



# EASTERN CATHOLIC LIFE

Official Publication of the Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Passaic

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## LIVING ICONS OF CHRIST THE SERVANT Eparchy Hosts National Eastern Catholic Deacon Congress in Scranton

Staff Writer



“Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!” Psalm 133:1

From September 20-22, the Eparchy of Passaic was the host to the first ever Eastern Catholic Deacon Congress, sponsored by the Eastern Catholic Associates (ECA), the Eastern Catholic Bishops of the United States.

“This event was entirely unique in the history of our Churches in the United States,” said the event coordinator, Deacon Daniel Dozier. “With over 110 attendees and speakers, we had 14 jurisdictions represented here, from the Ruthenian, Ukrainian, Melkite, Romanian, Maronite, Syro-Malabar, and Roman traditions; all gathered together in support of renewing our diaconate in Christ according to the dimensions of word, worship, and charity. It was really an opportunity to come together across the country to pray, to fellowship, to learn, and to support our growth and fidelity to Christ and His Church through our shared ministry.”

*Living Icons of Christ the Servant: The Diaconate in the Eastern Catholic Churches* was the theme for the Congress, which took place at Saint Mary of the Assumption Byzantine Catholic Church in Scranton, PA, through the hospitality of its pastor, Father



Subdeacon John Harden gives his presentation

Lawrence Martin, SJ, and his staff, with Bishop Kurt speaking and in attendance at the entire event in his capacity as both the shepherd of the host eparchy and as the President of the ECA. Attendees at the Congress included deacons, deacons’ wives, minor clergy, deacon candidates, deacon directors, and those interested in a vocation, along with many spouses.

The origin of the idea for the Congress came out

of the Eparchy of Passaic’s Annual Deacon Retreat two years ago, led by Father Nicholas Daddona, the Chancellor of the Eparchy and the Director of Deacon Formation. The USCCB and the National Association of Deacon Directors were sponsoring a National



Subdeacon John Reed looks over presentation materials

Deacon Congress in New Orleans in the Summer of 2018 to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the restoration of the Permanent Diaconate in the United States. Father Daddona pointed out that there was really no representation of the Eastern Catholic Churches planned for this event, which led to a suggestion by several deacons that the Eastern Churches should host their own congress. Bishop Kurt, who was present for the discus-

sion, was very supportive of the idea, and appointed several deacons to help coordinate such an event. The Congress Coordinating Committee included: Deacons Nicholas Sotack, Robert Behrens, Elmer Pekarik, Stephen Russo, and Daniel Dozier. A formal proposal

flection.

Four main talks formed the structure of the Congress:

*Who Do you Say That I Am? The Deacon as the Icon of the New Evangelization* by Deacon Keith Fournier of the Diocese of Richmond with bi-ritual faculties from the Melkite Greek Catholic Eparchy of Newton.

*The Deacon as Servant of the Worship of God* by Protodeacon David Kennedy of the Ukrainian Eparchy of Toronto

*The Deacon as the Servant of the Word of God* by Deacon Daniel Dozier of the Eparchy of Passaic/Phoenix

*The Deacon as the Servant of the Charity of God* by Deacon Basil Balke of the Eparchy of Phoenix

Breakout sessions were offered following each of the main talks, and the topics included:

*Defend Us in Battle: Diabolical Activity, the Church and the Ministry of Deacons* by Deacon Dominic Cerrato, Editor of *Deacon Digest*.

*An Historical, Juridical and Pastoral overview of the*

*Role of Deacon—with special reference to the Syro-Malabar Church* by Father Jojo Kutikadan from the Eparchy of Irinjalakuda (Syro-Malabar)

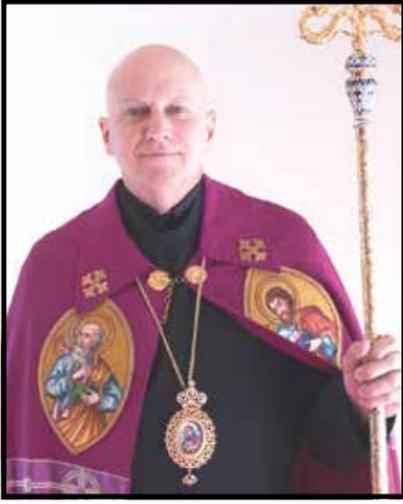
*How to Be Married to a Clergyman... and still remain a Christian!* by Dr. Maureen Daddona from the Eparchy of Passaic

*A New Evangelization Brainstorming Session* by Deacons Russo, Balke, and Dozier.

*How to Lead a Parish Bible Study* by Subdeacon John Harden of the Eparchy of Passaic.

All of the talks were recorded by Eastern Christian Publications and Orientale Lumen TV, and will soon be made available for viewing and purchase from their website. Pins and other commemorative items to celebrate the Congress will also be made available for sale from [www.easterngiftshop.com](http://www.easterngiftshop.com).

“In many respects, this congress was a true microcosm of the Church—a bishop, gathered with presbyters, deacons, minor clergy and the lay faithful—celebrating a renewed commitment to the *diakonia* of *continued on page...3*



# I LIFT UP MY EYES...

*Pastoral Reflections of Bishop Kurt*



## THE CARMELITE MARTYRS OF COMPIÈGNE

In 1787, the government of France was financially broke, to some extent from helping to finance the American Revolution. The finance minister attempted necessary reforms, but was stymied by special interests. It was recommended to King Louis XVI that he call a national assembly of the Estates General, a sort of three house parliament that had not met for 170 years. When the King called this assembly in 1789, France was perhaps the wealthiest, most stable, best educated, and most Catholic country in Europe. Who could have imagined that in the next few years, hundreds of thousands of French men, women, and children would be murdered by other Frenchmen; and that many of the faithful parish priests and even cloistered nuns would be executed in public, or killed in other humiliating ways. Who could have imagined that even the seven-day week would be abolished to wipe out three thousand years of the Sabbath, and two thousand years of witness to the Resurrection of Jesus Christ? Who could have imagined that the Cathedral of Notre Dame, which means Cathedral of Our Lady, would be the site of blasphemous mockeries of God and the Blessed Virgin?

The Estates General was a three-part national assembly divided into the First Estate, the Second Estate, and the Third Estate. Elections were held in spring of 1789. The First Estate in France was the clergy, showing their belief that God is higher than any earthly government. The Second Estate was the aristocracy. The Third Estate was everyone else, that is, the common people. The King was not part of the assembly of course, since it existed to assist him. When the Estates General met in 1789, there were 100,000 clergy in France, and they elected 303 delegates to the assembly. The Church owned 6% of the land in France at the time, but two thirds of the delegates were ordinary parish priests, not the abbots and bishops who collected the revenue from the lands. The Second Estate chose 282 delegates, about a third were nobility. The Third Estate was allowed 578 delegates. About half of these were educated lawyers, many were in trades, and 51 were wealthy landowners. The 578 delegates were far from being "common" people.

The assembly opened with great festivity and high hopes. As it turned out, the assembly was unable to reach any agreement on a way to help the debt problem of the national government. As we would say, it was "deadlocked" in relation to the King. The Third Estate wanted to talk about other things, and when they declared themselves a National Assembly, the King had them locked out on June 20. The National Assembly continued to meet on a tennis court, agreed not to disband until they had written a constitution for France, and when they were locked out of the tennis court, they assembled in the Church of Saint Louis. Most of the clergy joined the commoners, most of the aristocracy left, and the King found himself losing control of the government rapidly.

During the next year, the National Assembly, whose name changed several times, began to dismantle the institutional Church in France. All of the lands owned by the Church were confiscated, and all forms of religious order, monastic life, or religious community were outlawed. So much for liberty, equality, and fraternity! Ironically, in 1791, the Americans approved the Bill of Rights for the United States, and the First Amendment prohibits the Congress from interfering with freedom of religion. Did you know there were originally 12 articles in the Bill of Rights? The first one has never passed, but the second one passed recently. The second article prohibited Congress from giving itself a raise. A change in salary has to be effective for the next Congress. The article never passed, but in 1982 Gregory Watson, a 19-year-old sophomore at University of Texas wrote an essay for a class in which he claimed the amendment could still be ratified because it was not written with a sunset provision. The teaching assistant gave him a C on his paper. He protested his grade, and the professor, Sharon Waite, denied his appeal. Rather than accept his grade, he began a national campaign to have the amendment ratified, and it became the 27th amendment to our Constitution, 202 years, 7 months, and 10 days after it was proposed for ratification. In 2017, the University of Texas changed Mr. Watson's grade from a C to an A.

Returning to France in 1790, within a year of its inception, and after outlawing almost all forms of religious life and monasticism, the national assembly passed a law called the Civil Constitution of the Clergy in July of 1790, to reorganize the French clergy and episcopacy. The Constitution reorganized the dioceses of France to coincide with the new secular divisions of France called "departments," and provided for the election of bishops and priests. An archbishop suggested quite reasonably that the French Church should have a national council to decide these things, as the early Church did. Some of the reforms were good, but the most alarming part of the law was the requirement that new bishops take an oath of loyalty to the laws of France that surpassed the law of God and the Faith. Interestingly enough, one of the opponents of the Constitution was a French priest named Abbé Emmanuel Joseph Sieyès. Father Sieyès was one of the chief theorists of the Revolution. He wrote a famous pamphlet "What is the Third Estate?" that was found

ational to the Revolution. Recall that the Third Estate was 95% of the population of France, everyone but the clergy and the nobility. He begins with these words, "What is the Third Estate? Everything. What has it been until now in the political order? Nothing. What does it desire to be? To become at least something." The pamphlet was hugely influential, and argued convincingly that only the common people, who do all the work and pay all the taxes, have the right to determine the future constitution of the government of France.

Despite some of the good reforms in the Constitution of the Clergy, it was also an attack on the Catholicity of the Church, and an attack on the supremacy of God and conscience over the state. The new law was delayed by the King and many clergy waited to see how the Pope would judge the oath, but by November of 1790, the National Assembly required all clergy to sign an oath supporting the law. The following January about half of the clergy in France took the oath including seven bishops. The following March, the Pope ruled that the oath was unconscionable, and the clergy of France were now severely divided. The ones who took the oath were called "jurors" and the ones who refused were called "non-jurors." As the government began to punish the non-juror bishops and priests, a much deeper division began in the French Church. The government, who now owned the churches and paid the salaries, denied non-juror priests the right to say Mass in churches. On the other hand, the pious lay people, especially in the countryside, which was most of the people of France at the time, did not respect the juror priests and refused to allow them to function. The revolutionary government began to find itself at war with the people of France outside of Paris. The pious people in the countryside were distressed to see the more devout priests forbidden to function, not to mention the nuns and other religious turned out of their houses and unable to even feed themselves.

On January 21, 1793, the revolutionary government executed King Louis XVI and the deluge began. One of the eyewitness accounts of the execution is given by a Catholic priest named Henry Essex Edgeworth who heard the king's confession and accompanied him to his execution. There was a scuffle when the executioners attempted to tie up the king. After a standoff, the priest told the king that Jesus

allowed himself to be tied up. After this advice, the king allowed himself to be tied up. He made a short speech in which he asked God not to hold his blood against the French nation. After the execution of the king, the worst killings began, both massacres around France, and the acceleration of executions mainly in Paris.

One of the most frightening men of the Revolution was Maximilien Robespierre. A very intelligent and articulate lawyer from Arras near Belgium, he was a man of such strict principles that the people called him "the Incorruptible." He favored the poor, opposed slavery, and believed that everyone should have the right to vote. He left his prestigious job as a prosecutor because he was opposed to the death penalty. Isn't it ironic that the most principled people seem to become the most bloodthirsty when they get into power? Although he

### The Carmelites continued to live their communal life of poverty, chastity, and obedience after it had been outlawed in 1792

vigorously opposed the death penalty until 1793, he was the most forceful, eloquent, and fanatical advocate for the execution of the King. As the workers and poor people of Paris took control of the Revolution, they favored Robespierre because it was well known that he never accepted bribes and had no desire to get rich. After the execution of the King, the Revolutionaries began executing most of the people in the jails and prisons. They did conduct trials with lawyers and juries. Under the leadership of Robespierre, the more moderate members of the assembly were executed, leaving only the most radical. George Danton, who first promoted Robespierre, was one of those moderates who was executed. On February 5, 1794, Robespierre wrote, "If virtue be the spring of a popular government in times of peace, the spring of that government during a revolution is virtue combined with terror: virtue, without which terror is destructive; terror, without which virtue is impotent. Terror is only justice prompt, severe and inflexible." And so, the red horse of slaughter and the pale horse of death from the Apocalypse entered the French Revolution. On June 4, 1794, a law was passed allowing the execution of those accused after a very short trial. Only the accusation and the words of the accused were heard. There was no defense attorney and no evidence and no witnesses. The true Reign of Terror is dated from this law on June 4. The number of executions each day doubled. When someone asked the executioner why he always had the correct number of carriages ready he said that the prosecutor told him the night before.

Meanwhile out in the countryside, there was much opposition to the de-Christianization of France and the mistreatment of the faithful priests and nuns. In the northwest of France, the people rose up. In the city of Nantes, the execution of all prisoners was ordered, beginning with the priests. Special boats were made with trapdoors, and there were mass executions carried out by dropping prisoners into the river. On



*Holy Annunciation Monastery Chapel of the Byzantine Carmelite Nuns of Sugarloaf, PA*

November 16, 1793, the first ninety priests were dropped into the freezing river. Three survived and were revived by nearby sailors with booze and blankets. They were retaken and killed with the next group the following night. That night 58 priests were stripped naked and drowned using a specially designed barge with no survivors. Historians disagree with the total number of executions in the Nantes drownings, from 1,800 to 9,000 victims. When the Revolutionary government ordered the people of the region to conscript 300,000 men as soldiers, many of these men instead formed their own army called the Catholic Army. They later renamed it the Royal Catholic Army. Their symbol was a Sacred Heart with the slogan "God and King." The Parisian government swiftly responded with their own army, better equipped and trained. The uprising was suppressed, and the revolutionary forces were ordered to kill everyone: men, women, and children. Women were especially targeted because they would "give birth to counterrevolutionaries."

In Paris, Robespierre was presiding over blasphemous religious ceremonies insulting to the Christian faith, but in another part of France, a community of cloistered Carmelite nuns was clinging to their faith. Although they were outlawed and expelled from their convent, although they had to petition the government for money to purchase secular clothing, the Carmel of Compiègne, under the courageous leadership of Mother Teresa of Saint Augustine, was continuing their community life, and doing something even more remarkable. Each day they consecrated themselves with an "act of holocaust." They offered themselves as sacrifices to God to save France. The act of holocaust began in 1792 when the community was outlawed, and the faithful Carmelites made the consecration every

day from then on. Mother Teresa of Saint Augustine even wrote a Christmas carol for her community for the Christmas of 1792 or perhaps for 1793, their last Christmas. One of the verses is:

*O Infant God, nothing else can fill my desire,  
Yes, nothing else can fill my heart!  
It's done then, from now on I belong to You.  
And of Your love, I've now become a part.  
Heal my criminal soul of its shameful sin,  
Wound my heart, with pain or love's delight,  
Let wounds divine, wounds for my soul most gainful,  
Martyr my heart to suffer day and night!*

It is not the usual kind of Christmas carol. As you can see, she is praying for martyrdom while singing about the Christ Child.

Eventually on June 22, 1794, 16 of the Carmelites were arrested by the Revolutionary government, 11 professed nuns, three sisters, and two externs. They were surprised to find in their place of confinement 17 Benedictine nuns as well. These nuns belonged to an English community of Benedictines in northern France which was founded by the granddaughter of Saint Thomas More when the abbeys were outlawed in England. They had been arrested as foreigners. These Benedictine nuns learned that the Carmelites were making a daily consecration as holocausts before God to restore peace in France and stop the executions, and considered them saints. The Reign of Terror was in full force in Paris, and the Carmelite nuns were transported in open carts to Paris on July 12. Confined in a place called the Conciergerie, they were placed on trial on July 17 as enemies of the people. Indeed, the Revolutionary Surveillance Committee had discovered letters proving that the Carmelites had continued to live their communal life of

poverty, chastity, and obedience after it had been outlawed in 1792. To quote from the trial documents, "For a long time now we have suspected that the former Carmelite nuns of this city, though lodged in different houses, were still living as a community and following the rules of their former convent. Our suspicions were not in vain." At the trial, the prosecutor accused the nuns of hiding weapons in their lodgings. The only one to answer during the trial was Mother Teresa of Saint Augustine, and she pulled a crucifix out of her bosom and announced, "The only weapon we've ever had in our convent is this."

The nuns spent their last night singing hymns and the next day were tried as enemies of the people with a total of 54 prisoners. Of the 54, 39 were tried in the Courtroom of Freedom and 19 in the Courtroom of Equality. In all, forty were condemned as enemies of the people, including the 16 Carmelites. Remarkably, the nuns were forced out of their convent on September 14, the Feast of the Holy Cross, and were formally arraigned on July 16, the Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel.

The journey from the courtroom to the gallows by cart was about two hours in the crowded streets. According to witnesses the Carmelites sang hymns on the journey including the *Veni Creator Spiritus* (Come Spirit Creator) and also the Penitential Psalm 50, "Have mercy on me O God in the greatness of your love, in the abundance of your tender mercies blot out my offense." When they arrived at the place of execution, the nuns renewed their monastic vows together at the foot of the stairs. Part of the humiliation at the execution was when the executioner ripped away clothing and cut the hair to expose the neck. Mother Teresa had seen to it that all the nuns already had their collars and hair clipped so that they

were saved this last humiliation. Then the first nun began to climb the stairs and began to sing a hymn, the *Salve Regina*. The other nuns began to sing with her. And so all sixteen nuns were singing, and all continued to sing as each one ascended the stairs, was strapped to the board, and guillotined. The singing continued until the last one was stopped by the guillotine.

The nuns offered themselves as a holocaust for the peace of France and an end to the killing. Did God accept their sacrifice? Ten days later, which is one revolutionary week, Maximilien Robespierre was condemned by his radical friends, and the following day, the Reign of Terror ended with the execution of Robespierre. He was not singing when he was executed. He attempted suicide the night before during arrest, shooting off part of his jaw. At the guillotine, the executioner ripped off the bandage covering his jaw and, according to witnesses, he howled with pain till the blade fell.

*"Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain?  
The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together,  
Against the Lord and against his Christ, saying,  
Let us burst our bonds asunder, and cast their cords from us.  
He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord has them in derision...  
He said to me, You are my Son, today I have begotten you.  
Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession...  
Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth.  
Serve the Lord with fear, with trembling rejoice." -Psalm 2*

+Kurt Burnette

## DEACON CONGRESS

Continued from page 1

the Body of Christ," said Deacon Dozier. "Our hope is that the witness of the Diaconate continues to be strengthened and translates into the growth in mission and life for our Churches here in the United States."

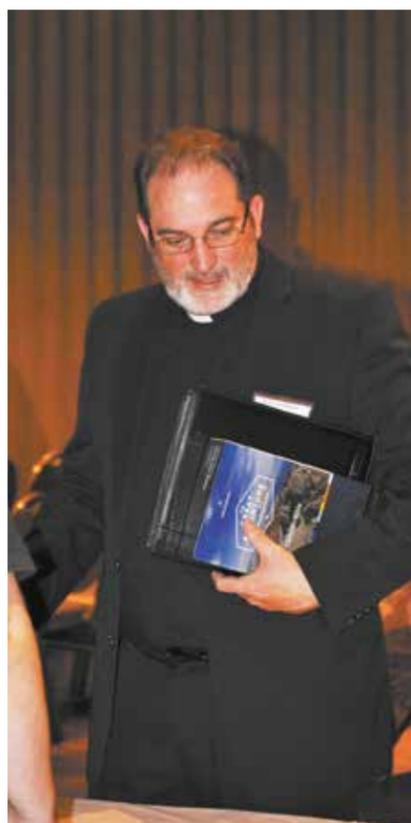
"Being a Deacon is not just about serving, it is about inspiring and equipping others to be servants themselves and faithfully use their charisms."



The deacons intently listen to the presentation



Deacon Basil Balke



Deacon Daniel Dozier



Father Nicholas Daddona



# PEOPLE YOU KNOW

## IN BALTIMORE...

*Parish Celebrates Patronal Feast Day*

Members of Patronage Byzantine Catholic Church, while celebrating the patronal feast of their parish, Protection (or Patronage) of the Theotokos, visited the graves of deceased members of Patronage Parish whose graves are in Holy Trinity Russian Orthodox Cemetery near Patronage Church. Father Conan Timoney is the pastor of Patronage Parish.



### Blessing of Pets

On Sunday, October 7, a blessing of pets celebration was held in honor of Saint Francis at Patronage Byzantine Catholic Parish in Baltimore, where Father Conan Timoney is pastor.



## IN CARTERET...

*Kolachi Sale at Street Fair*

The Women's Organization of Saint Elias Byzantine Catholic Church in Carteret, NJ, held a kolachi sale at the Saint James Street Fair in Woodbridge, NJ, on September 15, 2018, to help offset the cost of two new boilers needed for the church and rectory.

Father Edward Semko, priest-in-residence, offered encouragement to the women as they rolled the cookies. The women rolled, filled, baked, and sold the results of their hard work. After many weekends of work, they realized a profit of over \$3,000.00. Father Jack Custer, Administrator of Saint Elias Parish, also thanked the women for their dedication and continued support of their church.



### 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. • *Victim's Assistance Coordinator* • 516.623.6456

# AROUND THE EPARCHY



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

A Byzantine Catholic community is forming at Saint Philip Neri Church, 292 Munn Rd., Fort Mill, SC. Please join us as we grow our community and celebrate the Byzantine Divine Liturgy. Father Steven Galuschik of All Saints Byzantine Catholic Church in North Fort Myers, FL, celebrated Liturgy at the end of October and is now offering weekly Divine Liturgy in the area. This community will serve the northern part of South Carolina as well as Charlotte, NC. Please share this information with your friends and family – especially those who have moved “down South.” We will be celebrating the Byzantine Divine Liturgy on Saturdays at 4 PM. If you would like to participate in any way, or have questions please contact Ron Somich at 440.477.6389 or ron.somich@gmail.com. The website <https://carolinabyzantine.com/> will be coming soon – please check that out for news, upcoming gatherings, and service times.

**Divine Liturgy on Saturdays at 4 PM: November 3, 10, 17, 24**

## IN HILLSBOROUGH...

Parish Teen Performs at Saint Peter's Basilica



Savanna Bezick, 16, and 70 members of the Princeton Girl Choir, traveled to Italy this past summer. One of the highlights of the tour was singing at a Mass at Saint Peter's Basilica at the Vatican. In addition to her singing voice, she also excels as a flautist, playing first chair in her high school wind ensemble. Savanna is also an assistant cantor and leads the singing at one of the weekend Divine Liturgies at Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church in Hillsborough, NJ, where Father James Badeaux is pastor.

## IN WILLIAMSBURG...

First Ascension Scholarship Awarded

The Ascension of Our Lord Byzantine Catholic Men's Club announced its First Annual Saint Joseph's Scholarship in June of 2018. This year's scholars were Morgan Kelly and Matthew Montgomery. Each scholar was awarded \$1,000.00 towards her and his tuition. Morgan is a student at The University of Delaware, and Matthew is attending New Horizons School in Hampton, VA.

Applicants for scholarship must be members in good standing of Ascension of Our Lord Church, be between the ages of 18 and 25, and maintain a grade point average of 2.5 or greater. The awards are based on scholarship, references, and service to the church, and applicants must be registered in an accredited college, university, or trade school.

The scholarships were funded by contributions from: The Men's Club, The Women's Guild, The Youth Club, and other private donations.

The amount of the awards depends upon funds available in the scholarship fund and the number of qualified applicants.



Matthew Montgomery, Father Alex Shuter, and Morgan Kelly



## Quilt for Chance in Williamsburg

Over twenty ladies of the Ascension of Our Lord Quilting Bee, "I Don't Give A Stitch," donated their time and talent in making a magnificent queen-sized quilt as a fundraiser. This project took over 300 hours in a labor of love for the parish. Tickets are limited and are a cost of \$10.00 per ticket. The drawing will be held 12/1/18 and the winner will be contacted by phone.

Tickets are on sale now and may be purchased through the church website: [ascensionva.org](http://ascensionva.org)

Please include your phone number and email address. A minimum of two tickets

may be purchased through the website. Tickets may also be purchased by check by filling out the order form below:

Cut out and mail:

### Ascension Quilt Raffle

Name & Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number:email: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Tickets: \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$10.00

Make checks payable to: Ascension of Our Lord

Mail to:

Ascension of Our Lord Byzantine Catholic Church,  
114 Palace Lane, Williamsburg, VA 23185

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# ROSWELL CELEBRATES 41 YEARS AT ANNUAL FOUNDER'S DAY PICNIC

By Carol Evancho, Photos by Hanna Grace Fuchko

Sunday, October 7, was a marvelous and sunny autumn day in Roswell, GA, where, along with clergy and guests from neighboring churches, the members of Epiphany of Our Lord Byzantine Catholic Church celebrated its 41st anniversary. The observance also marked the official parish welcome to Father Lewis M. Rabayda, who was appointed resident and full-time parochial administrator in June of this year. Liturgical celebrations began the day with the Divine Liturgy and a Panachida for deceased founders. After Liturgy, the parishioners processed with the festal icon to the newly renovated rectory and classrooms, which were formally blessed, and then to the picnic area. An

launched the beginning of the first Ruthenian Byzantine Catholic parish in Georgia. +Bishop Michael, of blessed memory, placed the new mission under the patronage of Saint John the Forerunner and dedicated it as Epiphany of Our Lord Byzantine Catholic Church. Following in the footsteps and architectural heritage of our forefathers, a 12-acre site was selected in suburban Roswell for the new church, a unique and traditional Carpatho-Rusyn tripartite wooden style edifice. Fathers Paul Berny and Nick Novario, bi-ritual priests with the Archdiocese of Atlanta, served the mission parish until Father Robert Evancho, was assigned as the first Byzantine Catholic administrator. Father Robert served until



all-American picnic lunch of burgers and hot dogs was served, complete with a variety of traditional side dishes and desserts brought by parishioners. It was a fun time for the children and young-at-heart who enjoyed volleyball, badminton, and corn

1980, when Father Philip Scott was appointed to serve the growing parish until June of 2016, when illness forced him to take a temporary leave and Deacon James Smith was appointed by Bishop Kurt as parish administrator. From August, 2016,



hole games on the front lawn of the parish grounds. Younger children were especially delighted as they were treated with an afternoon of balloon animals and face-painting. At the close of the picnic, the festal icon was carried in procession back to the church for the celebration of a Moleben for vocations and for holiness within the church.

until February, 2017, Father Steven Galschik of All Saints Byzantine Catholic Church in North Fort Myers, FL, traveled to Atlanta each weekend to celebrate Divine Liturgy for the parish. Father Philip returned to part-time service to the parish until June, 2018, when Father Lewis Rabayda was assigned to serve the Roswell parish. Under the guidance of Father Lewis, numerous spiritual and physical changes have had a profound impact on the parish. In addition to Sunday Divine Liturgy, the schedule of Divine Services now includes weekday liturgy, Great Vespers for days of

It was in October, 1977, that a group of 50 Byzantine Catholics from metro Atlanta and North Georgia gathered for a celebration of the Divine Liturgy at Holy Cross Roman Catholic Church. That bright day



precept and solemnities, with Molebens, Akathists, and Healing Services also being celebrated. The Eastern Christian Formation and Adult Education programs have been revamped, and the number of children under the age of 12 in "Sunday School" has grown significantly to 25. Father Lewis also plans to start in the near future prayer and

the Ruthenian, Ukrainian, Melkite, Maronite, Chaldean, Syro-Malabar, Armenian, Roman Catholic, and other faith traditions. Epiphany has also served as the first place of worship for both the Coptic and Armenian Orthodox Churches until they were formally established in their own locations.



study groups for men and women, as well as to develop outreach to the local community and to build relationships with the other Eastern and Roman rite parishes within the territory of the Archdiocese of Atlanta.

Throughout its history, Epiphany of Our Lord has continued to grow, remaining constant and faithful to its Byzantine tradition and heritage. The diversity and universality of the Catholic Church is reflected in the many families of Epiphany who represent

Now under the spiritual direction of Father Lewis, assisted by Father Deacons Michael Tisma and James Smith, as well as Subdeacon John Reed, Epiphany of Our Lord continues to welcome all who seek to grow in faith and service to Jesus Christ, the Lover of Mankind, in the fullness of the Eastern Christian traditions.



## BISHOP'S ANNUAL APPEAL 2018

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 Florida!*

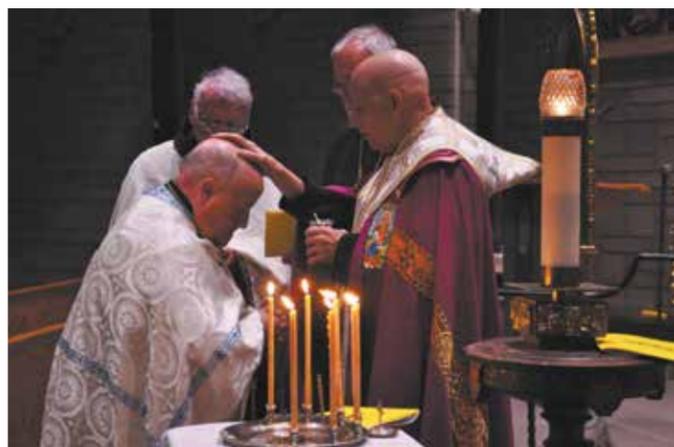
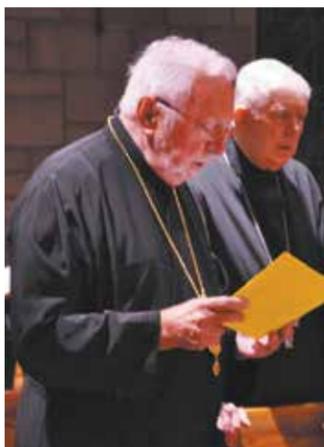
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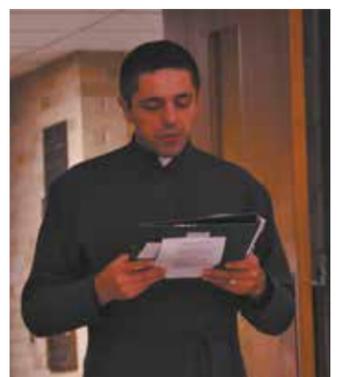
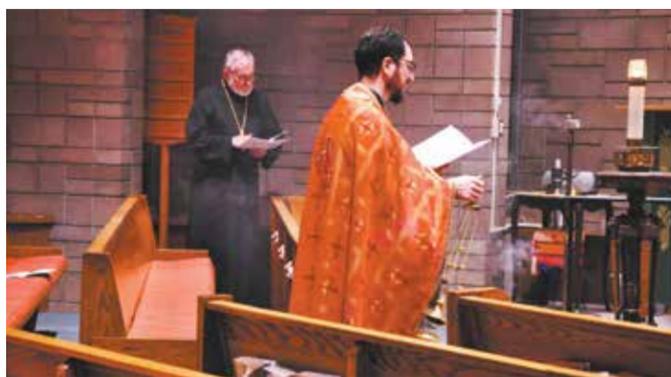
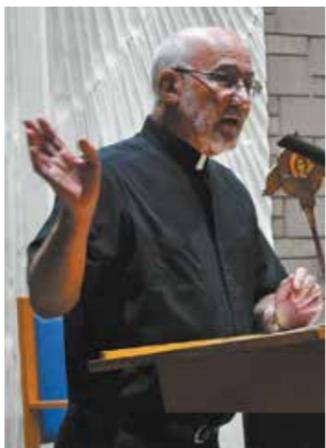
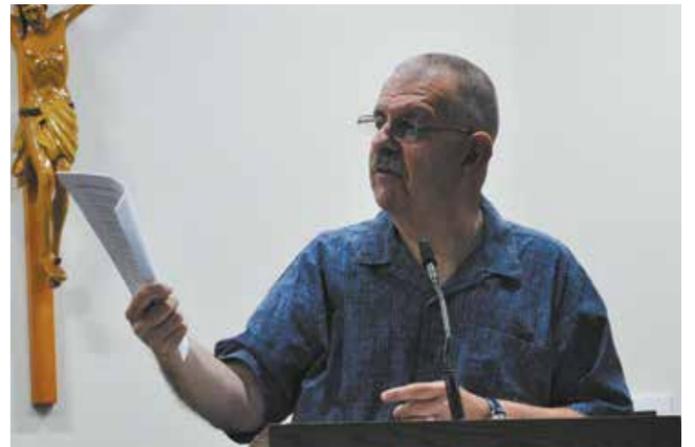
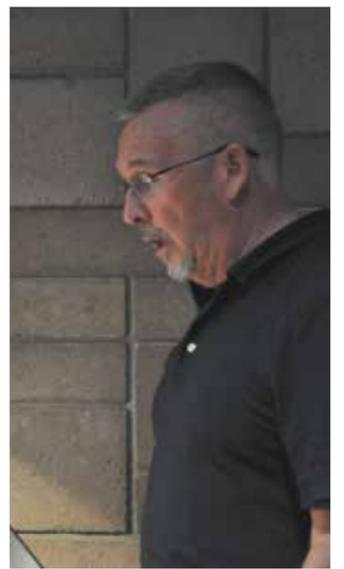
# 2018 BISHOP'S APPEAL

**Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Passaic**  
 445 Lackawanna Avenue Woodland Park, NJ 07424  
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# 2018 Eparchial Priest Retreat

## Photo Highlights of the Week





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With Homily Ponašemu

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(Saint Mary's Ruthenian Greek Catholic Church, Inc.)

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

Telephone: 212-677-0516

Email: Fredcimbala@gmail.com

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

Beginning Sunday, December 16, 2018, at 8:00 AM, and every Sunday thereafter, Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church, 246 East 15th Street, New York, NY, will offer the Divine Liturgy celebrated in Church Slavonic with the homily preached ponašemu. The celebrant and homilist will be Father Gregory Lozinskyy, parochial vicar of Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church in Jersey City, NJ. This Divine Liturgy is being established as an outreach for people from Eastern Europe with the blessing of Bishop Kurt Burnette, Eparch of Passaic, NJ, at the request of Bishop Milan Šašik, Eparch of Mukachevo, Ukraine. Saint Mary Parish is located on the corner of East 15th Street and Second Avenue and is easily accessible by subway. The 14th Street-Union Square Subway stop is less than a ten-minute walk. Everyone is invited. For more information, please contact Father Gregory Lozinskyy at 201-333-2975.



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Fr. Edward G. Cimbala, D.Min.—Pastor

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

### Sunday Divine Liturgy

8:00 AM – Church Slavonic & Homily Ponašemu  
(Beginning December 16, 2018)

10:00 AM

6:00 PM  
(Beginning January 13, 2019)



# LIFE, LOVE, AND THE HUMAN PERSON

By Ann M. Koshute, MTS

## WHAT ARE YOU LACKING?

Throughout His life and ministry on earth, Jesus encountered many people: men, women, and children; noblemen, military leaders, priests; the poor and the outcast. Jesus met with resistance and hardness of heart among some, while others surrendered to Him in gratitude, exhausted from a life of sin, suffering, and seeking. In every case, Jesus met each person where he or she was in that moment: sick, questioning, angry, weighed down by sin, searching for *more*. In those moments, He made a proposal: **Come, follow Me**. It was an open invitation, taken up immediately by some, at times rejected outright, or weighed tentatively and accepted later. That proposal is still in effect, and it is one which Jesus offers to us, not on a one-time, take-it-or-leave-it, basis, but in every moment of every day of our lives. Like those of His day, we weigh Jesus' invitation to follow Him (in all that *following* entails), embracing it, rejecting it when we sin, and at times not fully understanding what the proposal means for us and how we are to live it out.

One of the most profound and well-recognized examples of such a proposal is the encounter with the Rich Young Man (Mark 10:17-30). A young, well-dressed man ran up to Jesus (Mark tells us specifically that he "ran") and questioned Him about salvation. The man's question and his urgency to find a response should be familiar to us. How often we ourselves seek "the answer" to all of life's questions, and search for the "magic" formula or solution

to our queries. To the man's question, "What must I do...?" Jesus responds by listing the Commandments. The young man immediately informs Him that he knows and follows them. Can you picture yourself responding in the same way, "schooling" Jesus, as if to say "Tell me something I *don't* know."? I can. I know what God asks of me, how He wants me to treat others, and the way He wants me to live in accordance with His image in me. I'm quick to look at others' actions and remind God (by telling myself) that I'm not as bad as they are. Like the young man, I have an answer ready. And yet, I—and maybe you—look for something else, another answer; something easier that requires less effort to change. Like an office worker or someone on an assembly line, we want a clear list of tasks and all of their requirements so that we can check each one off and forget it. We'd like to simply fulfill our duty and get on with our lives, as if salvation is *shift-work* from which we can walk away when we've finished it. But the salvation Jesus accomplished on the Cross is a work we continue through daily death to self and conversion of heart. Jesus didn't find fault with the young man's response. Instead, He challenged him—and you and me—to a deeper understanding of the Commandments and how they are to take flesh in our lives. "Jesus, looking at Him, loved Him and said to Him, 'You are lacking in one thing. Go, sell what you have, and give to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow Me.'" All of Salvation History, and the

meaning of our existence as human beings, is contained in just these two sentences. So is the elusive "key" we search for, with the answer to our every need and desire.

The Commandments aren't simply a list of "do's and don'ts," but they can easily become for us that checklist of obligations, completed,

**Jesus calls the young man to acknowledge those "empty spaces" in his life, and to deeply reflect on whether they bring him the happiness he's seeking**

crossed off and forgotten ("I didn't steal or kill today, so I'm OK with God!"). Or, we can make the Commandments weights on our shoulders that burden and worry us; they become obligations set forth by an angry, score-keeping God. Jesus invites us to a new way of life recognizing that as good as the created world is, nothing can satisfy our desires but God. The Commandments are given to free us to love generously and well. The fruits of the earth and our labors are for our good and to share with others in community, not hoard it in isolation. This is the meaning of our lives: God **looks at** each of us, recognizing our sinfulness, but also the beauty of His image in us. We are not faceless, interchangeable *parts*, but unique, unrepeatable creatures made for riches greater than any found in this world. We are God's own sons

and daughters, made for a kind of prosperity not measured in material wealth, but in the richness and abundance of Love through which we were created.

By all appearances, the young man had everything, yet Jesus' declaration that "one thing" is "lacking" likely took the young man and those listening by surprise. Knowing our human hearts and their desires so well, Jesus calls him to acknowledge those "empty spaces" in his life, and to deeply reflect on whether they bring him the happiness he's seeking. Jesus is also asking us to look honestly at ourselves to discover those spaces we try to fill with whatever satisfies our egos, or relieves our loneliness, pain, and sorrow. Like His challenge to the young man, Jesus calls us to answer hard questions: "What is lacking in my life? What is keeping me from being loved by God, and from loving others? Am I settling for instant but momentary satisfaction?" These aren't test questions that must be answered in a fixed time, but should be considered by us every day. Reflecting on what we truly treasure (cf. Matthew 6:21), what leads us closer to God and to our neighbor, and cooperating with God's grace are an essential elements of the on-going conversion necessary to "work out our salvation." (Philippians 2:12). Jesus "looks at us," as He did the young man, with love. Whatever is lacking in us, Jesus offers to give us in abundance with a simple proposal: "Come, follow me." **ECL**

## St Ann Byzantine Catholic Church

5408 Locust Lane, Harrisburg, PA

### Parish Education Calendar 2018 - 2019

Join the St. Ann Parish family for these upcoming spiritual formation events in 2018-2019:

- Parish Meager Meal & Moleben Prayer Service with speaker each week, Wednesdays December 5, 12, & 19, 2018 starting in the parish hall at 5:30 PM.
- Parish Lenten Reflection given by Fr. John Zeyak: Date TBA.
- Pysanky Workshop: Sunday March 24, 2019. Registration Required.
- "Being the Hands, Feet, and Heart of Jesus." Sr. Ruth Plante, Provincial, Sisters of St. Basil, Uniontown. Parish Formation Day Retreat: Sunday May 19, 2019 following Divine Liturgy.

All programs take place at St. Ann Byzantine Catholic Church, 5408 Locust Lane, Harrisburg, PA 17109. For more details on events, location, or speakers, please contact the parish office at 717-652-1415.





# SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

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

## SETTING UP HOUSE

Imagine four teenage boys setting up a house for themselves. It sounds like an idea for a sitcom, right? In our recent Bible study on the Book of Daniel, my cathedral parishioners and I discovered something interesting. Daniel, Hananiah, Azariah, and Mishael, four adolescents exiled from Jerusalem, did set up a home for themselves in Babylon. It was an oasis of faithfulness in the desert of pagan error and tyrannical kings.

The boys rejected the fancy foods offered by their new Babylonian masters: their home was kosher (Daniel 1:6-17). Their house was also a place for prayer (Daniel 2:17-18). In fact, Daniel's house was designed for prayer. Even when King Darius forbade prayer of any kind, Daniel "entered his house, where the windows facing Jerusalem were open to him in the upper rooms, and he knelt down on his knees three times that day and prayed and gave thanks to his God, as he was doing before" (Daniel 6:11).

Think of the beautiful picture Psalm 128 paints for a couple on their wedding day:

"Your wife like a fruitful vine in the recesses of your house. Your sons like olive shoots around your table. Behold in this way shall be blessed the man who fears the Lord." Elsewhere, the Psalmist sets out some of the guidelines for building such a house: "I will walk with blameless heart within my house; I will not set before my eyes whatever is base ... I look to the faithful in the land that they might dwell with me. He who walks in the way of perfection shall be my friend. No man who practices deceit shall live within my house. No man who utters lies shall stand before my eyes" (Psalm 101:2,6-7). Originally this Psalm described the code of conduct for the royal "house" of David. But the crowns given to couples at the Sacrament of Matrimony remind us that husbands and wives have been given a share of God's royal authority to rule and to bless in their own domestic kingdoms: "You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood" (1 Peter 2:9). The Psalms teach "Unless the Lord builds the house, in vain do the builders labor." The Lord is the architect; He has a plan for every Christian home. Each couple, each family has the opportunity and the responsibility to build up their home according to His plan.

I thank God I was raised in a home that took this challenge and opportunity seriously. My father would occasionally speculate on what Saint Joseph "must" have said when he accidentally hammered his thumb in the carpenter's shop but my parents made it very clear that our home (four railroad rooms three flights up) was a sacred place. There were things that you might see or hear "out in the street" but would never be tolerated "in this house!" The feasts and the fasts were observed, Sunday felt and tasted different from ordinary days, and the casual visitor would have known immediately, in any of the four rooms, that this was a Catholic home.

You'll hear a lot of talk in the next two months about being "home for the holidays." Contractors even market quick makeovers to impress your Thanksgiving and Christmas guests. Whether or not you get those granite counters or replace that shag carpeting, it's a good idea to take stock of your home. Do you have a place for prayer like Daniel? Have you set some clear rules about what will be shown and seen and said like Psalm 101 does? Will your holidays celebrate "winter" or material gifts, or the birth of the Son of God in the flesh?

A Byzantine Catholic home will probably never make the cover of a lifestyles magazine. But then, making a godly home has never been easy or fashionable, not for Daniel in Babylon, not for King David in Jerusalem, and not for Joshua, who put it this way to the first generation of Israelites to settle in the Promised Land: "Now then, fear the Lord and serve Him in justice and righteousness... But if it does not please you to serve the Lord, choose gods for yourselves today whom you will serve... but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord because He is holy" (Joshua 24:14-15). **ECL**



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# UNDERSTANDING ICONS

Father Joseph Bertha, Ph.D.

## THE CRIMSON CHITON OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST PART 2

*The crimson clothed Christ figure in the north apse of the National Basilica Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, Washington D.C. John Henryk De Rosen, installed 1959*

*The crimson color chiton of Our Lord is derived from the Scripture readings utilized by the Eastern Church for the feast of the Ascension of Our Lord*

The scriptures used by the Eastern Church and quoted by Jan Henryk De Rosen in his proposal demonstrate the vital link he draws between the Sacred Word and Image. There are three Vesperal readings assigned for Ascension Thursday:

Isaiah 2: 2-3

“It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised above the hills; and all the nations shall flow to it. And many peoples shall come, and say: come let us go up to the mountain of the Lord to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.”

Zechariah 14:1,4, 8-11

“Behold a day of the Lord is coming, when the spoil taken from you will be divided in the midst of you.”

Isaiah 63: 1-2 5-7

“On that day his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives which lies before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall be split in two from east to west by a very wide valley; so that one half of the Mount shall withdraw northward, and the other half southward. On that day living waters shall flow out from Jerusalem, half of them to the eastern sea and half of them to the western sea, it shall continue in summer as in winter. And the Lord will become king over all the earth, on that day the Lord will be one and his name one. The whole land shall be turned into a plain from Ge’ba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem. But Jerusalem shall remain aloft upon its site from the Gate of Benjamin to the place of the former gate, to the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hanan’el to the king’s wine presses. And it shall be inhabited, for there shall be no more curse, Jerusalem shall dwell in security.”

Four details present in the National Shrine image are found in these scriptures: 1) the mountain of the Lord (referring to the Ascension from Mount Tabor, 2) living water flowing from east to west (all nations of the earth), 3) King over all the earth (Jesus as King of Glory, 4) King’s wine presses (crimson colored chiton).

Furthermore, three Ascension Thursday vesper verses articulate several more features in the mosaic: (from the Sisters of Saint Basil the Great, *Pentecostarion*, Uniontown, Pa.)

1. “You humbled Yourself and were clothed in our humanity” (Page 278)

2. “Your angels, O Lord, said to the apostles, Men of Galilee, why do you stand there looking into the sky? Christ our God, who by leaving you ascended into heaven, will

come again in the manner by which you have seen Him leave. Therefore, serve Him in justice and holiness.” (Page 279)

“O Christ, when the powers of heaven beheld your Ascension from the Mount of Olives, they wondered and exclaimed: Who is He? And they heard the reply: He is the mighty Conqueror; He is the mighty One in battle, He is indeed the King of Glory. And why are his clothes crimson? Because He comes from Bosor, which is the flesh. As for You O Christ, since you are God, You are enthroned at the right hand of God the Father, and You send down upon us the Holy Spirit that He may enlighten us and save our souls.” (Page 281)

Several characteristics found in the Basilica image appear in the verses: 1) humility clothed in our humanity (the crimson chiton stained by sin); 2) angels standing by (the three figures at the base of the mosaic); 3) when you come again (the second coming in the same manner as your Ascension); 4) three titles given to Christ: Mighty Conqueror, Mighty one in Battle, King of Glory (which will be referenced in the liturgical section); 5) Bosor which is the flesh (Christ is still in earthly realm); 6) crimson clothes (the crimson grape-stained chiton).

### *The art historical precedents of Ascension icons*

The majority of Ascension of our Lord icons show him wearing crimson himation and chiton. This attire reflects and derives from the iconographers. Diligent attention to the liturgical services of the Eastern church which prescribe the Isaiah reading for the feast. The crimson chiton can clearly be seen in both the San Marco (12<sup>th</sup> century) and Monreale (13<sup>th</sup> century) mosaics. Both of these cathedrals are Roman catholic churches festooned with royal Byzantine mosaics, derived from the imperial capital of Constantinople (see illustrations). De Rosen may have drawn his inspiration from these well-known churches as he incorporated these details in the National Basilica Shrine of the Immaculate Conception.



Icon of the Ascension of Our Lord from San Marco, Venice

The intriguing encounter with Mary Magdalene the “Noli Me Tangere.”

The benefit of searching Scripture commentaries on computer data bases is astonishing. As I searched the Bosra crimson garments quotation in regard to this mosaic I came across a jewel found in Origen’s Commentary on Saint John’s Gospel. It is in regards to Our Lord’s remarks to Mary

Magdalene as he encounters her in the garden after his resurrection: John 20: 17-18, “Jesus said to her: “Do not touch me for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brethren and say to them, I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.”

At this point after the resurrection and before the appearance to the Apostles and Thomas, Our Lord is speaking about his ascension to heaven. Remarkably Origen mentions the whole economy of salvation, the passion, the death of Our Lord, and the color of His garments, linking them to the Isaiah prophecy read on Ascension Thursday. The lengthy commentary on the Gospel of John describing the encounter between the Risen Christ and Mary Magdalene by Origen reveals many significant details found in the De Rosen mosaic:

From Origen’s *Commentary on the Gospel of John*

We have lingered over this subject of the martyrs and over the record of those who died on account of pestilence, because this lets us see the excellence of Him who was led as a sheep to the slaughter and was dumb as a lamb before the shearer. For if there is any point in these stories of the Greeks, and if what we have said of the martyrs is well founded,—the Apostles, too, were for the same reason the filth of the world and the off scouring of all things, [4969]—what and how great things must be said of the Lamb of God, who was sacrificed for this very reason, that He might take away the sin not of a few but of the whole world, for the sake of which also He suffered? If any one sin, we read, [4970] “We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for those of the whole world,” since He is the Savior of all men, [4971] especially of them that believe, who [4972] blotted out the written bond that was against us by His own blood, and took it out of the way, so that not even a trace, not even of our blotted-out sins, might still be found, and nailed it to His cross; who hav-

serve Him, because He [4973] saved the poor from his tyrant by His own passion, and the needy who had no helper. This Savior, then, having humbled the calumniator by humbling Himself, abides with the visible sun before His illustrious church, tropically called the moon, from generation to generation. And having by His passion destroyed His enemies, He who is strong in battle and a mighty Lord [4974] required after His mighty deeds a purification which could only be given Him by His Father alone; and this is why He forbids Mary to touch Him, saying, [4975]

“Touch Me not, for I am not yet ascended to My Father; but go and tell My disciples, I go to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God.”

And when He comes, loaded with victory and with trophies, with His body which has risen from the dead,—for what other meaning can we see in the words, “I am not yet ascended to My Father,” and “I go unto My Father,”—then there are certain powers which say, Who is this that cometh from Edom, red garments from Bosor; this that is beautiful? [4976] Then those who escort Him say to those that are upon the heavenly gates, [4977] “Lift up your gates, ye rulers, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and the king of glory shall come in.” But they ask again, seeing as it were His right hand red with blood and His whole person covered with the marks of His valor.

“Why are Thy garments red, and Thy clothes like the treading of the full wine fat when it is trodden?” And to this He answers, “I have crushed them.” For this cause He had need to wash “His robe in wine, and His garment in the blood of the grape.” [4978] For when He had taken up our infirmities and carried our diseases, and had borne the sin of the whole world, and had conferred blessings on so many, then, perhaps, He received that baptism which is greater than any that could ever be conceived among men, and of which I think He speaks when He says, [4979] “I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished?” I enquire here with boldness and I challenge the ideas put forward by most writers. They say that the greatest baptism, beyond which no greater can be conceived, is His passion. But if this be so, why should He say to Mary after it, “Touch Me not”? He should rather have offered Himself to her touch, when by His passion He had received His perfect baptism. But if it was the case, as we said before, that after all His deeds of valor done against His enemies, He had need to wash “His robe in wine, His garment in the blood of the grape,” then He was on His way up to the husbandman of the true vine, the Father, so that having washed there and after having gone up on high, He might lead captivity captive and come down bearing manifold gifts—the tongues, as of fire, which were divided to the Apostles, and the holy angels which are to be present with them in each action and to deliver them.

For before these economies they were not yet cleansed and angels could not dwell with them, for they too perhaps do not desire to be with those who have not prepared themselves nor been cleansed by Jesus. For it was of Jesus’ benignity alone that He ate and drank with publicans and sinners, and

ing put off from Himself the principalities and powers, made a show of them openly, triumphing over them by His cross. And we are taught to rejoice when we suffer afflictions in the world, knowing the ground of our rejoicing to be this, that the world has been conquered and has manifestly been subjected to its conqueror. Hence all the nations, released from their former rulers,

suffered the penitent woman who was a sinner to wash His feet with her tears, and went down even to death for the ungodly, counting it not robbery to be equal with God, and emptied Himself, assuming the form of a servant. And in accomplishing all this He fulfils rather the will of the Father who gave Him up for sinners than His own. For the Father is good, but the Savior is the image of His goodness; and doing good to the world in all things, since God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, which

formerly for its wickedness was all enemy to Him, He accomplishes His good deeds in order and succession, and does not all at once take all His enemies for His footstool. For the Father says to Him, to the Lord of us all, [4980] "Sit Thou on My right hand, until I make Thy enemies the footstool of Thy feet." And this goes on till the last enemy, Death, is overcome by Him. And if we consider what is meant by this subjection to Christ and find an explanation of this mainly from the saying, [4981] "When all things

shall have been put under Him, then shall the Son Himself be subjected to Him who put all things under Him," then we shall see how the conception agrees with the goodness of the God of all, since it is that of the Lamb of God, taking away the sin of the world. Not all men's sin, however, is taken away by the Lamb of God, not the sin of those who do not grieve and suffer affliction till it be taken away. For thorns are not only fixed but deeply rooted in the hand of every one who is intoxicated by wickedness and has parted with sobriety, as it is said in the Proverbs, [4982] "Thorns grow in the hand of the drunkard," and what pain they must cause him who has admitted such growth in the substance of his soul, it is hard even to tell. Who has allowed wickedness to establish itself so deeply in his soul as to be a ground full of thorns, he must be cut down by the quick and powerful word of God, which is sharper than a two-edged sword, and which is more caustic than any fire. To such a soul that fire must be sent which finds out thorns, and by its divine virtue stands where they are and does not also burn up the threshing-floors or standing corn. But of the Lamb which takes away the sin of the world and begins to do so by His own death there are several ways, some of which are capable of being clearly understood by most, but others are concealed from most, and are known to those only who are worthy of divine wisdom. Why should we count up all the ways by which we come to believe among men? That is a

thing which every one living in the body is able to see for himself. And in the ways in which we believe in these also, sin is taken away; by afflictions and evil spirits and dangerous diseases and grievous sicknesses. And who knows what follows after this? So much as we have said was not unnecessary—we could not neglect the thought which is so clearly connected with that of the words, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world," and had therefore to attend somewhat closely to this part of our subject. This has brought us to see that God convicts some by His wrath and chastens them by His anger, since His love to men is so great that He will not leave any without conviction and chastening; so that we should do what in us lies to be spared such conviction and such chastening by the sorest trials.

Origen not only links the crimson colored chiton to the trodden out of the grape harvest and sin, he also references the fire which proceeds from the mouth of Lamb who takes away the sins of the world. This references the fire cross in the exterior halo of Our Lord. Ultimately, Origen's reference to the Lamb of God appeals to the Second Coming of Christ at the end of the world, which Our Lord himself says he will return the same method in which he came down in the Book of Revelation. **ECL**

*To be continued...*



Icon of the Ascension of Our Lord from Monreale, Sicily



## SCHOOL OF PRAYER

Father G. Scott Boghossian

### DON'T DESPAIR, BELIEVE IN THE POWER OF PRAYER

There are significant problems in the Catholic Church. Every day we hear something new that discourages and disheartens us. Something must be done! But if you are not the pope, not the bishop, not the parish priest, it may seem that there is nothing you can do. Hopelessness and despair set in. Many Catholics are feeling this way today. One well-known Catholic writer recently stated, "I don't know how much more I can take." Others ask themselves, "how much longer can all this continue?" Know that there is something you can do, and something that will make a difference. Do not lose hope. You can, and you must pray. Prayer is effective. Prayer changes things. God promises to hear and answer prayer. Let's renew our confidence in the prayer of petition.

There are different kinds of prayer, and all are important in the life of the believer. There is the prayer of adoration, the prayer of contrition, and the prayer of thanksgiving. But the kind of prayer that most directly changes the world, that effects things, that will save us from calamity, and that must be used to alter the present lamentable state of affairs is the prayer of petition, supplication, or request. In other words, we must ask God to do something. In the prayer of petition, we ask Him to intervene,

to give us that for which we pray. Jeremiah prays, "Although our sins testify against us, do something, LORD, for the sake of Your name" (Jer. 14:7), and the Psalmist prays, "Do something, LORD! They have broken Your Law" (Ps. 119:126). Let us pray: "O God, do something!"

Don't fall into pseudo-spiritual passivity with thoughts like, "Prayer is meant to change us, not to change things," or "Let go and let God; the Lord will take care of it." No, this is not scriptural and not the mind of the historic Church. Rather, the scriptures teach, "You have not, because you ask not" (Jn. 4:2). Christ asks, "will not God give justice to His elect, who cry to Him day and night? Will He delay long over them?" (Lk. 18:7). If we do not pray, beg, petition and earnestly contend for the answer in prayer, we will receive nothing. "The kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force" (Mt. 11:12). Violence? The violence referred to here is the power of passionate, faith-charged, and unrelenting prayer.

Renew your confidence in the power of prayer. Faith comes by hearing the Word of God (Rm. 10:17). Remember the promises of God: "Call to me, and I will answer you..." (Jer. 33:3). "Ask, and it will be given

to you..." (Mt. 7:7). "Whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith" (Mt. 21:22). "This is the confidence that we have toward Him, that if we ask anything according to his will, He hears us. And if

### The kind of prayer that most directly changes the world...is the prayer of petition, supplication, or request

we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of Him" (1 Jn. 5:14, 15). By meditating on these promises and the many others found in the Word of God, you will increase your faith in the power of prayer. You will be encouraged. You will know that there is something that you can do to turn things around.

Don't let your confidence in prayer "die the death of a thousand qualifications." It is most certainly true that there are prerequisites to answered prayer. God does not answer just any old prayer. We must pray in accord with His will, we must pray in faith, we must pray with perseverance,

we must be living in the state of grace (Ps. 66:18), and there are many other prerequisites to answered prayer. Don't fail to pray because you are not satisfied you fulfill all the requirements. Begin to pray the prayer of petition and the grace of God will work in your soul, ironing out the obstacles that may be hindering your personal prayer power.

With all the distressing problems occurring in the Church today, some are tempted to leave Her. Perhaps you know someone who has allowed the current crisis to rob them of their faith. This is not for you! Believe in the power of prayer, and pray for the Catholic Church. Pray for her ministers, the Pope, the bishops, the priests, and deacons. Pray and believe that the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, in communion with the Successor of Saint Peter, will again be the "light of the world" and the "city set on the hill" that Jesus Christ our Lord has destined Her to be. Don't despair, instead renew your confidence in the power of prayer.

*"You who call on the Lord, give yourselves no rest, and give Him no rest till He establishes Jerusalem and makes her the praise of the earth."*

- Isaiah 62:7 **ECL**

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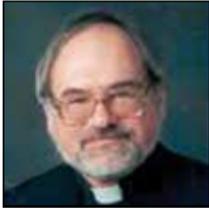
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# THE BYZANTINE LITURGY

By Archpriest David Petras, SEOD

## THE POWER OF PRAYER

What is prayer really? The common conception is that it is asking God for something. You only pray in real emergencies when you know that you're going to fail just by yourself. We must not scorn prayer as "asking," sometimes we exalt ourselves too much to see the reality that exists between God and ourselves. As we shall see, much of the primitive Christian prayer was "asking God for things," and this has persisted in intercessory prayer in the office to this day. It is more than that. Prayer must be a continuous reality in our lives, we must pray daily, morning, and evening.

Saint John of Kronstadt described it as "the breath of the soul, our nourishment and our spiritual drink." Prayer becomes communication with God, in which not only an exchange of information takes place, but we are ourselves transformed into the divine image. Saint Ignatius Brianchaninov wrote: "When prayer seizes people, it transforms them progressively, making them spiritual, therefore, from their union with the Holy Spirit." Likewise, in the Western tradition, Mechtild of Magdeburg, *Revelations*, describes prayer in a more practical way as transforming: "That prayer has great power which a person makes with all his might. It makes a sour heart sweet, a sad heart merry, a poor heart rich, a foolish heart wise, a timid heart brave, a sick heart well, a blind heart full of sight, a cold heart ardent."

Prayer ultimately is possible only if it becomes true communion with God (con-

templation) which points to the action of God in our prayer. All this must happen when we pray alone or in the community. For this reason, all prayer is done "in the Spirit." As Saint Paul said, "...the Spirit too comes to the aid of our weakness, for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit itself intercedes with inexpressible groanings." (Romans 8:26) In liturgical prayer, the importance of the Spirit is most clearly expressed in the *epiclesis*, the invocation. Nothing happens sacramentally without the work of the Spirit. The *epiclesis* is a characteristic of every eucharistic prayer except the traditional Roman Canon, which tended to obscure the role of the Spirit in the Liturgy for centuries.

We cannot ever skip our daily prayer. And sometimes, it gets tough to do, we get up in the morning, we have a full agenda, we hardly have time to prepare ourselves, and so our spiritual life goes on auto-pilot. Even so, it is not enough to simply pray, we need quality prayer. And we are living in a world which has a lot of distractions, a lot of noise, and a low level of spirituality. We also live in a world that fosters narcissism. Business prefers it that way, because if you dote on yourself you will buy more for yourself and that's good for business. It may also make you self-centered. People that are self-centered cannot pray as they should and inevitably confuse their own ideas with divine grace.

When we pray, we imitate Christ. In the gospels, Jesus, "the leader and perfecter of

faith" (Hebrews 12:2), frequently prayed by Himself in quiet. "After doing so, [Jesus] went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When it was evening He was there alone." (Matthew 14:23) Saint Mark tells us, "And when He had taken leave of them, He went off to the mountain to pray." (Mark 6:46) Saint Luke witnesses, "The report about him spread all the more, and great crowds assembled to listen to Him and to be cured of their ailments but He would withdraw to deserted places to pray." (Luke 5:15-16) Of course, there is the story of his prayer in Gethsemane, on the night He was arrested. Jesus came back and found His disciples asleep, so He reprimanded them, "Could you not watch one hour with me in prayer?"

When we pray, if we use our own words, we must take care not to fall into the trap of "spiritual self-deception," making our own ideas and concepts in the place of God's. "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways, says the Lord." (Isaiah 55:8) The highest form of prayer is when God takes hold of us, which the spiritual teachers called, in Greek, *theoria*, or "contemplation." We have no control over that at all. All we can do is to empty ourselves as much as possible so that God could fill our soul. The initiative, however, comes always from God. We cannot force God to fill our soul; it is the height of pride to think we can do this.

How do we know that God answers our prayers? In three ways, I think. First, by simply existing. We must become aware

**When we pray, we become a part of the Body of Christ, and our prayers and words become Christ's prayer and words**

that "I exist, the world is real, God is holding me in existence, and everything that I am, everything that I have, everything that happens to me is because 'God is present and fills all things.'" Our very existence is God's answer. Second, because sometimes God acts in a very concrete way in His providential love for us. There is not a big fanfare, it is not accompanied by thunder and lightning and voices from on high, but "things happen" that brings us through a rough spot. There are little "miracles" every day. Third, because when we pray, we become a part of the Body of Christ, and our prayers and words become Christ's prayer and words. As one of my students so accurately said, "When we pray as a community and become the incarnated body of Christ, the prayer of the community is literally God speaking to us." Prayer is truly powerful, it works, and when we pray sincerely, we are changed and transformed and become a different person. **ECL**

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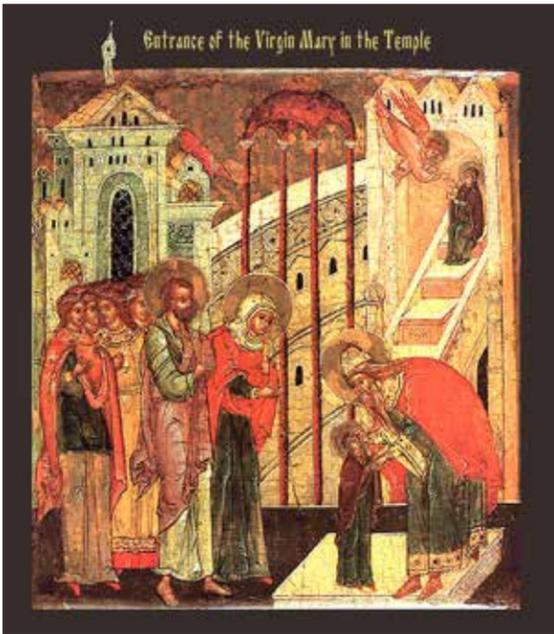
# SEASONAL REFLECTIONS

Father Ronald Hatton



## ENTRANCE OF THE THEOTOKOS

the midst of the Philippian Fast as a deeper preparation for the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord. Although we also celebrate her conception in the womb of Anna on December 8, this feast should be just as important to us in our celebration of our salvation.



Icon of the Entrance of the Theotokos

At this season, we once again enter into the Philippian Fast, and prepare ourselves to journey spiritually to the cave at Bethlehem and encounter our God, Who has taken on our flesh, become human in every way except sin, to show His love for mankind, and to open the kingdom of Heaven to all who believe.

How fitting that we celebrate the feast of the blessed Theotokos into the Temple in

The Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple is an historical feast. According to Tradition, the Theotokos was taken—presented—by her parents Joachim and Anna into the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem as a young girl, where she lived and served as a Temple virgin until her betrothal to Saint Joseph. One of the earliest sources of this tradition is the non-canonical Proto-gospel of James, also called the Infancy Gospel of James. Mary was solemnly received by the temple community which was headed by the priest, Zachariah, the father of John the Baptist. She was

led to the holy place to become herself the “holy of holies” of God, the living sanctuary and temple of the Divine child who was to be born in her. The Church also sees this feast as a feast which marks the end of the physical temple in Jerusalem as the dwelling place of God. Many hymns are offered for the Vespers and Matins of this feast, which highlight the glory of the Theotokos replacing the glory of the Temple: “O faithful, let us leap for joy today, singing psalms

and hymns of praise in honor of Mary, His Mother, the holy Tabernacle and Ark that contained the Word Whom nothing can contain. She is offered to God as a child in a marvelous way, and Zechariah the high priest receives her with great joy, for she is the dwelling place of the Most-High.”

“O Virgin Theotokos, you are the One foretold by the prophets. You are the glory of the apostles and the pride of the martyrs and the cause of renewal for the entire human race. Through you we have been reconciled to God. Therefore, we honor your entrance into the temple of the Lord. Together with the angels, all of us who are saved by your prayers sing to you: Rejoice O most holy one!”

“The most praiseworthy Anna cries out in great joy: ‘O Zechariah, receive the One Whom the prophets of God foretold through the Spirit. Escort her into the holy temple, since she is to be the sublime Temple, the palace, throne, and wondrous abode of our God.’”

“Today the Theotokos, the Temple that is to contain God, is being escorted into the temple of the Lord, and Zechariah receives her. Today the Holy of Holies greatly rejoices and the choir of angels mystically celebrates this feast. Let us also celebrate with them today and cry out with Gabriel: ‘Rejoice, O Full of Grace, the Lord is with you, and He grants us great mercy.’” (Selections from Vespers of the Feast)

At every Marian feast, we hear a reading from the Letter to the Hebrews (9:1-7) describing the “regulations for worship and an earthly sanctuary.” I am sure that

many people who hear this read wonder how this is relevant to our blessed Mother. But when we realize that we once again are presented with the concept that what took place in the Old Testament is a prefiguration of what will find its fullness in the New Testament, it all makes sense! In verses 8-10, the writer states: “...the Holy Spirit indicating this, that the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing. It was symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered ... concerned only with foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation.” The temple in Jerusalem was an “imperfect,” if you will, prefiguration of what God had in store when the Ever-virgin Mary was manifested as the Temple of the Living God. Her womb actually superseded this temple made by human hands from stone. Indeed, in verse 11, it states that “...Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands...” Our great High Priest does not offer the blood of goats and calves, year after year, but offers His own Body and Blood, once and for all. And Mary “is to be the sublime Temple, the palace, and the wondrous abode of our God.” In this light, we see how important it is for us to celebrate this glorious feast, to see our Lord fulfilling what before had only prefigured. **ECL**



## SPIRITUAL REFLECTIONS

Father Lewis Rabayda

### WE ARE NOT SATISFIED WITH MILK

Most of us look around our church on Sunday morning and see that our parishes have “room to grow.” We may also notice other differences such as the lack of diversity of age, the lack of participation, and worse, the lack of personal supernatural faith. These present elements can have a debilitating effect on the faithful as well as the clergy. We then all find ourselves asking these questions: how do we get more people in our church? How do we invite others to appreciate the beauty of Byzantine liturgy, architecture, icons, and theology that we have to offer? How do we invite others to be transformed by Christ? How do we communicate the truths of eternal salvation to those who are unaware? As always, the answers to these questions are found in Sacred Scripture. We can only invite others to Christ after we are united with Him ourselves. And we can only be more fully united with Christ when we are no longer satisfied with the theology of milk, but when we are incessantly seeking the theology of solid food.

Saint Paul tells us that he first fed the church at Corinth “with milk, not solid food; for you were not ready for it; and even yet you are not ready, for you are still of the

flesh” (1Cor. 3:2-3). Saint Paul is articulating that he purposely taught the church at Corinth gradually. He first began with concepts in relation to their understanding of the natural world because they were still concerned about their flesh, about their earthly lives and all the concerns that accompany it. But he makes the earthly analogy that what he taught them so far is only the beginning, as infants begin with milk, so he began to feed them with milk. But Paul alludes that the milk they have accepted is only the beginning, and that they would need to graduate to more solid food, to more difficult concepts, to a more profound understanding of Christ and Salvation that will not only raise them up from their decaying flesh, but will raise them up to the heights of the Kingdom of Heaven.

People in this current age are like the people of any age in their ability to subconsciously assess everything they encounter. However, in this age, this sense of quick judgment and assessment of what is being presented to the individual is heightened because of our need to navigate the growing complexity of modern living. We can easily spot junk mail, irrelevant advertisement, insincerity, deception, lies, as well as

truth, conviction, hope, and honest altruistic acts. Jesus said, “you will know them by their fruits” (Matt.7:20). More and more the people of this age, especially the youth, assess others by the fruits they bear. And we are being assessed by the fruits we bear.

### The people of the world... are seeking for themselves a firm foundation, a solid food, a truth that is evident

All those who are hurting and without direction, all those who are seeking something to fulfill them, all those who desire to know the unaltered truths of God, all those who are no longer satisfied with the simple milk of human thought, long for the real meat of knowing how to allow ourselves to be transfigured by Christ. Saint Paul continues to write to the church at Corinth, “for no other foundation can any one lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1Cor. 3:11). The people of the world, the people of our nation, the

people of our communities and neighborhoods, and the members our families are seeking for themselves a firm foundation, a solid food, a truth that is evident, and a truth that is seen to be lived by those who profess it. Everyone we encounter, is hungry; and their hunger is not for a thin and watery faith or even a faith of milk. Everyone is hungry for that which will answer all questions, for that which will fill the voids within them, because they are hungry to experience again the essence of God in their lives. It is only the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church—sustained by the Holy Trinity—which has the authority on earth to offer such an experience. But we can only guide others towards this real meat of a lived supernatural faith, if we ourselves have been able to digest it and live it in our lives. The real meat is found in constant humble prayer, in the reading of Scripture, in the reading of the Church Fathers, the documents of **all** the councils, and Papal addresses and documents which reaffirm or articulate the teachings of Jesus Christ. With the advent of the internet there is no obstacle in our way of accessing these documents. The meat is before us, and on the table, waiting for us to dig in. **ECL**



# SEMINARIAN REFLECTIONS

Seminarian Christopher LoGrippe

## TOOLS FOR CHRIST

*“I have separated you from other people, that you should be Mine.” (Levit. 20:26)*

I am now in my third month of classes at the Byzantine Catholic Seminary and I cannot believe how fast my first semester has been progressing. A fire hose of different elements has been coming at me from every direction. Between the busyness of my personal formation, academics, liturgical obligations, extracurriculars, and adjusting to seminary life in general, I have learned to cherish the limited downtime I have to sit down and reflect on my time here so far. Putting my goals into perspective has helped me to continue pressing forward at a high rate of speed, amidst all the hustle and bustle.

Being 24 years old and not long out of college, I often think back on the last two years at home in the working world. I vividly recall making the big announcement to my former coworkers in New York City, expressing to them my decision to explore a vocation to the Byzantine Catholic priesthood; I would be leaving my job, my family, and my friends to move to the seminary in Pittsburgh and immerse myself in all things God. This concept was foreign to many and the reactions I received were...interesting. “I’m very happy for you.” “You’re lucky you’ve found your life’s calling at such a young age.” “I’m happy that you’re happy.” And my personal favorite, “Do what you gotta do.”

These responses—most of which seemed to be personally supportive without mentioning my Catholic faith—caused me to think more

**[The Priest] challenges those he serves to step out of their comfort zone and dig deeper into their faith**

deeply on the responsibility of a priest in the world, and how those outside our faith may perceive this sacred duty. As a child, church was a special place for me from a young age, and one of my first role models (besides my parents) was my priest. His pious and humble example led me to want to learn more about my faith and live according to the truths that God has revealed to us. I carried Christ in my heart throughout high school and college, always striving to defend and live out my faith, even in the face of adversity or opposition. I had come to know God as the source of everything in this life and enjoyed reading the lives of the saints and martyrs who put God before anything else. The priest is a man chosen by God to convey this message and lead souls to heaven, the attainment of which is our ultimate goal in this life.

I have always been fascinated with the military and police. There is something about their strength, honor, grit, and sacrifice in defending citizens that captivates me. Always on guard and ready for action, these men and women show no fear in the presence of the enemy. Since I was young, I loved this idea of being a soldier, being the first line of defense for the people. As I grew older and my faith became deeper, I could not help but see the priest as

the ultimate soldier. The priest lays down his life to carry the Gospel through the battlefield laden with souls constantly being tempted and led astray by our biggest enemy, the evil one. “Put on the armor of God so that you may be able to stand firm against the tactics of the devil.” (Ephesians 6:11). To take up arms in the spiritual realm and lead the fight for Christ in the name of peace and love is the focus of the presbyterate.

A priest strives to be a builder. He has unique weapons and skills to build the faith, congregations, confidence in God, and the church throughout the world. He realizes that his responsibility is heavy. One wrong word or command that sends his brother or sister astray could lead to lost souls engulfed by the enemy. To prevent his people from being lost, the priest engages in constant prayer, because only through God and the gifts of the Holy Spirit can he continue forward. As we pray in the Byzantine tradition for God to “enlighten our thoughts and eyes” and to “raise up our minds from the deep sleep of slothfulness,” the priest must also continue to sharp-

en his own mind as well as those in his church. He challenges those he serves to step out of their comfort zone and dig deeper into their faith. The priest simultaneously serves as a nurturing father who listens intently to his spiritual family and offers comfort and advice for blazing forward.

Clearly, the priestly office is not an easy one to fill and the charge set forth is immense. Saint Gregory of Nazianzen even says, “No one rejoices when he is ordained priest.” As I continue to discern here at the seminary, “doing what I gotta do,” I do not think about pursuing the priesthood as a type of career. Following this path is not about being “happy” for one’s own sake, but rather sacrificing the cares of this world to focus on the spiritual battle for Christ. A priest is a tool in the hand of God, moving, speaking, and acting according to the will of our Savior to lead his flock. Christ has not sent his priests to do what is for their profit, but what is for the glory of God. This is where the true happiness lies. **ECL**



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## UPCOMING EPARCHIAL AND PARISH EVENTS

### NOVEMBER

- 8 Holy Archangel Michael and All Holy Bodiless Powers of Heaven  
*Solemn Holy Day*
- 12-15 USCCB General Meeting  
*Baltimore, MD \* Bishop Kurt in attendance*
- 14 Christmas Fast begins at sundown  
*Forty day voluntary fasting period in preparation for the Feast of Christmas*
- 21 Entrance of the Virgin Theotokos into the Temple  
*Solemn Holy Day*
- 22-23 Thanksgiving Holiday  
*Civic holiday \* Chancery closed*

### DECEMBER

- 6 Our Holy Father Nicholas the Wonderworker  
*Solemn Holy Day\* Chancery closed*
- 8 Maternity of the Holy Anna  
*Solemn Holy Day*
- 24 Vigil of Christmas  
*Chancery closed*
- 25 Nativity of Our Lord, God, and Savior, Jesus Christ  
*Holy Day of Obligation\* Chancery closed*
- 26 Synaxis of the Theotokos  
*Solemn Holyday\* Chancery closed*
- 27 Holy Protomartyr Archdeacon Stephen  
*Simple Holyday\* Chancery closed*