

WORLD

THE BYZANTINE CATHOLIC

THE OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF THE ARCHEPARCHY OF PITTSBURGH

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"Jesus Christ is in the heart of each one of us"

METROPOLITAN JONAS MAXIM OF THE ARCHEPARCHY OF PREŠOV, SLOVAKIA VISITS U.S.



Metropolitan Jonas Maxim (center) of the Archeparchy of Prešov, Slovakia concelebrates the March 1 Divine Liturgy with Metropolitan Archbishop William C. Skurla at St. John the Baptist Cathedral in Munhall, Pa. At left is Very Reverend Marek Visnovsky of the Eparchy of Passaic. For more photos, see page 4. Photo by Nick Havrilla Sr.

By David Mayerik Jr.
 Editor

Metropolitan Jonas Maxim of the Archeparchy of Prešov, Slovakia concelebrates the March 1 Divine Liturgy with Metropolitan Archbishop William C. Skurla at St. John the Baptist Cathedral in Munhall, Pa.

During his trip to the United States, Metropolitan Jonas also celebrated the Divine Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts at St. Mary in Trenton, N.J. in the Eparchy of Passaic and traveled to New York City, where he discussed finding Christ in both Byzantine and Roman Catholic traditions at the Basilica of St. Patrick's Old Cathedral in Lower Manhattan.

Following the Sunday morning liturgy at the Cathedral in Munhall, they moved to the

lower level of the Cathedral, for a breakfast baby shower in honor of Seminarian Nicholas Krivacs and his wife, Cailee.

In his homily, Metropolitan Jonas expressed appreciation for being able to celebrate the Divine Liturgy with the Cathedral's faithful.

Very Reverend Marek Visnovsky of the Eparchy of Passaic served as translator.

"I'm very glad I'm here with you this morning and we can celebrate the Divine Liturgy and glorify God," he said.

"It's so pleasant to fly all these thousands of miles, come here to Pittsburgh and find at the Cathedral the same Jesus Christ as I find Him back in Europe.

"(Our ancestors) traveled thousands of miles and they had this desire to have their own Church. They wanted to have their

own liturgy and they wanted to have their own priest. Many times I ask myself: How come that our people had that desire? That in such a distant world for them, they always wanted to have the Divine Liturgy and celebrate the Mysteries?"

Metropolitan Jonas then spoke on the day's Gospel reading of St. Mark in which four men bring a paralyzed man to Jesus Christ.

"There was a sick man and there were four people who are helping him in his sickness. The sick man, through those four men, saw the face of Jesus Christ. Those four men who are helping this sick man to see Jesus Christ, they're representing the image of the Church," he said.

"That's the goal of the Church..."

Story continued on page 4

ETERNAL MEMORY

SISTER HELEN SCHOTT, OSBM

On the morning of Tuesday, March 3, Sister Helen Schott (Annunciata) was welcomed to the loving embrace of the Lord after a full life in His service. She was 91 years of age and in the 70th year of her consecrated life as a Sister of St. Basil.

Sister Helen Schott was born on June 22, 1934, in Freeland, Pa. Formerly a parishioner of St. John's Church in Hazleton, Pa., she entered the Sisters of St. Basil on Sept. 12, 1953, and made her perpetual vows on Aug. 16, 1959.

From 1956 to 1969, she faithfully served as a teacher and principal in parochial schools in Bridgeport, Munhall, Whiting, Lorain, Pottstown, and Parma. From 1974 to 1979, she ministered as Director of Nursing and Superior at Mt. Macrina Manor Nursing Home in Uniontown, Pa.

Sister Helen served her Province with dedication as Provincial Councilor (1975-1980) and Provincial Superior (1980-1990). Under Sister Helen's leadership, the Sisters moved into the decade of the 1980s with a new appreciation of their vowed life and their Byzantine heritage. The movement to various ministries began in the previous years continued during Sister Helen's two terms as Provincial. In 1982, Sisters from the Uniontown Province added to their presence in Rome by missioning Sisters to the Generalate and in the Vatican Secretariat.

Story continued on page 5



Sister Helen Schott and her brother, Metropolitan Archbishop Basil M. Schott, OFM

WORLD

THE BYZANTINE CATHOLIC

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MISSION

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.



BULLETIN BOARD

Helping Days Day set for May 30

Mark your calendars for Helping Hands Day on Saturday, May 30 at Mount St. Macrina in Uniontown, Pa.

This is your chance to make a real difference. Join us as a volunteer to help prepare the grounds for Pilgrimage and be part of something truly meaningful. Your time and effort will help create a memorable experience for everyone.

Stay tuned for more details and opportunities to get involved. ■



Upcoming events at the House of Prayer at Mount St. Macrina



The following events will take place at Mount St. Macrina, 510 W. Main St., Uniontown, Pa.

Events now take place in the Trinity Center, the former Servants' Quarters and Stables of the J.V. Thompson Estate.

To register for programs or more information, call 724-438-7149 or email hpmsm@verizon.net.

■ **Centering Art Workshop:**
9:45 a.m.- 1 p.m. Saturday, April 25. Presenter is artist Nancy McChesney, MA. using simple components of movement, meditative imaging, and watercolor. Materials provided. Includes lunch. Offering: \$45. Registration due: April 17.

■ **Icon Writing Retreat:**
4 p.m. Friday, May 15 to 3 p.m. Sunday, May 17. Led by Marylyn Barone. Icon of St. Photina, the Samaritan Woman. Materials, meals, and overnight accommodations provided. Space limited. Commuters welcome. Offering: \$425. Commuters: \$375. Registration due: May 8. ■

Carpatho-Rusyn Society: *Manifesting Carpatho- Rusyn Culture and History*

The mission of the Carpatho-Rusyn Society is to preserve and perpetuate the distinct culture, history, language, and heritage of the Carpatho-Rusyn people.

The Society offers regular educational Zoom presentations, chat groups, in-person events in our chapters, genealogy help by professional Rusyn genealogists and scholarships to students.

Also offered is an online/mail-in Heritage Store with books and gift items. New is our first-ever activity book for children (and adults) to engage learning about the Carpatho-Rusyn Culture. We also carry three-bar cross candles.

Listen live on Sunday afternoons to Rusyn music on our Rusyn Heritage Program (also archived).

Check out the headings on our new website to find this information and more: <https://c-rs.org>.

Visit Facebook Carpatho-Rusyn Society, our strictly informational page, to learn about past and upcoming events. For more information contact Bonnie Burke at bb@c-rs.org. ■

“Carpathian Cookery” available for purchase

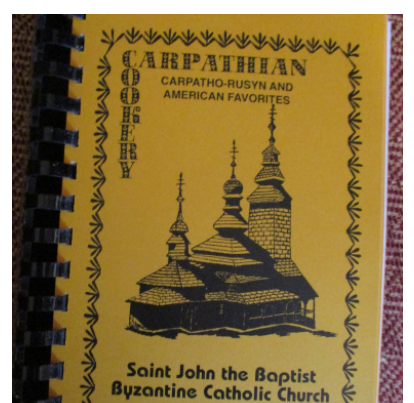
The Carpathian Cookery cookbook is available for purchase.

The 330-page cookbook has a new look and features a protective plastic cover. The book includes sections on Christmas and Easter customs and recipes, traditional Rusyn and Slavic foods, other ethnic dishes, and many other tried-and-true recipes of St. John's parishioners.

The cost of the cookbook is \$14 plus \$6 postage and handling (\$20).

If ordering from Canada, please send \$36 (\$14 plus \$22).

To order, send a check or money order to: Ethnic Craft Club, St. John Byzantine Catholic Church, 201 E. Main Street, Uniontown, Pa. 15401, or call 724-438-1382 (M-F 9 a.m.- 3 p.m. – leave message). ■



YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT EVENTS 2026

& more to come

FEB 7

SATURDAY / TEENS

CALLED TO LOVE AND TO DANCE

St. John Chrysostom
Byzantine Catholic Church
Pittsburgh, PA

FEB & MAR APR 11

TUESDAYS / YOUNG ADULTS

GREAT FAST BIBLE STUDY

6:00 pm via Zoom

SATURDAY / TEENS & YOUNG ADULTS

2026 ARCHDIOCESEAL YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT GATHERING

With the metropolitan archbishop William
Holy Trinity Byzantine Catholic Church, Sykesville, PA

MAY 16

SATURDAY / TEENS

2026 SPRING BYZANTEEN HIKE

Raccoon State Park, PA

JUNE 8-20

13 DAYS / YOUNG ADULTS

MISSION TRIP TO ATHENS, GREECE

Athens, Greece

JULY 9-12

4 DAYS / TEENS

BYZANTEEN RALLY

John Carroll University, Cleveland, OH
Eparchy of Parma

AUG 8

SATURDAY / TEENS

2026 BYZANTEEN SPLASH BASH & MORE AND BYZANTEEN RALLY REUNION 🥳

St. Nicholas Chapel, Beaver & Seven Oaks Country Club Swimming Pool, PA

SEP 12

SATURDAY / TEENS

2026 FALL BYZANTEEN HIKE & COOKOUT

Riverview Park and the Chancery, Pittsburgh, PA

OCT 3

SATURDAY / YOUNG ADULTS

2026 ARCHDIOCESEAL YOUNG ADULT PILGRIMAGE

Basilica and Shrine of Our Lady of Lebanon, North Jackson, OH



The Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry
The Byzantine Catholic Archeparchy of Pittsburgh

youth@archpitt.org



A Cry for Peace, Justice from the Eastern Catholic Bishops of the United States

“WE ARE ANGUISHED BY THE PASSION THEY ARE ENDURING ON ACCOUNT OF WAR, PERSECUTION, ASSAULT AGAINST HUMAN DIGNITY, AND VIOLATION OF PERSONAL AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY.”



We, bishops of the Eastern Catholic Churches in the United States, gathered in prayer and dialogue at our annual assembly in St. Louis, express solidarity with our longsuffering brothers and sisters representing different confessions in countries where our communities originate. We are anguished by the passion they are enduring on account of war, persecution, assault against human dignity, and violation of personal and religious liberty.

We express deep gratitude to Catholics and all Americans of good will for their prayers, advocacy for justice and peace, and humanitarian aid for all those victimized by escalating hostilities and autocratic rule, from India to the Middle East, from Ukraine to the Caucasus.

We echo Pope Leo XIV in calling the world's political leaders to begin a “disarmament of heart, mind, and life.” Like the Pope, we insist that stability and peace can be built “only through a reasonable, authentic, and responsible dialogue.” We appeal to those in power in the United States and globally to protect and defend the innocent and vulnerable and engage in diplomacy to forge just and lasting peace.

Together with the Holy Father, we beseech all Americans to remain steadfast in both spiritual

solicitude with and concrete assistance to all those suffering from warfare, torture, and either political or religious oppression. For the Lord Jesus Himself calls us to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and welcome the refugee — especially during Lent.

What we are witnessing in our home communities could easily bring us to despair: churches bombed; clergy and faithful killed; innocent millions forced from their homes. Houses and apartments, hospitals, schools, and roads are destroyed, entire cities wiped out, children abducted. Hundreds of thousands slain, countless maimed, millions traumatized. Torment, rape, and massacre. The menace of genocide.

And yet, together with them, we do not lose hope! Instead, we find inspiration in those who are overcoming great hardships. Worlds apart, our suffering brothers and sisters bear witness to us, at great personal cost, the truth of God's gifts of human dignity and of mutual love amidst desperation. These words of St. Paul could well be said of them: they are “afflicted in every way, but not constrained; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed” (2 Cor 4:8–9).

Indeed, the witness they bear is truly apostolic. They forge our

faith and strengthen our common hope. And that hope is not in an abstraction. It rests in the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ, a Brother, who suffered and died, who has risen from His grave, and who comes to us and meets us. We believe in the Lord who trampled death by His death and gives to us eternal life.

In anticipation of His and the whole world's Resurrection, we proclaim “Christ is Risen! Indeed, He is Risen!”

Signatories

Most Rev. William Skurla
Metropolitan Archbishop of the Byzantine Catholic Archeparchy of Pittsburgh

Most Rev. Borys Gudziak
Metropolitan Archbishop of the Ukrainian Catholic Archeparchy of Philadelphia

Most Rev. Joy Alappatt
Bishop of the Syro-Malabar Eparchy of St. Thomas

Most Rev. Francois Beyrouti
Bishop of the Melkite Eparchy of Newton

Most Rev. John Michael Botean
Bishop of the Romanian Catholic Eparchy of St. George in Canton

Most Rev. Artur Bubnevych
Bishop of the Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Phoenix

Most Rev. Kurt Burnette
Bishop of the Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Passaic

Most Rev. Paul Chomnycky
Bishop of the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Stamford

Most Rev. Bohdan Danylo
Bishop of the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of St. Josaphat in Parma

Most Rev. Gregory Mansour
Bishop of the Maronite Eparchy of St. Maron in New York

Most Rev. Mikaël Antoine Mouradian
Bishop of the Armenian Eparchy of St Nareg in Glendale

Most Rev Robert Pipta
Bishop of the Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Parma

Most Rev. Nicholas Samra
Emeritus Bishop of the Melkite Eparchy of Newton

Most Rev. Elias Zaidan
Bishop of the Maronite Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon in Saint Louis



“Jesus Christ is in the heart of each one of us.”

METROPOLITAN JONAS MAXIM OF THE EPARCHY OF PRESOV, UKRAINE VISITS U.S.

continued from page 1

to bring people to Jesus Christ. We cannot imagine having church without Jesus Christ. It's like a bride without a groom...and most importantly, Jesus Christ is in the heart of each one of us. He is present in each person. Each one of us is a child of God. And we need God and we need Jesus Christ. We're not perfect. We're all in some way sick, we're weak, and as the man from today's Gospel, we have the desire to be healed by God. But what many times happens is because of this weakness and illness...it serves as a block to see and get closer to Jesus Christ.”

Metropolitan Jonas said the Church is here to help us get closer to Jesus Christ.

“That's why we should be happy that we have those kind of friends that bring us closer to Christ and that we're able to see the face of Jesus Christ. And I believe that each one of us after this Divine Liturgy and every Divine Liturgy will leave healed. Each little thing, each little sickness that is in us, God wants to heal,” he said.

“That's why I'm glad and happy that I can celebrate this Divine Liturgy along with Archbishop William and all of you even though I'm from a distant land from Europe but I'm meeting the same Christ. Even though I come from a very distant land, I'm in the same rite as I am in Europe. As a child of God, I feel that the whole world is mine because in each corner of the world, I can still find our Church, our people, and Christ in it. That's what I wish and pray for all of you and for myself that even during this Lent we can get closer to Christ and we will be able to look deeper into the eyes of Jesus Christ. That we have ability to say humbly to Jesus Christ, look at my weaknesses and illnesses. If there is something I cannot resolve on my own, offer it to Jesus Christ,” he said.

“May this Divine Liturgy be something that gets us all closer to Jesus Christ. And when we come home this afternoon, we can clearly say, yes, I've met Jesus Christ. And something changed within me. Glory to Jesus Christ!”





“Resilience Through Hope, Prayer”

21ST ANNUAL WOMEN’S DAY OF REFLECTION SET FOR APRIL 18 ON THE CAMPUS OF LA ROCHE UNIVERSITY

The 21st annual Women’s Day of Reflection will be held 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Saturday, April 18 at Kearns Spirituality Center (Campus of La Roche University), 9000 Babcock Blvd., Allison Park, Pa.

This year’s theme is: “Resilience Through Hope & Prayer.”

Presenters include:

Mike Clark has anchored and reported news for WTAE since 1995. He was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters from La Roche University and won multiple Emmy Awards both individually and as part of a news team.

Mike has been involved in multiple charitable organizations and is an adjunct professor of journalism at Duquesne University.

He lost a son in a tragic hiking accident in 2019. He is a proud husband, father and man of deep faith who has a story to tell about resilience.

Michelle Wright is a Franciscan University graduate and worked in the field of Catechetics for 20 years. She recently joined the Doctorate in Ministry program at Franciscan with a desire to focus on spiritual formation for individuals with special needs.

SCHEDULE

<p>9 a.m. Doors open Registration/Coffee</p> <p>9:45 a.m. Prayer/Welcome</p> <p>10 a.m. Session I Mike Clark</p> <p>11 a.m. Break</p>	<p>11:15 a.m. Session II Michelle Wright</p> <p>Noon Lunch and vendors</p> <p>1 p.m. Session III Flower Arrangement</p> <p>2 p.m. Plant Benefit Auction for children and women in Ukraine</p>
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Please help to support the women and children in Ukraine by donating a plant for the auction. May God reward you

She will share with us her experiences with traits and behaviors of disabled people who are resilient and what she has learned about autism.

Michelle lives in Cranberry Township, Pa., with her husband and teenage son.

There will also be a Floral Demonstration.

The event is sponsored by the Byzantine Catholic Archeparchial Office of Religious Education.

Cost of \$40 includes lunch. Pre-registration is required.

Contact Sister Marion Dobos at

412-322-8773 or mdobos1@gmail.com for more information.

A dedicated committee meets throughout the year to plan and coordinate the day, working with a theme of interest to women to help them grow in their spirituality.

Proceeds of a Plant Auction will benefit women and children in Ukraine.

For overnight accommodations, call 412-366-1124 or email kearns@cdpsisters.org

A registration form is available at archpitt.org. ■



“That you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other’s faith.”
(Rom. 1: 12)

What is Resilience?

Resilience is the ability to bounce back from difficult or tough situations. It means being able to cope with hardships, recover from adversity and keep going even when things are tough. It is about adapting to challenges rather than being knocked off course for good.

Resilience is not about pretending everything is okay. It is about having coping strategies, asking for help, and working through problems.

Some of the common symbols for resilience are: the phoenix, a mythical bird that rises from ashes; the lotus flower grows from mud to bloom beautifully; and the bamboo plant, known for bending without breaking. ■

Name _____

Email _____

Parish _____ Pastor _____

Make check payable to: *Office of Religious Education*

FEE: \$40 – includes box lunch (No Refunds)
Ham ___ Turkey ___ Salad ___

Registration Deadline- April 13, 2026

Additional registration forms can be found at www.archpitt.org

Please mail this form and your registration fee to:

Office of Religious Education
3605 Perrysville Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15214
412-322-8773

ETERNAL MEMORY SISTER HELEN SCHOTT, OSBM

Story continued from page 1

The initial translation of the Divine Office into English primarily for community use, resulted in the publication of the Office of Vespers, Office of Matins, The Festal Menaion and the Triodion. The Basilian Associate Program was established in 1990.

A revitalization program was begun in the Province, and a review of buildings and resources for future planning was undertaken. The health care ministry at Mt. Macrina

grew and in 1989 groundbreaking was held to enlarge the Manor to a 120-bed facility, offering three levels of care to the elderly and infirm.

When her terms of office were completed, Sister Helen worked with Albert Gallatin Nursing Service in Hospice care, also serving as Health Director of the Province. Until she was no longer able to do so, health care of the Sisters proved to be her final engagement in active ministry.

As her health declined, Sister Helen became a resident at the Manor. It was from here, that Jesus called her to her new home in the

Heavenly Kingdom.

Sister Helen chose a reading from the Gospel of John for her Funeral Liturgy. In his homily, Archbishop William C. Skurla highlighted the verse: “I am the Bread of Life . . .whoever believes in me will never thirst.” This belief truly sustained Sister. Her many achievements bore out the fact that it was the hallmark of her life as a Sister of St. Basil.

Archbishop William concluded that all of us would do well to follow her lead.

Sister Helen was known for her open and friendly manner,

not only in the community, but wherever she was called to serve. She wanted to be known for her untiring concern for the infirm Sisters, her love of Byzantine Spirituality, and her love of the Sisters of St. Basil.

In addition to her community, she is survived by nephews James Bannon and Daniel and Christopher Peterson, as well as several cousins and devoted family and friends. Sister Helen was the last surviving member of her immediate family. ■



FIRST ANNUAL PITTSBURGH PRO-LIFE MARCH AND RALLY

Join Us on Saturday, April 18 | 11 AM - 1 PM
Rally | 11 AM
March | 12 PM
Schenley Plaza, 4100 Forbes Ave, Pittsburgh, PA, 15260
Let's celebrate Life in the city of Pittsburgh



RSVP and details:
pittsburghprolifemarch.com

Want to help support our March efforts? Consider donating!

Checks can be made out to "People Concerned for the Unborn Child" and sent to 3050 Pioneer Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA, 15226

Or an online donation can be made on our march website, scan the QR code below.

Scan the QR Code for RSVP and other details



KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



David Bereit
Founder, 40 Days for Life



Lydia Taylor Davis
Spokesperson, Students for Life of America

Holy Spirit Byzantine Catholic Church
4815 Fifth Avenue, Pittsburgh

and the Archeparchy of Pittsburgh
Pro-Life Office

Moleben (Prayer Service)
for the Sacredness of Life
and Supplication for the Victims of
Abortion

Friday, April 17
at 6:30 pm



On the eve of the



<https://www.pittsburghprolifemarch.com/>

Byzantine Catholic Seminary Annual Lecture set for May 12

By The Byzantine Catholic Seminary
of SS. Cyril and Methodius

In honor of the 380th anniversary of the Union of Uzhhorod, our 26th annual academic lecture is to be delivered by Paul Robert Magocsi, PhD at 7 p.m. E.D.T. on Tuesday, May 12.

Dr. Magocsi's presentation will focus on how the Byzantine Ruthenian/Greek Catholic Church has been able to survive for nearly four centuries in the face of political, social, and cultural challenges placed before it by the different societies in which it has had to function in Europe and North America.

All are welcome to attend this lecture virtually via the Seminary website at www.bcs.edu.

The lecture can also be accessed live or at a later time from archives on the B.C.S. YouTube channel.

Dr. Paul Robert Magocsi is professor of history and political science at the University of Toronto, where since 1980 he also holds the John Yaremko Chair of Ukrainian Studies.

He completed his education at Rutgers University (B.A. 1966; M.A. 1967), Princeton University (M.A. 1969; Ph.D. 1972), and Harvard University (Society of Fellows 1976).

Professor Magocsi has taught at Harvard University, the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Prešov University in Slovakia, and on five occasions was historian-in-residence at the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology in Halle, Germany. In 1996 he was appointed a permanent fellow of the Royal Society of Canada — Canadian Academies of Arts, Humanities, and Sciences, and has been awarded honorary degrees from Prešov University in Slovakia (doctor honoris causa, 2013) and from Kamianets-Podilskyi National University in Ukraine (pochesnyi profesor, 2015).

Dr. Magocsi is interested in the history of nationalism, in



Dr. Paul Robert Magocsi

particular among ethnic groups living in border areas. He has published in the fields of history, sociolinguistics, bibliography, cartography and immigration studies.

The annual lecture series is sponsored by the Byzantine Catholic Seminary of SS. Cyril and Methodius in Pittsburgh, Pa., a community of mentors, teachers, and students living and working in an ecumenical environment of Christian unity, integrity, and missionary spirit.

Founded in 1950, the Byzantine Catholic Seminary of SS. Cyril and Methodius is a free-standing, English speaking theological seminary, welcoming all those seeking the knowledge possessed by the Eastern ecclesial traditions. We are authorized to grant graduate degrees by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and accredited by the Commission on Accrediting of the Association of Theological Schools.

We offer the following degree programs approved by the Commission on Accrediting: Master of Divinity; Master of Arts in Theology.

We operate as a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization incorporated in Pennsylvania, and are governed by a Board of Directors under the leadership of the Metropolitan Archbishop of Pittsburgh. ■

Earn your Master's Degree in Theology at the Byzantine Catholic Seminary's School of Theology

Degree options are offered both online and on campus.
Catholic • Ecumenical • Flexible
Affordable • Prestigious • Spiritually Enriching
Rooted in ancient Christianity

To begin M.A.T. program in upcoming summer semester, application deadline is April 20.

Students have a choice of three different M.A.T. focus areas:

- Dogmatics
- Liturgy
- Sacred Scripture

www.bcs.edu

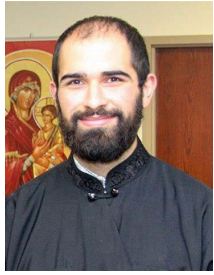




ASK FATHER LUKE

Baptism, Chrismation, Eucharist

By Father Luke Iyengar
Assumption of the Mother of God,
Weirton, W. Va.
St. John the Baptist, Avella, Pa.



Recently, my parish bulletin started a section called "Ask Fr. Luke," where parishioners can write

in with questions about liturgy, theology, and parish life.

Some of the questions may be specific to the parishes I serve, but some of them might be interesting to a wider audience. So, with that in mind, I share my answer to a question I got in early February: "Why does the Byzantine Catholic Church permit young children who haven't celebrated their First Communion to share in the Holy Eucharist?"

My answer: Technically, the "First Communion" of a Byzantine Catholic is at Baptism. In 1996, the Congregation for the Eastern Churches (the office in Rome that handles Eastern Catholic matters on behalf of the pope) published the Instruction for Applying the Liturgical Prescriptions of the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches (online free at EWTN.com), which explains the matter nicely in paragraph no. 42.

The Instruction points out that

Christian Initiation is essentially "one and indivisible celebration of the entrance into the life of Christ" and into the Church; and this takes place through the three sacraments of Baptism, Chrismation (Confirmation) and Eucharist.

In the ancient Church, both Eastern and Western Catholics were generally communed as infants, though in the West this changed due to "historical and cultural reasons." The Instruction goes on to say that "This practice was changed during the last centuries in different Eastern Catholic Churches under external pressure, based on spiritual and pastoral meanings altered by Latins, comprehensible but extraneous to the organic progress and not in line with the dynamism of the Eastern patrimony." Or, as my great-grandmother would have said, our original and ancient practice was changed for reasons that were "ne naš (not 'ours')."

Fixing this, canon 697 of the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches (the book of canon law which regulates the life of all Eastern Catholic Churches, promulgated by Pope St. John Paul II in 1990) states that "the Divine Eucharist is to be administered as soon as possible" after Chrismation. Our Council of Hierarchs (the archbishop and

his suffragan bishops) clarified what this means for us when they promulgated the "Particular Law for the Byzantine-Ruthenian Church in the USA" in 1999 and legislated that "Eucharist is to be given at the time of baptism regardless of the age of the one to be baptized."

So, to sum up: Christian Initiation is one event composed of Baptism, Chrismation and the Eucharist. In our Church, we have restored the ancient practice of infant Communion, thus completing the Christian Initiation of infants in one go. I'll let the Instruction (again paragraph 51) have the next-to-last word:

Eucharist is the Bread of life, and infants need to be nourished constantly, from then on, to grow spiritually. The method of their participation in the Eucharist corresponds to their capacity: they will initially be different from the adults, inevitably less aware and not very rational, but they will progressively develop, through the grace and pedagogy of the sacrament, to grow until "mature manhood to the extent of the full stature of Christ" (cf. Eph. 4:13).

And, though it's not the Christmas season, I'll let Charles Dickens offer the last words here: "May that be truly said of us, and all of us." ■

REFLECTION FROM
MOUNT ST. MACRINA

Lead us to Your truth

By Sister Barbara Jean Mihalchick, OSBM



Sister Barbara Jean Mihalchick posts videos of her reflections each week on the Facebook page of the Sisters of St. Basil the Great at <https://www.facebook.com/sistersofstbasiluniontown>.

This is a transcript of her April 17, 2025 reflection.

Glory to Jesus Christ!

We come now to the magnificent days. The days of our Lord's passion, death, and resurrection. Days that we are invited to walk closely with the Lord in this time.

I invite us to seek our patron saints to pray for us to do just that; to walk a personal journey with the Lord or ask the intercession of Lazarus and Martha and Mary, who surely were there, and our Holy Mother Mary.

In our prayers, one particular beautiful prayer that I found helps us to become personal in this time to walk with the Lord. This comes from Thursday Matins:

You were crucified for my salvation and you poured forth the fountain of forgiveness for me. Your side was pierced and the stream of life gushed forth for me. You were nailed to the cross so that when I saw the depth of Your Passion I would recognize the greatness of your majesty and sing to You, O Christ, the giver of life, glory to You, for You save us through Your cross and Your passion. When You were on the cross, You drew all mortals together, O Jesus. A fountain of life flowed from the wound of Your side. You poured out streams of forgiveness upon us. By Your cross, lead us to Your truth. O Christ, Savior, deliver us from the snares of our enemies.

Let us pray for each other, as well, to walk closely with the Lord and to bring to Him what we need to bring yet: our weaknesses, sins, our needs for grace, blessings, strength, and courage. Let us pray for whatever virtue we need to see us through these days and prepare our hearts to enjoy, celebrate, and glorify His Holy Resurrection.

God bless you. ■

HOLY WEEK AND PASCHA SCHEDULE

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST
BYZANTINE CATHEDRAL
210 GREENTREE ROAD
MUNHALL, PA. 15120
WWW.STJOHNSBYZANTINECATHEDRAL.COM
412-461-0944



Holy Week and Pascha services may be viewed online at www.stjohnsbyzantinecathedral.com.

HOLY MONDAY

6:30 P.M. MARCH 30

- Presanctified Liturgy

HOLY TUESDAY

6:30 P.M. MARCH 31

- Presanctified Liturgy

HOLY WEDNESDAY

6:30 P.M. APRIL 1

- Presanctified Liturgy with Anointing of the Sick

HOLY THURSDAY

6:30 P.M. APRIL 2

- Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great with Consecration of Sacred Chrism

GREAT AND HOLY FRIDAY

9 A.M. APRIL 3

- Royal Hours

7 P.M. APRIL 3

- Entombment Vespers for Good Friday and Procession with the Holy Shroud

HOLY SATURDAY

7 P.M. APRIL 4

- Resurrection Matins and Divine Liturgy

THE RADIANT RESURRECTION

9 A.M. APRIL 5

- Divine Liturgy

BRIGHT MONDAY

9 A.M. APRIL 5

- Divine Liturgy

ByzanTeen Rally set for July 9 to 12 at John Carroll University in Cleveland, Ohio

EARLY BIRD (BEFORE APRIL 1) & SIBLING DISCOUNT \$350

Registration is OPEN now!

Deadline to register is Friday, May 15, 2026

BYZANTEEN RALLY
AGES 13 THROUGH HIGH SCHOOL!

“TAKE COURAGE!
“I HAVE OVERCOME THE WORLD.”
JOHN 16:33

JULY 9-12

FULL PRICE \$380 AFTER APRIL 1

JOHN CARROLL UNIVERSITY CLEVELAND OHIO

More info & registration Scan QR code

The Intereparchial Youth Commission warmly invites all **TEENS** (ages 13 through high school) to join us at the **ByzanTEEN Rally 2026!**

Get ready for four unforgettable days of faith, friends, and fun! The ByzanTEEN Rally will be held July 9–12, 2026, at **John Carroll University in Cleveland, Ohio** (Eparchy of Parma).

The rally is open to **participants who are 13 years old by the beginning of the Rally, through high school.**

Registration Fee (includes all meals, housing, and programming):

Early Bird (before April 1) and Sibling Discount: **\$350**
After April 1 (full price): **\$380**

Payments may be submitted ONLINE at the end of the sign-up form, or by CHECK made payable to “ByzanTEEN Rally 2026” and mailed to:

ByzanTEEN Youth Rally 2026
Byzantine Catholic Archeparchy of Pittsburgh
66 Riverview Ave
Pittsburgh, PA 15214

The registration deadline is Friday, May 15, 2026.

Question? Email byzanteenrally@gmail.com

■ **University Website:** John Carroll University | John Carroll University

■ **Campus address:** 1 John Carroll Boulevard, University Heights, Ohio 44118

■ **Arrival & Registration:** Thursday, July 9, 3:00–4:30 PM (precise location TBA)

■ **Departure** from the ByzanTEEN Rally site: Sunday, July 12, after 11:00 AM

REGISTRATION is OPEN NOW! Want to sign up? Use the forms below:

PARTICIPANTS
<https://form.jotform.com/YouthArchPitt/byzanteen-rally-2026-participant-form>
VOLUNTEERS/CHAPERONES:
<https://form.jotform.com/YouthArchPitt/byzanteen-rally-2026-volunteers-form>
CLERGY/RELIGIOUS:
<https://form.jotform.com/YouthArchPitt/byzanteen-rally-2026-clergy-and-rel>
We can't wait to celebrate, connect, and grow with you at ByzanTEEN Rally 2026!

Would you like to support ByzanTEEN Rally financially? Use this form: <https://archpitt.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Donation-form-ByzanTEEN-RALLY-2026-Archeparchy-of-Pittsburgh.pdf> ■

“I HAVE CALLED YOU FRIENDS” (John 15:15)

CONVERGE! 2026

An Annual Gathering of Teens and Young Adults
Sponsored by the Archeparchy of Pittsburgh & Holy Trinity Byzantine Catholic Church, Sykesville, PA

SATURDAY, APRIL 11, 2026
10:00 AM – 4:00 PM

HOLY TRINITY BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH
104 SHAFFER STREET, SYKESVILLE, PA. 15865

Highlights of the Day:

- **Divine Liturgy & Q&A Session** with Archbishop Metropolitan William C. Skurla
- **Lunch and Fellowship**
- **Keynote Address** by Dr. Alexander Harb (Melkite Catholic – Alabama)
- **Separate activities & interactive sessions** for teens and young adults

More details and registration coming soon.

This event is open to:

- **Teens:** 7th grade through high school
- **Young Adults:** Ages 18–39 (single and married)
- **Parents** are welcome to attend with their teens.

Don't miss this yearly celebration of next-generation followers of Christ gathered together in joy, connection, faith, and friendship!

The Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry
The Byzantine Catholic Archeparchy of Pittsburgh
www.archpitt.org



Sundays at 9:00 a.m.
WEDO Radio 810 AM
McKeesport, Pa.
Broadcast live from Holy Ghost Church McKees Rocks, Pa.
OR via Internet: click “Listen Live” link at www.holyghost-byzantinecatholic.org



ASSUMPTION OF THE MOTHER OF GOD IN WEIRTON, W. VA.

One day, many blessings



“JOE” OF ALL TRADES! Joe Romanyak Sr. (seated) is joined by his children and Father Luke Iyengar to help celebrate his 93rd birthday. Joe was born on March 3, 1933 (3/3/33)!

By Mike Garan
*Assumption of the Mother of God,
Weirton, W. Va.*

Sunday, March 15, proved to be a very busy and exciting day at St. Mary’s in Weirton, W. Va.

Following the morning’s Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great, the parish recognized parishioners celebrating March birthdays. Among the early afternoon’s special birthday guests was Joseph Romanyak Sr., who turned 93 on March 3.

The church’s senior parishioner worked for 33 years at Weirton Steel. In addition, the U.S. Army veteran spent time dabbling in home maintenance projects and hobbies that included maintaining electrical and gas components; servicing automobiles; and wood carving.

Over time, he also used his wide-ranging talent to help preserve parish property and keep it in first-rate condition.

During his active years at St. Mary’s, Joe and his partner, the late Bob Duboy, generously volunteered their time and talents to complete a variety of maintenance projects inside and outside the church.

Indoors, they cleaned the pews, stained-glass windows and sacristy; vacuumed carpeting; replaced candles and polished candle holders; checked and serviced electrical outlets; and repaired cracks in the walls, window sills and baseboards.

On the outside, they mowed and trimmed grass around the church and rectory; trimmed shrubbery; shoveled snow; installed and painted railings; and checked heating and cooling units.

For many years now, Joe and his children also have taken charge

of collecting pussy willows, then tying them with white ribbons to blessed palms for distribution to the faithful on Palm Sunday.

Yet with his physical abilities now limited, Joe is still quick to offer his advice and opinions about enhancing the church’s infrastructure.

“But age certainly hasn’t diminished Joe’s commitment to the parish,” Bob Mohoroski, parish council member, said. “Even at 93, he remains eager to suggest ideas for improving our church.”

Later that day, Father Luke Iyengar observed Lenten Vespers consistent with the Fourth Sunday of the Great Fast and St. John Climacus.

“St. John’s teachings, especially emphasized during the Great Fast, encourage repentance, humility, perseverance and growth in virtue. He reminds us that the path to God is gradual, requiring prayer, self-discipline and trust in His grace,” he said.

“It’s important we practice gradual growth in holiness offered in his ‘Ladder of Divine Ascent’ not only during this week of the Great Fast but also throughout our lives.”

Afterwards in the church hall, the Altar Society sponsored a humble Lenten meal comprised of sourdough bread, a variety of soups (including Father Luke’s “fiery” meatless chili), cheese pizza and movie snacks. Parishioners and guests also shared lighthearted stories and laughter along with their meals.

Father Luke then wrapped up the day by showing a movie, an inspiring animated epic about Moses leading his people to freedom from slavery.

Embracing pillars of the Great Fast

By Mike Garan
*Assumption of the Mother of God,
Weirton, W. Va.*

During each Great Fast observance, our Byzantine Catholic faithful are called to prayer, fasting and almsgiving — the three traditional pillars of the 40 days leading to Holy Week and Pascha.

At St. Mary’s in Weirton, W. Va., parishioners have embraced those pillars during the Lenten season to curb their spiritual struggles and strengthen their commitment to God, His church and all that is good and righteous.

“Prayer is the ascent of the mind and heart to God.” – St. Basil the Great

Father Luke Iyengar has offered St. Mary’s parishioners many opportunities to pray before the Holy Eucharist during this special time: Sunday Divine Liturgies of St. Basil the Great, weekday Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, Vespers, Matins, Molebens, Hours — all designed to uplift their personal moments of prayers and scripture readings.

“Making prayer a priority during the Great Fast draws us closer to God and helps us grow in faith,” Father Luke said. “Even a few minutes each day spent speaking with the Lord can renew our hearts.”

“The value of fasting consists not so much in abstinence from food but rather in withdrawal from sinful practices.” – St. John Chrysostom

Enriching the call to fast on designated days or beyond can lift people who are inclined to weaken during the 40 days and Holy Week.

Father Luke has offered Lenten reflections and suggested Scripture readings in church bulletins, helping people not only fast from food but also foster a spiritual renewal; invited parishioners and guests to meatless meals after Vespers;

“Our movie-goers witnessed the struggle of the Israelites for their deliverance from the Egyptians and the miraculous power of God,” Father Luke noted. “In the Hebrews march to liberation, God prepared their hearts for the Passover and, ultimately, the true



and encouraged fasting from the usual meats and desserts. Thereby, fasting cultivates a spiritual renewal and a deeper communion with the Almighty.

“Give something, however small, to the one in need. For it is not small to one who has nothing.” – St. Gregory the Theologian (Nazianzen)

Other than Christmas, cries of the needy bellow no louder than at this time of year. St. Mary’s parishioners contribute food items monthly to the local Community Bread Basket — and it’s no different during the Great Fast. But this year, they also are collecting extra monetary donations at Presanctified Liturgies to benefit other worthy causes championed by the Bread Basket.

“Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.” – Matthew 25:40

In addition, when a parishioner’s brother recently suffered a stroke and needed financial assistance, St. Mary’s faithful stepped up to collect money to help him offset hospitalization and medicine costs.

“Since arriving here in October, it didn’t take me long to recognize the faith people show in God and in one another,” Father Luke said. “Their efforts to pray more deeply, fast with sacrifice and give alms to help the needy are tremendous signs of living faith.” ■

Passover of Jesus Christ at Pascha.”

Overall, the day’s atmosphere proved relaxing, welcoming and encouraging, while strengthening the sense that St. Mary’s is a place of not only worship but also one for family to assemble and celebrate. ■

ST. ELIAS IN MUNHALL, PA.

Lenten Kitchen

St. Elias in Munhall, Pa. had another very successful Lenten Kitchen season! We thank all of our customers who supported us and returned week after week.....

and year after year! We also thank all of our volunteers who work every week! May God grant you many years! ■



Veneration of the Holy Cross

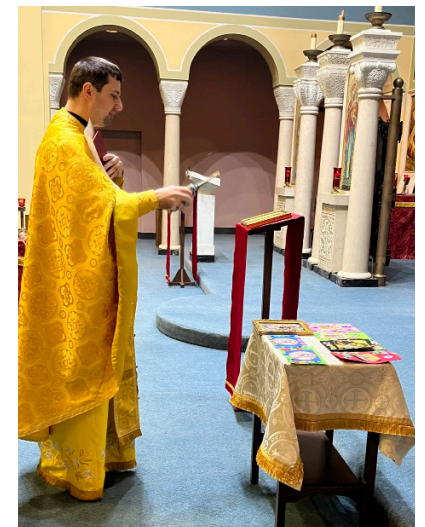
On the Sunday of the Veneration of the Holy Cross, children brought in crosses they had made and adults brought crosses and

chotki to be blessed at liturgy at St. Elias in Munhall, Pa. Additional crosses were blessed for parishioners to take home. ■



Sunday of Orthodoxy

On the first Sunday of the Great Fast, the Sunday of Orthodoxy, the young parishioners of St. Elias in Munhall, Pa. brought in icons which they made and Father Vitalii Stashkevych blessed at liturgy. ■





SS. PETER AND PAUL IN TARENTUM, PA.

Veneration of the Holy Cross

By Father Vasyl Polyak
SS. Peter and Paul, Tarentum, Pa.

In the middle of the Great Fast, when the spiritual journey of Lent begins to feel demanding and the initial enthusiasm may start to weaken, the Church places before us a powerful and comforting sign: the Holy Cross.

The Third Sunday of the Great Fast is known as the Sunday of the Veneration of the Holy Cross, a moment when the faithful pause to contemplate the very center of the Christian faith.

Interestingly, we celebrate the Cross of Christ at least twice each year in a particularly solemn way. In the autumn we observe the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, which recalls the historical event of the rediscovery of the Cross of Christ in Jerusalem by Saint Helena, the mother of Emperor Constantine. During that feast, our attention is directed primarily to the history of the Cross and its discovery.

The celebration during the Great Fast, however, has a different purpose. The Church intentionally places the Cross in the middle of the 40-day Lenten journey as a source of spiritual strength and encouragement. By this time many believers may already feel the weight of fasting, prayer, and the effort of sincere repentance. The Cross appears before us like a spiritual oasis in the desert — reminding us why we began this journey and where it is leading us.

This oasis, however, is first of all the Cross of Christ Himself — the Cross upon which our Savior gave His life for the salvation of the world. It is the Cross that reveals the depth of God's love and the price of our redemption. When we venerate the Cross during the Great Fast, we are not simply remembering an event from the past. We are encountering the living mystery of Christ's sacrifice, which continues to strengthen and guide us.

At the same time, the Gospel reading for this Sunday reminds us that the Cross is not only Christ's Cross. The Lord Himself speaks about the crosses that belong to each of us. He says, "Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me." These words reveal an essential truth of the Christian life. Following Christ requires personal commitment, sacrifice, and the willingness to carry the crosses that appear in our own lives.

Every person has such a cross



— sometimes in the form of struggles, responsibilities, illnesses, misunderstandings, or personal challenges. Yet the Gospel teaches us that these crosses are not meaningless burdens. When united with Christ, they become a path to salvation and spiritual growth.

This important spiritual truth is even reflected in the visual life of our churches. On the icon screen we usually see two crosses. At the very top stands the main Cross — the Cross of Christ, often beautifully gilded and bearing the image of the crucified Savior. It is elevated above everything else because it represents the saving sacrifice of Jesus.

But there is often another cross visible on the icon screen. This one is usually simpler. It may not be gilded or decorated so richly, and it may appear more modest and less precious. This cross can remind us of something very personal — our own individual cross.

The Church, through this quiet symbolism, reminds us of a profound spiritual reality. First we look upward to the Cross of Christ — the Cross that becomes our spiritual oasis in the middle of the Lenten journey. There we find strength, hope, and encouragement. Then we remember our own cross, the one we must carry in our daily lives.

Christian life is lived precisely in this relationship between the two crosses. We do not carry our cross alone. We carry it in the footsteps of Christ, guided by His example and strengthened by His sacrifice.

Therefore, as we reach the middle of the Great Fast, the Church invites us to approach the Cross of Christ with reverence and gratitude. Strengthened by this holy sign, we continue our Lenten journey with renewed hope, knowing that beyond the Cross stands the light and joy of the Resurrection. ■

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST IN SCOTTTDALE, PA.

Pirohi pride

Parishioners of St. John the Baptist in Scottdale, Pa. made pirohi for the Lenten season.

Mark Seremchuk (right), son of Father Oleh Seremchuk, helped Catherine Catalina make the dough. ■



John Onusko, Mark Seremchuk and Catherine Catalina (background) and Cindy Marcej, Luke Hribal, and Cindy Hribal.



Other parishioners peeling potatoes are Barb Zaksek and Maryna Seremchuk.



Making pirohi are: Cindy Hribal, Sandy Kadylak, and Catherine Catalina. Using the dough machine is Terry Frederick. Cutting the rounds are Mike Lashinsky and Andy Lipko. Passing out the dough is John Kadylak. Helping but not pictured are: Janice Frederick, Mike and Christine Dedo, Mariana Kupets, and Betty Sapola.



ST. GREGORY IN UPPER ST. CLAIR, PA.

Sunday of Orthodoxy

By Father Valerian Michlik
St. Gregory, Upper St. Clair, Pa.

The First Sunday of the Great Fast on Sunday, Feb 22, was celebrated in a special way at St. Gregory in Upper St. Clair, Pa.

Since the year 843 the dominant theme of this Sunday has been in our Holy Church the Triumph of the Holy Icons.

At the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy, our ECF students witnessed the Blessing of Icons.

Following that, they participated

in the procession around the Church holding Holy Icons depicting Christ, the Theotokos, and all of those saints who have walked the Christian life before us.

This Sunday of Orthodoxy is a reminder for all of us, that we are called during this Lenten season to recover-restore within us the image of what it means to be an authentic human being, a genuine person created in the image and likeness of God. ■



Creating digital memories

By Father Valerian Michlik
St. Gregory, Upper St. Clair, Pa.

On Sunday, March 1st, we welcomed to St. Gregory's Emily Kubincanek, the Digital Community Collection Specialist from the Carnegie Library. Emily gave a wonderful presentation on how the library can help you

scan or convert your photo and video collections to create digital copies to save and share for free. This presentation was enjoyed by all as we learned more about the Carnegie Library's commitment to preserving our neighborhood's diverse voices, knowledge and history.



Preparing for Easter

By Father Valerian Michlik
St. Gregory, Upper St. Clair, Pa.

The Fourth Sunday of the Great Fast, March 15, was very busy at St. Gregory in Upper St. Clair, Pa.

Our St. Gregory's ByzanTeens were busy serving the Lenten Soup Luncheon. Two delicious and fast-friendly soups were a big hit and enjoyed by the parishioners.

Our faithful also enjoyed fellowship and did some shopping at our Slavic Easter Sale.

In the parish library members of the Bethany Ministry gathered to prepare for pastoral visitations during Holy Week and Pascha/Easter. ■



ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST IN UNIONTOWN, PA.

All stories by Julia Pillar and Bonnie Balas

The Light of the World

The Feast of Our Lord's Presentation into the Temple was celebrated with a morning Divine Liturgy on Feb. 2.

Father Kyprian Wojiechowski's sermon focused on Jesus's light that we can share with others.

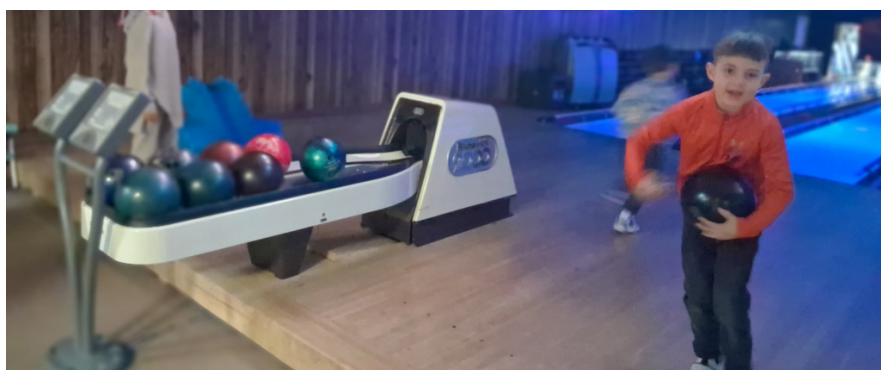
Candles were blessed for those in attendance to take as reminders of that light. ■



Youth Bowling Party

On the evening of Feb. 14, children, parents and grandparents, priests, and ECF teachers met at Fairbank Bowling center for Cosmic bowling. The

church provided the pizzas and the ECF teachers brought snacks and drinks. A great time was enjoyed by all. ■



Caring for the needy

On Super Bowl weekend, Feb. 7 to 8, ECF students and parishioners participated in a nonperishable food and money

collection which will benefit the Fayette County Community Action Food bank. ■



Fashengy Pre-Lenten Celebration

The annual Fashengy meal was held after the Cheese Fare Saturday Divine Liturgy.

The St. John Social Ministry room was decorated with a Mardi Gras theme which added to the extensive array of foods

which included chicken, holubki, and delicious covered dish items.

A "King Cake" brought by Pani Emily directly from New Orleans served as a birthday cake to honor those celebrating February birthdays. ■



ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST IN UNIONTOWN, PA.

All stories by Julia Pillar and Bonnie Balas

Forgiveness Sunday

Vespers were held on Sunday afternoon. To signify the beginning of the Great Fast, the color scheme of the vestments and altar linens changed from bright gold to red, and the music

changed to a more somber melody. Father Kyprian Wojciechowski gave an uplifting homily which encouraged forgiveness. Confessions were offered to those attending. ■

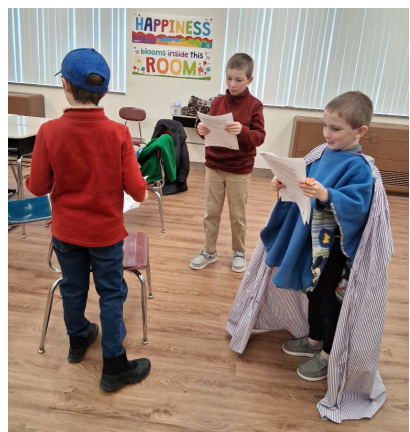


Focus on the Great Fast

Before and during Lent, ECF students were actively involved in lessons with the Sunday themes of prayer, fasting, and doing good works.

In addition, bulletin inserts in "The Children's Corner" depicted the Good Samaritan, Prodigal Son, and St. Ephrem's prayer with

prostrations. The children also prepared decorative frames with icons which were blessed by Father Thomas Sikora, who was filling in for Father Kyprian Wojciechowski, on the First Sunday of the Great Fast. ■



Pysanky classes

The yearly Pysanky classes offered at St. John Church on Monday evenings from Feb. 16 through March 23 were well-attended.

More than 20 participants of varying age groups included several new students, as well as returning students who marvel at their creations.

Instructor, Bonnie Balas, encourages them to continue this form of art which also gives glory to God. ■



SS. PETER AND PAUL IN BRADDOCK, PA.

Penitential Vespers Service

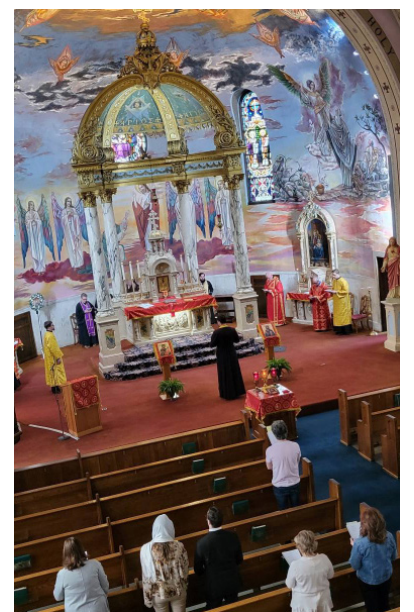
A beautiful afternoon of prayer and fellowship as our Deanery family gathered during the Great Fast.

Today, our parish of SS. Peter and Paul in Braddock, Pa. welcomed our Deanery for Penitential Vespers, with more than 80 faithful joining in prayer during this sacred season.

In his homily, Father Frank Firko spoke on the virtue of humility, reminding us that the journey of the Great Fast calls us to return to the Lord with open and humble hearts. The prayerful singing added to the beauty of the service and lifted our hearts together.

Following Vespers, we shared fellowship with meatless soups and bread.

A heartfelt thank you to our wonderful parish ladies for their



time and effort in preparing and serving the delicious soups for everyone.

May God continue to bless us as we journey through the Great Fast. ■



THOUGHTS FOR OUR DAY

By Archpriest David M. Petras

THE OFFICE OF BISHOP




The ordination to the office of bishop takes place in the Divine Liturgy after the Trisagion. This was the ancient beginning of the Liturgy, and the bishop, as the presider over the liturgy, was ordained at this point, which is still the moment when the bishop enters the sanctuary in a hierarchal liturgy. The bishop kisses the altar, as did the deacon and priest. The imposition of hands takes place in front of the altar, rather than at the southern corner, since the bishop, by right, presides at the Liturgy. He is ordained by three other bishops to represent the hierarchal college. The bishops impose hands, but they also hold the gospel book over the head of the ordinand, as a sign of his service to the gospel of our Lord. In the first prayer for the ordination of bishops, he is then given a three-fold office: apostle, prophet and teacher. In the letters of St. Paul, these were three separate offices, but now they are combined in the position of bishop. The word "bishop," (Greek, episcopos), actually means "administrator," or "overseer."

The office of apostle ("someone sent," an "envoy") was destined to be temporary, since they were those sent directly by Jesus to be witnesses of his gospel. Eusebius said they "laid the foundation of the faith in foreign places and established others as pastors" (Church History 3,37). Hegesippus in the second century was the first to call bishops the "successors of the apostles." The immediate reason for this was Gnostic heresies which appealed

to apostolic authority to justify their teachings. They claimed to have received secret mysteries from the apostles. Of course, no one could challenge them, since the apostles were all dead. Therefore, Hegesippus and, later, Irenaeus said that the only true successors to the apostles were the bishops, "those who neither taught nor knew of anything like what these (heretics) rave about."

Prophets were likewise a separate office in the early Church. They seemed to have a charismatic role and took no part in administration. We don't know how they were chosen, how they functioned and what their

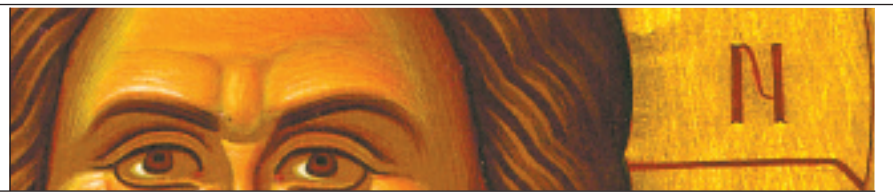

"Appoint for yourselves bishops and deacons, for they are performing for you the office of prophets and teachers."

responsibilities were, but we find references to them here and there in the New Testament. Agabus is mentioned in Acts 11:28 and 21:10, and Judas and Silas in Acts 15:32. Already, Paul has to put restrictions on the prophets, "Let no more than two or three prophets speak, and let the rest judge the worth of what they say" (1 Corinthians 14:29). The order

of prophets was not to last. The main difficulty was that there was no control. 1 John 4:1-6 has to give instructions on discerning the spirits, and Didache 13 on discerning true prophets. The prophets possibly contributed one of the books of the New Testament (Revelation), which was written by John, of the brotherhood of prophets (Revelation 22:9). The prophets had to be restricted because of the danger of false prophecy and heresy. The bishops did not become prophets in the classical sense, but, as the people who received the highest gift of the Holy Spirit in the community, they inherited what remained of the prophetic authority.

This likewise applies to the office of teachers. In a revealing passage, the Didache says, "Appoint for yourselves bishops and deacons, for they are performing for you the office of prophets and teachers" (15:1). The office of teacher was quite powerful in the church, they were what we might call "super-catechists." They had charge of the books of the community, when books were valuable and difficult to reproduce. They taught and kept the deposit of faith. An example of an early teacher (second century) is Clement of Alexandria. For similar reasons as the prophets, the bishops had to take over the office of teaching, since the catechists were causing dissension in the community. The bishops became quite active teachers, and patristic literature is composed mainly of the instructions of the bishops and their commentaries on the books (Sacred Scripture). The catechetical homilies of St. Cyril, Bishop of Jerusalem, are the best example of this.

As the presider over the life of the community, the bishop also presided over the liturgy. Thus, the second prayer of ordination says, "...in your plan of salvation, you have appointed for us teachers subject to the same infirmities as ourselves to stand before your altar and to offer sacrifices and oblations for all your people." Therefore, the bishop presides over both the community and the liturgy. In this role, he is the "good shepherd." The second prayer says, "Make him, O Lord,...a follower of you, the true Shepherd, who gave his life for his sheep." The signs of his office as shepherd were the staff and omophorion (from the Greek word "to bear on the shoulders") The first mention of the omophorion is in St. Isidore of Pelusium (d. 450 a.d.), who wrote, "The bishop's omophorion is made of wool, and not of linen. It represents the lost sheep that our Savior went to seek and brought back upon his shoulders." Simeon of Thessalonica says that, by the omophorion, the bishop "is shown to be the pastor of Christ's flock and to become, by grace, Christ himself." The omophorion is distinct from the orarion in being shorter and wider and designed to be worn over the shoulders. The staff represents the shepherd's crook by which he herded sheep. It seems to have evolved from the walking-stick, quite common in earlier times, and we have references to bishop's staffs from the sixth century. They now have become very elaborate, and are capped with a cross between two snakes to symbolize the victory of the cross over evil. ■



PARISH LITURGIES BROADCAST VIA INTERNET

Here is the most current list of parishes broadcasting Sunday Divine Liturgies and other services to the Faithful via their websites and social media sites such as Facebook.

For changes or to be listed, send information to bcw@archpitt.org.

St. John the Baptist Cathedral
Munball, Pa.
www.stjohnsbyzantinecathedral.com

Holy Ghost
McKee Rocks, Pa.
www.holyghost-byzantinecatholic.org
www.youtube.com, then type Holy Ghost Church Live Stream

St. John Chrysostom
Pittsburgh, Pa.
www.sjcbcc.com

St. Gregory
Upper St. Clair, Pa.
www.facebook.com/stgregoryusc

St. Michael
Campbell, Ohio
www.facebook.com/st.michaelbyz.campbell

St. Elias
Munball, Pa.
www.facebook.com/StEliasByzantineCatholicChurch/

SS. Peter and Paul
Braddock, Pa.
<https://www.facebook.com/SSPeterPaulBraddock/>

St. Michael
Hermitage, Pa.
<https://www.facebook.com/stmichaelbyz.hermitage>

St. Mary
Windber, Pa.
<https://www.facebook.com/StMaryDormition>

St. Mary
Bradenville, Pa.
Go to Youtube.com and type in "St. Mary's Byzantine Media"



GCU **3RD ANNUAL**
SPRING
ST. NICHOLAS
CELEBRATION

Join us on the first Sunday in May at the GCU St. Nicholas of Myra Chapel in Beaver, PA, as we gather to honor our patron saint, St. Nicholas! This special celebration, established by Fr. Val Michlik, is a meaningful opportunity for all the faithful to come together in devotion. We'd love to see you there!

DIVINE LITURGY

Hierarchical Divine Liturgy will be celebrated on Sunday, May 3, 2026, at St. Nicholas Chapel at 3^{PM} celebrated by Bishop Artur Bubnevych

MUSEUM

At the conclusion of Divine Liturgy, the GCU Museum, combining Greek Catholic, and Carpatho-Rusyn histories, will be opened to all visitors until 5^{PM}

BANQUET

A banquet at Seven Oaks Country Club will follow. \$40 for adults, \$20 for children (12 & under). Must be registered and prepaid online.

SUN, MAY 3RD

3PM - 7PM

ST. NICHOLAS
BYZANTINE CHAPEL
 5400 Tuscarawas Rd
 Beaver, PA 15009

Banquet to follow at:
SEVEN OAKS COUNTRY CLUB
 132 Lisbon Rd, Beaver, PA 15009

REGISTRATION REQUIRED

Registration required for both the Liturgy & Banquet. Due to the size of the chapel, the Liturgical celebration is limited to the first 80 who reserve a spot.

Register today!



gcuusa.com/pages/spring-st-nicholas-event



2026 | Beaver, PA

“Resilience Through Hope, Prayer”

21ST ANNUAL WOMEN’S DAY OF REFLECTION SET FOR APRIL 18 ON THE CAMPUS OF LA ROCHE UNIVERSITY

The 21st annual Women’s Day of Reflection, sponsored by the Byzantine Catholic Archeparchial Office of Religious Education, will be held 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Saturday, April 18 at Kearns Spirituality Center (Campus of La Roche University), 9000 Babcock Blvd., Allison Park, Pa.

This year’s theme is: “Resilience Through Hope & Prayer.”

See page 5 for details.



AROUND THE ARCHEPARCHY



POST-EASTER CASH BASH IN CONEMAUGH — 6-9 p.m. Saturday, April 11, Holy Trinity, 217 Fourth St., Conemaugh, Pa. Dinner is served at 6 p.m.; games and drawings follow until 9 p.m. Tickets: \$10 includes dinner and drawings. For more information, contact Georgia Lehman at 814-242-2083.

ST. MARY’S SUPER BINGO — 2-6 p.m. Sunday, April 12, St. Mary’s Center, State Route 981, Trauger, Pa. Doors open at noon. Games start at 2 p.m. Tickets cost \$35 for 24 games and include first set of Regular cards (Specials are included), one Jackpot and lunch. Extra cards, specials, and a WTA Quickie may be purchased at admission. Tickets must be reserved or paid for in advance. None sold at the door. Seating is limited. Call or text Marlene at 412-526-0285 or Marge at 724-787-5631 for tickets. 16 Regular games: \$100, 4 Specials: \$200. \$1,500 Jackpot Series. Regular: \$200, Letter X: \$300, Full Card: \$1,000. There will be opportunities for a 50/50, Chinese Auction, Instant Tickets, and a Lottery Tree. Proceeds Benefit the Church’s Building and Maintenance Fund.

ST. PIUS X ANNUAL SPRING CRAFT AND VENDOR SHOW — 9 a.m.- 3 p.m. Saturday, May 2, St. Pius X, 2336 Brownsville Road, Carrick, Pa. There will be refreshments and baked goods for purchase. A Basket Raffle will also be held. There are still tables available for purchase. Call the Church at 412-881-8344 or Pat Geary at 412-759-2024.

STUFFED PORK CHOP DINNER IN CONEMAUGH — Sunday, May 3, Holy Trinity, 217 Fourth St., Conemaugh, Pa. Sponsored by the Blessed Bishop Theodore Romzha Men’s Fraternity of Holy Trinity. Take-outs only. For more information, contact Tom Oleksa at 814-487-4791.

ICONOGRAPHY WORKSHOP — This workshop is 4 p.m. Friday, May 15 to 3 p.m. Sunday, May 16, House of Prayer, Mount St. Macrina, 500 W. Main St., Uniontown, Pa. Marylyn Barone will conduct an iconography workshop for adults at all levels of experience featuring Saint Photini, the Samaritan Woman. Registration at 2:30 p.m. This includes Friday evening, all day Saturday and Sunday after liturgy until finished. You must be able to attend all three days to have a completed icon. Materials, meals and overnight accommodations provided. Commuters welcome. Offering: \$425; Commuters: \$375. The workshop will be limited to 15 people. Contact House of Prayer to register at 724-438-7149. Registration due: May 8. All icons will be on an 8 x 10 gesso covered board. Using a pre-prepared prototype, you will learn techniques for faces, garments, 23 karat gold gilding and background. The theology of iconography and specifically Saint Photini will also be presented. There will be the opportunity to attend services.

DATES TO REMEMBER



MARCH 30 to APRIL 2

Holy Week

Chancery closed April 2 to 3

APRIL 3

Great and Holy Friday

APRIL 4

Holy Saturday

Archbishop William and Christian leaders bless the City of Pittsburgh

APRIL 5

Pascha —The Glorious Feast of the Resurrection of Our Lord

APRIL 6

Bright Monday

Chancery closed

APRIL 18

Thirteenth anniversary of Archbishop William’s Enthronement as Metropolitan Archbishop of Pittsburgh

See more upcoming events at www.archpitt.org



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NEXT ISSUE:

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