



EASTERN CATHOLIC LIFE

Official Publication of the Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Passaic

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AUGUST 2013

Danbury Church Destroyed by Fire

Hope resurrects from the ashes

By Deacon Stephen Russo
St. Nicholas Church, Danbury



*Saint Nicholas of Myra Byzantine Catholic Church in Danbury, CT
was destroyed by fire on Saturday morning, June 29th.*

June 29, 2013 was a sad day in Danbury, CT. In the early afternoon, a few hours after the Liturgy for the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul, a fire broke out in our church of Saint Nicholas of Myra. The cause is still being investigated.

Our pastor, Father John Cigan, was first to get the call from the alarm company indicating the fire department was on their way. He quickly ran to check the church but the fire was already engulfing the server's sacristy. Although the fire alarms were triggered, the fire quickly raged across the roof and through the sanctuary and nave of the 17-year-old structure. Three fire companies and 70 firefighters responded to the alarm and worked tirelessly trying to control the blaze as the parish family looked on in horror and disbelief. The fire was so intense the building could not be entered. As the firefighters worked, word quickly spread and more and more of the parish family rushed to the scene.

When I heard the news from Father John, I rushed to the church as quickly as possible with my family. The whole drive there, I tried to imagine and hope that the damage would be minimal. When we came closer those hopes were shattered for by this time the majority of the roof was gone. Some children of the parish were in tears watching as their spiritual home was reduced to ashes. Father Edward Cimbala, the Administrator of the Eparchy of Passaic, was already on the scene. When he heard the news, he rushed up immediately from New Jersey to assist, to support, and to provide guidance to the parish community.

Clergy from our neighboring Byzantine Catholic Churches and other churches in the area quickly arrived to offer their help and support, but there was little anyone could do at this point other than watch as the firemen finally extinguished the flames and assessed the remains.

The main part of the church was completely destroyed. What was not destroyed by fire was severely damaged by the immense amount of water. The firemen were able to bring out some of the sacred vessels which were charred and mangled. Some vestments, blackened and soaked, were carried out and carefully hung in the barn with hopes that they could be cleaned and restored. Pieces of stained glass window blasted out by the force of the water and heat of the fire were collected with great care, so that maybe they could be placed back in their proper places at some later date in a new church. These were the first glimmers of hope, the first acts of restoration, to return from the ashes.

The next day was Sunday, and the decision was made that we would indeed celebrate the Divine Liturgy, not in the structure of our church building but on the patio next to the church barn. The community came together to pray, console, remember, and support. Father Edward stayed with us and gave an inspiring homily first stating "Soon we will begin the rebuilding effort" then he corrected himself and said, "no we would not begin the *rebuilding* but the *resurrection* of the church structure as well as the parish community".

Father John in a tearful voice announced "This morning we were supposed to have a very different announcement." He said, "I was supposed to be leaving you and a new pastor was being assigned, but that has changed. I will stay with you and work together with you to resurrect Saint Nicholas Church. Although our church edifice has been lost to fire, the Church of Saint Nicholas subsists and continues in the people of God of Saint Nicholas Parish Family. Our Faith, Hope, and Love will bring about the realization of a new church edifice and, hopefully, a closer and strengthened parish family."

God always provides signs and signals that He is with us in times of great joy and in times of great sorrow and the Sunday after this terrible fire was no exception. After Liturgy and some social time with each other, the clean-up crews securing the property along with some parishioners were able to recover the tabernacle. It was buried under the charred remains of the roof, which fell on the main altar. It was black from the fire; parts were bent and mangled from the intense heat. The key was completely melted. Yet, when we got the second key from the rectory and it was opened, the chamber holding the Blessed Sacrament was completely untouched, the silk lined walls completely intact and the gold chalice containing the precious Body of our Lord was undisturbed. It was truly a sign of God's presence among His people.

With God's grace and strength we hope to resurrect the structure of Saint Nicholas Church in Danbury, CT and to emerge as a more fervent community of faith. The road will not be easy and we humbly ask for your prayers and support.



Across above the charred timbers of the structure remains as a sign of hope.

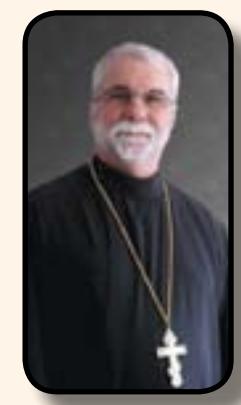
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FROM THE OFFICE OF THE
Eparchial Administrator



*Eparchial Relief Appeal for
Danbury Church Fire*

To the Dear Faithful of the Eparchy of Passaic,

Glory to Jesus Christ!

During the afternoon of the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul, Saturday, June 29th I received a call from Father John Cigan with the devastating news that Saint Nicholas Church in Danbury, CT was consumed by fire. I immediately left my rectory in Hillsborough, NJ and was there within two hours. On my arrival, I saw a church building that was completely destroyed.

As I spent the next 18 hours with Father John Cigan and the parish family, I saw a community that was not going to be destroyed by this misfortune. I experienced a community that with their faith and trust in Almighty God was going to do whatever it would take to rebuild their building and continue to grow their parish. This was especially evident in the celebration of the Divine Liturgy outside on the parish grounds as the congregation's voices were raised to the heavens. Even the birds were singing with us!

The sorrow of the people of Saint Nicholas Church is felt by each and every one of us throughout the Eparchy of Passaic. These wonderful people do not suffer alone - we each grieve with them. But as



we grieve, we also know their hope. That is what we do as Christians, we have hope because we know God will not let us down.

I invite you to share in the rebuilding of Saint Nicholas Church by participating in an eparchial-wide special collection which will be taken up during the weekend of August 10th and 11th. If you are not able to participate at that time, I ask that you send in your contribution to your local parish, or the Eparchial Chancery addressed to my attention. I also ask that you join me in praying for the parish community of Saint Nicholas Parish.

Thank you for your kindness. Please know that you are in my prayers.

Sincerely yours in the service of Christ
 and His people,

Very Rev. Edward G. Cimbala, D.Min.
Eparchial Administrator



FROM THE OFFICE OF THE EPARCHIAL ADMINISTRATOR
TRANSFERS AND APPOINTMENTS

REVEREND JOSEPH BERTHA, PHD from Pastor, Saint Michael the Archangel Byzantine Catholic Church Pittston, PA and Administrator, Saint Nicholas of Myra Byzantine Catholic Church, Swoyersville, PA, to Administrator, Saint John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church, Trumbull and Administrator, Holy Trinity Byzantine Catholic Church, New Britain, CT, effective July 17, 2013.

REVEREND FRANK HANINCIK is relieved of his responsibilities as Pastor, Saint John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church, Trumbull, CT and Administrator, Holy Trinity Byzantine Catholic Church, New Britain, CT, effective July 17, 2013, and, at the request of the Metropolitan Archbishop, is granted permission to serve as Spiritual Director of Saints Cyril and Methodius Byzantine Catholic Seminary, Pittsburgh, PA, effective August 1, 2013.

REVEREND GARY MENSINGER from Pastor, Saint Nicholas of Myra Byzantine Catholic Church, Old Forge, PA and Administrator, Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church, Taylor, PA to Administrator, Saint Michael the Archangel Byzantine Catholic Church Pittston, PA and Administrator, Saint Nicholas of Myra Byzantine Catholic Church, Swoyersville, PA, effective July 17, 2013.

REVEREND EDUARD SHESTAK from residence at Saint Nicholas of Myra Byzantine Catholic Church, White Plains, NY to Administrator, Saint Nicholas of Myra Byzantine Catholic Church Old, Forge, PA and Administrator, Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church, Taylor, PA, effective July 17, 2013.



UNIONTOWN, PA – Sister Vitalia Tomcho, OSBM, who turned 104 in the month of June, continues to celebrate the gift of life. Sister Vitalia, a resident at Mount Macrina Manor in Uniontown, PA, is the oldest Sister in the community and

the senior resident at the Manor.

Many members of the Sisters of St. Basil joined Sister Vitalia on her special day for a birthday celebration at the Manor. Sister enjoyed the opportunity to visit with so many Sisters and to share memories. Since Sister Vitalia was often the principal at the schools where she taught, many of the Sisters had worked under her guidance. Her dedicated service as a religious spans 83 years. Fifty-three of those years were spent in full-time teaching and admin-

istration, followed by 13 years of part-time teaching and tutoring at Byzantine Catholic Central School in Youngstown, OH.

Alumnae of Mount St. Macrina Academy (where Sister Vitalia was the Prefect of Students and a math and science teacher) especially enjoy visits with Sister when they have their biannual reunions at the Mount. Sister says the Academy was a favorite time and place of ministry and she recalls it with special fondness.

Sister Vitalia is very proud of being from the state of Ohio and feels a special kinship with anyone else who grew up there. Sister's family members visit and correspond regularly, and Sister proudly delights in their accomplishments and their remembrances of her. The Sisters and staff know that Sister Vitalia spends a great deal of time in prayer and in attendance at the liturgies celebrated at Mount Macrina Manor. All are grateful for her intercession offered quietly in their behalf.

Eternal Memory: +Deacon Gerald McDonnell

Deacon at Epiphany of Our Lord in Annandale, VA

Deacon Gerry McDonnell of Epiphany of Our Lord Byzantine Catholic Church in Annandale, VA, fell asleep in the Lord, surrounded by his loving family, on Saturday, June 22, 2013.

Born February 27, 1932 in Somerville, MA, Deacon Gerry was the son of the late William McDonnell and Katherine McDonnell. He was a graduate of Boston College and earned a Master's Degree from the George Washington University.

He married Mary Schmidt in September, 1953 after which he en-

listed in the United States Marine Corps. After serving in the Marine Corps for six years, he transferred to the United States Army where he served as a communications officer in stateside posts in Alaska, Georgia, Virginia and Maryland, and overseas in Okinawa and Vietnam. He was a veteran of the Korean Conflict and the Vietnam War. During the Vietnam War he served a tour of duty in Vietnam and then returned numerous times for assignments. He achieved the rank of Lieutenant Colonel and his final posting was Washington, DC.

Deacon Gerry proudly served his country 28 years as an officer in the United States Army, then worked in private industry for consulting companies for the Federal Government and the military. He retired from civilian occupation in 1995. During his military career he was a parishioner of Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church in Anchorage, AK, and Saint Gregory of Nyssa, Washington, DC as well as his current parish of Epiphany of our Lord Church, Annandale, VA. Prior to his ordination to the diaconate, Gerry, as a layman, super-



vised and trained parish altar servers and worked in the kitchen for parish catering along side his wife, Mary, who served as Hall Manager.

Discerning and answering a life-long vocational calling, Gerry

Continued on page 15.



+John and Mildred Noga at their recent wedding anniversary.

John Noga, 89, of Macungie, PA and formerly of McAdoo, PA fell asleep in the Lord on June 13, 2013 at Phoebe Home, Allentown, where he had been a resident since March. He was the Father of Father Gregory Noga, Pastor of Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church in Trenton, NJ and Administrator of Saint Nicholas Church in Roebling, NJ.

+John Noga was born in Tresckow, PA and was the son of the late John and Anna (Sluck) Noga. He was a member of Saint Michael



Father Gregory Noga thanks the clergy and guests for their prayers and support on behalf of his late father.

+John Noga Reposes in the Lord

Father of Eparchial Priest, Very Reverend Gregory Noga

Byzantine Catholic Church, McAdoo, PA where Father George Bujnak is Pastor. He was a member of the parish Holy Name Society and a graduate of Hazleton High School, Class of 1942.

Prior to retiring, John was employed as a manager by McAdoo Manufacturing. Preceding him in death, in addition to his parents,

were his sisters, Elizabeth "Betty" Noga and Anna Puhak. Surviving are his wife of 64 years, Mildred (Postupack) Noga; daughter, Theresa "Terry" Ammon and her husband, John, Allentown; his priest-son, the Very Reverend Gregory Noga, of Trenton, NJ; daughter, Susan Samargis and her husband, Steve, Temple City, CA; grandchildren, Judith Nicole and Kathryn Marie Ammon; brothers, Joseph Noga, Tresckow; and George Noga and his wife, Mary Ann, McAdoo; and many nieces and nephews.

The Office of Christian Burial with Divine Liturgy was celebrated at Saint Michael Byzantine Catholic Church, McAdoo, PA on Tuesday, June 18th by Father Gregory Noga and Father Edward Cimbala, Eparchial Administrator. Concelebrating were Father George Bujnak, Pastor; Msgr. John Sekellick, who also served as homilist; Father Basil Hutsko; and Archpriest John Kachuba. Seminarian Lewis Rabayda assisted at the altar and responses were led by cantor Andrew Skitko.



Msgr. John Sekellick preached the homily.

Also in attendance were Father Peter Hosak, Regional Syncellus; Father Frank Twardzik, regional Protopresbyter; as well as Father Joseph Bertha, Father Ronald Hatton, Father James Hayer, Father Michael Salnicky, Father Martin Vavrak, Father James Demko, Father John Cigan, Father Peter Donish, Father Gary Mensinger, Father Michael Yurista, Father Gregory Hosler, Fa-

Continued on page 15.

PEOPLE YOU KNOW

AROUND THE EPARCHY



SAINT THERESE CHURCH - ST. PETERSBURG, FL FIRST CONFESSION AND COMMUNION CELEBRATION

May 26th, the Sunday of All Saints, was a special day of celebration at Saint Therese Byzantine Catholic Church in St. Petersburg, FL.

Prayers and best wishes were extended to the children celebrating the Holy Mystery of First Confession, followed by Solemn Corporate Communion.

The class of 2013 included Rachel Kimball, Brodie Hausman,

Gabriella Maszera, and Andrew Koscho. The children and their families were welcomed to a parish celebration following the services. Kim Maszera served as the children's catechist.

Father Robert Evancho, pastor, celebrated the Divine Liturgy with Father Kenneth Bonadies concelebrating.

SAINT ANN CHURCH, HARRISBURG, PA FIRST CONFESSION AND COMMUNION CELEBRATION

On Saturday, March 23rd, eight students from Saint Ann Byzantine Catholic Church, Harrisburg, PA, celebrated the Holy Mystery of First Confession and a Corporate Holy Communion at the Divine Liturgy.

Concelebrating the Divine Liturgy were Father Michael Popson, Pastor of Saint Ann Church, and Father Joseph Loya, OSA, visiting clergy. The following day, Palm Sunday, was a special day as well as the children renewed their

baptismal vows during the Sunday Divine Liturgy.

Following the celebration of the Divine Liturgy, all eight children were the guests of honor at a parish breakfast sponsored by the parish Eastern Christian Formation organization. After breakfast, all children from the parish then enjoyed an Easter egg hunt.

Saint Ann Church is served by Father Michael Popson. The children were prepared for their First Confession by Mrs. Gina Mistishin, ECF instructor.



40th Annual Slavic American Festival



**Sunday, September 8, 2012
Epiphany of Our Lord Church
3410 Woodburn Road
Annandale, VA 22003**

Featuring: Traditional Slavic foods: holupki, pirohi, klobasi, haluski, and potato pancakes; dance to *Joe Stank and the Cadets*, from 12 Noon to 6 PM; Enjoy children's events; religious art & crafts sale; handmade Slavic art & crafts; rummage sale; bake sale; nutrolls; bingo; football on TV; raffles; and cold refreshments.

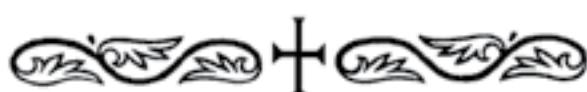
Church tours at 12:30 PM, 2:30 PM, 3:30 PM and 4:30 PM.

Byzantine Sacred Music Concert at 1:30 PM.

Liturgical schedule: Saturday, September 7th - 5 PM and Sunday, September 8th - 8 AM and 10:30 AM.

Rain or Shine - Noon to 6:30 pm - Free admission - Free shuttle parking - No pets please - Event times may vary - Quantities while they last - Proceeds benefit the Building Fund. Epiphany Church is served by Father John Basarab.

**For more information call 703-573-3986
or visit www.epiphanyofourlord.org**



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The Sisters of St. Basil the Great

warmly invite you to the

79th Annual Pilgrimage

in honor of

Our Lady of Perpetual Help

August 31 & September 1, 2013



Theotokos, Steadfast Foundation of Faith

Come and participate in:

- *The beautiful Divine Liturgy*
- *Mystery of Reconciliation*
- *The popular Children's Procession*
- *The inspiring Candlelight Vigil*
- *Adult enrichment sessions*
- *And, more...*



Sisters of St. Basil the Great
Mount Saint Macrina

Uniontown, Pennsylvania
(724) 438-8644
www.sistersofstbasil.org



The Daily Pilgrimage Schedule For the 79th Annual Pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Perpetual Help *August 31st and September 1st, 2013*



*Sisters of the Order of Saint Basil the Great
Our Lady of Perpetual Help Province
Mount Saint Macrina
Uniontown, Pennsylvania
Sister Seraphim, OSBM, Provincial
The Seventy-Ninth Annual Pilgrimage
In Honor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help*



Conducted under the Patronage of the Byzantine Catholic Metropolia

Metropolitan William (Skurla) - *Archbishop of Pittsburgh*
Bishop John (Kudrick) - *Bishop of Parma*
Bishop Gerald (Dino) - *Bishop of Phoenix*
Father Edward Cimbala - *Administrator of the Eparchy of Passaic*

Glory to Jesus Christ!

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This year we are celebrating the 79th Pilgrimage honoring Our Lady of Perpetual Help under the theme: "Theotokos: Steadfast Foundation of Faith." Mary's faith was much closer to our own than the sentimental legends that have been handed down through the ages. As the mother of Jesus, she experienced the same difficulties in life as we do, but with a much greater degree of intensity. Mary lived in the historical period of Roman occupation, and therefore withstood oppression and injustice. The holy family lived in poverty, and undoubtedly experienced a good deal of isolation and prejudice.

All of Mary's earthly life passed under the veil of an unbending faith. She continued to trust and to walk into an unfamiliar future as she was being called by God to live through an outwardly common but inwardly mysterious existence. The journey of the Mother of God was filled with unanswered questions, profound sorrow, and sacred joy. Pope Paul VI wrote that Mary is worthy of imitation because she was the first and the most perfect disciple. The Theotokos was always receptive to God's unfolding plan with an unswerving faith.

Plan to be with us in honoring Mary this Pilgrimage. All of us need great faith to cope with life situations involving our well-being, relationships, and world problems. All of us need to call upon the Theotokos, the Mother of God, as our firm foundation of Faith.

We Sisters invite you to join us at Mt. Macrina on August 31st through September 1st. Together, we can prayerfully reflect upon our own quest in faith, individually and as members of His holy Church. Together we can ask our gentle Theotokos for the faith to let our lives be fashioned by Him.

We look forward to meeting all of you Pilgrims again, or perhaps, for the first time. For you faithful Pilgrims who are unable to be with us physically, please know that we will keep you in the heart of our prayers as we prepare for and live out our sacred Pilgrimage journey.

In the love of the Lord Jesus,
Sister Seraphim, OSBM

Sister Seraphim, OSBM
Provincial

PRE-PILGRIMAGE SCHEDULE Friday, August 30, 2013

7:15 pm
Office of Small Compline
 Shrine Altar

ANNUAL PILGRIMAGE SCHEDULE Saturday, August 31st, 2013



7:30 am - 12 noon
Mystery of Reconciliation (Confessions)
 House of Prayer Patio

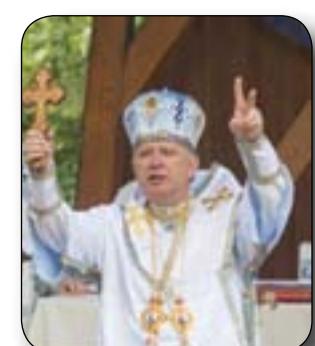
OPENING OF THE PILGRIMAGE

9:00 am
MATINS
 Shrine Altar

10:15 am
Procession with Icon of Our Lady of Perpetual Help
 House of Prayer to Shrine Altar

Welcome: Sister Seraphim, OSBM

**Divine Liturgy to be followed by the
procession to Lourdes Grotto for the
Solemn Blessing of Water; procession
to return to the House of Prayer at the
conclusion of the blessing.**



1:00 pm - 5:00 pm
**Mystery of Reconciliation
(Confessions)**
 House of Prayer Patio

Saturday, August 31, 2013 (continued)**1:00 am****MOLEBEN**
Shrine Altar**2:00 pm****Children's Pilgrimage**
Children's Tent
Orientation for Teens
Prayer Garden Area
Enrichment Sessions
Trinity Center**3:00 pm****Teen Pilgrimage**
Prayer Garden Area**4:00 pm****Vespers with Divine Liturgy**
Shrine Altar**6:00 pm****Enrichment Session**
Mausoleum**7:15 pm****Procession**
House of Prayer to Mount Macrina Cemetery**7:30 pm****Parastas**
Mount Macrina Cemetery
Candlelight Procession
Mount Macrina Cemetery to Shrine Altar
Akathist to the Mother of God
Shrine Altar**Following Akathist...****Teen Social**
Prayer Garden Area
Young Adult Social
Trinity Center Courtyard**Sunday, September 1, 2013****7:00 am****MATINS**
Shrine Altar**7:00 am****DIVINE LITURGY**
House of Prayer Chapel**7:30 am - 12 noon****Mystery of Reconciliation (Confessions)**
House of Prayer Patio**8:30 am****DIVINE LITURGY (Slavonic)**
Shrine Altar**10:30 am****DIVINE LITURGY**
Shrine Altar**11:00 am****Mystery of Anointing**
Trinity Center**12:30 pm to 5:00 pm****Mystery of Reconciliation (Confessions)**
House of Prayer Patio**1:00 pm****Children's Procession with Special Blessing for Youth and Young Adults**
House of Prayer to Mother of God Shrine**Sunday, September 1, 2013 (continued)****1:30 pm to 2:30 pm****Mystery of Reconciliation (Confessions) for infirm, sick and physically challenged**
Manor Gazebo**2:00 pm****Children's Pilgrimage**
Children's Tent
Teen Pilgrimage
Prayer Garden Area
Adult Enrichment Session
Trinity Center
Mystery of Anointing
Shrine Altar**3:45 pm****Procession**
House of Prayer to Mother of God Shrine**4:00 pm****DIVINE LITURGY**
Mother of God Shrine
Words of Gratitude by Sister Seraphim, OSBM, Provincial**7:15 pm****Procession**
House of Prayer to Mother of God Shrine**7:30 pm****Candlelight Procession**
Beginning and ending at Mother of God Shrine**CLOSING OF THE PILGRIMAGE****Following Candlelight Procession...****Teen Social**
Prayer Garden Area
Young Adult Social
Trinity Center Courtyard

Dear Sisters,

Please pray for me and place the following intention(s) before the icon of our Lady of Perpetual Help.

Your Name (optional):

We have no greater help, no greater hope than you, O most pure Virgin; Help us, then, for we hope in you, we glorify you, we are your servants. Do not abandon us.

Mount Saint Macrina,
500 W. Main Street,
Uniontown, PA 15401
(724) - 438-8644

www.sistersofstbasil.org

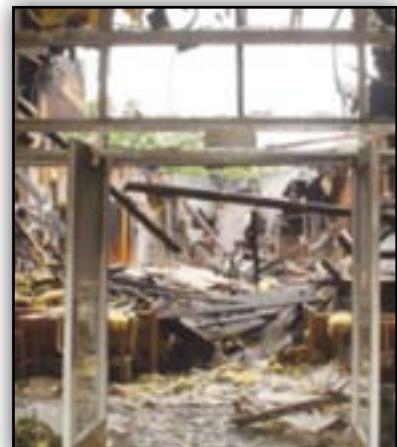
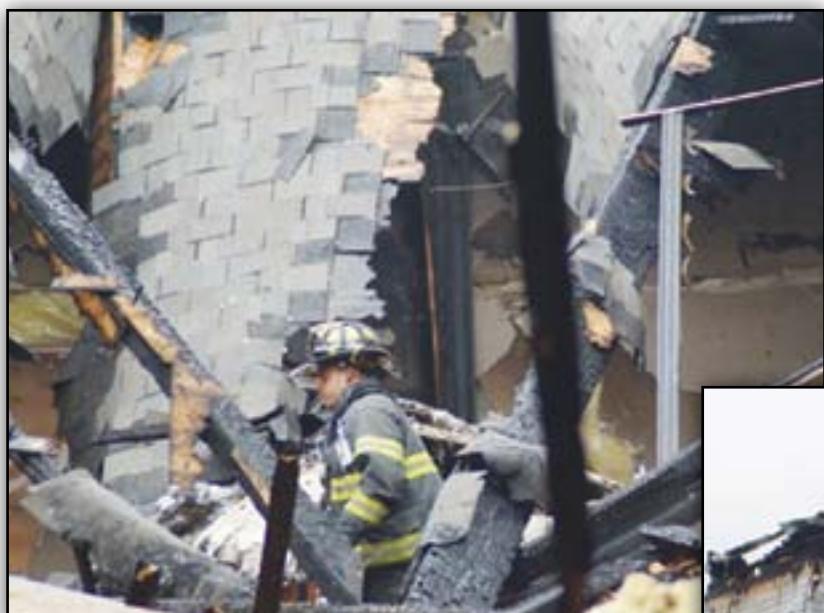




*“We will soon begin the rebuilding effort...
the resurrection of the church structure
as well as the parish community.”*

-Very Reverend Edward G. Cimbala, D.Min
Eparchial Administrator

Danb



*Photos courtesy of
Christopher Russo*

Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church DANBURY CHURCH DESTROYED BY FIRE



“This morning we were supposed to have a very different announcement – I was supposed to be leaving you, and a new pastor was being assigned, but that has changed; I will stay with you, and work with you to resurrect Saint Nicholas Church!”

–Reverend Father John Cigan, Pastor
Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church



EPARCHIAL COLLECTION FOR DANBURY FIRE RELIEF

Everyone is invited to participate in an eparchial-wide collection on the weekend of August 10th and 11th to assist Saint Nicholas Parish in the rebuilding of their church building.

Your generosity and prayerful support is greatly appreciated!

- A special collection will be taken in each parish on the weekend of August 10/11
- Please make checks payable to your local parish - Pastors will then send one check to the Chancery



If you are unable to attend the Divine Liturgy at your own parish on the weekend of August 10/11, you may make your checks payable to the “Eparchy of Passaic” and send them directly to the Eparchial Chancery.

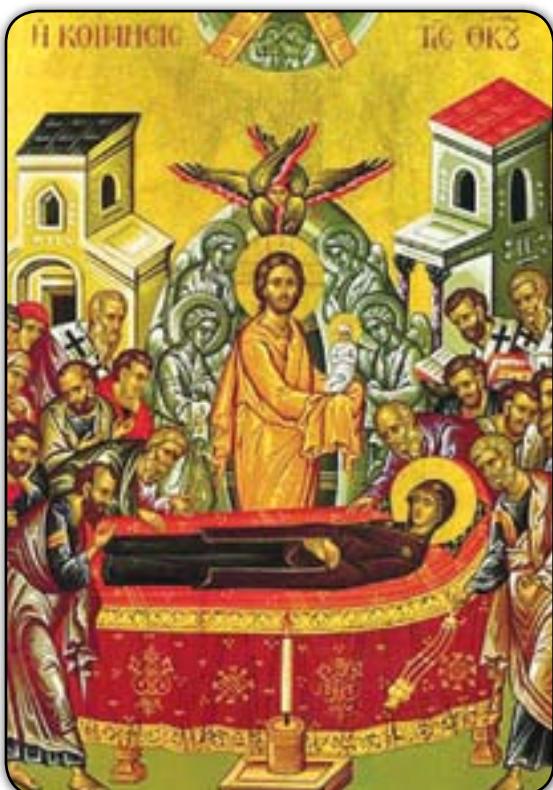
- Danbury Fire Relief
Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Passaic
445 Lackawanna Avenue
Woodland Park, NJ 07424
ATTN: Father Ed Cimbala
- Checks sent directly to the Chancery should be payable to: “Eparchy of Passaic”

59th Annual Holy Dormition Pilgrimage

St. Mary's Villa, Sloatsburg, NY

Saturday, August 10th & Sunday, August 11th

Sisters Servants of Mary Immaculate



**Theme: One Lord,
One Faith,
One Baptism**



Saturday, August 10th

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| 12 Noon | Food Available at Pavilion |
| 2-3:30 PM | Workshops |
| 5 PM | Divine Liturgy - Father Jack Custer
Main Celebrant and Homilist
<i>Responses: Cantor Joe Durko and the Chanters from Resurrection Church, Smithtown, NY</i> |
| 8 PM | Blessing of Water (front of Villa)
Moleben to the Mother of God
with Candlelight Procession (<i>grotto</i>)
Very Rev. Edward Cimbala, Administrator of the Eparchy of Passaic, <i>celebrant and homilist</i> ; |

Sunday, August 11th

- | | | |
|---------|--|---|
| 8 AM | Lamentations to the Mother of God (chapel) | Blessing of Religious Articles (<i>front of St. Joseph's</i>) |
| 10 AM | Hierarchical Divine Liturgy with procession to grotto followed by Blessing of Flowers | 2 PM Stations of the Cross |
| 12 Noon | Youth Liturgy (chapel) | 3 PM Moleben to the Mother of God (grotto) - Ukrainian
Blessing of cars and buses
<i>Confession Available Throughout the Entire Weekend</i> |
| 1:00 PM | Procession for Youth/Children | |
| 1:30 PM | Healing Service with Akathist (Villa chapel, grotto steps) | |



Father Gary Mensinger

“Blue Panachida”
For Firefighters and Emergency Responders
Sunday, August 25th at 3PM
Sybertsville, PA



Our firefighters and emergency personnel risk their lives to keep us safe. We do well to pray for them, both living and deceased. Join us in the chapel at Holy Dormition Friary, Sybertsville, Sunday August 25 at 3pm for a “Blue Panachida” to pray for those firefighters and emergency responders who have died in the past year.

Father Gary Mensinger, priest and volunteer firefighter, will be the celebrant. There will be a blessing of equipment and a social in our Emmaus Hall after the panachida. For more information: 570-788-1212 ext 400; or, email holydormition@gmail.com.

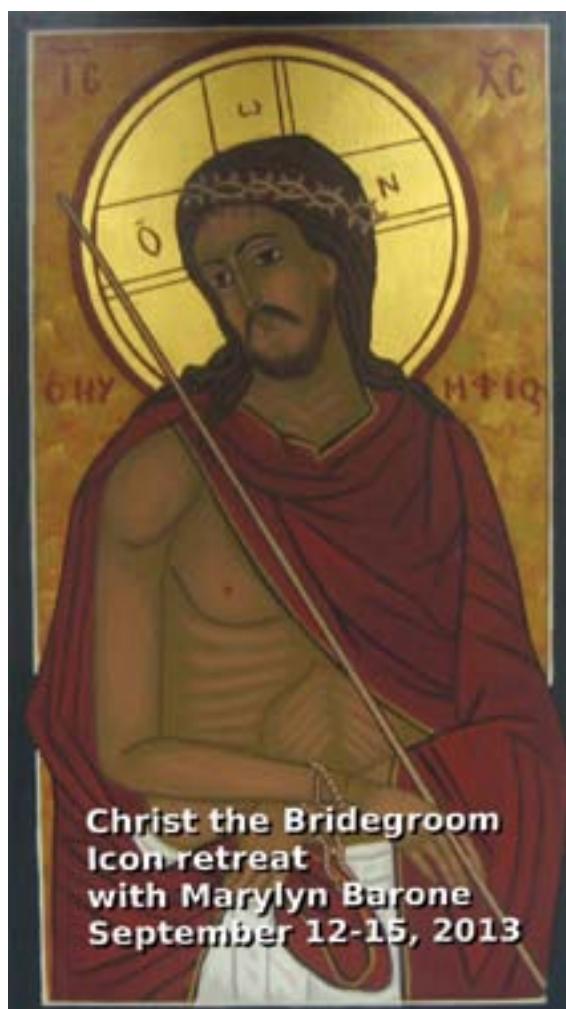
Festival in Wilkes-Barre, PA August 2nd, 3rd, and 4th



Friday, August 2nd and Saturday, August 3rd from 5PM - 10PM, and ALL DAY on Sunday, August 4th!

Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church, 695 North Main Street, Wilkes-Barre, PA
Indoors & outdoors. Potato Pancakes, Live Entertainment! Games of Chance with great prizes! Delicious ethnic and traditional foods. Giant Flea Market, Cash Raffle, and free Blood Pressure screening!

All Welcome! Rain or Shine!



Christ the Bridegroom Icon Retreat

*Thursday-Sunday
September 12th-15th
Sybertsville, PA*

No experience needed to learn how to make your own icon. Iconographer Marylyn Barone teaches people of any (or no) skill level how to go from paint and wood to a complete icon.

This workshop will be at the beginner level for adults. Each student will write an 8"x14" icon of Christ the Bridegroom, using a prepared prototype, learning techniques for faces, garments, 23k goldleaf gilding, and background. All supplies are included. Mary-

lyn will also present the theology of icons, focusing on Jesus and the Passion.

Cost: \$200 includes all materials and Friday and Saturday lunch. Thursday 6:30-9:30pm, Friday & Saturday 9:30am-4:30pm, Sunday noon-4pm. Optional room and board available at additional cost.

For more information: 570-788-1212 ext 402; or, email holydormition@gmail.com - Subject: Icon Retreat.

**Sunday, September 22, 2013
11 AM – 7 PM**

Day of Pilgrimage For Peace

**Holy Dormition Byzantine Franciscan Friary
Sybertsville, PA**

Pilgrimage Schedule

11:00AM	CHAPEL open for private prayer; Gift Shop and Dinner
1:00PM-3:00PM	Confessions. Locations in Chapel and Outdoors. Liturgy intentions accepted in Gift Shop area Candles available for intentions (<i>in chapel and outdoors</i>).
12:30PM	Panachida Service: Memorial Service for the Faithful Departed (<i>Chapel</i>)
1:00PM	Moleben and Healing Service (<i>Chapel</i>)
2:00 PM	Spiritual Presentation by Sister Ann Laszok, OSBM
2:30PM	Concert of Byzantine Traditional and Spiritual Hymns
3:45PM	Procession to the Main Altar
4:00PM	Hierarchical Divine Liturgy
Special Note:	<i>Parishes requested to bring decorated Procession Crosses. Please bring lawn chairs</i>



Food Service

- 11:00AM-2:30PM Pilgrimage Dinner
(Indoors in Emmaus Hall)

12:00PM-3:00PM and after the 4PM
Divine Liturgy: Slavic and American
Foods/Beverages, Bake Sale (Outdoors)



History of the Eparchy of Passaic

*Preparing for the 50th Anniversary
of the Eparchy of Passaic - November 10, 2013*

**50
Years
an
Eparchy**



Part 10 - A True Shepherd and Spiritual Father

The Carmelite Sisters of Sugarloaf, PA

By Father Jody J. Baran

Bishop Michael was a true shepherd and spiritual father to his flock in the Eparchy of Passaic. One of his many great accomplishments in building our Eparchy was the founding of Holy Annunciation Monastery for the first Byzantine Discalced Carmelite Nuns in Sugarloaf, Pennsylvania.

This particular Carmel was established by the inspiration of Pope John XXIII and the Second Vatican Council. The unity in the Church was the concern of the Popes and Bishops throughout the 20th and into the 21st centuries. This was also the reason for the founding of Holy Annunciation Monastery. The three founding sisters, Mother Marija of the Holy Spirit, Sister Marie Helen of the Holy Cross and Sister Ann of the Trinity felt that Carmelite spirituality was not just a gift for the Western Church and its members but was also a gift to the Eastern Rite Catholics. They also recognized the close connection of Carmelite and Byzantine spirituality. Therefore, like the Myrrh-bearing Women of the Gospels, these three Sisters set out to bring Carmel to the Eastern Church.



*The Carmelite Monastery
in Sugarloaf, PA.*

The Sisters sought out Father Walter Ciszek, SJ, a bi-ritual Jesuit priest from Northeastern Pennsylvania who went into the former Soviet Union and worked as an underground priest ministering to Catholics there. Father Ciszek was arrested and placed in a Soviet prison camp where he spent many years of torture and questioning, but he remained steadfast in his Faith. He is the noted author of *With God in Russia and In His Steps*, which are two spiritual classics and tell of his life and work in Russia. Father Walter gave both spiritual guidance and encouragement to these pioneering Sisters. He recommended these wonderful religious to Bishop Dudick who then accepted them into the Eparchy of Passaic. Subsequently, Bishop Dudick established the Community on February 23, 1977 in Sugarloaf, PA and purchased the former Genetti Mink Ranch (only a few miles away from the Byzantine Franciscans in Sybertsville, PA) as the beginnings of this House of Carmel.



Father Ciszek, SJ.

Although those first years were difficult, the Sisters persevered through their intense faith and prayers, along with the help of Bishop Michael and the Byzantine Catholic Faithful in the Hazleton area. As a result, the Sisters' monastery began to grow and flourish. The Byzantine Franciscans along with Father Walter and several other clergy offered spiritual guidance and acted as chaplains to the Sisters. Following his retirement, Bishop Michael served as the Community's chaplain and celebrated the Divine Liturgy, Sacraments and Office daily with the Sisters up to his last illness. The Sisters cared for him as their founder and father for many years.

Under Bishop Michael's protection, the Community grew in numbers and had high hopes of accomplishing Church unity. They also maintained an intense spiritual life. The Sisters invoked cloister after the new cells (rooms) and small chapel were added on to the monastery. Later, the Sisters built a beautiful Chapel and adorned it with hand-painted icons. The Sisters also developed a "bakery" and their continued sales of homemade baked goods reaches global proportion. They send their wonderful confections throughout our country and other countries. They also established a *poustinia*, or retreat where anyone can come and take part of the serenity and prayer life of the Carmel on individual retreats. In recent years, the Sisters have branched out to raising miniature horses and livestock that they then sell to interested parties.

Along with this entrepreneurial side, their main goal has been to pray and support the Church. When Communism weakened and fell, several Byzantine Catholic women from Slovakia and the Carpathian region felt the call to religious life in the Carmel of Sugarloaf. These were accepted and trained to go out and open up Byzantine Carmels in eastern Europe, in France, and the Middle East. A group of Carmelite Friars (the men's group) even formed in Bulgaria after the fall of Communism and as a result of the work done by the Sisters. In 1999, through several unusual events, five young women from the Indian Syro-Malabar Catholic Church joined the Sugarloaf community. Once again, Bishop Michael's generosity and foresight was able to help sister Churches of the Eastern Rite.

Bishop Michael left a legacy of prayer and furthered the spirituality and boundaries of our Church and our Eparchy of Passaic. Again, a debt of gratitude is owed to Bishop Michael. So, if you find yourself in northeastern Pennsylvania and especially in Sugarloaf, please stop by and say *hello* to the Sisters and help support their ministry. Also say a prayer of thanksgiving for the Eparchy of Passaic and Bishop Michael, as well as for the Sisters. Also, say a prayer for the clergy – including your humble servant who is sharing this wonderful journey with you.

50 Years an Eparchy Save the date!

**The Byzantine Catholic
Eparchy of Passaic**

Sunday

November 10, 2013

3:00 pm Divine Liturgy

**The Cathedral of Saint Michael the Archangel
96 First Street, Passaic NJ**

Reception immediately following:



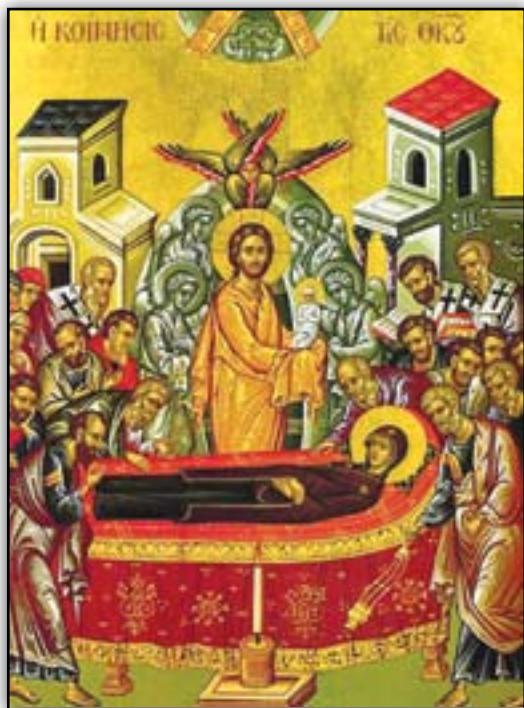
the brownstone
Paterson, NJ

*Special rates have been arranged at the following nearby hotels:

Crown Plaza (Rt 46 in Fairfield) or Holiday Inn (Rt 46 in Totowa)
Transportation optionally provided to Cathedral and Dinner

SEASONAL REFLECTIONS

Msgr. John. T. Sekellick, JCL



It wasn't long after the Christian religion spread throughout the known world at the time, thanks to the preaching of the Apostles under the inspiration and guidance of the Holy Spirit, that serious issues arose regarding the divinity of Christ. The first Council of Nicea confronted and resolved the Arian heresy which actually denied His divinity and caused great controversy.

Dovetailing controversies about Christ were also questions about His Mother, Mary. Is she really God's mother? Is she just the mother of the human person of Christ? What is the condition of her being a mother but still being considered a virgin even after giving birth? Was she really assumed into heaven, body and soul?

When we turn to sacred scripture for some answers, we find the account of the Annunciation as the Archangel Gabriel tells Mary, "The Holy One to be born (of you) shall be called the Son of God." (1:35) Saint Luke records the words of Elizabeth, Mary's cousin, upon her visitation: "How have I deserved that the *Mother of my Lord* should come to me?" (1:43) This is a solid scriptural reference to Mary as God's mother.

Saint Luke then records the angel's announcement to the shepherds upon Jesus' birth: "I bring you good news of great joy which shall be to all the people; for today in the town of David

The Holy Mother of God, Theotokos

a Savior has been born to you who is Christ *the Lord.*" (2:10-11). More profoundly, Saint John the Evangelist writes in his Gospel, "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." (1:14)

The early Church understood and accepted Mary as truly the Mother of God until a priest by the name of Nestorius denied the unity of the divine and human natures in the Person of Christ. Consequently, according to Nestorius, Mary, being human, was only the mother of the human nature of Christ. This was formulated in the Greek term *Christotokos* (Christ-bearer).

The ecumenical council of Ephesus in 431 addressed this issue and condemned that false teaching by giving Mary the preeminent title *Theotokos* – Mother of God. It is a title found in a third century prayer *Sub tuum praesidium* which we know in Church Slavonic as *Pod tvoju milost'*. More likely than not, the title was already in use much before that time and surely factored into the decision of the Council Fathers.

The Second Vatican Council in its Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (*Lumen Gentium*) makes reference to this ancient prayer stating,

"From the most ancient times, the Blessed Virgin has been venerated under the title of 'God-bearer.' In all perils and difficulties the faithful have fled prayerfully to her protection." (VIII, 66) The Council adds, "Especially after the Council of Ephesus, the cult of the People of God toward Mary wonderfully increased in veneration and love, in invocation and imitation, according to her own prophetic words: 'All generations shall call me blessed, because He Who is mighty has done great things for me.' (Luke 1:48)

As we celebrate on August 15th the Holy Dormition (Falling-asleep) of the *Theotokos* this month, may we reflect on this hymn from the Vespers of the Feast: "The most pure Spouse, the Mother of the One in whom the Father is well-pleased, she whom God had chosen to become the dwelling place of His natures that had been united without confusion, today delivers her most pure soul to her divine Creator. The angels welcome her in a divine manner, and the Mother of Life is now transferred to life. She is the lamp of inaccessible brightness, the hope of our souls and the salvation of believers." (3rd hymn *at the Litija*)



Women of Faith

*Mary, Our Model:
Lighting Our Path in Faith, Hope and Love!*

A Special Retreat for Women at:

Saint Mary's Villa

150 Sisters Servants Lane, Sloatsburg, New York

Director of Retreat: Sister Natalya, SSMI

Spiritual Advisor: Reverend John J. Zeyack, Eparchy of Passaic

September 27 - 29, 2013

Cost: \$160.00 per person (Includes Lodging & Meals)

- **Arrival, Welcome and Registration:** Beginning at 3PM Friday, September 27, 2013
- **Friday Evening Prayers:** 8:30 PM
- **Saturday:** Breakfast, Morning session, Lunch, Afternoon Session, Dinner
- **Sunday:** Breakfast, Liturgy and Luncheon with the Sisters Servants of Mary Immaculate

TO REGISTER OR FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

Please contact: Mrs. Diane Rabiej, Chancery, Eparchy of Passaic,

445 Lackawanna Avenue, Woodland Park, NJ 07424

Phone: (973) 890-7777. Make checks payable to: "Saint Michael Cathedral."

This year of Faith is a call to deepen our lives as followers and friends of Jesus. We continue to be invited to walk the path of faith: faith in God's presence, power and Love, faith in other people, and faith in ourselves as the dwelling place of God. Jesus Constantly said to everyone He healed: "Your faith has saved you!"





FAITH AND COMMUNITY ISSUES

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

The Dignity and Holiness of Marriage and the Family

How does the Church view Marriage? What role does Marriage and Family life play in the life of the Church? Responses to these questions are found in the middle of the *Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World*, (the Latin name, *Gaudium et Spes* comes from the first two words of the document, the joy and hope ...) specifically, the section on the dignity and holiness of Marriage and Family.

The document describes marriage as, “The intimate partnership of life and love . . .” (§48) and that this partnership, established by the Creator has its own laws, proper to itself and based upon the free contract entered into by the partners therein. Unlike a business contract, this consensual contract is irrevocable (§48). Marriage is recognized as an institution strengthened by the power of Divine Law. It receives its stability from an act of total surrender on the part of the participating couple of one to the other partner, for the welfare of the partner’s relationship, any children that may come and society-at-large.

The guarantee of these benefits does not rely solely upon human will; rather it rests upon God who Himself is the Author of the Married State. It is God who endows Marriage and family with various benefits and ends toward which God directs and orients. All of this bears the greatest of import regarding the continuance of the human race.

Simply stated, the Church sees the state of Marriage as endowed with dignity and holiness. God Himself made marriage, so that it’s totally dependent upon God its creator to become the fullest expression of what the Divine Vision sees it to be, and yet human cooperation with the Will of God within the marital relationship is ordered by God and as such made necessary for a successful marriage and family life.

The day-by-day living out of the marriage commitment becomes the visible way in which humans continue existing throughout time, the healthy development of the human person, the destiny, eternally speaking, of every member within the human family, as well as “the dignity, stability, peace, and prosperity of the human family and of the whole human race” (*Gaudium et Spes*, §48).

How is this achieved practically? Did you ever stop to think that just by having children and raising a faith-filled family, one that is morally based, responsibly following the Commandments of God and His Church is for the family the way to Crowning Glory? Such a life of dedication is not easy! Although the single parent scenario has become a commonplace oc-

and exclusive love for each other, a reflection of Christ’s great love for His Church a love so richly manifested in Christ’s delivering Himself up for it (Ephesians 5:25).

Marital Love that is authentic is drawn into the mystery of Divine Love, sculpted and strengthened by Christ’s redemptive power and the Church’s salvific share in that power. What comes out of this mystery is that the spouses by their life shared together as one are directed toward God in His Spirit and in such are strengthened in their sacred role as parents. Therefore, by striving to be good and faithful parents and spouses in their day-to-day living out of their marital vows, they are brought closer to God and the faithful witness of their shared life in marriage brings down upon their families God’s loving Providence and protection.

The Document states it beautifully, “by virtue of this sacrament (Mystery of Marriage) spouses are penetrated by the Spirit of Christ and their whole life is suffused with Faith, Hope and Charity; thus they increasingly further their own perfection and their mutual sanctification and together they render Glory to God” (*Gaudium et Spes, Holiness of Marriage and the Family*, §48).

Did you ever stop to think that just by having children and raising a faith-filled family, one that is morally based, responsibly following the Commandments of God and His Church is for the family the way to Crowning Glory?

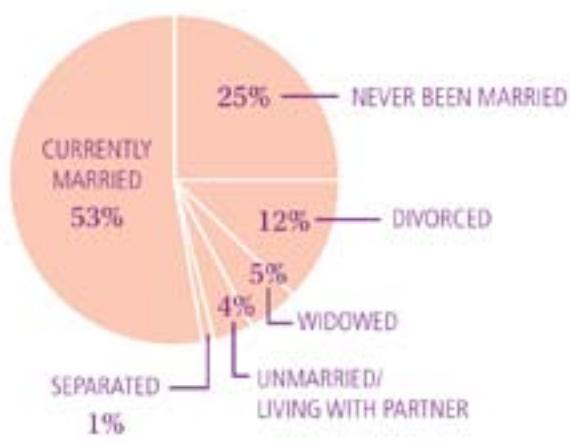
currence, the fullest expression of the family is found in the man and women becoming one. The document states, “(they) help and serve each other by their marriage partnership; they become more conscious of their unity and experience it more deeply from day to day” (*Gaudium et Spes*, P. II, Chpt 1, *The Dignity of Marriage and the Family: Holiness of Marriage and Family* §48).

The mystery of Divine relationship is reflected in the intimacy of the marital partners. This intimacy is shared between the couple first and then with the children borne of that union. Such a bond demands a fidelity that is total; a unity that is unbreakable until death itself separates them. Such a loving union is blessed by Christ Himself modeling by its unique existence the union Christ has with His Bride the Church and finding its origin directly from the Fountainhead of God’s own Love (*Gaudium et Spes, Holiness of Marriage and Family* §48).

As the document states: “just as of old God encountered his people with a covenant of love and fidelity, so our Savior, the spouse of the Church, now encounters Christian Spouses through the sacrament of marriage” (*Gaudium et Spes, Holiness of Marriage and Family* §48). It is precisely the abiding presence of Christ within the married couple that allows the spouses to achieve an enduring fidelity in their mutual

An important part of any family are the children, the gift of life and the promise of the future in any family. In the next installments we’ll look at where married love, children, and the fruitfulness of marriage fit together in the family dynamic.

MARITAL STATUS of U.S. adult Catholics:



Annual Slavic Festival

St. Mary Church, Scranton, PA - Mifflin Ave and Linden St.

Friday, August 16th - Saturday, August 17th

5:00 PM - 10:00 PM



Ethnic Foods, Bake Sale, Children's Activities, Basket Raffle, 50/50 tickets, White Elephant Sale, Clams, and more!

Live Entertainment by *Take 3* on Friday, and *Doubleshot* on Saturday.

For information contact Mike Fedorka @ 570-241-8975 or Dave Evanko @ 570-466-6892.



RESPECT LIFE FORUM

By Anne McGuire

Living the Gospel of Life

I walked briskly into my co-worker's office to drop off some papers before going about the rest of my day. Her elderly husband was there with her, but I didn't stop to say hello before continuing with my objective. They were on their way out the door; I was merely concerned with carrying out my task. I barely acknowledged his presence, if at all.

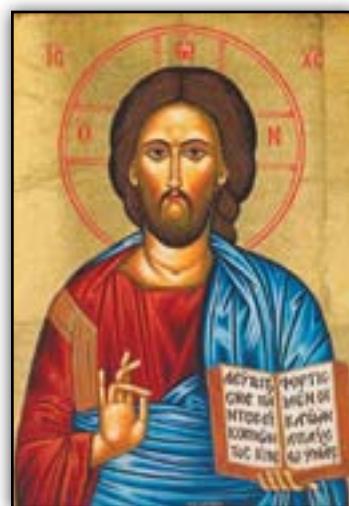
As I finished my business with her, he looked at me and called me out for not greeting him. Although he was teasing, the accuracy of his point struck me and continues to nudge my conscience, even as I think about the event days later.

How often do I see people – even look them in the face – but not acknowledge their presence? Whether this stems from my own insecurity, laziness, or any other reason, the effect is the same: I am failing to step outside of myself and recognize with wonder the person in front of me, who was created by God and is now held in existence by His love.

As Pope Benedict said in his homily at the beginning of his pontificate, "Each of us is the result of a thought of God. Each of us is willed, each of us is loved, each of us is necessary." Do I treat the people I encounter each day according to this truth? Do I acknowledge the dignity that each of us has, as one who is precious to God?

In *Evangelium Vitae* (The Gospel of Life), Pope John Paul II recognizes that, as a "people for life," "we need first of all to foster, in ourselves and in others, a contemplative outlook." He goes

on to say that "such an outlook arises from faith in the God of life, who has created every individual as a 'wonder,'" and that "it is time...with deep religious awe to rediscover the ability to revere and honor every person" (no. 32).



As Pope Benedict said, "Each of us is the result of a thought of God."

Do I treat the people I encounter each day according to this truth?

When I studied abroad for a semester with about 160 other students from my college, I initially thought of many of them as strangers. Yet in time, I grew to be struck by the incredible richness and beauty of the individual people with whom I traveled, studied, and worshipped. They

was accepted as a Deacon Student by Bishop Michael J. Dudick who, with the approval of Bishop Thomas Welsh, Bishop of Arlington, VA, was accepted in the Deacon Formation Program of the Diocese of Arlington. He was ordained a Deacon at Epiphany of our Lord, Annandale, VA, June 11, 1989 by Bishop Dudick. He served for twenty-four years as a deacon, assigned to Epiphany Church, Annandale, VA and Epiphany Mission, Gaithersburg, MD.

As a Deacon, he continued his studies, enrolling in a Master of Theology program in what is now

the Notre Dame Graduate School, Alexandria, VA. He was assigned to co-teach with Father John Basarab a course in pastoral theology at the Deacon Formation Program of the Eparchy of Passaic at Saint Pius X Seminary Dalton, PA.

Deacon Gerry enjoyed being of service to the Church, to become an icon of Jesus Christ who said, "The Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve." This service was its own reward as Saint Paul under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit preached, "Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, who Himself said,

"There is more happiness in giving than in receiving." (Acts 20:35).

Deacon Gerry is survived by his loving wife of 59 years, Mary McDonnell; his three sons, Eric, Chuck, and FJ, and their spouses; his daughter, Terry Abell. He is also survived by nine grandchildren, one great-granddaughter and many nieces and nephews.

The Office of Christian Burial with Divine Liturgy was celebrated

by Father Edward Cimbala, Eparchial Administrator and Father John Basarab, Pastor on Thursday, June 27 at Epiphany of Our Lord Byzantine Catholic Church in Annandale, VA where his body lie in state. A Parastas was celebrated on Wednesday, June 26th with parish and local and eparchial clergy concelebrating. Interment was at Fairfax Memorial Park.

May his memory be eternal!

Funeral of +John Noga

Continued from p. 3

ther Joseph Erdei, Msgr. Nicholas Puhak, and Father Robert Lucas.

A Parastas was celebrated at the Damiano Funeral Home in McAdoo the night before by Father Gregory Noga and numerous local and visiting clergy.

In his homily, Msgr. John Sekellick noted that in the eyes of the world, death is seen as something final. However, if seen with the eyes of faith, he noted, death is not the end but merely a change. He then quoted the Apostle Paul from 1 Corinthians, Chapter 2: "Eye has not seen, and ear has

not heard, and it has not entered the human heart, what God has prepared for those who love Him." Msgr. Sekellick also reflected on +John's devotion to the Church and encouraged all to remember his example of a faith-filled life.

Father Edward Cimbala, Administrator of the Eparchy of Passaic, offered condolences on behalf of the Eparchy and assured father Gregory and his family that, "as a Church, we care for you." Father Gregory thanked Father Edward and all priests in attendance offering his heartfelt gratitude for their prayerful support and attendance. "It was a joy to celebrate (the services) with you," he said. Interment was at Saint Michael's Cemetery, McAdoo, PA.

May his memory be eternal!



Father Edward Cimbala, Eparchial Administrator, chants the Prayer of Absolution.





SEMINARIAN REFLECTIONS

Seminarian Lewis Rabayda

Stillness and Silence in an Age of Distraction

As part of the seminary formation experience, the summers are spent shadowing a priest in a parish in our respective Eparchies. This is to give those studying and working towards priesthood practical hands-on experience through the method of apprenticeship. This experience is invaluable. And this summer I have the opportunity to live alone in a rectory, which has given me a more full understanding of what it is like to be a celibate priest in the Byzantine Church.

This experience has provided much comfort and affirmation of my vocation. However, it has also exposed the realities of living in this day-and-age. I am 30 years old. I am a child of the computer age and an early adopter of mobile media devices. I enjoy popular music and movies and I like being in public places such as coffee shops. These are all normal activities. However, even though I am a participant of this culture, I somehow have deceived myself in thinking that I am immune to its influence, and that a building such as a rectory, or even the seminary itself, is a monastery like place full of peace and quiet contemplation of the mysteries of Christ. I have heard this point of view from others, and I myself have held it: that these places are walls that keep the culture out. This view is false.

There is no physical material on this earth that can shield us from distraction. Even if I were to stop my participation in culture now, enter into a contemplative monastery where I would never leave my cell, I would still have 30 years of culture and media memories to struggle with. These memories alone are sufficient to keep my mind distracted for the rest of my life. But, I am not going to enter into such a monastery. And the simple act of going to the grocery store is enough exposure to culture that can lead to spiritual distraction. The distraction comes from within the walls of our mind and from our inability to repel the seeds of temptation if we do not have a strong devotion to prayer.

So, how different is the average family home? Not at all different. The priest, just like the family, has his time filled with many different activities, meetings, liturgical services, entertainment, and traffic jams to navigate. So, in this day-

and-age, the question is, how do we cope with busyness, how do we cope with constant distraction and white noise? The Fathers of the Church deciphered the answer to this question through their understanding of Scripture and the Tradition of the Church—stillness and silence.

Stillness and silence are indeed not products of a fallen world, a world sickened by the disease of sin. Stillness and silence are the absence of distraction; hence they can be the absence of evil. In the state of stillness and silence, our minds can be free from the slavery of culture and distraction, free to allow the presence of God to manifest itself. This is just like the famous painting of Jesus knocking at the door, only the door has no handle on the outside that Jesus can use to come in, it is left to us to open that door from inside and to invite Jesus into our hearts. A state of stillness and silence allows us to hear the knocking at the door, it allows us to answer that call from God, it allows space for God to enter into our lives.

I am no different from the average person and I am no saint. If I have deceived myself—a person on the path to priesthood—about the effectiveness of the walls of a rectory or even the nave of the church, then how many others have deceived themselves in thinking that the distractions of our culture are not hindering their relationship with God? Join me in promising to take time each day, even if it is 15 minutes, to purposely sit down and quiet the active mind. Stillness and the peace of God will come if we can silence our minds and bodies. But how do we silence our minds? Some prefer to recite the Jesus prayer in order to obtain this stillness—Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner. Others prefer to recite the Psalms. Still others find solace in praying the rosary. These prayers are good practices in replacing the distractions of the culture with words of prayer to God. After these words sweep through our minds and clean them of the day's troubles, can there be left an open space for God to dwell within us. Please, join me in allowing God to sweep our minds clean of the distractions of our day, so our hearts and minds will be a fitting dwelling place for the Spirit of God.

Upcoming Events for August Eparchial and Parish Events

Glory to Jesus Christ!
Glory Forever!

AUGUST

- 1 Feast of the Procession of the Cross
Small Blessing of Water
- 2-4 ANNUAL SUMMER FESTIVAL
St. Mary's, Wilkes-Barre, PA

- 6 Feast of the Transfiguration
CHANCERY CLOSED (Solemn Holyday)
- 10 Pilgrimage in Sloatsburg
5PM Divine Liturgy; 8PM Moleben
- 11 Eparchial Wedding Jubilee Celebration
St. Mary Church - Scranton, PA
- 15 Dormition of the Theotokos
CHANCERY CLOSED (Holyday of Obligation)
- 16-17 SLAVIC FESTIVAL
St. Mary's, Scranton, PA
- 25 Blue Panachida
Sybertsville, PA - 3PM
- 29 Beheading of John the Baptist
Simple Holyday
- 31 Pilgrimage Opens in Uniontown, PA
See complete schedule on pages 8-9.

Eastern Catholic Life

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