



# EASTERN CATHOLIC LIFE

Official Publication of the Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Passaic

VOL. LIII, NO. 5

MAY 2017

## A X I O S ! A X I O S ! A X I O S ! DEACON NICHOLAS DADDONA ORDAINED TO THE SACRED ORDER OF PRESBYTER



*Newly-ordained Father Nicholas Daddona and his family with Bishop Kurt*

The priests of the Eparchy of Passaic, together with their Chief Shepherd, Bishop Kurt, gathered at the Breakers Hotel in Spring Lake, NJ, for Presbyteral Days. While this annual gathering is usually a time for meetings about policy revisions, insurance, etc., this year was markedly different as the highlight of the entire week was the ordination to the Order of Presbyter (priest) by Bishop Kurt of Deacon Nicholas Daddona, Chancellor of the Eparchy of Passaic, and long-serving eparchial deacon at Saint Andrew Church in Westbury, NY. The drenching rain and gale force winds of Tuesday, April 25, 2017, could not drown out the heartfelt chants of “Axios!” (“He is worthy!”) and “Christ is Risen!” in the beautiful and historic Saint Catharine Roman Catholic Church in Spring Lake. This ordination was an historic “first,” as Father Nicholas is the first married man to be ordained to the priesthood for service in the Eparchy of Passaic.

Con-celebrating with Bishop Kurt were Father Jack Custer, current rector of Saint Michael Cathedral in Passaic, and former administra-

tor of Saint Andrew in Westbury, and former pastor of Holy Resurrection in Smithtown, NY; Father Tyler Strand, current administrator of Saint Andrew in Westbury, NY, and current pastor of Holy Resurrection in Smithtown, NY; Father Harry Untereiner, retired priest of the Eparchy, and former administrator of Saint Andrew in Westbury and former pastor of Holy Resurrection in Smithtown, NY; and Father Nicholas Deak, a priest of the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Toronto, a personal friend of the ordinand from Canada. After the ordination, there was a festive dinner reception at the Breakers Hotel, where Father Nicholas was warmly welcomed to the ranks of the priests, many of whom he has known and with whom he has labored in the Vineyard of the Lord for decades.

Father Nicholas Daddona, who was ordained to the priesthood on April 25, 2017, was previously a seminarian with the Franciscans at the Washington Theological Coalition. He then began a career as an educator for over 30 years on the high school and college levels and has been married over 43 years to his wife, Pan’i

Maureen. He has served as a deacon, and most recently, eparchial chancellor.

In addition to his wife, Pan’i Maureen, his three children, all successful, were present: Alessandra, a speech pathologist; Adriana, a math teacher; and Nicholas, Jr., a forensic toxicologist and drug recognition expert for the Nassau County, NY, Police Department. With their spouses, they have, in turn, blessed Father Nick and Pan’i Maureen with seven wonderful grandchildren: Philip, Nicholas, Juliana, Jonathan, Christopher, Matthew, and Mia.

Taking turns in accomplishing their personal dreams, Maureen held down the fort while Nick studied and prayed and worked for four years to complete the diaconal program and was ordained a deacon by Bishop +Michael (Dudick). Then he shouldered the majority of duties while Maureen earned a Ph.D. in Neuroendocrinology. She also serves as Victim’s Advocate for the eparchy and is a retired college professor having taught human genetics and the biochemistry of human nutrition for over 30 years.

In the past 29 years, Father Nick has served God at Saint Andrew Byzantine Catholic Church in Westbury, Long Island, NY. He has been deacon, Acting-Administrator of the Parish, Director of Deacons, and Chancellor for the Eparchy of Passaic. In addition to his religious duties, he taught development and remedial reading for grades 7-12 at Carey High School on Long Island, NY. He also was an adjunct professor of remedial studies at Nassau Community College, in Long Island, NY. Father Charles Kohli, who is Father Nick’s present spiritual advisor, married Pan’i Maureen and Father Nick 43 years ago.

A bittersweet moment of the Presbyteral Days was the announcement that Father Frank Twardzik, SDB, pastor of Saints Peter and Paul Church in Minersville, PA, and administrator of Saint Mary Church in Saint Clair, PA, will be retiring this summer. A hearty *Mnojaha l’ita* was intoned by Bishop Kurt after expressing his gratitude to Father Frank for his many years of service to our eparchy.

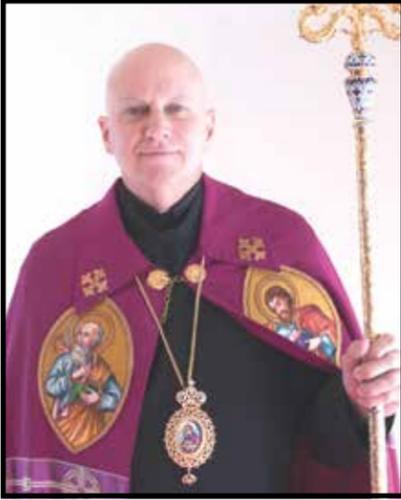
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# I LIFT UP MY EYES...

*Pastoral Reflections of Bishop Kurt*



## THIS DAY YOU WILL BE WITH ME IN PARADISE

When Adam and Eve separated themselves and all their descendants from God, God placed at the entrance of the Garden a Cherub, a terrifying angel, with a fiery sword that turned in all directions to protect the Tree of Life from greedy hands. Two thousand years ago, the Son of God commuted our sentence, conquered death, and gave us access once again to the Tree of Life, His dear Cross of self sacrifice. Today, though, it seems that the world is filled with self-appointed Cherubim who wield their fiery swords and try to keep us out of Paradise. Filled with righteous accusations, they try to keep us away from Mercy, from Life, and from our dear Jesus. "Go away!" they tell us. "You don't belong here." The following drama is from the Syriac Church, and it should encourage all of us. (By the way, our Syriac brothers and sisters have been literally driven out of their homes at sword's point. I'm so happy that our Cathedral parish has made them welcome at our Cathedral Chapel in Woodland Park.) When someone with a fiery sword tries to keep you away from Jesus, remember the thief on the cross and take comfort in the words of Our Lord, "This day you will be with me in Paradise."

*At the crucifixion I saw a miracle  
when the thief called on Our Lord  
"Remember me O Lord in the day of your coming  
in the kingdom that will not pass away!"*

*He made a petition, handed it and gave it  
to the crucified King and asked for mercy,  
and, full of compassion, He listened  
and accepted his prayer.*

*"Remember me, O Lord", shouted the crucified,  
"when you show Yourself in that kingdom  
and in the glory with which You come.  
I see Your mercy because I have believed in You."*

*The Lord said, "Because you believed,  
Today you will be in the Garden of Eden.  
Have faith, O man, that you will not be excluded  
from the kingdom at which you aim."*

*"Take as a sign the cross and go!  
Behold the exalted key which opens  
the great door of that Garden,  
so that you will step inside that Garden  
from which Adam was expelled."*

*The word of the Lord, like a rescript  
that has received the seal of the court,  
was consigned to the thief. These  
he took and went to the Garden of Eden.*

*The Cherub heard and arrived running  
and captured the thief at the door,  
blocked him with the sword that he had,  
and, dumbfounded, said to him:*

*The Cherub: "Tell me, O man, who sent you,  
what you are looking for, and how did you come?  
What motive carried you here?  
Show and tell me who you are!"*

*The thief: "I'll tell you what you ask.  
Hold off the sword and listen to my words.  
I am a thief, but I begged for mercy  
and of my coming, it was ordered by your Lord."*

*Cherub: "By what power did your arrival occur  
and who sent you into this terrible place?  
Who made you to cross the sea of fire?  
Who sent you to enter into Eden?"*

*Thief: "With the power of the Son, since it is He who  
sent me.*

*I crossed, I have arrived and am not blocked,  
and thanks to Him I have subdued all the Powers,  
and I have arrived to enter as He promised me."*

*Cherub: "You are a thief, as you said,  
but our place cannot be plundered.  
It is surrounded by the lance that guards it.  
Go back, O man, because you have taken the wrong  
path."*

*Thief: "I was a thief, but I am changed.  
I did not come here to plunder.  
Behold, I have with me the key of Eden  
to open and to enter and I will not be stopped."*

*Cherub: "Terrible is our place and cannot be  
stepped on,  
Its wall is fire and cannot be knocked down.  
The sword is flaming and turning all around.  
How do you dare to come here?"*

*Thief: "Terrible was your place, as you said,  
until your Lord climbed up on the cross.  
He has planted the spear of pains,  
and your sword can no longer kill."*

*Cherub: "From the day in which Adam left,  
I have seen no one enter here.  
Your race was expelled from the Garden.  
You will not enter. Don't argue!"*

*Thief: "From the time when Adam sinned,  
Your Lord was angry with our race,  
but He has reconciled and opened the door.  
Whether you stay now is not important."*

*Cherub: "You should know that no impure man is  
allowed to enter here.  
You are an assassin and a blood spiller.  
Who has brought you to this place of the just?"*

*Thief: "You should know that the One who was  
crucified with me so desired the cleansing of the  
impure.  
With the blood from His side, He washed and  
cleaned me  
and He sent me into Paradise."*

*Cherub: "Go away, man! Don't argue,  
since I was charged in this.  
The Tree of Life is here.  
With this tree I preserve it from your race."*

*Thief: "Go away, guard, learn and see  
that the Fruit of Life of your Garden  
I left hanging on Golgotha, look,  
so that our race may come in and not be blocked."*

*Cherub: "Eve and Adam wrote and took on their  
shoulders  
a declaration of debt, but it was not extinguished  
and, furthermore, by verdict, they left here  
to labor in the land of thorns."*

*Thief: "Listen, O Cherub, the debt is extinguished  
for He has nailed the note on the cross.  
Your Lord cancelled it with blood and water.  
With nails He has shredded it and behold it can-  
celled."*

*Cherub: "Your race was expelled from the Garden  
and there is no remedy to come here.  
The point of the sword is in motion  
and will strike anyone who comes."*

*Thief: "The expelled has returned to his father  
because the Good Shepherd went out and reformed  
the sheep that was lost from His flock  
and carried it on His shoulders."*

*Cherub: "Today I saw something new,  
a procession that enters the Garden.  
Behold I saw the steps of Adam  
that also went out of here and returned here no  
more."*

*Thief: "Jesus your Lord, has done something new,  
since He loosed Adam who was tied,  
and He raised up again the dead in the inferno,  
and He sent me ahead of them to open for them."*

*Cherub: "I am a Cherub. How is it that you make foolish the guard that was entrusted to me? I am invincible and made of fire, but you, son of Adam, how much you still dare!"*

*Thief: "I am your equal, and we have only one common Master both me and you. His power is higher than yours and mine. Don't be afraid, for He has sent me."*

*Cherub: "It's not possible for you to enter here. You cannot step on this place. Here one is glorified in His presence, and the lance of fire stands guard over there."*

*Thief: "It's no longer possible for you to block anyone. He has blunted your sword and it has lost its heat. The cross has opened the Garden of Eden, and there is no way to close it again."*

*Cherub: "From the Scriptures haven't you heard of the Cherub and the sword that is commissioned to guard the way into the Garden of Eden so that the family of Adam can no more enter?"*

*Thief: "From Revelation haven't you learned that your Lord descended and dressed Himself in our body that He might reconcile Adam who was expelled and make his return to Eden, He who was angry?"*

*Cherub: "The sword of fire is in motion. It is she that guards the Tree of Life and terrorized Adam when he sinned. But you, how come you aren't afraid?"*

*Thief: "Look here, I have the sign from your Lord: thanks to it the lance and the sword have lost their cutting, and the verdict is annulled, and Adam returns who was chased out."*

*Cherub: "Legions of fire assemble here, thousands and uncountable multitudes. They are terrible and you cannot go forward and pass between them."*

*Thief: "The legions and multitudes of which you speak see the cross and it frightens them. The sign of the Son arouses their fear, and they bow down before it and honor it."*

*Cherub: "On the chariot is the Sign of my Lord seated on the Throne and hidden from us. But how is it that, as you claim, carry the Sign and you glorify Him?"*

*Thief: "His splendor is on the chariot, but behold here below His cross on Golgotha. With His blood He has written a new order to return Adam to his Garden."*

*Cherub: "O murderer, who are you? O assassin, who has sent you? The flaming sword is against you, and a lance of fire holds you at bay."*

*Thief: "Don't be afraid, O servant of the King! Your power established by the Lord is dissolved. I carried to you the cross as a sign. Look to see if it is genuine. Don't argue."*

*Cherub: "The cross of Jesus that you carried to me I do not even dare to look at it. It is truly terrible. You will no more be stopped. Come and enter into Eden since He wills it so."*

*Thief: "The cross of the Son has broken the barrier that He erected between us and you. The anger has passed, and peace is made, and the way to Eden is no more blocked."*

*Cherub: "The One Who was killed has sent you with His blood to ward me off, and to throw away the sword that I brandished."*

*Terrible is the sign that you have carried to me! No more do I persist. Come in, O heir!"*

*Thief: "The Resurrection has arrived for men, those that were expelled from their land. Cherubim and Watchers, rejoice with us that we have arrived in your city."*

*Cherub: "Great is the mercy that flowed for you O children of Adam that sinned and died. Enter, O thief, you are no longer blocked! The door is open for them to enter."*

*Thief: "Great is the mercy of my Lord since His pity has visited me and His love has willed it. O spiritual beings, rejoice with us that we have been mixed in with your assembly."*

*Cherub: "The point of the sword that I carried, the cross has turned away from your race. O expelled ones you have returned, don't be afraid! Come in with exultation into the Garden!"*

*Thief: "Glory in Eden that is reconciled, Peace on Earth that is liberated! Blessed be the cross because it has made me accepted, and has not excluded me from your ranks."*

*Cherub: "Thanks be to You, Lord of the universe that has accomplished the return of Adam who was expelled, and thanks to a thief who asked for pity: You opened the door that was locked."*

*Thief: "Thanks be to You, because by virtue of Your word the thief has entered into the Garden of Eden and Adam has good hope who returned to the place from which he left."*

*+Kurt Burnette*

THE BYZANTINE CATHOLIC EPARCHY OF PASSAIC subscribes to the

Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People

adopted by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. The Eparchy, within all its parishes, institutions and programs, is committed to assuring a safe environment in ministry for its children and young people that conforms to Charter requirements.

For further information regarding the Eparchial Safe Environment Program please contact:  
Father David J. Baratelli, Ed.S., M.Div. • Safe Environment Program Coordinator • 973.890.7777  
Dr. Maureen Daddona, Ph.D. • Eparchial Victim Advocate • 516.457.5684

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# PEOPLE YOU KNOW

## IN PASSAIC...

### *Cathedral Children Journey to Jerusalem*

The children of Saint Michael Cathedral, Passaic, recently enjoyed a virtual "Journey to Jerusalem" in a day-long catechetical gathering. Using Scripture, liturgical hymns, icons and a variety of liturgical items, Father Jack Custer, Rector of the cathedral, led them from Palm Sunday through Pascha. The children discovered how the liturgies of Holy Week take us back to the events of our salvation and how every Divine Liturgy connects us with Jesus' Cross and Resurrection.



*Father Jack Custer teaches the children about the antimimension*



*Father Jack Custer directs the reading of Scripture*



*Bishop Kurt prayerfully walks in the procession with the shroud on Market Street on Great and Holy Friday at Saint Michael Cathedral*

## IN MYRTLE BEACH...

Father Ihor Voronstov, pastor of Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church, White Plains, NY, celebrated Divine Liturgies for Flowery Sunday and Pascha 2017 at Blessed Basil Hopko Byzantine Catholic Mission in Conway, SC.

Father Ihor flew to the Myrtle Beach area each Sunday, after celebrating Liturgies for Flowery Sunday and Pascha at his home parish. Father blessed palms and willows and then on Pascha, Easter baskets. All of the parishioners of Blessed Basil Hopko Mission were extremely appreciative of Father Ihor's efforts.

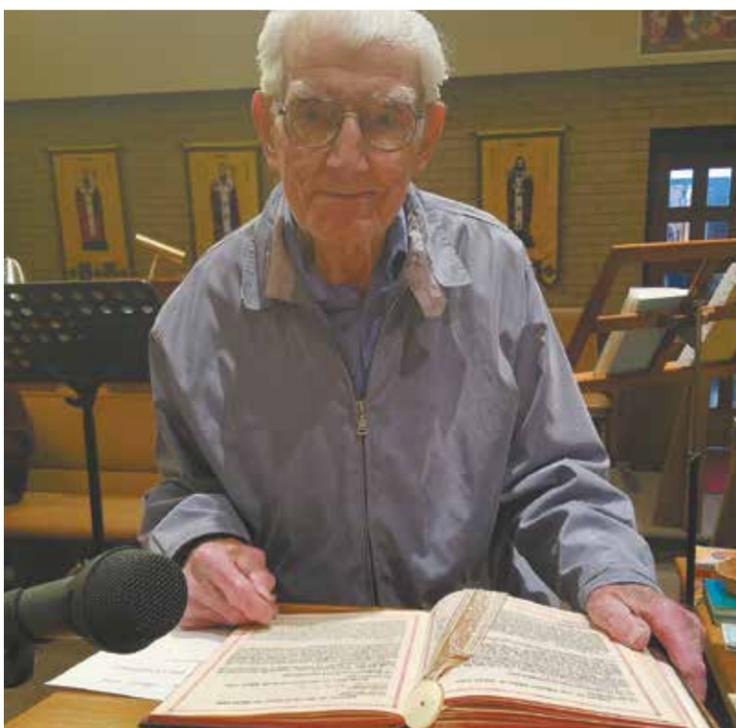
Also, on Tuesday, April 18, Father Conan Timoney celebrated Divine Liturgy at Blessed Basil Hopko Mission for the first time since his accident in 2016. He was assisted by Deacon Anthony Kotlar.



*Father Ihor blesses the palms and pussy willows on Flowery Sunday*

## IN TRUMBULL...

On the Fifth Wednesday of the Great Fast the Genesis reading is from chapter 17: 1-17. The first line reads when Abram was 99 years old.... At Saint John the Baptist, Trumbull, CT, the text was read by their beloved Cantor, George Kalinics, who coincidentally recently celebrated his 99th birthday!



*Cantor George Kalinics, 99 years old*



*Father Ihor blesses the baskets of paschal foods on the Feast of Feasts*

# AROUND THE EPARCHY



## IN HUNGARY...

Father Joseph Bertha in February made a visit to Mariapocs Monastery in Hungary and celebrated Divine Liturgy and met with Father Joseph Erdei and Father Basil Rakacky. Both Father Joseph and Father Basil served many years as priests in the Eparchy of Passaic.



L to R: Father Basil Rakaczky, Father Joseph Erdei, and Father Joseph Bertha



L to R: Father Joseph Erdei, Father Basil Rakaczky, and Father Joseph Bertha

## IN BELTSVILLE...

The parishioners of Saint Gregory of Nyssa in Beltsville, MD, had their annual pysanky making class on Sunday, March 26, in preparation for Pascha. Christine Kelleher and Betty and Dale Purich supplied the equipment and a video about the pysanky making process. Both young and old enjoyed this ancient craft. Father Lewis Rabayda is pastor of Saint Gregory Parish.

On Sunday, April 2, Nadia Kerechanin celebrated her first solemn confession. Mr. and Mrs. Charles Kerechanin were very proud of their youngest daughter's full participatoin in the life of the Church.



Handing on our traditions to the next generation



Catherine holding her egg



June removes some wax



The parish family of Saint Gregory of Nyssa



The pysanky created by the parishioners at the workshop!



Father Lewis Rabayda, Charles, Nadia, Gabriella, and Melani Kerechanin.

## 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 individualized 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](mailto:mci@archpitt.org) (412) 735-1676



## Let Your Soul Rejoice in the Lord

### 2017 Altar Server Congress

Aug 5th – Aug 9th 2017

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 Aug 5th

[http://www.eparchyofpassaic.com/altar\\_server\\_congress\\_2017](http://www.eparchyofpassaic.com/altar_server_congress_2017)

For questions and details contact Deacon Stephen Russo

[DcnStephen@gmail.com](mailto:DcnStephen@gmail.com)



## “HONORING OUR ANCESTORS”

SATURDAY, JUNE 3, 2017 AT 8:30 A.M. (REGISTRATION)

Place: Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church, 1900 Brooks Blvd, Hillsborough NJ 08844

St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church in Hillsborough, New Jersey, is pleased to announce that it is sponsoring a genealogy and history conference as a part of its centennial celebration!

Do you have ancestors who migrated from the Old Austro-Hungarian Empire? Want to know more about the people clothed in secrecy who came from the mountain regions of Eastern Europe? Are you not sure what to call yourselves when people ask, “What are you?” Do you say that you’re Slovak, Ukrainian, Polish, Austrian? Are you not sure what nationality your ancestors were? You may say that your ancestors came from the “old country”. Which one is that “old country”? This conference may be the answer to your prayers. Come learn how to begin doing your genealogy from experts. Come learn about your unique ancestry. Come and learn how to begin to search for your own personal history. This is one stop shopping. The price is eminently modest to attend. Just \$40 will get you some coffee and light refreshments and a light lunch as well as a potpourri of knowledge to share with the rest of your family. Join us for a fun day of learning. Bring your baptismal documents from the old country. We can assist you in translating them. Bring in copies of your family charts and show us where you have hit your brick wall. Maybe we can help you break through it. Write down what you know and what you wish to know. What great opportunities await! There will be time during breaks, after lunch, and after 3 p.m. to consult with us. Come celebrate your heritage, whatever it is. You will be among people who share your enthusiasm.

The speakers’ bios and a summary of their proposed lectures is attached. If you wish to attend, you must pre-register as seating will be very limited. Fill out the bottom portion of this sheet of paper and send it with your check in the required amount of \$40 per person to: Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church, 1900 Brooks Blvd, Hillsborough NJ 08844. Please register before and remember it is first come, first served. The seats will be filled quickly!

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

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

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ \* Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount Enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Number of people attending: \_\_\_\_\_

\*Needed to email an ancestor chart to you to complete and bring to the conference for help (if you wish).

Contact Info: Kathryn and Tom Peters: 908-253-8147

## 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 Fathers 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](http://www.EparchyofPassaic.com)



JUNE 19-22, 2017  
WASHINGTON RETREAT HOUSE  
WASHINGTON, DC



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THE ORIENTALE LUMEN FOUNDATION  
THE SOCIETY OF ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM  
EASTERN CHURCHES JOURNAL  
EASTERN CHRISTIAN PUBLICATIONS

Fairfax, Virginia – The theme for the Orientale Lumen XXI Conference on June 19-22, 2017 in Washington, DC will be "Chieti and Crete: Two Historical Events." Speakers and participants will discuss the Chieti Agreed Statement of September 2016 in which the Orthodox-Catholic International Dialogue agreed on the role of the Bishop of Rome during the First Millennium. The second topic will be the Great and Holy Council of the Orthodox Church held on Crete in June 2016 which produced, among other documents, a statement on the ecumenical relationship of the Orthodox Church with other Christian Churches. The conference is a "grass roots" ecumenical movement open to the public that includes laity, clergy, theologians and hierarchs from the Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Eastern Catholic and Oriental Orthodox Churches.

Speakers for this year will include:

- Archbishop Job of Telmessos  
Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, Chambesy, Switzerland  
Professor and Orthodox Co-Chair of the International Theological Dialogue
- Metropolitan Kallistos of Diokleia (by pre-recorded video)  
Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, Oxford, England
- Msgr. Paul McPartlan  
Carl J. Peter Professor of Systematic Theology and Ecumenism The Catholic University of America, Washington, DC
- Fr. Thomas FitzGerald  
Holy Cross Orthodox Theological Seminary, Boston, MA
- Fr. Hyacinthe Destivelle, OP  
Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, The Vatican
- Mr. Michael Haldas  
Author, Educator, Catechist, St. George Greek Orthodox Church, Bethesda, MD
- Father Ron Roberson, CSP (Moderator)  
Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs  
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington, DC

The agenda will include plenary lectures and panel discussions, a variety of prayer services, and opportunities for fellowship among all participants. The conference will begin Monday afternoon and conclude with lunch on Thursday. Early registration is due by May 1st with full registration in advance due by June 1st. Meals are included and overnight accommodations can be arranged through the conference office. Call 703-691-8862 or register online at <http://olfoundation.net/conferences/ol-xxi-june-19-22-2017/>.

SUNDAY AFTER-  
NOON  
DIVINE LITURGY  
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THE BAPTIST**

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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

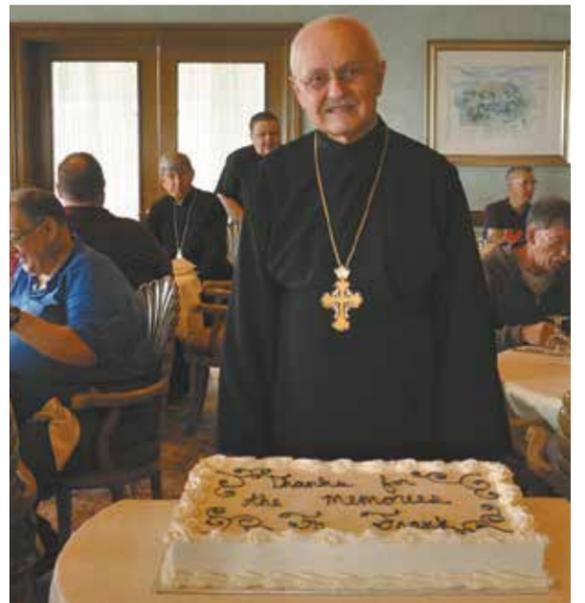
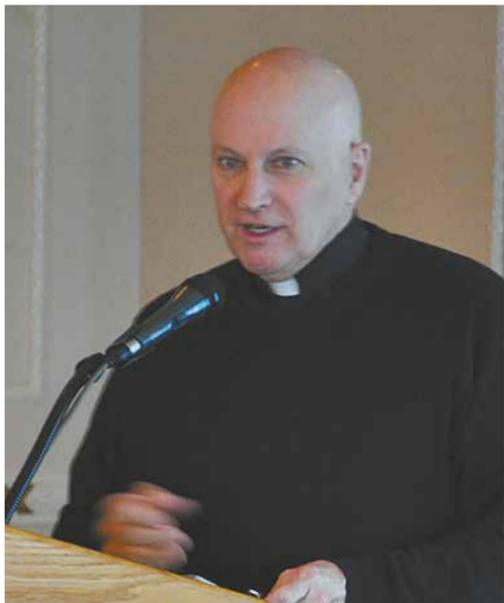
Father Marcel Szabo, Pastor, together with Byzantine Catholic clergy from Northern and Central New Jersey,

will provide a weekly schedule of service which will include:

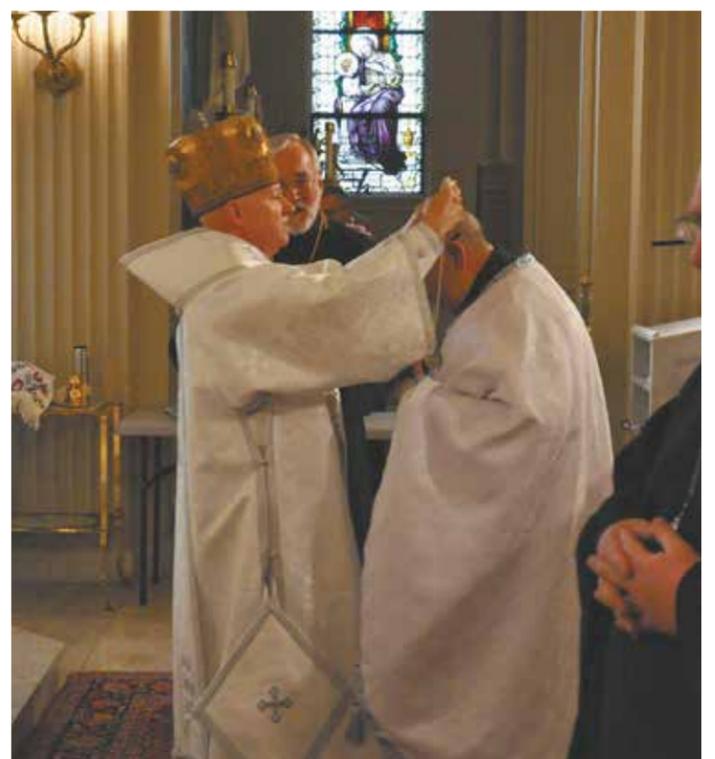
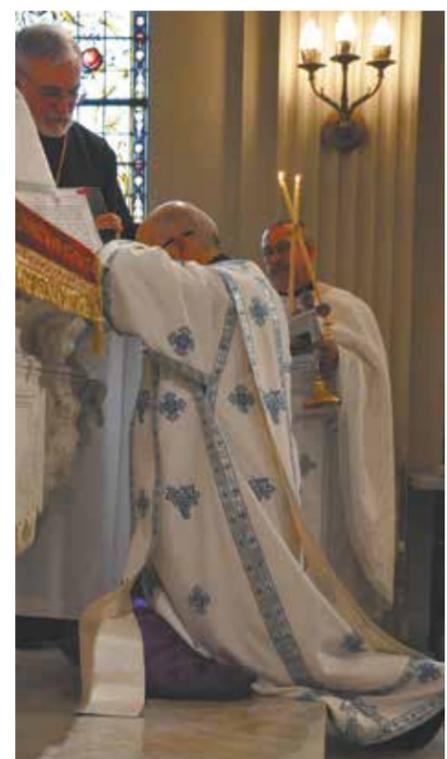
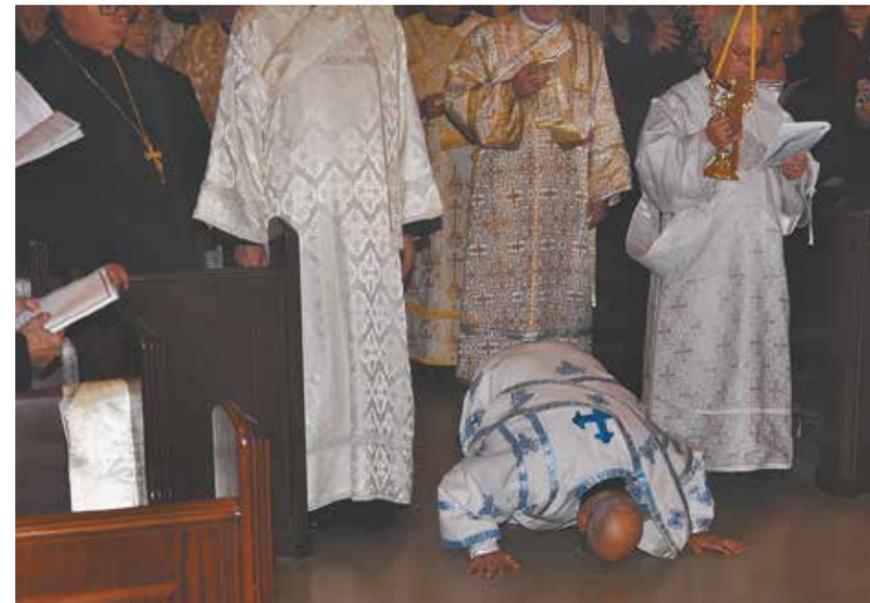
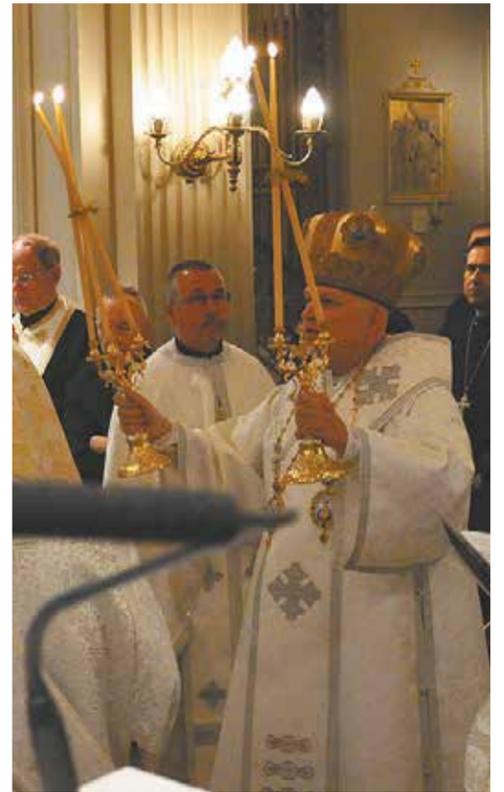
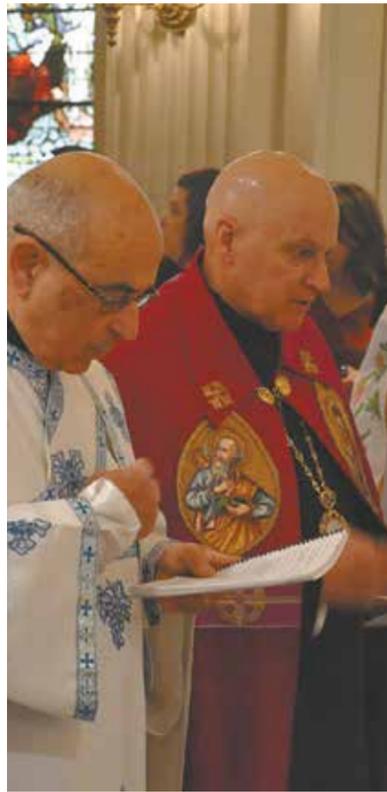
- The Holy Mystery of Reconciliation prior to services
- 3:30 PM - Prayer Service (Moleben) to Blessed Miriam Teresa
- 4:00 PM - Celebration of the Sunday Divine Liturgy.

**Saint John Church is  
the baptismal parish  
of Blessed Miriam Te-  
resa Demjanovich.**

# 2017 PRESBYTERAL DAYS AND THE ORDINATION OF P



# FATHER NICHOLAS DADDONA TO THE PRESBYTERATE





## FAITH AND COMMUNITY ISSUES

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

### FINDING GOD IN CREATION; FINDING JOY

Metropolitan Anthony Bloom and Marghanita Laski

The text "God and Man" (1971, Saint Vladimir's Seminary Press, Crestwood, New York) by Metropolitan Anthony Bloom addresses the concept of joy within the context of the encounter with God in the person of Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. Metropolitan Anthony's text offers the perspective of Christianity as a joy and a joyful way of life continually challenging the human person to the fullness of human potential within the creative activity of God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The outline of the text begins with a dialogue shared between Metropolitan Anthony and Marghanita Laski, an avowed atheist of Jewish background. The text is the dialogue reportedly aired on television. It appears to be an attempt to place issues at the very beginning, where faith meets unbelief, the place where the journey of the encounter with God begins.

#### *The Place where Belief and Unbelief Meet...*

The discussion in this first chapter between an Orthodox Metropolitan and an atheist of Jewish descent remains throughout the dialogue a rarified philosophical discussion. Considerations of life are seen through the lenses of meditation, music, medicine, family and/or religion. They are presented within the context of intellectual banter between two scholars without contention but with very definitive perspectives.

As the discussion develops there is an underlying salient point that emerges as the two intellectually banter about the concept of God and that point is experience. In "listening" to the dialogue between the two personages, there

arises a moment where Metropolitan Anthony experienced in his life, a moment of revelation, an experience of God that radically changed the Metropolitan's whole life purpose, understanding, vision, and direction. For Metropolitan Anthony, this encounter becomes the lens through which all of life is seen and interpreted as God reaching out to the creature Man. That touch brings about a metamorphosis in the relationship that the human creatures experiences within the contexts of God, neighbor, and self, where suddenly all things are seen in relationship one to another, the summit of which is found in the Divinity, the Creator Himself.

Marghanita however, proceeds to express life's experiences as a series of scientifically explained phenomena that occur as life's natural processes. There is a consistent denial of any experience or encounter with, or need for, any kind of Divinity - experientially or otherwise. For Marghanita, the experience suffices for itself; the concept of a God intervening into the life of the human creature is presented as superfluous and a means by which the non-self-sufficient individual seeks to use as a way to fill in the answers to the questions of life that arise in the face of daily lived experience.

For Marghanita, in the living experience, the concept of a God-meeting registers as superfluous. Personal meaning is derived from the persons themselves if any meaning is to be had. Beyond what can be scientifically verified there is nothing. So the possibility of having a God event in her life is virtually eliminated for there is no possibility of an opening in her experience or knowledge base of the existence of God be He

seen or unseen.

It was interesting to note that Marghanita's concluding remarks have her likening atheism to Protestantism specifically Puritanism (p. 29). Also interesting is the final statement of Marghanita which speaks of a deep dependence upon the language, ritual and the particular order or rite of religion as a means of helping the atheist develop vocabulary that adequately describes life experience lived in the here and now. Even in the midst of adamant atheism there is still the need to capture life experience on a level where mathematics alone fails.

One issue that can be gleaned from this dialogue is the restless desire of the human person to find rest, the *Shalom* that is Peace in its fullness. For the atheist, the music that is life is continually left with a discordant note that seeks resolution: that final tonic chord that brings the symphony to a close. Marghanita Laski has chosen to remain in the discordant as a consequence of the vagaries of existence, for Metropolitan Bloom, the place of resolution final, absolute and complete is found in the Presence of the Divine wherein *Shalom* Peace is encountered and the restless spirit can find a rest that does not disappoint.

In the next installment, Metropolitan Anthony's consideration of doubt in the life of the Christian will be examined as well as how to answer the questions of doubt in the light of God's surpassing gift of revelation through His Son, Jesus the Christ revealed through the Holy Spirit into our lives and how this activity brings about the realization of joy in the life of the believer.

**ECL**

## 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](mailto:holydormition@gmail.com) or call Father Jerome, OFM, at 570-788-1212 ext 402.



## LIFE, LOVE, AND THE HUMAN PERSON

By Ann M. Koshute, MTS

### WHEN RACHEL MOURNS, WE PRAY

I'm privileged to join occasionally my friend, Anne McGlone, on her weekly radio show, "Thy Will Be Done." Small, independent Catholic radio stations (like "In His Sign" near Philadelphia, from where Anne broadcasts) provide the faithful with nourishment, and seekers with a place to meet Christ. I'm overwhelmed by the power of the Holy Spirit whenever I join Anne as a guest or fill in for her as host. Prayer,

Liturgy and the Holy Mysteries are essential to connecting us to Christ in intimate, grace-filled ways. Proclaiming God's Word in simple language, through our lived experience, is important too, and this is why Catholic media has a vital role in evangelization and catechesis. For those working in Catholic TV, radio or the web, it's equally important to allow listeners and viewers to express how the Word is unfolding in

them, in their own words – and in their tears.

Prior to joining Anne on a recent show, we sketched a roadmap for our discussion: listening to God's word, and rejecting the contrary messages drawing us away from Him. During the second half of the show, however, something changed. Our plans gave way to talk of mercy, and Christ's desire to absorb our "wounds" into His own, to heal and transform us. As we

continued sharing with each other, Anne and I both sensed that speaking about sin, mercy and “unburdening” was what the Holy Spirit was calling us to, and we spoke with greater urgency. Anne turned the conversation to the Holy Mystery of Confession, and we extended an invitation to the listeners to go to confession – regardless of whether it’s been months or decades – and let Jesus absorb and heal their wounds.

A woman – I’ll call her “Rachel” – called the show and related that her close friend had had four abortions. The woman was wracked with guilt, fearful that God couldn’t possibly forgive such a grave sin – much less one committed multiple times. Through tears, Rachel said she’d been with her through it all, but that her friend felt hopeless. We prayed on-air for her friend at that moment. Anne and I were moved by this story, and we continued speaking of the power of God’s mercy, regardless of the sin. All that God requires is sorrow, trust, and the healing grace of the Mystery of Confession. No sin is greater than His overwhelming mercy. With that, we wrapped the show. About twenty minutes later Anne called me. As we were ending the show, Rachel called again and asked if she could come back on air. Rachel revealed to the screener that

it was she (not a friend) who had the abortions. She’d never admitted it to anyone, until that day. Rachel is now 73 years old.

We all have personal struggles, and the burdens we carry are sometimes heavier than we think we can manage. But Jesus is there to shoulder the burdens with us, to take up our wounds – our tears, our grief and our pain – into His, and to make us “new” (Revelation 21:4-5). Sometimes we experience these burdens so intensely that they feel like real weights on our shoulders, and we just can’t carry them. It’s in those times that we must reach out to each other – especially through the power of prayer. Too often our burdens are so heavy that we’re too weak, too stubborn, or too sad to hand them over to Jesus. These are the moments when we need others to cry out “Abba, Father!” for us (Romans 8:15). These are the moments when we need God’s mercy most – and we “feel it” least.

As I listened to Rachel tell her “friend’s” story, I had a sense that it might really be her story after all. Rachel had carried her burden (the loss of four children to abortion, and her guilt over it) for decades. Something moved Rachel’s heart and prompted her to call the show that day; Someone moved her, and it wasn’t Anne or me. When we

feel bound by burdens (by sins) and it seems like even Jesus can’t (or won’t) untie those ropes that squeeze the life and the hope from us – that’s precisely when we must take the chance and cry out to Him for help. And when our voice is unsteady and filled with trepidation and fear – as Rachel’s was – that’s precisely when we need help from others who can cry out to God with confidence for us. During a show on a small Catholic radio station, Anne and I had the opportunity to help Rachel bring her burden to Jesus. But we all meet “Rachel” every day: in friends and strangers, people carrying burdens we may never know. Jesus is waiting to receive their wounds, to shoulder their burdens. Maybe Jesus is waiting for YOU to be the voice crying to Him when theirs goes silent; to hold up “Rachel” and pray for His mercy to erase her fear and dry her tears. “In Ramah is heard the sound of sobbing, bitter weeping! Rachel mourns for her children [...] Thus says the LORD: Cease your cries of weeping, hold back your tears!” (Jeremiah 31:15,16)

“Thy Will Be Done” can be heard Fridays from 4-5 PM. Go to [www.inhissign.com](http://www.inhissign.com) to listen. If you or someone you know has had an abortion, hope and healing are available at <http://www.rachelsvineyard.org/>. **ECL**



## SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

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

### LET THE KING OF GLORY ENTER

The “standard” crucifix in Catholic homes carries the inscription INRI, the initials of the Latin *Iesus Nazarenus Rex Iudaeorum* (which actually was written in Latin on Jesus’ cross; John 19:19). If you’re fortunate enough to have a three-bar Byzantine-Slavonic model, the inscription will read IHJII: *Iisus Nazarjanin Car’ Judejskij*. Both mean: “Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews.” The traditions of iconography, however, prescribe a different inscription: “The King of Glory.” This title refers to Saint Paul’s claim that, if Jesus’ contemporaries had recognized God’s wisdom, “they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory” (1 Corinthians 2:8). The exact title, “King of Glory,” comes from Psalm 24, which is quoted again and again in the Church’s Liturgy for the feast of the Ascension.

The Septuagint, the Greek version of the Old Testament made by Jewish scholars several centuries before the birth of Jesus, is the Old Testament most often quoted in the New Testament, by the Fathers of our Church, and in our Liturgy. Often, minor differences between this Greek version and the Hebrew text (which was standardized several centuries after Christ) lead us to see the Gospel prefigured in surprising ways.

Psalm 24 (23 in the Greek numbering) is such a case. Verses 7-10 (as translated from the Greek by *The Orthodox Study Bible*) read: “Lift up the gates, O you rulers. And be lifted up, you everlasting doors. And the King of glory shall enter. Who is this King of glory? The Lord, strong and mighty. The Lord powerful in battle. Lift up the gates, O you rulers, and be lifted up, you everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall enter. Who is this King of glory? The Lord of Hosts. He is the King of glory.”

The Jewish translators into Greek made two

choices that help us see the Ascension in this Psalm. The Hebrew could also be read: “O gates, lift up your heads” and “everlasting doors” could also be understood as “ancient doors.” But if the doors are everlasting, they can only be found in one place: heaven, since no other place will last forever. And the Greek word for “rulers” can easily point to the angels, understood as commanders of a heavenly army.

The Psalm clearly reports a conversation. One voice calls for the gates to be opened. Another voice asks who wants to enter and who this “King of glory” might be. Throughout the liturgical hymns proper to Vespers and Matins for the Ascension, the conversation described by Psalm 24 is placed into the mouths of two groups of angels. The angels are rightfully amazed to see the Ascension into heaven of someone who is perfectly and completely human (as well as perfectly and completely God). No human had ever ascended into heaven before. No human body had ever participated in the Divine Life. And it isn’t just poetic imagination that allowed our hymnographers to put these words into the mouths of angels. St. Luke (Acts of the Apostles 1:10) describes the presence of angels at the Ascension.

Psalm 24:8 describes the King of glory as “powerful in battle.” What battle has Christ won? At the Last Supper, Jesus claimed victory over the hostile

“world” fueled by sin (John 16:33). St. John’s visions in the book of Revelation refer to Christ’s “victory” (5:5; 17:14). Similarly, St. Paul (Ephesians 4:8) quotes Psalm 68:18 and identifies Christ as the victorious conqueror described there: “When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive and gave gifts to men,” the Psalmist says. Paul connects this with the death, descent into Hades, resurrection and ascension of our Lord: “What does ‘he ascended’ mean except that he also descended into the lower regions of the earth? The one who descended is also the one who ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.” Who is conquered? Death (Revelation 20:14), as we sang for forty days of Pascha. What gift is given? We sang it again and again: “He granted life.” And so, the Epistle to the Hebrews (6:20) calls Christ our “forerunner” since He has taken our human nature, body and soul, to heaven and made a place for us there (John 14:1-4). **ECL**

## HOLY LAND PILGRIMAGE

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# UNDERSTANDING ICONS

Father Joseph Bertha, Ph.D.

## CHRIST PANTOCRATOR ICONS



Icon of the Hospitality of Abram

One of the most widely distributed icons of Our Lord Jesus Christ; the Pantocrator, is derived from the Hebrew/Aramaic term El Shaddai, and frequently translated into English as God Almighty. Byzantine iconographers employed this image of Jesus Christ as a representation of the Imperial Emperor clothed in royal garments. The portrayal of Our Lord was located in various areas of the church interior. At first, the Pantocrator icon was displayed in the conch of the apse in the sanctuary. Over time the image was lifted up into the apex of the interior central dome, the place where Christ the Pantocrator icons are traditionally positioned today.

### The First use of Pantocrator in Sacred Scripture

#### The Hebrew Names of God

Our Jewish ancestors claim seven names of God, three of which are mentioned at a pivotal moment in Genesis 17: 1-3 as Abram encounters the Lord and He makes a covenant with him. In a mere three verses, three different words are employed for God:

1. When Abram was ninety-nine years old, HASHEM; Appeared to Abram and said to him, I am, EL SHADDAI; Walk before Me and be perfect.
2. I will set My covenant between Me and you, and I will increase you most exceedingly.
3. Abram fell upon his face, and GOD Spoke with him saying, ...

#### 1. Lord Hashem YHWH: I am who am

Jews do not write or even dare pronounce the name of God out of strict reverence, respect and obedience to the second commandment: You shall not take the NAME of the Lord your God in vain. Instead they use a circumlocution in Hebrew; HASHEM, which means the Name. In the Hebrew Torah (Bible) commentaries, the authors employ this term. In English, Hashem is translated as YHWH or Jehovah.

HASHEM refers to the Tetragrammaton, the four-letter abbreviation of the Name of God: written by Jews in the Torah as YHWH, they omit writing the two vowels "a" and "e", out of respect for the mystery of the Holy Name. Iconographers imitate this reverence for the writing of the Name of Our Savior. This is the reason why in icons we see the Name: Jesus Christ abbreviated, and always inscribed in Greek as: IC XC.

In icons, the cruciform halo of Our Lord is inscribed with the Greek letters: ων; which

means: I am who am, the Greek translation of YHWH. When Jesus pronounces the great I AMs found in the gospel of Saint John, He is actually calling Himself as God. Unfortunately, this does not translate clearly into English translation. However, Our Lord's Jewish listeners would have immediately understood and made the connection.

#### 2. God El Shaddai: God Almighty

In the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Bible, the word used to translate El Shaddai is Παντοκράτωρ Pantocrator, God Almighty.

Interestingly in English Jewish commentaries on Genesis, El Shaddai is translated with many connotations:

- I am He in Whose Divinity there is sufficiency for every creature;
- I can provide every creature with its needs;
- I am the God who said to My world during creation enough! Had I not ordered Enough heaven and earth would have continued expanding until this day;
- And now regarding your uncircumcised state I declare; enough;
- God who is sufficient in granting His Mercies, and in Whose hand is sufficient power to give.

Jewish commentaries stress God's supplying man's deficiencies. In the case of Abraham, God is able to strengthen a newly circumcised 99-year-old man in order for him to father a child of the covenant, Isaac. Abraham is promised to be able to become a father of a multitude of nations, numerous as the stars in the night sky, or the sands at the seashore.

Particularly compelling is El Shaddai's designation as the provider of Mercies. When Pantocrator is understood in this manner, we can view God as personified as Abraham, who becomes the intercessor for the good remaining in Sodom and Gomorrah. Furthermore, we can see God's bestowal of mercy in Abraham's ultimate test of faith in the willingness to sacrifice his son of the covenant Isaac.

#### 3. God Elohim: a plural form meaning God (of Majesty)

When the Hebrew word Elohim is employed it is the only name of God associated with a creature. The God of Abraham signifies God's Theophany in the world. When a person such as Abraham demonstrates God's holiness, then he becomes an extension of God, and manifests His Presence on earth.

The Jewish commentary states that Abraham was unable to stand erect at this particular moment

while the Holy Spirit! (sic) was upon him, and so he literally fell prone to the ground., in deference to the Presence of God.

#### Establishment of the Covenant

The covenant of faith made with Abram is a significant event in the history of salvation. In the first three verses of Chapter 17 of Genesis, the name of God, utilizing three different Hebrew words. In the following chapter three angels visit to Abraham and Sara at the Oak of Mamre.

Hebrew commentaries translated into English, subtly reveal three names of God, and parallel the Names and attributes of the Holy Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This is further reinforced by the presence of three Holy Angels. The Triune Godhead makes a covenant with Abram, the Father of a multitude of nations.

There seem to be no iconographic illustrations of the first three verses of chapter 17 of Genesis. However, upon closer reflection, the thirteenth Italian Norman churches in Sicily depict Patriarch Abraham prostrate before the three angels.

In the Monreale Cathedral mosaic 12th century, Abraham clasps the foot of one of the three holy angels, while inviting them for a repast. Directly in front of them is the magnificent oak tree of Mamre, and an open portal.

In the Capella Palatina mosaic 12th century, Abraham is shown prone at the feet of the angelic procession. Then Abram is standing erect and serving the three holy visitors.

The Byzantine liturgical usage of this Genesis Scripture occurs at the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts on the fifth Wednesday of the Great Fast. The reading happens to coincide with the service of Saint Andrew of Crete Matins, including the numerous prostrations, celebrated on Thursday. Byzantines imitate the Holy Patriarch Abraham by prostrating themselves before God petitioning and interceding for the forgiveness of the sins of the multitude of nations.

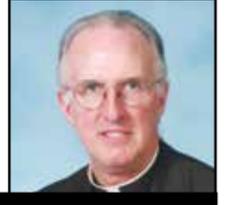
To be continued ... **ECL**



Icon of the Hospitality of Abram

# CATECHETICAL REFLECTIONS

Father Robert F. Slesinski, Ph.D.



## MAN BEFORE GOD

*Moments of Selfhood: The Subject of Rights and Freedom of Action—Installment 2/6*

The truth of the ultimate “incommunicability” of the human person ever remains a mystery for us to delve into, fathom, and ponder. Just reflecting on the essential “being-at-one-with-oneself” that marks our personhood renders us a veritable enigma to ourselves. True self-presence may even seem to overwhelm us; it bespeaks an autonomy of self that we might not even want to embrace. We do, after all, also know that we depend on other people for our existence and well-being. Indeed, there is no shame in accepting, nay, embracing our co-dependency on others. The inescapable reality of co-dependency is no less a truth about human existence.

But the selfhood of our personal existence ineluctably remains a primordial datum of our personal experience. It, indeed, willy-nilly exacts a claim on the disposition of others toward us. The very fact that we are irreducibly ends in ourselves, that is, persons of unimpeachable importance enjoying inherent value that puts us beyond objectification and instrumentalization at the hands of others entails that we cannot but expect the respect of others. Incommunicably our own, however low our station in life may be, we command the deference of others toward our person. The fact of our very dignity as human persons, for its part, cannot but entail that we are the subjects of rights. Our very persons command a venue, as it were, for freedom of expression and activity in accord with our personal being-in-the-world. Importantly, this is a truth graspable by us by

our natural reason alone. It may well be that our rights are ultimately sustainable, theologically speaking, only in view of a Provident Godhead, but this “supernatural” truth in no way lessens its graspability in the natural order as expressive of the “way things should be.”

This fact we find verifiable in the Bill of Rights of the American Constitution, the first amendment of which upholds the rights of freedom of religion, of speech, and of public assembly. The Declaration of the Rights of Man, expressive of the ideals of the French Revolution, even in its secular orientation, for its part, proclaims universality in import and outreach of the fundamental truth that all men and women are born free and enjoy equality in rights. More recently, the United Nation’s (1948) Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which bases itself on the inherent dignity and worth of human persons, proclaims four freedoms, those of speech and religion and those from fear and from want. Any violation of these rights only entails violence against persons, who should be free from all coercion not in tune with human self-worth.

The primary truth of our being-in-the-world and our consciousness of this fact, truly rendering us worthy of rights before others, for its part, grounds our active presence in the world. We enjoy the right to personal action in the world. One classic Scholastic maxim deftly captures this truth: *agere sequitur esse* (acting follows being).

The nature of our being indicates how we should act in the world. We are not intended to be passive spectators, but, indeed, active participants in shaping the world order around us. We truly are called to be the owners of our actions.

But the need to be responsible actors on the world stage elicits another classic definition of the person, one that links autonomous self-presence with rational activity. The ancient Christian philosopher Boethius proffered the following definition of the person: *Persona est substantia individualis naturae rationalis* (A person is an individual substance of a rational nature). Our unique individuality—our incommunicability—as persons reigns supreme, but our individuality at all times is subject to our rational nature. Rationality, in other words, is no less a mark of the human person. All human activity in the world should be in accord with reason and not tainted by the whimsicalness of irrational outburst or unfettered passion. OMG!, does something of a divine plan possibly insinuate itself here? Is not rationality evocative of a planned world order, that is, expressive of the mind of God? New light, accordingly, it can be opined, is shed on the opening words of St. John’s Gospel: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him and without him was not anything made that was made” (Jn 1:1-3). **ECL**



## SCHOOL OF PRAYER

Father G. Scott Boghossian

### THE PRAYER OF TOTAL CONSECRATION

To consecrate something is to set it apart for sacred use. Synonyms for “consecrate” are: commit, devote, offer, give over to, and surrender. Every follower of Christ must express his commitment or consecration by way of the prayer of total consecration. When we embrace the gospel message of Christ’s salvation, we do so with words and actions that express total consecration. When we fall into sin and then repent, we do so with words and actions that express a renewal of total consecration. When we embrace a new state in life, whether marriage or religious life, we do so with words and actions that reflect an attitude of unreserved consecration.

In the Old Testament book of Leviticus, God tells the Israelites, “Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy” (11:44). In the New Testament, the call to total consecration is found in Romans 12:1: “I appeal to you, therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.” We must give ourselves wholly over to Christ, because by his death and resurrection He has purchased us for Himself, and made us his own. “You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore, glorify God with your body” (I Cor. 6:19, 20).

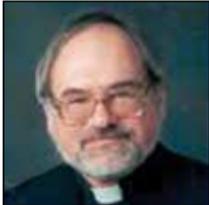
That our consecration to Christ must be total, and not only partial, is made clear by the call of Jesus, “Come, and follow me” (Mt. 4:19). “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me,” (Matt. 16:24). “Any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple” (Lk. 14:33).

We made this act of total consecration to God when we were baptized: we renounced the devil and all his works and all of his angels and all his pride and committed our lives to Christ. We intend to renew our total consecration whenever we receive forgiveness and absolution in the sacrament of Penance. In the Divine Liturgy and the Liturgy of the Hours we often respond, “To You, O Lord,” when the priest or deacon commemorates the Theotokos with all the saints and urges us all to “commit ourselves and one another, and our whole life, to Christ, our God.” Therefore, in some sense, we are making or renewing our total consecration to God at every stage of our life and whenever we gather to worship.

“These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me” (Is. 29:13). In the prophet Isaiah’s day, people were professing their total dedication to God outwardly but were not living

out this commitment sincerely from the heart. We have the same problem today. Let us firmly decide and resolve to belong entirely to God. A simple prayer, like, “Lord, I give myself wholly to You,” or “Jesus, I surrender my entire being to You, and promise to love and serve You for the rest of my life,” if truly meant from the heart, can turn our spiritual lives around. For a person who is not entirely committed, the Catholic life is at best a terrible drudgery. But the prayer of total consecration changes everything!

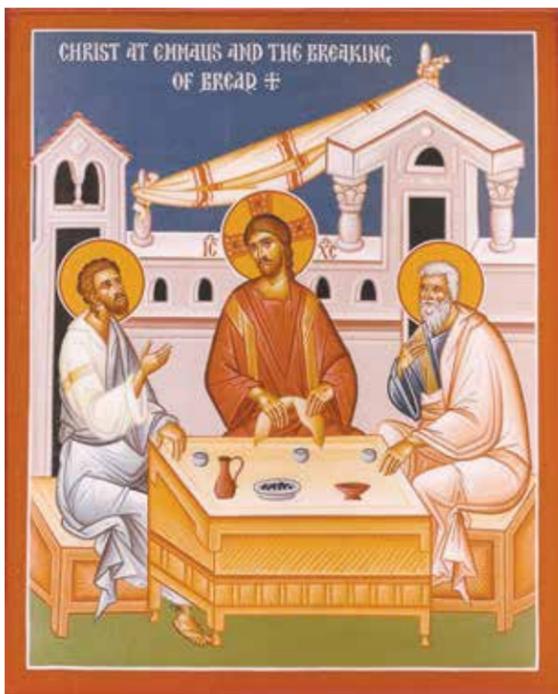
Once we sincerely surrender all to Jesus and give ourselves without reserve to Him, our Faith comes alive. When we pray the prayer of total consecration, the Holy Spirit begins to act on us in a new way. Many people attest that they attended the Sunday Divine Liturgy for years, but it was when they prayed the prayer of total consecration, that they truly encountered Christ. Even highly observant people who receive the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist every Sunday, and the sacrament of Penance every month, will testify that only when they sincerely prayed the prayer of total consecration, did the sacraments take on a perceptible and life changing power. Are you ready for a new life in Christ? Then pray the prayer of total consecration today. **ECL**



# THE BYZANTINE LITURGY

By Archpriest David Petras, SEOD

## THE REALITY OF THE RESURRECTION



Icon of the Road to Emmaus

We can make a basic statement - Christian faith is faith in the resurrection of Christ. St. Paul wrote about the resurrection shortly after it happened, and it had already become the foundation of our hope of life in Christ: "But if Christ is preached as raised from the dead, how can some among you say there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then neither has Christ been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then empty too is our preaching; empty, too, your faith" (1 Corinthians 15:12-14). Each of the four gospels confirms this foundation of faith. Today, some people say that the resurrection is too incredible to believe, but the gospel witnesses to its reality. It is our Creed, "I believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ ... he was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered and was buried. He rose on the third day according to the Scriptures." However, St. Paul testifies, within twenty years of the resurrection, when most witnesses were still alive, that "Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures; that he was buried; that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures; that he appeared to Cephas, then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at once, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep" (1 Corinthians 15:6).

We must understand the deep meaning of our Lord's resurrection. There are actually many stories of resurrection in revealed scripture: Elijah raises the widow's son (1 Kings 17:17-24); Elisha raises the son of the Shunammite woman (2 Kings 4:18-37); Paul raises Euthychus (Acts 20:7-12); Peter raises Tabitha (Acts 9:36-42); Jesus raises the daughter of Jairus (Matthew 9:18-26; Mark 5:21-43); the son of the widow in Nain (Luke 7:11-17); and his friend Lazarus (John 11:1-44). These resurrections, however, have one thing in common, they are ultimate healing, from beyond the point of death. The people are restored to life in this world. They must die again, and they have no word for us after their resurrection.

The resurrection of Jesus is different. All the other resurrections were radical healings. The people were sick and died from their sickness and were then revived. In the case of Jesus, he willingly gave up his life on the Cross, and then arose by divine power. After his resurrection, he did not return to an ordinary life among us, though the gospels make it quite clear that it was truly a bodily resurrection. He eats with his followers, Thomas is able to touch his wounds, he can be recognized, and seen and heard by the faithful. At the same time, he is not recognized by Mary Magdalene until he speaks, nor by the disciples on the road to Emmaus until he breaks bread with them. Seven disciples return to their occupation of fishing, and they do not recognize him on the shore of the Sea of Tiberius until he gives them a miraculous catch of fish. He tells Mary Magdalene, "Stop holding on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father" (John 20:17). He comes to be with his disciples even though the doors are locked. Jesus speaks to us in very clear words, "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. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age" (Matthew 28:19-20).

This, then, is not a radical healing, but a new way of life, the glorification of the human body that we hope for in the general resurrection. St. Paul teaches us about this resurrection, "But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first-

fruits of those who have fallen asleep (1 Corinthians 15:20) .... So also, is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown corruptible; it is raised incorruptible. It is sown dishonorable; it is raised glorious. It is sown weak; it is raised powerful. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual one" (1 Corinthians 15:42-44). Our Paschal celebration proclaims that this has already happened: "Christ is risen (in the present!) from the dead, by death he trampled death, and to those in the tombs he granted life."

The story of the disciples on the road to Emmaus is our key to understanding the resurrection. Their journey to the village of Emmaus becomes a Divine Liturgy. As they make their way, Jesus explains all the scriptures to them, "Oh, how foolish you are! How slow of heart to believe all that the prophets spoke! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them what referred to him in all the scriptures" (Luke 24:25-27). This corresponds to the Liturgy of the Word, in which we hear the Epistle and Gospel, and their explanation in the homily. As they sit at table in Emmaus, bread and wine are brought out for the meal, which corresponds to the Great Entrance of the Divine Liturgy, where bread and wine that are to become the Body and Blood of Christ are brought forth. Then Jesus takes these gifts, "And it happened that, while he was with them at table, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them. With that their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he vanished from their sight" (Luke 24:30-31). He vanishes, only because he has revealed to us that he is with us always, as he promised. This reality is present every time we celebrate the Divine Liturgy. The Lord is with us always (Matthew 28:20). We receive Holy Communion in the risen Body and Blood of Jesus, "for life everlasting." Our whole life is a journey to Emmaus.

**ECL**



# ASK A PRIEST A QUESTION

Father Vasyl Chepelskyy

## CHURCH'S INTERPRETATION OF PSALM 110:7

This article is a continuation from last month's question: How does the Church interpret Psalm 110:7 as stated: "He (the Lord) will drink from the brook by the wayside and therefore he will lift up his head."?

DJ  
The evocative image that concludes our Psalm fits in here; it is also an enigmatic word: "He

will drink from the brook by the way; therefore, he will lift up his head" (v. 7).

The king's figure stands out in the middle of the description of the battle. At a moment of respite and rest, he quenches his thirst at a stream, finding in it refreshment and fresh strength to continue on his triumphant way, holding his head high

as a sign of definitive victory. It is clear that these deeply enigmatic words were a challenge for the Fathers of the Church because of the different interpretations they could be given.

Thus, for example, Saint Augustine said: "this brook is the onward flow of the human being, of humanity, and Christ did not disdain to drink

of this brook, becoming man; and so it was that on entering the humanity of the human being He lifted up his head and is now the Head of the Mystical Body, He is our head, He is the definitive winner, for as a brook is gathered together by the rain, overflows, roars, runs, and by running runs down, that is, finishes its course; so is all this course of mortality. Men are born, they live, they die, and when some die others are born, and when they die others are born, they succeed, they flock together, they depart and will not remain. What is held fast here? What does not run? What is not on its way to the abyss as if it was gathered together from rain? For as a river suddenly drawn together from rain from the drops of showers runs into the sea, and is seen no more, nor was it seen before it was collected from the rain; so, this hidden rain is collected together from hidden sources, and flows on; at death, again it travels where it is hidden: this intermediate state sounds and passes away. Of this brook He drinks, He has not disdained to drink of this brook; for to drink of this brook was to Him to be born and to die. What this brook has, is birth and death; Christ assumed this, He was born, He died. Therefore has He lifted up His head; that is, because He was humble, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross: therefore

God also has highly exalted Him, and given Him a Name which is above every name; that at the Name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in Heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ the Lord is in the glory of God the Father" (cf. Philippians 2:8-11).

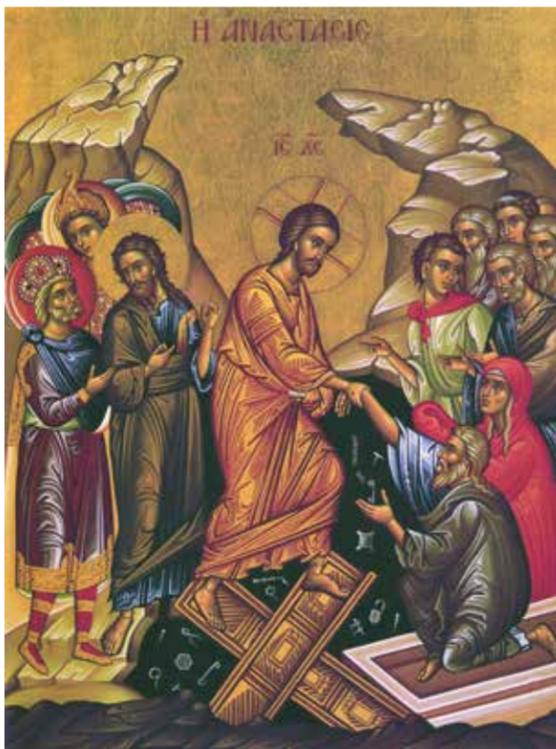
The Holy Father says: "The Fathers continued eminently to refer to it in a Christological key. The king of whom the Psalmist sang is definitively Christ, the Messiah who establishes the Kingdom of God and overcomes the powers of evil. He is the Word, begotten by the Father before every creature, before the dawn, the Son incarnate who died and rose and is seated in Heaven, the eternal priest who through the mystery of the bread and wine bestows forgiveness of sins and gives reconciliation with God, the king who lifts up his head, triumphing over death with his resurrection."

It would suffice to remember a passage, once again in Saint Augustine's commentary on this Psalm, where he writes: "It was necessary to know the Only-Begotten Son of God who was about to come among men, to adopt man and to become a man by taking on his nature; he died, rose and ascended into Heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father and fulfilled among the

people all that he had promised.... All this, therefore, had to be prophesied, it had to be foretold, to be pointed out as destined to come about, so that by coming unexpectedly it would not give rise to fear but by having been foretold, would then be accepted with faith, joy and expectation. This Psalm fits into the context of these promises. It prophesies our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in such reliable and explicit terms that we cannot have the slightest doubt that it is really Christ who is proclaimed in it.

"In praying with this Psalm let us therefore ask the Lord to enable us to proceed on his paths, in the following of Christ, the Messiah King, ready to climb with him the mount of the cross to attain glory with him, and to contemplate him seated at the right hand of the Father, a victorious king and a merciful priest who gives forgiveness and salvation to all men and women," concludes the Holy Father.

We encourage all the readers to ask any questions you have on subjects such as theology, spirituality, the sacraments, morality, church history, and the lives of the saints. Submit your questions to the email: [sjpastor@ptd.net](mailto:sjpastor@ptd.net), or on the wall or by private message at the Facebook page: [SaintJohntheBaptist-ByzantineCatholicChurch](https://www.facebook.com/SaintJohntheBaptist-ByzantineCatholicChurch). **ECL**



Icon of the Descent Into Hades

"You know the day destroys the night; Night divides the day. Tried to run; Tried to hide. Break on through to the other side." ("Break on Through (To The Other Side)" -Jim Morrison, et al, 1967) There are probably some who would take exception to me thinking about a song by the rock group, The Doors, for the Paschal Season, but these lyrics came to my mind as I reflected on the time after the feast of the Resurrection. The Day of Resurrection has destroyed the darkness of the night of sin, and "the people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined" (Isaiah 9:2, RSV, CE).

We have gone through the rigors of the Great Fast, with all the services. Holy Week can be an unending series of going to church, getting our baskets ready for Pascha (Oy! all the cooking and baking!), planning for family getting together around the Easter feast and, unfortunately for most of us, by the end of the Paschal Liturgy we are "churched out;" we just want to take it easy

## SEASONAL REFLECTIONS

Father Ronald Hatton



### BREAK ON THROUGH TO THE OTHER SIDE

for a while. (Faithful church-goers can see it in how the pews are filled for Palm Sunday and Pascha, and then everyone seems to disappear by Thomas Sunday.) I say it is unfortunate because the Church continues to offer so much for us during the Paschal season, but I liken our reaction to a golfer or a baseball player who swings but does not follow through on their swing. I am not a sportsman, but I know enough to know that if you don't follow through, there is no power or direction to your swing, and the result is futile. It is the same with our Faith and with the power of the Resurrection in our lives: it is not enough to go through all the externals that we place on this season; we must follow through, and break on through to the other side, as it were. This is what Jesus did with His death and resurrection: He suffered the Passion, the three-day burial, and then broke through the power of death and darkness, shattered the gates of Hades, rose from the grave and shed a new light on the world.

There are some theologians who see the death of Jesus as being all that was necessary for our salvation – "He died in our place, and now we do not have to pay the price for our sin." This leads such people to be able to spiritualize His rising from the dead. They stop at the cross, but don't follow through. "But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised; if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain" (1 Cor. 15:14). It was not enough for Christ to die on the cross; He had to "break on through to the other side." He had to rise to fulfill all things for us. So, we too have to realize that Easter is not the end of a season, but the beginning of new life for us. The day has destroyed the night, and as much as we

try to "run and hide" from the rest of the story, if we are true to our Faith, we have to now respond to what has happened.

In our icon of the "Harrowing of Hades," we see Christ trampling down the gates of Hades, and physically raising Adam and Eve, representing all of mankind, from Hades into the new life. This is what the Paschal season is all about: we who have been brought from death to life are now dead to sin and alive to Christ. Our former ways are over. We have new responsibilities, a new reason for living. The forty days of the Paschal Season are a celebration of the forty days that Christ appeared to the disciples and taught them, before His Ascension in to heaven (cf. Acts 1:3). If we are to "follow through," it is important that the days after Pascha be just as important as was the Fast, Holy Week, and the Feast itself. All that has gone before will be for nothing if we do not allow ourselves to be transformed into the new life offered to us in the resurrection of Christ.

On the Sunday of the Veneration of the Cross, we hear the words, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (Mark 8:34). Following Christ leads to the cross, but it leads past the cross, to the new life in the Resurrection! "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Galatians 2:20). In this Paschal season, we should resolve to follow through with our faith, to delve deeper into the mysteries we have witnessed, and break on through to the other side, to eternal life. **ECL**



# SEMINARIAN REFLECTIONS

Seminarian Paul Varchola West

## IN NEED OF A HUG

There are times when my nine-week-old son will become fussy and irritated for no apparent reason. He just ate, so that is not the issue. His diaper is fresh, so thankfully that is not the issue! Why on earth is he so fussy? In these moments, I will pick him up and quite often he will give a huge stretch, grunt, squirm and nestle into his favorite spot on my left shoulder. Within seconds he is fast asleep. He was tired and just needed rest and comfort...that was easy! We adults can learn quite a bit from the youngest of humans. My son knew what he needed and was communicating to his father for help. How many times do we become cranky and irritable, completely absorbed in our daily lives, so out of touch that we are absolutely unaware that we need to cry out for a loving embrace?

When I am holding my son, thoughts of all that I need to get done encircling my mind, I cannot help but recall a poem my mother

had hanging on the wall throughout my childhood.

*Cleaning and scrubbing can wait til tomorrow*

*for babies grow up we've learned to our sorrow*

*So quiet down cobwebs, dust go to sleep*

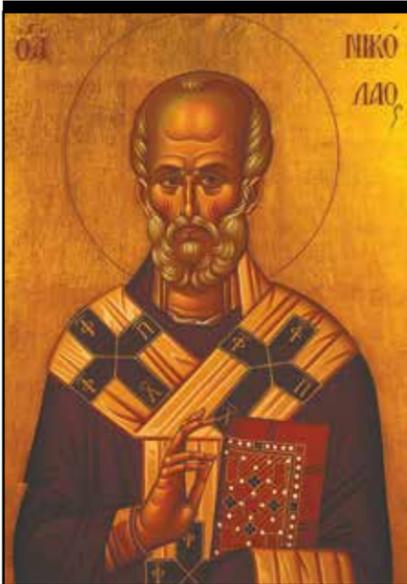
*I'm rocking my baby and babies don't keep*

I neither know who wrote this poem nor when it was written; however, I do know that it exists in the same place in my heart as the Our Father or Hail Mary. It is simply part of my being. Just as a parent reaches out to pick up a crying child, God is reaching out to His children in our moments of irritation and crankiness that He may soothe us. The question is, are we being receptive to God's willing comfort?

As part of the seminary forma-

tion program we are required to take several retreats throughout the year. Each time one of these retreats draws near, I find myself becoming increasingly agitated and irritable; just ask my wife! Finals are looming in the near distance, I have reading assignments, papers, Holy Week, a family function coming up, and two small children at home who are growing older each and every day. Do I really have time to go away for three days and pray? The result is inevitable and consistent: I arrive at the retreat, find that special place with God, and I realize how much I truly needed that time with Him. I find myself nestled in God's warm love, coming to the conclusion that I have not been enjoying the blessing He has bestowed upon me because I have been neglecting the loving embrace of the Heavenly Father. I was too absorbed with the work-a-day aspects of life to realize that my inner crankiness was really the cry of a child in need of a hug.

I urge each and every one of you to let the cobwebs sway in the afternoon breeze just one more day. Permit the dust to sleep in late next Saturday morning. Allow God to be not only a father, but THE Father. Afford Him the privilege of holding and rocking us in our spiritual infancy as we journey through this uncertain world. God is waiting with open arms, waiting for us to surrender to His love and cry out to Him for comfort and rest. As we grow daily in our spirituality, we can learn to find these moments with God while holding our children, in a morning cup of coffee, a phone call with an old friend or even a short, simple prayer said throughout the day. The trick is, we must allow God to enter these moments and pick us up, just as my helpless son allows me to do. Treasure being held by God in your helplessness, for, as I am all too quickly learning, babies don't keep. **ECL**



### Mark Your Calendars!

The Saint Nicholas Pilgrimage at Carpathian Village Cresco, PA is returning on **July 9, 2017**



The Altar Server Camp at Carpathian Village Cresco, PA, will be on **August 5-9, 2017** Boys ages 7-17 welcome! Apply at: [www.EparchyofPassaic.com](http://www.EparchyofPassaic.com)

## UPCOMING EPARCHIAL AND PARISH EVENTS

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### MAY

- 8-10 Eastern Regional Conference of Canonists  
*Hilton Meadowlands, East Rutherford, NJ  
Hosted by the Eparchy of Passaic*
- 10 Mid-Pentecost  
*Simple Holy Day*
- 25 Holy Ascension of Our Lord  
*Holy Day of Obligation \* Chancery closed*
- 29 Memorial Day  
*Chancery closed*

### JULY

- 9 Saint Nicholas Pilgrimage  
*at Carpathian Village, Cresco, PA*

### AUGUST

- 5-9 Altar Server Camp  
*at Carpathian Village, Cresco, PA*
- 6 Pilgrimage For Peace  
*at Holy Dormition Franciscan Friary*
- 12-13 Holy Dormition Pilgrimage  
*Sister Servants of Mary Immaculate,  
Sloatsburg, New York*