Christ is born! Glorify Him!
FAITHFUL RETURN TO MOUNT ST. MACRINA TO WITNESS LIVE NATIVITY

By Junno Arocho Esteves
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — The Christmas tree and Nativity crèche should evoke the joy and the peace of God’s love and not the selfish indulgence of consumerism and indifference, Pope Francis said.

Meeting Dec. 10 with delegations from Andalo in Italy’s Trentino-South Tyrol region and from Peru’s Huancavelica region — responsible, respectively, for the Christmas tree and the Nativity scene in St. Peter’s Square — the pope said the traditional Christmas symbols bring an atmosphere that is “rich in tenderness, sharing and family closeness.”

“Let us not live a fake, commercial Christmas! Let us allow ourselves to be enveloped by God’s closeness, by the Christmas atmosphere that art, music, songs and traditions bring to our heart,” he said.

The delegations were at the Vatican for the evening ceremony to light the Vatican Christmas tree and unveil the Nativity scene. However, the Vatican announced earlier that due to less-than-favorable weather predictions for the evening, the traditional outdoor ceremony would be held inside the Paul VI hall.

In the evening, despite the rain and cold temperatures, dozens gathered in St. Peter’s Square to witness the lighting of the Christmas tree. In the audience hall, the sounds of festive holiday music in Quechua played as videos of a children’s choir from Huancavelica were shown to commemorate the Andean-inspired crèche.

Archbishop Fernando Verger Alzaga, president of the commission governing Vatican City State, also welcomed the delegations from northern Italy and Peru and said their contribution was a symbol that “Europe and America are united in paying homage to the King of Kings.”

Continued on page 5

Two beginnings
DEACON MICHAEL KUNITZ ORDAINED TO PRIESTHOOD.
LUKE IYENGAR ORDAINED TO READER

By The Byzantine Catholic Archeparchy of Pittsburgh


Concelebrants for the Divine Liturgy were Cathedral Rector Very Reverend Andrew J. Deskevich; Seminary Rector Very Reverend Robert M. Pipta; Very Reverend Frank A. Firko, Pastor of Holy Ghost Church in McKees Rocks, Pa.; and Reverend Father Will Rupp, Administrator of SS. Peter and Paul Church in Duquesne, Pa. Sub-Deacon Kyprian Wojciechowski served as the Master of Ceremonies, and Sub-Deacon Timothy Fariss and the Seminarians assisted. Seminarian Nathan Tapsak was the cantor.

The newly ordained Father Michael was born on March 2, 1995 in Dearborn, Mich., the second of the three sons of David W. Kunitz and Margaret E. Merren Kunitz. He graduated cum laude from St. Mary’s Preparatory High School in Orchard Lake, Mich. in 2011. He has experience in teaching both on the elementary level and as a catechist to high school students.

He began his Theological education at Aquinas College in Grand Rapids, Mich. in 2013, his studies took him to the Oriental Institute in Rome. Returning to Aquinas he and a group of fellow students founded the college's...
Pro-Life, Respect Life, Whole Life ... Is there any difference?

by Deacon Paul Bobryjev
Coordinator, Pro-Life Office, Byzantine Catholic Archeparchy of Pittsburgh

“Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment” (1Cor:1:10)

Is Christ divided? (v.13a).

As I cruise the internet and social media I run across arguments, claiming “you are not pro-life, you are pro-birth” or “how can you prioritize economic well-being over the right to life?” The situation of the Corinthian Church which Saint Paul criticized is present in our day amongst Christians claiming to be leaders. How can we claim brotherhood when we criticize each other.

God has placed us in a historic time for which he has given us talents and purpose. As of this writing the Supreme Court has not issued a ruling on the Dobbs vs Jackson Women’s Health Organization and its effect on abortion as a Constitutional right. It is suspected that Roe vs. Wade, which protects abortion, will be overturned. It is a credit to the “pro-life” (or pro-birth) advocates that this is possible, and credit should be given. But that will not be the end of this advocacy, because there is more to be done. Adoption needs to be streamlined and made available to those who don’t have thousands of dollars for legal fees. The mother who gives up her baby for adoption needs to be cared about and cared for. Crisis pregnancy centers (CPC) will have to increase staff to aid the mothers to bring their babies to birth and help with diapers and clothing.

The “whole life” advocates will step up to assist the CPCs and lobby for the same funding that was afforded to Planned Parenthood and other abortuaries. Instead of rationalizing abortion as an alternative, they will support the parents of the babies or advocate the cost reduction of adoption and its associated red tape. As the children grow, gainful employment has to be created and nurtured.

Realistically, abortion will not end if Roe vs Wade is overturned. The most populous states will continue their pro-abortion bias and may restrict pro-life crisis pregnancy sites. The FDA may make mail order, self-administered chemical abortion easy, even in states that prohibit clinical abortion. Legal avenues to end all abortion are not realistic; we have to win the hearts and minds of potential mothers and fathers with moral, scientific and positive persuasion.

Pro-Life and Whole Life people must work together to oppose the increased calls for euthanasia and increasing the limit of fetal research from 14 to 28 days (https://www.eurekalert.org/news-releases/769244). It must be noted that the current limit applies only to Federal-funded studies. There is no legal restriction on private-funded experimentation and it is legal to nurture a cloned human up to birth. In some regions hospice care has relaxed ethical and holistic care and given greater importance than respect for human dignity. This has digressed to the point that they require removal of ordinary g-tubes, resulting in the starvation and dehydration of patients. People with Christian ethics and professional qualifications must lobby for appointment to hospital and research ethics boards. Care for the disabled and the elderly needs attention, with ability and allowances of family members to care for their loved ones at home. Aides at nursing homes are among the lowest paid workers. Though their dedication is exemplary, more people need to be called to this vocation. It is proven that many women and men have suffered from PAS (Post Abortion Syndrome). This suffering must be exposed so that they can heal through spiritual and psychological care.

All groups and persons who are concerned for human life must remember that spiritual care and nourishment are part of holistic care.

“But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that part which lacks it, that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another.

And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it” (1Cor:2:24-26).

Let us unite in spirit and purpose, each using the talents which God has given, and cease quarreling about who has the nobler purpose. For God has created all persons equally and we are cautioned not to “lord it over others, but to serve.”

Let us all be open to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit and remember in confidence Christ is amongst us!

Official Appointments by Metropolitan Archbishop William

Official Appointments effective December 1, 2021:

• Father Vasyl Symyon, at his own request, is relieved as pastor of St. Mary Church, Weirton, W. Va., and administrator of St. John Church, Avella, Pa., and appointed pastor of St. John the Baptist Church, Uniontown, Pa.

• Father Robert Jones is appointed administrator of St. Mary Church, Weirton, West Virginia, and administrator of St. John Church, Avella, Pa.

Official Appointments effective December 22, 2021:

• Father Michael D. Kunitz is appointed administrator of Holy Spirit Church and Saint Pius X Church, both in Pittsburgh, Pa., having given greater honor to that part which lacks it, that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another.

The mission of The Byzantine Catholic World is to spread the Gospel message in the rich tradition of the Byzantine Catholic Church, to encourage faithful to reflect the image of Christ in everyday activities of life; to offer spiritual formation through changing times; and to celebrate community among Byzantine Catholics in the Archeparchy of Pittsburgh, throughout the Metropolitan Church in America, and around the world.
Metropolitan Sheptytsky’s Fellowship to facilitate education on Eastern Christian Spirituality and Ecumenism on campus.

He served as president of the fellowship during his senior year. The completion of his time at Aquinas College brought him to graduation in Dec. 2015 with honors in Theology and the Bachelor of Arts degree.

Sad to say, Father Michael’s mother Margaret fell asleep in the Lord in July 2016, shortly before he entered SS. Cyril and Methodius Seminary.

Most Reverend Milan Lach S.J. ordained him to minor orders and the sub-diaconate on Dec. 29, 2019 at his parish church, St. Stephen in Allen Park, Mich. He graduated from the Seminary with the Master of Divinity degree in May 2020, and in June of that year, Sub-Deacon Michael and Janine Golub were married in St. Stephen Church. He was accepted for service in the Archeparchy, and Archbishop William C. Skurla ordained him to the Diaconate on Oct. 3, 2021.

As his first pastorate, the Archbishop has assigned Father Michael administrator of Holy Spirit and St. Pius X parishes, both in Pittsburgh.

Reader Luke Iyengar is of a family of long standing at Holy Ghost Byzantine Catholic Church in McKees Rocks. His mother, grandmother, pastors and other family members were particularly influential in his early discernment for his vocation to the priesthood. His elementary and high school educations were in local Catholic schools. Luke earned both the Bachelor and Master degrees in Theology at Franciscan University in Steubenville, Ohio where he was named the outstanding Senior for the 2014-15 Academic Year. He briefly taught Theology there before entering SS. Cyril and Methodius Seminary in 2019.

Axios! May God grant to His servants the Priest Michael and Reader Luke peace, health and happiness for many blessed years!
FROM THE OFFICE OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Planning a wedding in 2022?

Jesus blessed marriage and elevated its significance when he performed his first miracle at a wedding reception in Cana (John 2:1-11). From generation to generation, the institution of marriage has positively influenced both culture and society. Consistently through the ages, the essential features of marriage as the Catholic Church understands it are, fidelity, permanence, openness to life, and Sacramentality. The Office of Religious Education invites all couples preparing for the Mystery of Marriage to attend a Pre-Cana program on two Saturdays, March 26, 2022 and April 2, 2022. A series of presentations will be given by gifted and experienced presenters to help couples understand and appreciate the Theology of Marriage and the Crowning Ceremony. To register, go to https://archpitt.org/pre-cana/ and download a flyer to mail to the Office of Religious Education. ■

TEXT MESSAGES

Fifteen seconds lasts forever

By David Mayer Jr.

What can you accomplish in 15 seconds? Maybe typing a reply to a friend’s email or walking downstairs into the basement from the second floor of your house. Or perhaps warming up a chocolate chip cookie in your microwave oven. Doesn’t seem like a lot of time, right? I’ll get back to what you can do in 15 seconds after a few paragraphs.

I attended a presentation by Father Carlos Martins, a Vatican-appointed expert on relics Dec. 21 at St. Gregory in Upper St. Clair, Pa. Father Carlos heads Treasures of the Church, a ministry of evangelization of the Catholic Church, and brought 150 relics, some as old as 2,000 years, to St. Gregory.

They included relics of St. Joseph, St. Maria Goretti, St. Therese of Lisieux (the “Little Flower”) and St. Francis of Assisi. Also present in the church hall was a portion of the Veil of Our Lady and one of the largest pieces of the True Cross in the world.

The crowd for his presentation did not leave a pew seat empty and chairs were filled in the Mother of God Chapel and narthex.

During his presentation, before faithful walked downstairs to view the relics, Father Carlos asked for everyone to adhere to a 15-second time limit in front of the portion of the Veil of Our Lady.

If not, with an estimated 250 people assembled inside St. Gregory, “we’ll be here until Christmas morning,” he said.

He suggested people pray as they wait in line and not wait until you are in the presence of relics.

The experience to view the relics has been called a once-in-a-lifetime-opportunity.

But I’m thinking the odds are much greater.

Probably once in a million lifetimes.

I’m sure of some of the faithful present waited their entire lives for this opportunity. These particular 15 seconds most likely will be remembered forever. ■

BULLETIN BOARD

Mount St. Macrina online programs

Mount Saint Macrina House of Prayer, 510 W. Main St., Uniontown Pa. has announced an upcoming virtual online program. For more information or to register, call 724-438-7149 or email hpmssm@verizon.net. ■


Knights of Columbus documentary on St. Joseph

Press release by Knights of Columbus

NEW HAVEN, Conn. — The newest Knights of Columbus documentary film, “St. Joseph: Our Spiritual Father,” is available at kofc.org starting Dec. 8, 2021, to coincide with the end of the Year of St. Joseph. Produced to encourage devotion to him can be life-changing.

The Knights of Columbus is obedience and courage in our lives. The Knights of Columbus is a powerful example and intercessor.”

To coincide with the end of the Year of St. Joseph, the film premiered on Jan. 19, 2022. “He models for each of us a father’s love for the incarnate Son of God,” said Archbishop William Lori, supreme chaplain of the Knights of Columbus, “the eternal Father recognized in St. Joseph a man of utmost integrity — a man who perhaps had no idea what God had in mind for him but nonetheless went about his daily life and work with honesty and reliability.”

Learn more about the Knights of Columbus at kofc.org. ■

RELECTION FROM MOUNT ST. MACRINA

Blessed are the pure of heart

By Sister Barbara Jean Mihalchick, OSBM, Sisters of St. Basil the Great Mount St. Macrina, Uniontown, Pa. ■

“The Beatitudes” of St. Matthew 5:3, 4 and 8-11

Blessed are the pure of heart... for they shall see God. Our Holy Mother, ever pure in heart, is our greatest model and intercessor, for sure.

An image I always have about purity of heart and, really, of living the spiritual journey is a “channel,” a “pipeline,” so to speak, that flows. Even the center of a fountain; a source that continues to pour forth unless some obstacle gets into that pipeline or, over a period of time, there’s a growth inside.

Either of those can be an image of how we become impure: through sin, through giving in to temptation, through gathering that which is not pure into the “channel.”

Blessedness, God’s grace, is meant to flow; to change who we are into the Holy People of God and also to overflow in blessing to help others to become that, as well.

Constant prayer, frequent prayer — such as the Jesus Prayer — reading the Scripture, going to the Eucharist and using the sacraments when we can; all of that can help us stay close to God’s ways. Let us be watchful that the negative, the terrible, the things that are not the ways of God, do not become part of our habits. And that those habits we have we could continually ask God’s grace to clear, purify, and transform.

Where is this all meant to go? Well, this “channel” of peace and love is to overflow in blessedness to others. This time we’re living in, is a very good opportunity to reach out for one another with a kind and loving word, with forgiveness of others.

It’s a time to do acts of kindness, whether you can actually meet up with that person or you see people in need on the television news and respond with prayer, charity. We have many ways that we can be mindful and be a blessing! God bless you. ■

Relics on display Dec. 21 at St. Gregory in upper St. Clair, Pa.
Christmas in the air

The East Wind Symphonic Band presented a Christmas Holiday performance Dec. 12 at St. John the Baptist Cathedral in Munhall, Pa. Entertainment featured seasonal music and various instrumental ensembles throughout the program. The event was well attended putting all is the holiday spirit!

Christmas is time for sharing

Story continued from page 1

The Nativity scene in St. Peter’s Square featured 30 statues depicting Mary, Joseph, the Three Kings, shepherds and various flora and fauna from Huancavelica. The figures were dressed in the traditional bright, multicolored garments of the region’s Indigenous Chopoca people.

Next to the Andean Nativity scene stood a 90-foot-tall Christmas tree. The spruce tree came from a sustainably managed forest in the Dolomite mountains in northern Italy’s Trentino-South Tyrol region. The round wooden ornaments were also from Trentino.

During the meeting with Pope Francis, the two delegations were joined by a group of young men and women from a parish in Padua who created the Nativity scene displayed in the audience hall. Expressing his gratitude to the delegations for their gifts, the pope said the traditional garments worn by the figures in the Nativity scene “represent the people of the Andes and symbolize the universal call to salvation.”

“Jesus came to the world through the concreteness of a people to save every man and woman, of all cultures and nationalities. He made himself small so that we might welcome him and receive the gift of God’s tenderness,” he said.

He also said the spruce tree was a “sign of Christ” and a reminder of God’s gift of uniting “himself with humankind forever.”

As Christmas festivities draw near, Pope Francis said the crèche remains a symbol of hope that God “never tires of us” and that he chose to dwell among men and women “not as one who stands on high to dominate, but as the one who stoops low, small and poor, to serve.”

“For it to be truly Christmas, let us not forget this,” the pope said. “God comes to be with us and asks us to take care of our brothers and sisters, especially the poorest, the weakest and the most fragile, those whom the pandemic risks marginalizing even more.”

Pre-Cana Program

for engaged couples

Sr. Cyril & Methodius Seminary

Saturday March 26 & April 2, 2022

Topics covered:

- Communication, Forgiveness & Intimacy
- Finances & Budgeting
- Marriage & Sexuality
- Why a Church Wedding?
- Elements of a Healthy Marriage
- Theology of Marriage/Crowning Ceremony

For information about registration, fees, etc. go to archpitr.org – Office of Religious Education link
A Pittsburgh man’s ambitious quest to visit each major college football stadium

‘I’m almost there’:

Frank and Carol Lipchick (right, left) visiting in 2019 with cousin Will Bednar (center) at Mississippi State football game at Davis Wade Stadium in Starkville, Miss. Will pitched MSU to the championship in the 2021 College World Series and was a subsequent first-round draft selection by the San Francisco Giants. Photo courtesy of Frank Lipchick.

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Editor’s note: Frank Lipchick attends Holy Ghost in McKees Rocks, Pa. and is a member of the Arshbashal choir.

By Johnny McGunigal
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Five years ago, McKees Rocks native Frank Lipchick was in a tailgate tent eating gumbo outside Louisiana football’s Cajun Field. There, Lipchick met the university president, who invited him up to his club box. Before the Ragin Cajuns kicked off against Appalachian State, Lipchick was introduced to a cavalcade of local dignitaries.

“And this is how the president of the university would introduce me, with a straight face,” Lipchick said. “This is Frank. His job is to go around and see college stadiums.”

Lipchick laughed. He doesn’t get paid to travel the country and watch college football. But during the past 16 years, it has developed into the 74-year-old’s full-time passion.

When Lipchick retired from his job as an engineer in 2005, he set out on an ambitious quest to see a game at every Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) stadium. And perhaps the wildest part of it all? (and the five other remaining destinations) to remain a secret. You see, Lipchick plays a game with his friends every time he goes to a new stadium. He texts them a photograph as a clue — a duck in a pond at Oregon, a campus statue, etc. — to see if they can guess where he’s at that week.

Lipchick also sends his friends detailed reports of every trip.

“He’ll not only give a recap of the game, but he’ll give a recap of the venue, the city, how they treat the visiting team. He’ll give a little update on the band. It’s always very interesting,” said Aldo Zini, Lipchick’s friend and a former Pitt band member himself. “We look forward to reading them because you learn something new about these places, stadiums and teams.”

Through the years, Lipchick has added a person here, a person there to the email list. After a trip to Louisiana Tech in 2018, he tacked on the Bulldogs’ clock operator.

“There before the gates open. A guy walks by and sees my Pitt hat. He says, ‘Are you from Pittsburgh? Or do you live down here?’ I tell him I’m from Pittsburgh, and I tell him the story,” Lipchick recalled. “He asks where I’m sitting, I look at my ticket, and it’s section whatever. He says, ‘Act like you belong and follow me.’ So I just followed him. No one gave me any grief, and he took me up to his workstation. And he goes, ‘Pull up a chair, you’re going to help us.’ So that was a blast.”

For a man who has almost seen it all, that was a first. And it was an experience that cemented why, in his mid-70s, he keeps pushing to complete this quest. Even last year’s COVID-19 shutdown, which kept him from road venues for the first time in 45 years, didn’t deter Lipchick from making up for lost time.

Lipchick went to seven new stadiums this year: at Fresno State, Washington State, SMU, Air Force, South Alabama, New Mexico State and UTEP. He keeps track of the last two in the same day, driving 40 miles from an afternoon game at New Mexico State to watch the Miners host then-undefeated UTSA.

Admittedly, that slate took a lot out of Lipchick. Because all the while, he’s still prioritizing his Pitt fandom.

Lipchick didn’t miss a game at Heinz Field this season. He was also in the stands as Kenny Pickett and the Panthers hoisted the ACC championship in Charlotte following his long list of in-person triumphs away from home (1977 Sugar Bowl, 1982 Sugar Bowl, 2016 Clemson, among others). Lipchick said the 45-21 win against Wake Forest gave him and his friends the chance to “revel” in a special season.

This year on the whole has given Lipchick perspective. He has been to 517 Pitt games. He’s been to 675 games total, from the FBS level all the way to Division III. He’s had a lot to look back on and appreciate. But nothing excites him quite like the next game.

And with six stadiums to go, that passion isn’t going to fade away any time soon.

“At first, we thought he’ll never be able to get to all these schools. I think he’s going to make it,” Zini said. “We’re all excited for him. It’s been quite a journey.”

“It’s tougher and tougher to get those all in. But with time left, that should be manageable,” Lipchick said. “I’m almost there.”
ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM IN GREENFIELD (PITTSBURGH), PA.
ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST IN PITTSBURGH, PA.

A full Fall schedule

by Elizabeth Harbist
St. John Chrysostom, Greenfield (Pittsburgh), Pa.

Parishioners of St. John Chrysostom and St. John the Baptist, both located in Pittsburgh, Pa., welcomed Father Miron Kerul'-Kmec Jr. as our new pastor.

Father Miron, his wife Sarah, and their infant son Miron, soon became acquainted with many parishioners and friends of the parishes through a myriad of activities.

First was the lively and successful Night at the Races benefiting St. John the Baptist.

Bi-monthly coffee and donut socials following Sunday Divine Liturgy began at St. John Chrysostom in September.

On Oct. 31, while some spent the afternoon preparing to trick or treat, many parishioners, friends and neighbors of St. John Chrysostom convened for the annual Steelers Tailgate Party sponsored by GCU CPR-Lodge.

Father Miron was officially welcomed and presented with his very own Steeler jersey that afternoon. He has been advised to not wear No. 7 around town unless he’s ready to pose for pictures and sign autographs.

(You might notice a slight resemblance to Big Ben!)

The Feast of St John Chrysostom on Nov. 13 was celebrated the following day with a Potluck Brunch. Everyone enjoyed a wonderful array of delicious homemade foods such as stuffed cabbage, kolbasa and kraut; broccoli and rice casserole, and chili and baked chicken. The fellowship and good food made for an enjoyable afternoon.

Preparations for Christmas included weekly Wednesday Spiritual Reflection Day with 10 a.m. Liturgy and Confession at St. John the Baptist. Father Miron will continue the Wednesday Spiritual Reflection Day in the new year.

GCU CPR-Lodge sponsored a Children’s Christmas Party for all parish children Dec. 12. Everyone enjoyed lunch, games, music and a visit from St. Nick. Over the next week many helped to prepare the church for Christmas, culminating with a large group of volunteers on Saturday, Dec. 18 who assembled the Christmas trees and lights.

Families came together Dec. 11 to clean and decorate Ascension Church in Clairton, Pa. for Christmas.

Adults and children helped clean and decorate the church in readiness for St. Nicholas.

Early Sunday morning, the ECF children presented a program explaining the meaning of each ornament placed on the Jesse Tree. They joined together to sing Christmas carols with cantor Chris Dufalla, Father Ivan Mina and altar server Bill Kerr along with ECF instructors.

After Liturgy, a breakfast social was held at the church hall. St. Nicholas was invited to attend and the children sang to him as he arrived.

St. Nicholas visited with each child delivering treats and gifts. The children wore beards they made to resemble St. Nicholas and passed out chocolate coins to everyone as they learned that “giving” is more important than receiving.

Better to give than receive

by Trish Roberts
Ascension of Our Lord in Clairton, Pa.

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Welcome, Father Robert


This weekend, we welcomed our new pastor, Father Robert Jones and his wife Pani Liz. May your ministry with us at St. Mary’s be spiritually fruitful and fulfilling. May God grant you many happy and blessed years!

Holy Meal

By Father Don Bolls
Church of the Resurrection, Monroeville.

On the Sunday Before Christmas, Dec. 19, Church of the Resurrection in Monroeville, Pa. celebrated the Holy Meal after liturgy. Wine, bread, honey, and garlic were shared. Parishioners supplied foods free of meat and dairy and enjoyed a visit from St. Nicholas. The church’s in-house “band” provided Christmas carols and a few Rusyn melodies.

Forging ties

A blessed Christmas is wished to our shut-in parishioners. ECF students made gift baskets after liturgy to be delivered to them.
**“Sweats for the Vets”**

by Barbara Longstreth  
St. Peter and Paul, Duquesne, Pa.

In November and December, parishioners at SS. Peter and Paul in Duquesne, Pa. collected 27 sweatsuits and 34 sweatshirt tops. On Friday, Dec. 10, we delivered them to the Southwest Veterans’ Center on Highland Drive in Pittsburgh, Pa. We also collected monetary donations for the blind and visually impaired which let us purchase a white cane with accessories, a cordless large telephone, a large button telephone, and 40 bold writer pens. The projects were in partnership with the Duquesne Women’s Club’s “Sweats for the Vets” and “Angel Tree for the Blind and Visually Impaired.”

**Pirohy project**

by Ron Balta  
St. Stephen, North Huntingdon, Pa.

Pirohy team members from St. Stephen in North Huntingdon, Pa. gathered together the first week of December for the final pirohy project of 2021. Resuming our projects provided an opportunity to reunite our parishioners in a safe and socially engaging way. After a year hiatus, our team members were eager to resume our pirohy project and our loyal customers came out in inspiring numbers making our sales a resounding success. Photos below show our team pinching potato cheese pirohy and the kitchen crew anticipating the surge to come from the pinchers and double pinchers. A special thank you to our team and loyal customers.

**Seminarians on the road**

by Mary Carol Planicski  
St. Elias, Munhall, Pa.


**Christmas project**

by John Gomolak  
St. Nicholas, Greensburg, Pa.

The children of St. Nicholas Byzantine Catholic church in Greensburg, Pa. wanted to give back this Christmas to children in Westmoreland County who were subject to crime or unfortunate events. Father Regis Dusecina is pastor.
Feast of St. Nicholas

HOLY TRINITY IN WALL, PA.

by Linda Oslick
Holy Trinity, Wall, Pa.

St. Nicholas made a special visit Dec. 5 to Holy Trinity in Wall, Pa. A Slovak dinner was enjoyed by all. St. Nicholas presented wrapped gifts to all in attendance.

ST. MICHAEL IN CAMPBELL, OHIO

Christmas celebration

by Father Kevin Marks
St. Michael, Campbell, Ohio

Our ECF program completed the first half with a fun Christmas celebration. Students made gingerbread houses, played games, and had their favorite, Chick-fil-A. Special thanks to our Catechists and students for a great first half. Classes resume Jan. 11, 2022.

ST. GREGORY IN UPPER ST. CLAIR, PA.

by Father Valerian Michlik

A week after our St. Nicholas Archeparchial celebration, St. Nick made it to the South Hills of Pittsburgh to visit our parish children. This year, since Dec. 12 fell on a Sunday, in a special way we also honored Our Lady of Guadalupe, Patroness of the Americas.

At the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy, we witnessed the blessing of new Altar cloths—Ependytes for the upcoming celebration of the Nativity of Christ.

Following that, all our St. Gregory’s children gathered together to welcome St. Nicholas as we sang “O who loves Nicholas the Saintly.”

We express our sincere thanks to all who participated and helped prepare this happy event as we all enjoyed great fellowship honoring the life of the wonder-worker St. Nicholas.
Pirohi pride

St. John the Baptist in Scottsdale, Pa. began making pirohi for its upcoming craft show and holidays.

Terry Frederick and Mike Lashinsky (right) cut dough for pirohi. Also helping were Floyd Mitchal and Andy Lipko.

Kathy Onusko and Marge Ondus perform final inspection.

Getting crafty

The annual craft show at St. John the Baptist in Scottsdale, Pa. was held Dec. 4.

Advent outreach project

During this Nativity Fast, St. Gregory's Advent outreach focused on the Jubilee Soup Kitchen, a wonderful ministry supporting the Hill District and surrounding Pittsburgh community, by providing services to assist those whose lives are challenged by poverty, joblessness, or homelessness.

For many years, 365 days each year, Jubilee Soup Kitchen provides a hot meal every day at noon, as well as bathrooms, showers, personal hygiene items, and seasonally appropriate clothing.

On Monday morning, Dec. 20, members of our St. Gregory’s Bethany Ministry loaded up three full cars of donations that were then delivered to the Jubilee Soup Kitchen. We are grateful to all our parishioners for their kindness and generosity during this time as we prepare for the Nativity of Christ.
The ministry of baking Prosphora

by Dorothy Mayerik and Barbara Stasiuk
St. Gregory, Upper St. Clair

Those who make the Prosphora, the Communion bread, will tell you that it is a great privilege, a very spiritual experience, and humbling as well...when you realize that the gifts of bread and wine at the Epiclesis will change into the Body and Blood of Christ. “It is a very spiritual time and honor for me to bake Prosphora,” says Barbara Stasiuk. “Each experience baking bread is different. There are so many variables that can change the bread’s results, such as temperatures of yeast and water, bread raising, and amounts of ingredients. I always think, as in life, you present your best self, but you never know what’s in store that can change the outcome, so we have to pray.”

The ECF students at St. Gregory Church in Upper St. Clair spent their November 21 class time in the church kitchen learning hands-on from Barbara Stasiuk about this beautiful ministry of baking Prosphora.

Barbara is only the third Prosphora baker in the 50-year history of St. Gregory Church. She follows in the footsteps of her mother Helen Stasiuk and before her, Elizabeth “Liz” Kuharcik, both of blessed memory.

Liz passed on to Helen...and now to Barbara...a unique pewter image of the Blessed Mother on a gold metal background, framed in wood. In the back of the frame is a wind-up key for a music box that plays “Ave Maria.” As part of Barbara’s talk, she explained to the students that she plays the music box to recall fond memories of Liz and her love for her mother, Helen. At this time, she prays for their Eternal Memory, and asks the Blessed Mother, Liz, and her own mother to help her hands make Prosphora for St. Gregory Church.

Barbara described a “spiritual moment” that happened during the class.

“I was teaching the following symbols on the Prosphora stamp: the center of the stamp has ICXC Nika which means Jesus Christ Conquers/The Victor. The priest cuts one piece to be offered as the “Lamb” which becomes Christ’s body, and other pieces are placed next to the Lamb. To the left is placed a large triangle piece for the Theotokos. The three points on the triangle represent her “Perpetual Virginity” — at birth, in life, and at death. I began to explain the colors used on her Icon of Perpetual Help, the colors of blue and red representing blue for earth and red for heaven. While I was talking about the symbols, the music box started playing on its own. I was so surprised that I immediately turned to look at (ECF teacher) Renee McEwen...and YES, Renee and the students heard the music! I decided Our Blessed Mary was truly happy about the children learning about the symbols placed on Her Son the Lamb (Body of Christ). It was a very special moment, and the children acknowledged it as well.”

The children enjoyed the kneading, rising, rolling, and stamping out of Prosphora. As the Prosphora baked the children learned about the meaning of Prosphora, the recipe, and the Prosphora Saints Spyridron and Nikollemos.

“The children who attended were so respectful of the baking process and asked if they could help make Prosphora the next time I baked. The following weekend, several children came and with my guidance made 18 small loaves and a dozen miniature loaves that Father Val gives to those who offer liturgies for living and deceased friends and family. It was truly heartwarming to see our children’s interest in this very special experience of the Baking of Prosphora.”

Thoughts from ECF students:

Malaya Boes

“I never thought about where the bread came from for Holy Communion. I was surprised that there was a special way to make it. I really liked stamping the dough. I learned about the special way the priest prepares the bread as the lamb of God. I took it home and shared my bread with Mom, Dad, Baba and my Uncle.”

Vid Mares

“At Communion, I always wondered where the Prosphora holy bread came from. I always thought that Father Val just bought it. At our lesson, I learned how to bake the holy bread, and I learned the history of the bread. I never knew you were supposed to pray before making it. My favorite thing about the lesson was everything. It was a great experience.”

Steve Hanna

“In this lesson, I learned how to make Communion bread and what it means in the church. I thought it was bought from a store. Then I learned that it was made at church. Nope, I didn’t know that we prayed before it. It does make sense to pray before it. I was interested in the symbols of the Prosphora, and the process of bread making. I was also kind of interested in the two saints that made bread. My favorite part was making the bread. I also liked learning about the bread and the symbols on the Prosphora.”

Boes, Christopher Krofcheck and Steve Hanna.
Pause to remember

By William Koshute
St. Mary, Windber, Pa.

Parishes and a community of miner descendants gathered in two prayer services April 16, 2021 to mark the 115th anniversary of the tragic loss of life in the struggle for unionization during the coal strike of 1906 in Windber, Pa.

It was Easter Monday April 16, 1906, when Windber miners were six weeks into a peaceful strike and had gathered to listen to encouragement and support and to pray for the peaceful resolution of the conflict. The strike was a reflection of the widespread dissatisfaction experienced by workers across the nation as the United States was undergoing a period of rapid industrialization and urbanization. The miners were demanding better wages, safer working conditions, and the right to form unions.

Following the 6 p.m. ringing of the church bells from the historic churches of St. John Cantius (now called St. Elizabeth Ann Seton) a polish immigrant-built Roman Catholic church, and SS. Cyril and Methodius, a Slovak-immigrant built Roman Catholic church, Father Ivan opened the Parastas service which was sung at a time approaching the time the shots would have been fired, with some reflection on the immigrant coal miners struggles for their workers’ rights.

“From history, we see that the United States did not become so strong and democratic in a day; it often required a lot of hard work and sacrifice and sometimes, loss of life, today we honor the lives of Stefan Popovic, Matus Toman, Simeon Vojcek and Curtis Kester, with our Parastas prayer service.”

On this day guards interrupted this meeting, firing guns into the air. As miners chased these guards from the grounds, skirmishes at a window. As the cold winds of early April 18, 1906, when Windber miners were six weeks into a peaceful strike and had gathered to listen to encouragement and support and to pray for the peaceful resolution of the conflict.

The 1906 Remembrance research project is indebted and guided by the extensive research conducted by miner-descendant and Windber native, Dr. Mildred Allen Beik.

As an update, one of the goals of this project was to reach all family member descendants and parishioners of all of those involved in this tragic event in an effort to locate research into the family genealogy of all of those involved.

This in-depth research includes her book “The Miners of Windber – The Struggle of New Immigrants for Unionization, 1890s – 1930s” along with her labor history research files archived in Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Special Collections.

As an update, one of the goals of the 1906 Remembrance includes research into the family genealogy of all of those involved in this tragic event in an effort to locate family member descendants and invite them to Windber to join our prayer services. This has been a 16-year effort to date, and this year we experienced a break-through as a great niece of Stefan Popovic, while doing her family genealogy, reached out to St. Mary’s via the church Facebook page.

Her contributions on the events post-April 16th have been invaluable! She has been able to pray with us through our live-streams. Also, visits to the church and final resting place of Curtis Kester led to the meeting of descendant cousins of the family and a special visit was made on the date of April 18.

The Parastas for those killed was live streamed to a mining history Facebook page: “Tribute to the Miners of Windber,” and it was also uploaded to the St. Mary’s YouTube video page.

St. Mary, Windber, Pa.

Pause to remember Eternal Memory!
thoughts for our day

by Archpriest David M. Petras

In our basic Catholic education, we are taught that there are seven sacraments. This fact is accepted also by the Eastern Church, both Orthodox and Catholic. In the Byzantine Church, the word mystery (Greek, mysterion) came to designate the seven special liturgical rites that have a particular importance in the life of the Church. The question is: how did the term “mystery” come to be applied to liturgical rites? The basic reason is clear: under the form of sacred acts and words we find the reality of God’s salvation. The sacramental system reveals the mystery. John Chrysostom wrote: “It is called mystery when we do not consider what we see, but see one set of things and consider another” (In 1 Corinthians Hom. 1, 7).

Therefore, the proper term for a “sacrament” in the Byzantine tradition is mystery, in the sense that the word mystery is applied also to God’s plan of salvation (economy) and the Church, that is something hidden from the eyes of unbelievers but revealed now in Christ, God and man, through his incarnation, to those who believe and are enlightened. Sacraments (particularly the eucharist) are the incarnation of Christ acting in the community. All sacramental mysteries, therefore, are the Gospel in action, not only revealing but also effecting the plan of God.

As incarnate realities, the sacramental mysteries are a union of our life in the physical world we inhabit, and the spiritual reality that is present in our celebration. The mysteries, therefore, are often anchored in material elements: water, bread, wine, and oil. What would seem to be common acquires a powerful divine presence. This was perhaps expressed most clearly by a Western theologian, St. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo in the fourth century. He explained sacraments by saying that a

The greatest of the sacramental mysteries is Holy Communion. It is often called by the Fathers the “mystery of mysteries.”

...
A child is born in Bethlehem

Cars waited in line Dec. 12 to view Mount Macrina Manor’s Drive-Thru Live Nativity, which was held on the grounds of Mount St. Macrina in Uniontown, Pa.

The following was posted Dec. 13 on Mount Macrina Manor’s Facebook page:

What an amazing Live Nativity it was this year. We had such a great turnout; the weather was perfect and so was the atmosphere. A big thank you to all the volunteers who helped with this event, including local businesses, the Laurel Highlands Senior High School cheerleaders, staff, friends, and family. Also thank you to Joseph’s Nursery for the donation of the 18-ft. Christmas tree and to Greenfield Farms for providing the animals. Thank you to our community for all your support and patience while waiting to see the Nativity. We hope everyone has a blessed Christmas.
**Liturgical Schedule at the Seminary**

*“Come, let us sing joyfully to the Lord”*

Join the Seminarians of Byzantine Catholic Seminary at 3605 Perrysville Ave., Pittsburgh, Pa., for Liturgical Prayer. Visitors are welcome at the Seminary chapel. Masking required of those who are not fully COVID vaccinated. Enter through the chapel door that faces Perrysville Avenue. It’s recommended visitors call 412-321-8383 in advance. For more information about the Seminary: go to www.bcs.edu.

**Schedule of Services for January**

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Service Time</th>
<th>Service Type</th>
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<tr>
<td>Wed 5</td>
<td>9 a.m.</td>
<td>Office of Readings (R) [LS]</td>
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<td>Thu 6</td>
<td>4 p.m.</td>
<td>Great Vespers and Divine Liturgy; Water Blessing (R)</td>
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<td>Wed 12</td>
<td>8 a.m.</td>
<td>Festal Matins and Divine Liturgy (R)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thu 13</td>
<td>4 p.m.</td>
<td>Great Vespers (R)</td>
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<td>Fri 14</td>
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<td>Divine Liturgy (M)</td>
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<td>Sat 15</td>
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<td>Vespers with 7th Kathisma (R)</td>
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<td>Sun 16</td>
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<td>Festal Matins (R)</td>
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<td>Mon 17</td>
<td>8 a.m.</td>
<td>Divine Liturgy (R)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tue 18</td>
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<td>Moleben for Those in Illness (R)</td>
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<td>Wed 19</td>
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<td>Divine Liturgy (R)</td>
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<td>Divine Liturgy (R)</td>
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<td>Fri 21</td>
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<td>1st Hour and Divine Liturgy (M)</td>
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<td>Sat 22</td>
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<td>Vespers w 8th Kathisma (R)</td>
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<td>Sun 23</td>
<td>5 p.m.</td>
<td>Great Vespers (R)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon 24</td>
<td>8 a.m.</td>
<td>Festal Orthros and Divine Liturgy (M) [LS]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tue 25</td>
<td>8 a.m.</td>
<td>Divine Liturgy for the Departed with Panachida (R)</td>
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<td>Wed 26</td>
<td>7 a.m.</td>
<td>Festal Matins (R)</td>
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<td>Thu 27</td>
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<td>Divine Liturgy (R)</td>
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<td>Fri 28</td>
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<td>Divine Liturgy (R)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sat 29</td>
<td>5 p.m.</td>
<td>Vespers w 9th Kathisma (M) [LS]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sun 30</td>
<td>8 a.m.</td>
<td>Divine Liturgy (R)</td>
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(M) Melkite tradition  (R) Ruthenian tradition  [LS] Livestream

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**Pre-Cana Program** — The Office of Religious Education will sponsor a Pre-Cana Program for engaged couples on Saturday, March 26 and Saturday, April 2, 2022 at SS. Cyril and Methodius Seminary in Pittsburgh, Pa. Topics covered include: Communication, Forgiveness and Intimacy; Finances and Budgeting; Marriage and Sexuality; Why a Church Wedding?; Elements of a Healthy Marriage; and Theology of Marriage/Crowning Ceremony. For information about registration, fees, etc. go to archpitt.org – Office of Religious Education link.

**Goulash Dinner** — 4-7 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 15, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 16, St. John Cathedral, 210 Greentree Road, Munhall, Pa. A take-out only Goulash dinner includes Beef Goulash, dumplings, veggie, roll and butter. Pre-orders will be guaranteed. To pre-order, call 412-461-0944. In addition, quarts of haluski, quarts of soup, our kolache, and various baked goods will be sold.