proceed.

The Ruthenian Byzantine Catholic Church will participate and be represented at the 2018 Synod of Bishops. All Roman Catholic Episcopal Conferences, all Eastern Catholic Churches, and other ecclesial institutions throughout the world, are

required to respond to the questions in order to prepare for this 2018 Ordinary Synod in Rome. The problem of gathering information from over a billion people, discussing it for a month, and then coming up with an action plan is more than a little complicated.

We are asking you what you think. Instead of mailing paper copies of your answers to me, we will collect the information through the website of the Byzantine Catholic Archeparchy and our three Eparchies in the United States. Your responses will be read by me and sorted into categories. You can be anonymous or give your name if you wish.

I personally read several thousands of the responses from the past two Synods which were sent to me from all of our churches in the United States. The responses came from Florida to Alaska, conservative to progressive, old to young, and from faithful to less active members. There were amazing responses. Your actual responses were used as a part of my presentation to the Holy Fa-

thers and members of the Synod of Bishops.

Some people, and even I, ask the question: "What difference will my response make?"

The answer is that one Byzantine Catholic person's comment to find a way to pass on the faith to our young people was the focus of mine and of several other presentations at the Synod on the Family. The response of a few has contributed to redirecting the entire Catholic Church worldwide to turn toward the need of our youth.

What we need now is information on what is working in your family and in parish programs which bring the faith and encourage vocations. If nothing is happening in your parish, what do you think could help bring the faith to the next generation of Byzantine Catholics? Your comments and ideas will be heard and presented to Pope Francis and the Synod Fathers. The voices of the youth are especially powerful. In addition to providing guidance to the Synod, your ideas and successful programs will be shared with the parishes of the Byzantine Catholic Church.

I thank you for your cooperation and for taking the time to respond to the questionnaire when it appears on your eparchial website: www.EparchyofPassaic.com



+SISTER JEAN MARIE CIHOTA, OSBM, ENTERS INTO THE JOY OF THE LORD

"I will lead her into the desert..."

before being called to be part of the team which organized the Religious Education program and office in Pittsburgh. As part of this group, she collaborated in initiating the *God With Us* series for Eastern Christian Formation. Her years in this ministry included beginning the same office in the Parma Eparchy. The office being firmly established there and in Pittsburgh, Sister Jean Marie was called to Pastoral Ministry for the Passaic Eparchy at Saint Therese Church in Saint Petersburg, FL. Here her many talents and gifts were put to good use until she answered the call to community ministry as the Assistant to the Provincial.

Sister Jean Marie held this position for ten years, also coordinating the many aspects of life in the monastery. Additionally, she served as Vocation and Affiliate Directress for the community and was also appointed Assistant Vocation Director for the Archeparchy of Pittsburgh. Her term of office concluded, the West beckoned Sister Jean Marie, and the Eparchy of Phoenix became the home of her heart for the last years of her life. She was no less generous in expending her efforts in this mission territory than in all her previous years.

In his homily, Archbishop William noted that Sister Jean Marie had the distinction of serving in all four of the Eparchies of our Metropolitan Church. Wherever she was, he noted, she was ready to reach out to young and old and in-between. She was so full of life and energy, that she brightened a room whenever she entered. When she came to meetings, Sister Jean Marie always came prepared and ready to put plans in motion that would further God's Kingdom. More often than not, the operative word was "now." While she may be remembered for the Myrrh-Bearers Retreat, for her work in Safe Environment, and her continuing involvement in religious education, Sister Jean Marie herself wrote that she would like to be remembered for "my love of the

Lord and all I come in contact with! My great love and zeal for our Byzantine Catholic Church! Spreading the Good News of Christ!" This she truly lived fully for more than 60 years as a Basilian Sister.

Sister Jean Marie was preceded in death by her parents; her stepmother Mary Ferko Cihota, and her sister Patricia Bellis. In addition to her sisters in community, she is survived by her brother, John; her sister, Mary Lynn Rebholz; her stepsister, Rita Ferko Joyce; and many devoted nieces, nephews and their families, all of whom she cherished with the great love that was the hallmark of her life.

The Parastas Service was celebrated by Father Michael Huszti, Monastery Chaplain. In attendance were Abbot Leo Schlosser, OSB; Father Andrew Deskevich, Father Ronald Larko, Archpriest Dennis Bogda, Father Frank Firko, Father Robert Pipta, Father Robert Karl, Father John Zeyack, Father Michael Popson, and Father James Ragan.

The Funeral Divine Liturgy was celebrated by Metropolitan Archbishop William C. Skurla. Concelebrants were: Monastery Chaplain, Father Michael Huszti; Father Robert Karl, Father John Zeyack, Father Thomas Loya, and Father Andrew Summerson, with Father Andrew Deskevich assisting. In attendance were: Archpriest Dennis Bogda, Archpriest John Petro, Archpriest Michael Hayduk, Father Ronald Larko, Father Robert Pipta, Father Stephen Wahal, Father Roy Schubert, Father James Spontak, Father Michael Popson, Father Robert Oravetz, and Father William Rupp. The number of clergy, religious, relatives, and friends in attendance at both the Parastas and Funeral Divine Liturgy gave testimony to Sister Jean Marie's life of dedicated service and love of all who crossed her path.

May God grant to his handmaiden, Sister Jean Marie, eternal memory and peaceful repose.

Some last minute preparations at the Pastoral Center in Phoenix, AZ, would be the last joyful and loving service Sister Jean Marie would offer in the long list of her missions as a Sister of Saint Basil. It was from that place that Jesus called her to Himself on Thursday evening, the 18th of May. In a reflection for the Sunday of Saint Mary of Egypt, she wrote, "As a nun with the Sisters of Saint Basil the Great, I have been missioned to live in the desert of Phoenix, AZ. Like Mary of Egypt, I am espoused to Christ; unlike Mary of Egypt, I do not walk on water. But in this desert, I am gradually coming to enter into a deeper relationship through the grace of God."

Sister Jean Marie (Jean Ann) Cihota was born in Mingo Junction, OH, the daughter of the late John and Anna (Burch) Cihota. She entered the Sisters of Saint Basil from Saint Nicholas Church in McKeesport, PA, on February 2, 1956, and made her Final Profession of Vows on August 20, 1961.

Sister Jean Marie began her ministry as a teacher on the elementary level for about a dozen years



SISTERS OF SAINT BASIL TO CELEBRATE 83RD ANNUAL PILGRIMAGE

The 83rd Annual Pilgrimage in honor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help will be held at Mount St. Macrina in Uniontown, PA., September 2 & 3, 2017. This year's theme is Mary: Life-Giving Spring. Preparations for this year's Pilgrimage have already started and will continue throughout the summer.

As in previous years, the Sisters will welcome all those pilgrims who come from all over the country and beyond. They will continue to welcome those who come early and camp on the race track or stay on the Mount. Light fare will be available at the Lunch Stand starting on Friday evening. Liturgical prayers will be held at the Shrine Altar on Friday evening for those arriving early and Divine Liturgy will be celebrated on Monday morning, September 4 for those who stay on Sunday evening.

Pilgrimage 2017: Participation? People?

By Sr. Elaine Kisinko, OSBM

I love our Pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Perpetual Help at our monastery in Uniontown. I appreciate the ways in which Jesus is glorified and His Mother is honored. I am very grateful for the prominence and renown it provides for our Byzantine Catholic Church. And maybe most of all, I am taken by the fact that we are all there together.

We Sisters are privileged to welcome our bishops and guests, priests, deacons, seminarians, other religious, families, groups, individuals and everyone who comes. We are all there united in purpose: to pray, to receive the healing and life-giving mysteries of the Church, to enjoy the beauty of Mt. St. Macrina, to meet friends old and new, and to be a part of this unique event which in itself is a phenomenon of God's grace.

We live in a time where "virtual reality" seems in many ways to have become the norm. Even small children can text messages. Games are played electronically. Play dates are arranged rather than youngsters spontaneously meeting for outdoor games. Watching television can replace conversation and communication.

"Our guest this year is Bishop Peter Libasci, an American prelate of the Roman Catholic Church who serves as the tenth and current Bishop of the Diocese of Manchester, NH. Bishop Libasci is bi-ritual and celebrates the Divine Liturgy in the Byzantine Ruthenian Catholic Church," said Sister Ruth Plante, Provincial.

The Festal Icon Walk that was popular last year, will be repeated at the Pilgrimage this year.

Other plans for the weekend include many opportunities for participation in the Divine Liturgy of the Byzantine Catholic Church. Also scheduled are Matins, Vespers, sacrament of reconciliation, activities for teens and children, and other services in honor of the Mother of God.

The Pilgrimage holds the distinction of being the oldest and the largest Byzantine Catholic Pilgrimage in the country.



Pilgrimage Icon: Mary, Life-Giving Spring

So, as we become a part of the crowd that is making the Pilgrimage journey this year, let us recognize and be thankful that for these short days our reality is holy, shared, and alive. We may jostle with someone while walking on a pathway. Grumbling might be heard in a too long line at medovniki, light lunch or the gift shop. The favorite spot for your lawn chairs could be occupied. But we are there.

We are praying either individually or as one at the impressive liturgical services. We are inspired by the uplifting of our souls as we beautifully raise our voices in hymns. We are healed by the power of the reception of the mysteries of Reconciliation and Eucharist. We are heartened by the presence of so many young families, children, youth and of the not so young who have been faithful pilgrims for countless years. And as we see our bishops, priests, deacons, seminarians, sisters, our fellow parishioners, family members and friends all around us, we know that it is very good to be here and to be a part of this Pilgrimage and to belong to our Byzantine Catholic Church.

Every person who journeys to become a pilgrim brings a blessing to be shared. And as always one who gives receives much more in return. Please plan to be at Pilgrimage 2017.

Saint Nicholas Pilgrimage

July 9, 2017

Carpathian Villlage / Saint Nicholas Shrine
802 Snow Hill Road, Cresco, PA 18326



- 11:00 AM Welcome and Blessing of Pilgrims Begins (Picnic Pavilion)
- 11:15 AM Devotion to Saint Nicholas (Shrine Altar)
- 11:30 AM Food Service Begins (Picnic Pavillion & Upper Tent)
- 12:30 PM Confessions Begin (Shrine Gazebo)
- 1:00 PM Healing Service with Anointing (Shrine Altar)
Children's Program (Lower Tent)
- 2:50 PM Procession from Lower Tent to Shrine Altar
- 3:00 PM Hierarchical Divine Liturgy w/Tonsure & Minor Orders (Shrine Altar)
Blessing of Distribution of Special Saint Nicholas Medallions
Anointing with Oil of Saint Nicholas from Bari, Italy
- 6:00 PM Panachida For Deceased Clergy and Pilgrims (in Church Slavonic)

Golf Club car sService available for those with difficulty walking. Restroom facilities for those with physical disabilities also available. Let's pray that God blesses us with great weather and a beautiful day, through the intercession of the Most Holy Theotokos and Our Holy Father Nicholas, of course!

A LETTER FROM MOUNT SAINT MACRINA

Summer 2017

Glory to Jesus Christ!

Dear Friends,

Just as in many families today, we must acknowledge the fact that we are aging - 44 Sisters with a median age of 80+. Consequently, we find ourselves with unused space in aging buildings and underutilized property, along with the accompanying problems of needed repairs, necessary upgrades, and ongoing financial constraints at Mount Saint Macrina.

To deal with these issues, we recently applied for and received a grant from NRRO (National Religious Retirement Office) to do an evaluation of our property and buildings.

The goal of this evaluation, which is being conducted with the help of Hoffman Planning, Design and Construction, Inc. from Appleton, WI, is primarily to provide for adequate eldercare for all our Sisters now and into the future. The Hoffman firm has served more than 45 religious congregations in 23 states. They have been involved in this work for the past 20 years on issues concerning stewardship of physical and financial resources and helping religious sustain their missions. We are strongly committed to maintain our presence here at Mount Saint Macrina, but we are

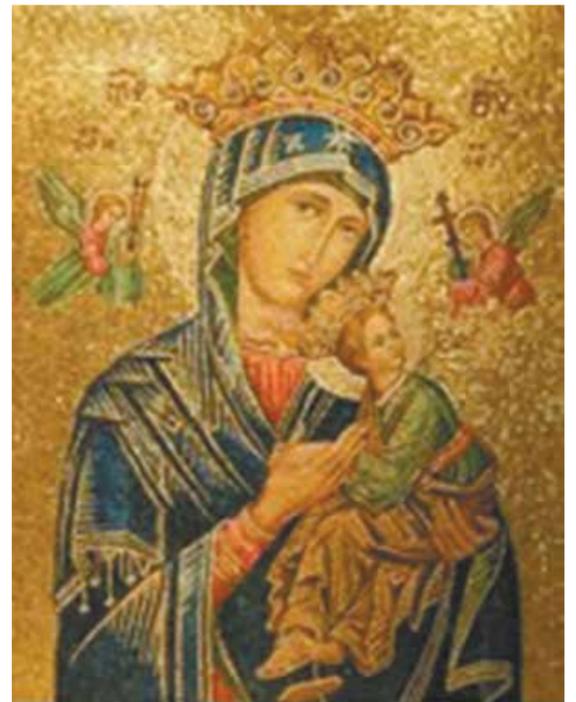
searching for developers interested in purchasing property/buildings for the highest and best use. Through continued reflection and dialogue, we will decide which options best fit our mission and ministries, and search out appropriate partners and developers to bring these ideas into meaningful reality.

We have embraced this process recognizing that decisions will be filled with emotional impact as well as physical changes. We move forward trusting fully that Our Lord will be present throughout this journey leading to new—though different—life.

While this evaluation continues, several anticipated projects (including the renovation of the Light Lunch food service area) are being placed on hold. It is more prudent to have a set overall plan in place before making changes.

It is our full intent to continue the pilgrimage ministry, which has become a focal point of our Byzantine Catholic Church, and an important part of our ongoing legacy.

We ask for continued prayers for us and for this important process. Your prayers and your faithful support have been essential throughout our 96-year history. We look forward to your support as



we continue this process and prepare to celebrate our 100th anniversary in service to the Byzantine Catholic Church in a few short years.

With gratitude for your ongoing prayers and support,

Sister Ruth Plante, OSBM

Sister Ruth Plante, OSBM, Provincial,
and the Sisters of Saint Basil the Great

2017 PILGRIMAGE FOR PEACE: TRANSFIGURED BY PEACE

HOLY DORMITION FRIARY, SYBERTSVILLE, PA

Sunday, August 6, 2017

Retreats and programs listed here are co-sponsored by the Bishop Michael Dudick Center, supporting awareness of the Byzantine traditions that bolster our Christian faith.

For more information, or to register for any of our programs, please contact holydormition@gmail.com or call Father Jerome, OFM, at 570-788-1212 ext 402.



FAITH AND COMMUNITY ISSUES

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

HAPPINESS AND JOY: THE MYSTIC'S PERSPECTIVE

Quenching the insatiable in the Quest for Happiness and Joy

Who is Mitrofan Vasil'evich Lodyzhenskii and what has he to tell us about the quest for joy and happiness in our lives? From an appendix in the book, *Light Invisible: Satisfying the Thirst for Happiness* (2011, Holy Trinity Publications, Jordanville, New York), he was born February 15, 1852, and rested in the Lord May 18, 1917. His parents as well as three of his four sisters "went on to become monastics" (p.198). His life was variegated in experience. A graduate from the Agricultural Institute in Saint Petersburg (1873), he worked as senior forester in Vologda province (p. 198), was sheriff in Tula Province, Chern County, 1884-86; Chief of Forestry Department, vice-governor of Semiplatinsk, May 2, 1896 to August 8, 1898; he held the same position in Vitebsk, August 8, 1898 to May 18, 1902 Stavropol and Mogilev (p. 198).

In the time of his retirement, Mitrofan became interested in the relationship of esoteric philosophy with Christianity (2011, *Light invisible: Satisfying the Thirst for Happiness*, p. 198) and visited with Tolstoy in the summer of 1910. It was in late July of 1910 that Tolstoy visited Lodyzhenskii to be introduced to the *Philokalia*, and on August 4, 1910 Tolstoy, accompanied by D.P. Makovitskii, visited Lodyzhenskii in Basovo to talk about Christian ascetics (2011, *Light Invisible*, p. 198)

Lodyzhenskii did spend some time investigating and experiencing the occult, Theosophy, and travelled into India and Japan at one point declaring publicly, "It is possible to be both a true Christian and a true Theosophist" (2011, *Light Invisible: Satisfying the Thirst for Happiness*, p. 199). He later was convinced he erred in thought and renounced Theosophy.

The present text we are considering, *Light Invisible* was published in 1912, was sandwiched between the first volume *Super-Consciousness and Paths to Its Acquisition* (1906) and the third volume *The Dark Force* (1914). To quote from the text:

In his 1914 review of *Light Invisible*, Sergei Sergeevich Glagolev, Professor of Apologetics at the Moscow Theological Academy, remarked: 'In his book, Lodyzhenskii simply, clearly, and convincingly establishes the apologetical significance of mystical phenomena from an Orthodox perspective.' (2011, *Light Invisible ...*, p. 199).

The book is divided into nine chapters, an afterword and two appendices. The text begins with an introduction into the mystery of Good and Evil, the intervention of the Gospel message of hope and peace, then springs into a study of Saints Seraphim of Sarov and Francis of Assisi. A study of the mysticism of both and then the Mysticism of the East and West is followed by a study of various lives of the saints and features that set them apart from the rest of Mankind.

Lodyzhenskii then launches into discussions on the yearning for happiness, the qualities that constitute a "Good Death" and what it means to make visible the Light that cannot be seen in this realm. How these Holy Ones arrived at Joy and how the rest of humanity can attain it will be the outcome of this exploration.

Light in Darkness—Chapter One

Lodyzhenskii begins the journey with a polemic, light and darkness and the struggle between them. The worldview, the Gospel view; self-reliance, total dependence upon God; for the world the seat of happiness locates itself in the midst of

power and possession which leads to control of the masses. For those of the Kingdom of Light, it is the simple and poor who shall inherit the earth (Matt. 5); the power relied upon is found in Matt. 11:28, "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden..." The distinction between the virtue of Humility and the "vice" of Humiliation and shame are hinted at (2011, *Light Invisible*, p. 2). Lodyzhenskii draws the line in concluding that Life in this world that is broken and Life in the Spirit, "are like two different worlds having nothing in common with one another" (p.2).

For Lodyzhenskii, regardless of the personal striving for perfection found in humanity in the world at any age or time, if done on humanity's own recognizance, humanity will find itself mired in a quicksand of moral contradictions and dilemmas that will overwhelm the person, individual resource and strength notwithstanding.

Lodyzhenskii freely admits the indispensability of Divine Intervention into the affairs of the human person to strengthen not only resolve but to assure perseverance leading to success in the spiritual endeavor. In the realm of Christian asceticism labels this help as "divine grace" (p.3, italics author's). For the ascetic, *divine grace* is not something to be believed in, but an actual experience apprehended by a faculty Lodyzhenskii labels as "their spiritual super-consciousness" (2011, *Light Invisible*, p. 3).

What is this grace? From whence comes the power that issues forth from grace; what consequences are called forth from the actions of this Grace will be addressed in the next installment.

ECL



LIFE, LOVE, AND THE HUMAN PERSON

By Ann M. Koshute, MTS

SPIRITUAL FIDGETING



Icon of the Holy Trinity

"Bored at dinner? We have Fidget Spinners!" If you don't have kids – or you're not interested in pop culture fads – Fidget Spinners are the latest craze among kids and teens. This small toy is designed to help relieve stress and is helping kids with ADHD and autism, as well as stressed-out and anxious adults. Its simple design, fitting easily in kid-sized hands, features a depression in the center from which protrudes three blades. Simply grasp the center with thumb and forefinger, and give it a spin! The Fidget Spinner has been touted by parents and educators for its benefits in helping kids become calm and focused. Whether it's a fad or a tool that will continue to reap benefits beyond this generation remains to be seen. As with any new gadget, an all-out marketing blitz makes the toy a "must have."

I don't have a Fidget Spinner, but my godchildren have fun with theirs. Simple toys that

positively impact our mental and physical health are great, so I'm not critiquing the Spinner or its users. What struck me from the sign advertising Fidget Spinners as an answer to "boring dinners," is that the toy makes a good metaphor for a real danger in our interpersonal relationships, and especially in our relationship with God. Many of us – I'm the first to include myself in this – are "spiritually fidgety." We become distracted from and bored with each other. We're "hyper-connected" through our phones, tablets, and social media, often not giving our full attention to flesh and blood people right in front of us. We settle for the efficiency of cyber connections, escaping the effort and self-sacrifice real, in-person encounters require. Don't get me wrong: technology is great, and allows family and friends who live at a distance to be in touch, and students from around the world the opportunity to get a degree online. Social media gives real-time updates on

the grandkids' exploits for Dzedo and Baba, and allows friends to reconnect after years apart. But we must be aware of how the ease and efficiency technology offers can negatively impact our ability to relate to each other, and to do the hard work required to love.

These are dangers for our relationship with God, too. If we spend so much time with our heads down – looking at screens, or simply being wrapped up in ourselves – we'll forget to look up to the God who loves us and wants to give us the peace we seek. Maybe you can relate to this as I can: I forget – or resist – living in the present moment, focusing on past mistakes and hurts, and worrying about what will come tomorrow. God proves Himself faithful to me again and again, reassuring me through Scripture, uniting Himself to me in the Eucharist, and speaking through the words and actions of family, friends and strangers. He loves me and will not abandon me! Still, I "fidget" and complain, looking for relief from worry or for personal gratification in any way but His way. I get "bored" with God, pushing Him

away when I feel sure I've got all the answers, and desperately grasping for Him when I realize that I don't.

"Count your blessings" is an easily dismissed cliché, a quaint way of speaking that doesn't capture the modern reality of who we are as "independent agents" of our lives. We believe that we "create our own destinies," and exercise our freedom through any number of choices, all equally valid if they're "true for me." I see this in my students' attitudes, and even in myself. Fierce independence, the need to make reality exactly what we want it to be, and denying Truth in favor of "my truth," infects all our thinking because we breathe it in the "cultural air." It's easier to count the number of things we want but lack, to blame God when we don't get our way, and to believe we know better anyway. "Spiritual fidgeting" keeps our eyes off God and His blessings, and squarely on ourselves.

So, what's the solution? Where's the "Spiritual Fidget Spinner" to calm our souls and draw us closer to God? At the risk of reading something

that isn't there into its design, I find it interesting that the toy has three blades. Place your fingers in the center and give it a go, calmed by the blades' spin and gentle purr. Because I'm Byzantine, naturally see the Trinity in "threes!" And it's there we find the answer to our spiritual boredom and fidgeting. Most times, my fingers grasp my life firmly and attempt to "control" God, trying to make Him "spin" in the direction I choose. Instead, I must think of the Trinity surrounding me; not "controlling" me, but inviting me into the center of their communion of life and love. That's right where God wants us – with Him – and that's the way to calm our restless hearts and settle our fidgety spirits. Regardless of what distracts us, and how often we get pulled away from Him – and each other – God is there. The antidote to "spiritual fidgeting and boredom" isn't finding better, more efficient distractions. It's focusing our attention on Him, letting ourselves be drawn into the gentle rhythm of God's voice repeating in our hearts, "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give you." (John 14:27). **ECL**



SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

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

ENCOUNTERING THE LORD ON THE ROAD

"Road trip!" There was a time, in my carefree student days, when those two words were enough to make me drop everything, pack a few essentials (donuts, coffee, and cassette "mix tapes," of course!) and take to the highway with an expectation of adventure.

Summertime is when many of us take to the road on vacation. We think of it as a time for relaxation or adventure, but it can also be a moment of grace. Stepping out of our ordinary routine and opening ourselves to new experiences can prepare us to be aware of things we usually miss in the rush and routine of our workaday lives.

It's probably no coincidence that Saint Luke recounts the story of two very different road trips one after the other in the Acts of the Apostles. In Acts 8:26-40, we meet an Ethiopian official, traveling back to Ethiopia from a trip to Jerusalem, where he had worshipped, perhaps at Pentecost or another of the pilgrimage feasts. He had bought himself a souvenir in Jerusalem, a copy of the prophecies of Isaiah, and he was reading it on the bumpy ride south.

Meanwhile, Saint Philip, one of the recently ordained deacons (Acts 6:1-7), is moved by an angel to take his own southern road trip, from Jerusalem toward Gaza. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, Philip runs to catch up with the chariot, hears the Ethiopian reading Isaiah aloud and asks "Do you understand what you are reading?" The Ethiopian invites Philip to ride along with him and explain the prophet's words. Beginning with the great prophecy of Jesus' sacrificial death (Isaiah 53:7-8), Philip shared the Good News with the Ethiopian. Passing by a body of water, the Ethiopian asks to be baptized and makes a profession of faith: "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." And from that chance encounter with a hitchhiker, the Gospel was brought from Jerusalem to Ethiopia.

It was a very different road trip for Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9). He set out from Jerusalem, north toward Damascus, a young man on a mission.

Having already participated in the murder of Saint Stephen (Acts 7:54-8:1), he had become a kind of vigilante against Jews who accepted Jesus as the Messiah. His plan was to arrest Jewish believers in Damascus and bring them back to Jerusalem for trial. Things didn't go as Saul had planned.

Jesus Himself met Saul on the road to Damascus. What Saul experienced was a blinding light and a voice that asked "Why do you persecute Me?" Saint Paul would later explain that he had seen the Risen Lord in that moment (1 Corinthians 9:1; 15:8), just as the other Apostles had in the 40 days between Pascha and Ascension.

Saul was sent on to Damascus, not to arrest Christians but to seek healing from a Christian. A believer named Ananias in Damascus had been warned in a vision that Saul would be coming and that Ananias should lay hands on him to restore his sight. Just as in the case of Philip and the Ethiopian, the Scripture gives us a God's-eye view of

how God has actually prepared two people to encounter each other for a moment that leads to salvation. Saul left Damascus with his sight restored, both physically and spiritually. He now saw what he had refused to see when he heard Saint Stephen preach: that Jesus was the Messiah and Son of God that the Old Testament had predicted (Acts 7). Not surprisingly, Saul became as zealous in preaching Jesus as he had been in persecuting Him. In fact, the rest of Saint Paul's life was a thirty-year road trip in the service of the Gospel.

Two road trips, two chance encounters, two men brought to faith themselves and empowered to share Jesus Christ with others. For Philip and the Ethiopian, it was a happy hitchhiking encounter. For Saul and Ananias, it required a change of heart and a change of plans. Look for your own moment of grace as you travel the roads this summer. And don't forget the mix tapes. **ECL**



Icon of the Saint Phillip and the Ethiopian Eunuch



UNDERSTANDING ICONS

Father Joseph Bertha, Ph.D.

CHRIST PANTOCRATOR ICONS:

Liturgical use of the Name of God Pantocrator

Although not so evident in English translation, the original Greek word *Pantocrator* (derived from the Hebrew Aramaic *El Shaddai*) appears many times in our liturgical services as “mighty,” “powerful,” and even “sustainer.”

There are many uses of Pantocrator in the *Horologion*, the Book of Hours; which contains Matins, Vespers, troparia and kontakia of the eight tones and for daily commemorations of the saints. Each of the nine canticles of Matins contain reference the mighty power of God. The nine biblical canticles are:

1. The Ode of Moses in Exodus (Exodus 15:1-19)
2. The Ode of Moses in Deuteronomy (Deuteronomy 32:1-43) (sung only on Tuesdays in Great Lent)
3. The Prayer of Anna, the mother of Samuel the Prophet (1 Samuel 2:1-10)
4. The Prayer of Habakkuk the Prophet (Habakkuk 3:2-19)
5. The Prayer of Isaiah the Prophet (Isaiah 26:9-20)
6. The Prayer of Jonah the Prophet (Jonah 2:3-10)
7. The Prayer of the Three Holy Children (Daniel 3:26-56)
8. The Song of the Three Holy Children (Daniel 3:57-88)
9. The Song of the Theotokos (The *Magnificat*, Luke 1:46-55) and the Prayer of Zacharias, the father of the Forerunner (The *Benedictus*, Luke 1:68-79)

Significantly, the two New Testament Canticles, the *Magnificat* and the *Benedictus*, refer to the Pantocrator. The Holy Theotokos chants: *For He who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is His name.* Zechariah proclaims: *He has raised up a horn of salvation, i.e., He is a mighty savior.*

Elsewhere in the *Horologion*, the three Persons of the Holy Trinity are addressed as Pantocrator. God the Father is called Pantocrator, sometimes Jesus the Son is called Pantocrator, and sometimes, in general, God is referred to as Almighty. In Pantocrator icons, it is always Jesus who is depicted as the Pantocrator.

In the Eucharistic Divine Liturgies, we notice two/three significant uses of addressing God as Pantocrator: in the Trisagion and the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed.

The Trisagion (thrice-holy hymn) prayer, the great invocation of the Holy Trinity is a prayer employed in almost every single liturgical service in the Byzantine liturgical books as part of the introductory prayers. The Hymn is chanted immediately before the Epistle and Gospel readings.

In Greek:

Ἄγιος ὁ Θεός, Ἄγιος ἰσχυρός, Ἄγιος ἀθάνατος, ἐλέησον ἡμᾶς.

Agios o Theos, Agios ischyros, Agios athanatos, el-eison imas.

In English:

Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal

One, have mercy on us.

The Greek word: ἰσχυρός *ischyros* is used instead of Pantocrator. *Ischyros* is a synonym for Pantocrator, and means “mighty, strong, valiant, and powerful.” Saint John the Baptist uses *ischyros* of Jesus in Matthew 3:11: “As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is *mightier* than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

In the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed we pray: I believe in God the Father Almighty...

Πιστεύομεν εἰς ἕνα Θεὸν Πατέρα παντοκράτορα. The Greek word Pantocrator is employed.

The Byzantine liturgical use of the Divine Name of God, the Pantocrator figures prominently and ubiquitous. Our predecessors in the faith employed this Hebrew/Aramaic name throughout our services, almost so frequently that we almost overlook their mention. As we daily pray Matins, in the canticles we see how various people invoke the almighty, and strong presence of God in their daily struggles. With the Theotokos and Saint Zechariah we witness the mighty deeds of God bringing about our salvation. Every single time we begin a liturgical service we employ the Trisagion and proclaim the mighty nature of our God. As we bear the coffin of the deceased, we solemnly sing in funeral tones of the Trisagion, beseeching the Almighty Savior to sustain us as mourners with his powerful mercy. We will next examine how the image of the Pantocrator is used in the church iconography to remind us of our Mighty Lord and God! **ECL**

St. Elias Day

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THE 15TH OF JULY 2017

4:00PM DIVINE LITURGY

ST. ELIAS PARISH

4:00 - 8:00PM
DINNER/RAFFLES

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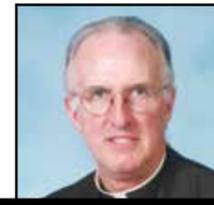
ENTERTAINMENT

Polka Whoooo 1 - 4:30 pm
Polka Quads 5 - 9 pm
• KIDS GAMES 1 - 7 pm •

FREE PARKING & ADMISSION
For a comfortable seat, bring your own chair • NO Carry-on foods, drinks or personal picnic tables

CATECHETICAL REFLECTIONS

Father Robert F. Slesinski, Ph.D.



MAN BEFORE GOD

Moments of Selfhood: Recourse to the Holy Trinity—Installment 4/6

The classic definition of man as bequeathed by Greek philosophy is surely that of Aristotle, namely, that man is a “rational animal,” an apt blend of species and genus. A clear grasping of personhood, however, seems to have escaped Greek notice. Ancient Roman jurists, on the other hand, clearly were on to something in regard to the true import of personhood in their dictum: *Persona est sui iuris et alteri incommunicabilis* (A person is of his own law and is incommunicable with another). But it falls to Christian philosopher-theologians to bring out the full ramifications of personhood for human understanding. Not surprisingly, the impetus for this development was the need for serious reflection on the Three-Personed God, of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and what the fullness of interpersonal existence must entail. Above all, with the Holy Trinity we have a supreme instantiation of personal incommunicability, yet sharing in one divine nature, Unity being no less a reality than Trinity.

As we have seen in the instance of St. August-

tine, many of his keen insights into personhood are articulated during the course of his treatise *De Trinitate* (On the Trinity). On this note another intriguing Medieval definition of the person comes to light in another treatise *De Trinitate*, this one written by Richard of St. Victor (+1173), a Scottish philosopher-theologian, whose ministry of prior at the Augustinian Abbey of St. Victor of Paris lasted from 1162 until his death in 1173. In his treatise, he defines the person as “*rationalis naturae individua existentia*” (A person is an individual [incommunicable] existence of a rational nature), a definition he applies to *all* persons (divine, angelic, and human). The accent of the definition is on the person’s *existence* rather than on his “essence,” which, of course, is of a “rational nature.”

This existence, for its part, is synonymous with *love*. Thus arises Richard of Saint Victor’s *love paradigm* for explaining not only the dynamics obtaining within the Holy Trinity, but also how the Godhead interacts with humankind. Love,

by definition, is directed toward another. There can never be love without a plurality of persons. The Holy Trinity is the *exemplar* of love. The Three Divine Persons *commune* in love; it is of their very nature to love, giving rise to a *triune* structure of love, lover (Father), beloved (Son), and co-beloved (the Holy Spirit).

A necessary, further reflection is in order. In this we return to Richard of Saint Victor’s definition of a person. So, persons are *existents* of a rational nature, but this “rational” nature—OMG!—cannot be such if it is not infused through and through with love. Hmm, “reason” and “love,” such apparently disparate notions, in fine, truly *are* at one with one another. It is not rational in the interpersonal sphere to be antagonistic with love. “Cold” human reason, in sum, cannot be true to itself without the “warming” presence of a higher reality, love, ever-reflective of a providential bearing of the Creator on His creation. **ECL**



SCHOOL OF PRAYER

Father G. Scott Boghossian

PRAY FOR THE LOST

The United Nations estimates that the current world population is around seven billion people. There are approximately 2.3 billion self-professed Christians in the world. Such statistics are a cause for concern. Only about one-third of the world’s population knows the good news about Jesus Christ. Only around 33% know that “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him will not perish but have everlasting life” (Jn. 3:16).

Jesus commanded His followers to preach the Good News to the whole world. “Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned” (Mk. 16:15, 16). Our Savior ordered us to disciple all nations. “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” (Mt. 28:19, 20). Yet, most people on our planet have not yet come to know, love, and serve Jesus Christ.

Those who do not know the Gospel of Jesus Christ may be saved. Blessed Pope Paul VI taught that “those who without fault on their part do

not know the Gospel of Christ and His Church, but seek God sincerely, and under the influence of grace endeavor to do His will as recognized through the promptings of their conscience, they, in a number known only to God, can obtain salvation” (Credo of the People of God). It is important to note that the Pope taught that these unbelievers “may” attain salvation, but he did not teach that they definitely will attain salvation.

Even those of us who are members of the true Church of Christ, who have the fullness of the means of salvation, must “work out our salvation with fear and trembling” (Phil. 2:12), and “give all diligence to make our calling and election sure” (2 Pt. 1:10). In 1864 Pope Pius IX condemned the following proposition: “Good hope at least is to be entertained of the eternal salvation of all those who are not at all in the true Church of Christ.” That is to say, we must never presume that the unbeliever is saved without faith in Christ, repentance, and baptism. “If the righteous is scarcely saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?” (1 Pt. 4:18).

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another” (Jn. 13:34). There is no greater demonstration of Christian charity than to point people toward the saving knowledge of

Jesus Christ. In 1926, Pope Pius XI asked, “Can we give a mark of greater love for our neighbors than to assist them in putting behind themselves the darkness of error by instructing them in the true faith of Christ? As a matter of fact, this type of charity surpasses all other kinds of good works inspired by love just as the mind surpasses the body, heaven surpasses earth, eternity surpasses time” (*Rerum Ecclesiae*, 6).

What are we doing for all of these lost and dying souls? We must pray for them. Let us pray that they would come to know Jesus Christ and His Catholic Church. Let us pray for vocations, not just to the parish priesthood or religious life, but also to the missionary vocation. May God grant us men and women like Saints Cyril and Methodius, who brought the Gospel to the Slavs, and Saint Francis Xavier who proclaimed Christ to the inhabitants of South East Asia and Japan. “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore, pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest” (Mt. 9:37, 38).

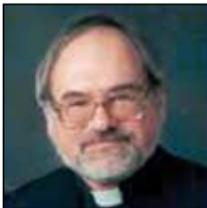
Christ called us to be the “salt of the earth” and the “light of the world” (Mt. 5:13, 14). We must study and know our faith well so that we can confidently share it with others. May each one of us live lives of holiness and Christian charity so that we attract others to the Faith. Let us pray that our unbelieving friends and neighbors would see something in our lives that would spark in them a longing for God and a concern for their salvation. The whole world needs the Gospel of Jesus Christ. **ECL**

THE BYZANTINE CATHOLIC EPARCHY OF PASSAIC subscribes to the

Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People

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THE BYZANTINE LITURGY

By Archpriest David Petras, SEOD

UNION IN THE TRINITY

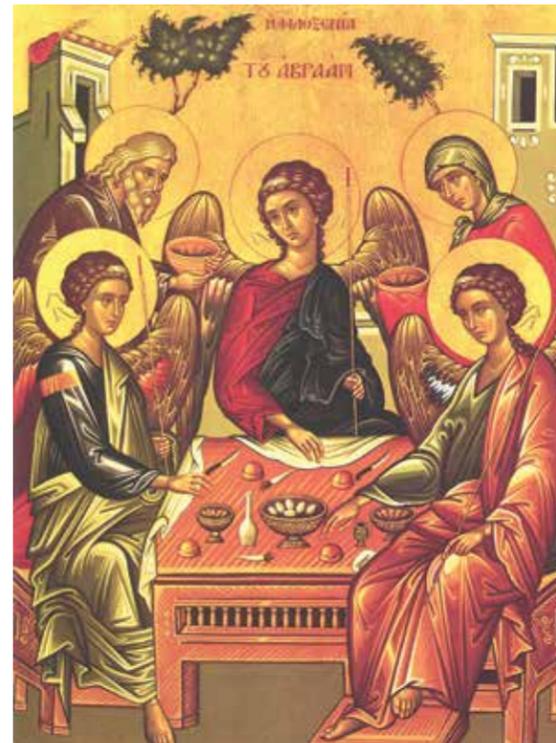
The Feast of Pentecost, which celebrates the gift of the Holy Spirit on the fiftieth day after the resurrection is also called the Feast of the Holy Trinity. On this day, God fully reveals himself to us as one God who is always with us - present in the Father "in whom we live and move and have our being, (Acts 17:28)," present in His Word and Son, whose message is proclaimed in the Gospel, and whom we receive in Holy Communion, present in the Spirit, promised by Jesus in His final discourse as, "the Spirit of truth, who will guide you to all truth. (John 16:13)." In God we are able to have faith, we have hope of life and unity, and we are able to love one another.

It was once said that all theology from the Eastern Christian perspective begins with the Trinity. This is equivalent to saying that all theology, from the Greek for "God-word," begins with God. A Syrian theologian of the sixth century called Dionysius wrote that we can know nothing of the supra-essential Cause of all things, totally beyond our dependent and passing existence, except what God (even His name is a mystery to us) reveals to us. This revelation has come through the Word of God made flesh, our Lord Jesus Christ. The revelation, then, is by its very "energy," a revelation of the Trinity.

Religions outside Christianity tend to misinterpret the Christian faith. Faith in the Trinity is a profound affirmation of unity. To say that God is One can be construed as "redundant," much as saying that "water is wet." However, to say that God - a community of three hypostases, usually translated as "person" - in Trinity is one is to enter into a deep mystery of total unity that is "ineffable, inconceivable, invisible, incomprehensible." (Anaphora of the Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom.) Saint Gregory the Theologian reflected on this mystery, "No sooner do I conceive of the one than I am illumined by the splendor of the three; no sooner do I distinguish them than I am carried back to the one ... When I contemplate the three together, I see but one torch, and cannot divide or measure out the undivided light."

The chosen people, therefore, professed their faith, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one." The Christian creed is, "I believe in one God." The unity beyond our power of understanding in the one God is the quality of goodness God imparts to his creation. Today even scientists acknowledge that the whole universe is one and interrelated. This oneness is rooted in the unity of God, One in the Holy Trinity. The prayer of Jesus just before His arrest is often cited today as manifestation of God's will that all the church structures of the Christian movement be united. But it is more than that. It reveals the will of God that His whole creation, particularly the society of human beings, be united in such a way that they reflect the unity of the Trinity. Jesus, therefore, prays: "Holy Father, keep them in Your name that You have given me, so that they may be one just as We are ... I pray not only for them, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word, so that they may all be one, as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And I have given them the glory You gave Me, so that they may be One, as We are one, I in them and You in Me, that they may be brought to perfection as one, that the world may know that You sent Me, and that You loved them even as You loved Me. (John 17:11.20-23.)"

This unity is a reflection and revelation of the divine unity. It is the way in which we are saved, that is, deified. It is the way in which we become like God. It is the way in which we become "sharers in the divine nature." (2 Peter 1:4.) God is One, He has made creation to become one. Saint Paul perceived how this unity was to mark all humanity, "I, then, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to live in a manner worthy of the call you have received, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another through love, striving to preserve the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace: one body and one Spirit, as you were also called to the one hope of your call; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, Who is over all and through all and in all. (Ephesians 4:1-6.)"



Icon of the Holy Trinity

Faith in the Trinity puts the concept of communion of Churches into the greater concept of creative unity. If this is so, then the division among churches is an evil contrary to the will of God. It is a sin and a scandal to the "world." This idea is seen by the leadership of the Catholic and Orthodox Churches. In the visit of a Catholic delegation to the Ecumenical Patriarch in November of 2013, His All-Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew said, "... our brotherly sentiments are pervaded by a certain sadness, which derives from the fact that we have not yet achieved the level of eating the same Bread and drinking of the same Cup, so that as many members we may be one body, to adapt the words of the Apostle. (Cf. 1 Cor. 10.17) We sincerely experience the ontological and existential sorrow of this spiritual division as the most painful separation of all." Beginning with Pentecost, every Divine Liturgy reminds us that true Christian unity is found in the Holy Trinity. That is why we sing, immediately after receiving Holy Communion, "We have seen the true light, we have found the true faith, and we worship the undivided Trinity, for the Trinity has saved us." **ECL**

2017 SUMMER MUSIC PROGRAM OF THE ARCHEPARCHY OF PITTSBURGH

Renewing Our Chant: Melody, Harmony, Prayer

This year, the Byzantine Catholic Archeparchy of Pittsburgh is inaugurating a regular summer church music program for cantors, choir directors, and section leaders. For 2017, the program will consist of a three-day master class and workshop to be held on July 12-14 at Saints Cyril and Methodius Byzantine Catholic Seminary in Pittsburgh, PA.

The program is open to experienced cantors and choir directors in the Byzantine Catholic Church; some experience with reading music is required. The program will show church singers:

- How to improve the flow, pacing, and effectiveness of liturgical singing
- How to use extemporized natural harmony to enhance plain chant
- How to renew liturgical music in the parish, and increase participation

In addition to classroom instruction, students will receive individu-

alized vocal coaching and the opportunity to lead services, with credit toward cantor certification.

The program is directed by Deacon Jeffrey Mierzejewski, with additional instructors from the Archeparchy of Pittsburgh and the Eparchy of Parma. Our goal is to enable cantors to develop and perfect their craft, and take home tools and expertise to benefit their parishes and eparchies.

A registration fee of \$200, due by July 1, covers all materials, meals, and instruction for the three day course. Lodging at the seminary is available for an additional \$100; both men and women can be accommodated, on separate floors of the seminary.

The course is limited to 24 students, and we ask that each parish send no more than one person to the workshop unless additional spaces become available.

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



SPIRITUAL REFLECTIONS

Father Lewis Rabayda

SPIRITUAL GREATNESS IS NOT FOR THE FEW

In many ways we resemble the thought of our culture and time. This is normal for us because we live in it and interact with it. Our surroundings have influenced us in very real ways and we have had influence over them as well. However, a negative aspect of this interaction is that sometimes we can be too passive when it comes to bringing about change. We can too easily slip into the idea that great and important work can only be done by great and important people. The same line of thinking also produces inaction in many because they do not see themselves as great, but rather, they see themselves as unimportant, lacking intelligence, and as not being capable of accomplishing great achievements. This way of thinking is not in line with what Jesus asks of us, and it will not allow us to do the great work that is necessary to build-up the Kingdom of Heaven.

Some believe that following Jesus' commandments is for others: for those who have already been following His commandments, for those more holy than themselves, for the religious, the deacons, the priests, and the bishops. Some believe that when Jesus Christ calls us to action in the Gospels that His call was not specifically directed at themselves, but that it was directed at

everyone else. This could not be further from the truth. Each instruction from the mouth of Jesus as recorded in Sacred Scripture was for the benefit of each human person born after the event of Christ. Jesus did not teach some how to live, but has shown us first-hand the correct way for each of us to attain happiness here on earth—through freely choosing to do good—as well as giving each of us the keys necessary to unlock the Kingdom of Heaven.

We can no longer defer acts of virtue, charity, and love to those whom we perceive as being more holy than ourselves. We can no longer deny ourselves the means to personal salvation by neglecting to do these good works. Because if we each take personal the calls of Jesus Christ to become better than we currently are, then we will become like those whom we formerly thought virtue and grace were reserved for. All good virtue and God's grace is reserved for each of us, if we listen to God and carry-out His will in our lives.

One of these calls of Jesus Christ is for us to build-up His Church, so that all who have not known the gift of salvation and forgiveness of sins which Jesus Christ came to accomplish through His death and resurrection can be saved just like us. This task of evangelization, of spreading

this Good News to the whole world, is not the task of a select few, but of each one of us. The bishop's role is to provide a clear continuity of Apostolic Teaching for his eparchy, priests, and deacons so they are properly equipped to evangelize the faithful. The priests and deacons roles are to prepare the faithful with the correct teaching handed to them so they may go out into the world and witness to the truth of salvation. It is then the role of each baptized person to accept this teaching, explore this teaching, and to test it with study, prayer, and faith, so that we are ready to share it with others in real and sincere ways.

Jesus Christ does not always call those who are already great and holy to enter into His service, but He often calls those of low stature, humble intelligence, and those steeped in sin. He calls each one of us in the state we are in to become even better, more holy, and to accomplish much greater tasks than we thought we were capable of. Greatness in the eyes of God, is not greatness in the eyes of men. And He calls each of us, regardless of who we are, what we do, or how intelligent we may believe ourselves to be; He calls each of us to overcome our perceived limitations and accomplish great things to build-up His Heavenly Kingdom. **ECL**

SEASONAL REFLECTIONS

Father Ronald Hatton



TAKE HEED LEST YOU FORGET THE LORD...

“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.” – The Holy Bible: Revised Standard Version, Catholic edition (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 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 Prokeimenon 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**



SEMINARIAN REFLECTIONS

Seminarian Paul Varchola West

STRANGERS ON A BUS

This past April, life dictated that I do something that I have not done in a very long time: traverse vast distances of the United States via public transportation. I am glad that my wayward youth of idolizing Jack Kerouac and traveling all over the country has given me practical skills that I am able to use in my adult life. Whenever I am traveling in such a manner, headed westward with the setting sun as the farmland of Pennsylvania gives way to the rolling mountains of its Western borders, I cannot help but think of the great American folk legends of modern time: Woody Guthrie, Pete Seeger, and the like. These true heroes of the people traveled the same routes in the same exact manner no more than one hundred years ago. One of these champions of justice and freedom, the 1960's-era folk singer Phil Ochs, described America as "A land full of power and glory/Beauty that words cannot recall." Having seen a great deal of this nation myself, I would have no choice but to agree with Ochs; however, he follows this sentiment with a challenge to this natural beauty: "But it's only as rich as the poorest of the poor."

Having recently spent hours upon hours in the NYC Port Authority Bus Terminal, I can assure you there are some very poor people in this country. Not necessarily only monetarily poor, but morally and spiritually poor as well. A very dear friend of mine qualified my hours spent in Port Authority as a wonderful opportunity to spend time with God's people and he could not have been more right! As all the passengers were boarding the bus bound for Pittsburgh, I found myself selfishly hoping to be left alone for six hours, without incident, and that would be that. As fate would have it, a woman who was talking to every single person in the terminal found it necessary to choose the seat directly adjacent to mine on a virtually empty bus. Lo and behold, almost immediately she struck up a conversation with me. I was less than pleased, but I politely listened anyway. Two and a half hours later, after we talked all about her extremely personal family issues and reasons for taking the bus, it came out that I was studying to become a priest. My new travel partner was then convinced I was sent to her by God to ease her worries and get her faith back on track. It was at that

moment I realized that this woman did not need me, I needed her.

This was a humbling lesson in compassion. The person whom I initially viewed as a nuisance was no different from me, just a strange face on a bus. She was a mother, attempting to make her way to her rather sick daughter in her early twenties who lived nearly three hundred miles away, and all I was concerned about was my six hours of peace. My lack of compassion in my travel-weary state made me feel rather spiritually poor. Echoing Ochs' sentiment, I am in no way richer than the poorest of the poor around me if I have no compassion for them.

As Christians, we really do not need a folk singer to tell us how to treat those cast away by society. Nor do we need cable news pundits or economic policy to dictate how we support those who cannot support themselves. Christ teaches that on the Day of Judgement, "The King will answer and say to them 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you do it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me'" (Mt 25:40). We are to find Christ in every person

we pass. Next time you see a person on a street corner begging, give them something, anything. A dollar. An apple. If you have nothing to give or fear that the money may be used for some illicit activity, at least acknowledge their existence and affirm that yes, they are indeed human. Say hello or simply nod and smile. Compassion costs nothing, yet it might be worth the world to the person sitting there suffering from addiction or untreated mental illness. Human interaction may simply lift the spirit of someone dealing with the bad hand that life has dealt, even if for a brief moment. Our riches in this life, and the next, cannot be calculated by dollars and cents or social status. Rather, it is the heartfelt compassion that is sent forth into the world that makes a beggar as rich as a king. Reach out in sincerity to the hand that is reaching out to you, that our compassion for one another may help us to better serve The Lord and His Creation. **ECL**

Let Your Soul Rejoice in the Lord

2017 Altar Server Congress

August 5-9, 2017

Boys ages 7-17 welcome!

Apply at: www.EparchyofPassaic.com

Carpathian Village Canadensis, PA

Come and experience a wonderful fun filled event with fellow altar servers from across the Eparchy of Passaic. Have fun while learning more about your important role as an altar server! This event is underwritten by the Eparchy. Registration by July 31st



UPCOMING EPARCHIAL AND PARISH EVENTS

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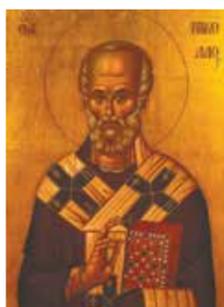
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JULY

- 4 Independence Day
Chancery closed Happy Fourth of July!*
- 9 Saint Nicholas Pilgrimage with Clerical Tonsure and Ordination to the Minor Orders of 9 men
at Carpathian Village, Cresco, PA
- 20 Holy Great Prophet Elias
Simply Holy Day

AUGUST



- 5-9 Altar Server Camp
at Carpathian Village, Cresco, PA
- 6 Pilgrimage For Peace
at Holy Dormition Franciscan Friary, Sybertsville, PA

12-13 Holy Dormition Pilgrimage

Sister Servants of Mary Immaculate, Sloatsburg, New York

15 Holy Dormition of the Theotokos

*Holy Day of Obligation * Chancery closed*

SEPTEMBER

2-3 83rd Pilgrimage in Honor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help

at Mount Saint Macrina, Uniontown, PA

10 Wedding Jubilarians Celebration for New Jersey and New York/New England Syncellates

3 p.m. Hierarchical Divine Liturgy with Bishop Kurt, Saint Mary Parish, Hillsborough, NJ