

WORLD

THE BYZANTINE CATHOLIC

THE OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH VOL. 67 NO. 2 FEBRUARY 2022

INSIDE



SACRED RELICS OF THE SAINTS
 Father Carlos Martins brings 165 relics to St. Gregory in Upper St. Clair, Pa.
 Page 3



CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS
 Parishes of the Archdiocese of Pittsburgh celebrate the Nativity of Jesus Christ
 Page 5



CONVERSION
 Archbishop David Petras discusses "a change in spirit or mind, or a change in conviction or way of life."
 Page 11

Christ is baptized! In the Jordan!

FEAST OF THEOPHANY CELEBRATED AT ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST CATHEDRAL IN MUNHALL, PA.



Very Rev. Andrew Deskevich, Archbishop William Skurla and altar server Marty Bovee celebrate the Feast of Theophany Jan. 6 at St. John the Baptist Cathedral in Munhall, Pa. Photo by Nick Havrilla Sr. For more photos, see pages 6 to 7.

God With Us Online

ONLINE PROJECT DEDICATED TO CATECHETICAL RENEWAL OF EASTERN CATHOLICS

By The Office of Religious Education

For decades, our catechetical programs have relied on the excellent publications provided to us by God With Us Publications and in 2019, the Eastern Catholic Directors of Religious Education (ECED), the catechetical arm of the Eastern Catholic Bishops of the USA that oversees the publications, launched an initiative in online adult learning: God With Us Online.

The outreach project is dedicated to the catechetical renewal of Eastern Catholics in the United States in accord with the Church's call for a new evangelization.

God With Us Online offers the same, excellent adult catechetical content online with some of the

best teachers of the faith.

You can register for free online at <http://easterncatholic.org/>. All classes begin at 8 p.m. Eastern Standard Time. The spring curriculum includes:

■ **"Image & Likeness: St. John of Damascus on the Holy Icons"** by Rev. Nathan Symeon Adams on Wednesday, Feb. 23. Study our Holy Father John of Damascus' fierce and powerful defense of the importance of Holy Images, that we may approach the anniversary of the restoration of icons to the churches after the iconoclast heresy with renewed faith in their power to ingrain the truth of our souls.

■ **"The Way of the Pilgrim: Unlocking the Jesus Prayer"**

by Rev. Hieromonk Maximos Davies on Mondays, March 7 to 21. "Pray always," St. Paul exhorts us (1 Th. 5.17). And yet, how do we achieve this? The ascetics of the Church have long extolled the Jesus Prayer as the most powerful means to achieve unceasing prayer. Join us as we explore this rich, but simple prayer of our Eastern Christian tradition, seeking to "remember God more often than [we] breathe."

■ **"Entertaining Angels: The Ascetical Practice of Hospitality"** by Rev. Michael O'Loughlin and Mother Natalia on Monday, March 28. In the Old Testament, Abraham and Sarah served three strangers not

Continued on page 2

ETERNAL MEMORY

SISTER MARY ANN VASILCHECK

OLDEST LIVING MEMBER OF SISTERS OF ST. BASIL THE GREAT ENTERS INTO ETERNITY

The oldest living member of the Sisters of St. Basil, Sister Mary Ann entered into eternity on Wednesday, Jan. 5. Her long journey of 78 years as a Sister of St. Basil ended as she stepped into new life.

Sister Mary Ann (Elizabeth) Vasilcheck was born in Struthers, Ohio, the daughter of John and Susan (Ondovcin) Vasilchek. She entered the Sisters of St. Basil in Uniontown on May 14, 1944 and made her Final Profession of Vows on April 4, 1954 in the presence of the late Rev. Father Bernardine Hvizdos, OFM.

Sister Mary Ann's years of ministry were largely spent as a home Sister in the various parish missions staffed by the Sisters. She also enjoyed teaching religion to younger children, and several years and many of her summers were taken up with this ministry. In addition, Sister served at the Bishop's Residence in Pittsburgh and at St. Basil's Home in Uniontown.

Following her service at St. Basil's Home, Sister Mary Ann retired to the monastery, where she assisted wherever she could.

Continued on page 2



Sister Mary Ann (Elizabeth) Vasilcheck



UPS 081500
ISSN 07442289

Official publication of the
Byzantine Catholic
Archeparchy of Pittsburgh

Serving parish communities in
central and western Pennsylvania,
Louisiana, eastern Ohio, Oklahoma,
Tennessee, Texas and West Virginia

Published monthly (12 issues)
plus two seasonal special issues

Byzantine Catholic Press Associates
66 Riverview Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15214
Tel: 412.231.4000
Fax: 412.231.1697
E-mail: bcw@archpitt.org
Web site: www.archpitt.org

Archbishop William C. Skurla
President

Sister Elaine Kisinko, OSBM
Copy Editor

David Mayernik Jr.
Editor

Deacon Robert J. Shalhoub
Business Manager

Annual Subscription Rates
US \$14
Canadian \$17
International \$20

Periodicals Postage PAID at Pittsburgh, PA

Postmaster: send address changes to:
The Byzantine Catholic World
66 Riverview Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15214

*Please allow 2 to 3 weeks for address
changes to take effect.*

Submissions deadline:
21st of the month prior to
the month of publication.



*The Byzantine
Catholic World*
is a member of the
Catholic Press
Association.

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.

IN PREPARATION FOR **The Great Fast 2022**

REGULATIONS FOR THE SEASON

The fasts of the liturgical year are to be kept in accordance with the
Norms of Particular Law of the Byzantine Metropolitan Church *sui iuris* of Pittsburgh.

SIMPLE ABSTINENCE

- The law of *simple abstinence* forbids the use of meat, but permits the use of eggs and dairy products.
- All faithful of the Archeparchy who receive the Eucharist are obliged to observe *simple abstinence* when prescribed. Abstinence is obligatory on all Wednesdays and Fridays of the Great Fast.

STRICT ABSTINENCE

- The law of *strict abstinence* (fasting) forbids the use and consumption of all meat, eggs and dairy products.
- All faithful of the Archeparchy who receive the Eucharist are obliged to observe *strict abstinence* when prescribed.
- Strict abstinence* (fasting) is to be observed in 2022 on **Pure Monday, Feb. 28** (the first day of the Great Fast), **and on Great and Holy Friday, April 15.**

DISPENSATIONS

- Priests and parents are to ensure that minors are educated in the authentic sense of penance.
- Pastors and administrators, with just cause and taking into account acceptable reasons due to personal circumstances, may grant to the individual faithful as well as to individual families, dispensations, transferals, or commutations of abstinence and strict fast into other pious practices. Superiors of religious houses or clerical institutions enjoy these same faculties relative to their constituents.

LITURGICAL SERVICES

- The Divine Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts takes precedence over all other Lenten Devotions.
- The Divine Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts only is to be celebrated on Wednesdays and/or Friday evenings of the Great Fast and also on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday of Holy Week. ■

ETERNAL MEMORY SISTER MARY ANN VASILCHECK

Story continued from page 1

In addition, from 1997 until 2005, Sister Mary Ann was a faithful volunteer at Mt. Macrina Manor. As her health declined, the Manor then became her home for the remaining years of her life.

While she wanted to be remembered for her deep faith and love of prayer, the Sisters also remember Sister as an enthusiastic sports fan. Although she was from Ohio, her loyalty in sports was transferred to Pittsburgh, and many a prayer was sent for the Pittsburgh Pirates, Steelers and Penguins. When visiting her at the Manor, any mention of sports would cause her eyes to light up! Sister Mary Ann also enjoyed putting together jigsaw puzzles; as another hobby, she spent time re-purposing greeting cards into bookmarks. These found their way into the hands of her many friends and acquaintances.

Metropolitan William Skurla, in speaking of Sister Mary Ann as a faithful follower of Christ, turned to the Gospel. These words, “when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who have heeded it will live . . .” are true of Sister Mary Ann’s long life as a religious. Heeding the call of her vocation, she now

finds its reward in her new life in the Kingdom. Her presence in the world as a Sister was manifested in the many ways throughout her life she heeded the voice of God.

Sister Mary Ann was the last surviving member of her immediate family. She was preceded in death by her parents, her sisters Mary, Helen, Susan, Delores, Ann, and Eileen, and brothers Michael, John and Edward. In addition to her members in community, she is survived by several devoted nieces and nephews.

The Parastas Service for Sister was celebrated on Sunday, Jan. 9 by Rev. Jerome Botsko, Monastery Chaplain. The Funeral Divine Liturgy was concelebrated by Metropolitan Archbishop William and Rev. Jerome on Monday, Jan. 10. Noah Hicks, great-nephew of Sister Mary Ann, served at the altar. In attendance were the Very Rev. James A. Spontak, Rev. Christopher Burke, and Rev. Stephen Wahal. Interment followed in the Dormition Section of Mount Macrina Cemetery.

May God grant to his handmaiden, Sister Mary Ann, eternal memory and peaceful repose. ■

God With Us Online

Story continued from page 1

knowing they were messengers of God, setting an icon for us to demonstrate that in serving our neighbor, we serve the one who came to save us. Join us as we explore the importance of hospitality to others in our Christian life.

■ **“O Death Where is Thy Sting?: The Biblical Roots of the Paschal Homily”** by Rev. Sebastian Carnazzo, Ph.D. on Wednesday, April 27. St. John Chrysostom’s renowned paschal homily, proclaimed during the celebration of Pascha each year, helps us grasp the great mystery enunciated when we sing: “Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and to those in the tombs, bestowing life!” Join us as we study the rich Biblical background of this powerful text.

■ **“Heaven on Earth: The Beauty and Symbolism of the Divine Liturgy”** by Rev. David Anderson on Wednesdays, May 4 to 18. When pagans of Kiev entered Hagia Sophia and first experienced the Divine Liturgy, they famously said: “We know not whether we were in heaven or on earth, for surely there is no such splendor or beauty anywhere on earth.” Join us as Father David guides us to understand what the beauty of the Divine Liturgy reveals to us. ■



Sacred Relics of the Saints

FATHER CARLOS MARTINS BRINGS 165 RELICS, SOME AS OLD AS 2,000 YEARS, TO ST. GREGORY IN UPPER ST. CLAIR, PA.

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

In preparation for the Nativity of our Lord, on Tuesday, Dec. 22, St. Gregory in Upper St. Clair, Pa. welcomed Father Carlos Martins, priest with the Companions of the Cross.

Currently conducting the “Treasures of the Church” ministry, Father Carlos also serves as the regional coordinator of evangelization for the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Detroit.

“Treasures of the Church” is a ministry of the Catholic Church and run by Father Carlos. Its purpose is to give people an experience of the living God through an encounter with the relics of his saints in the form of an exposition.

The collection included 165 relics, some as old as 2,000 years. Following the introduction and singing of the hymn “Who is on the Road to Bethlehem,” Father Carlos began his wonderful presentation on the “Sacred Relics of the Saints: Treasures of the Church”.

Relics are classified in three categories. A first-class relic is the body of a saint or fragments of bone or flesh. Second-class relics are artifacts that had close contact with the saints or with Jesus (such as an article of clothing or book). Third-class relics are items that are known to have touched a saint or have touched a first- or second-class relic. Many churches have relics built into the altar or displayed for veneration.

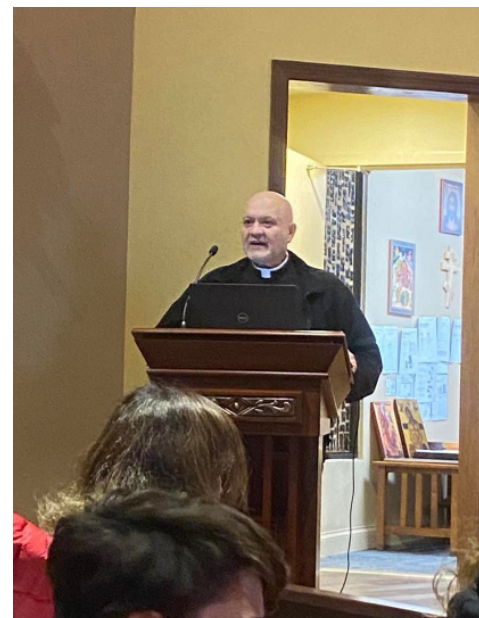
According to Father Carlos, many healings have been worked in the presence of relics.

He also promised us that those with an open heart would experience God in a new and profound way: “When God touches us, he does so in a gentle manner that we often don’t perceive. This is what God chooses to do through relics of the saints. If you give your heart fully and completely today — you will experience the presence and power of God today and unlike any other way you have,” he said.

After his talk, the faithful had the opportunity to venerate the relics, or simply to pray in front of those with which they feel a personal connection.

The collection included a portion of the Veil of Our Lady and one of the largest remaining pieces of the True Cross in the world.

From the Christian East the relics of St. Athanasius the



Faithful came to St. Gregory in Upper St. Clair, Pa. Dec. 22 to hear Father Carlos Martins (far left) and his “Treasures of the Church” ministry. Among the relics on display were a Fragment of the Veil of the Blessed Virgin Mary (left) and Wood of True Cross of Our Lord (above).



Great, St. Ignatius of Antioch, St. Nicholas of Myra, and others were on display.

From the Christian West the relics of St. Teresa of Calcutta, St. Maria Goretti, St. Therese of

Lisieux (the “Little Flower”), St. Francis of Assisi, St. Anthony of Padua, and others were on display.

This was a wonderful evening for our parish family and guests, as Father Carlos through his

ministry continues to give people an experience of the living God through the encounter with the relics of his saints. ■

TEXT MESSAGES

Under the dome

by David Mayernik Jr.
Editor



In the Stephen King novel “Under the Dome,” the small town of Chester’s Mill, Maine is cut off from the rest of the world by an enormous glass dome which mysteriously appears over the entire community.

I’m betting we all feel cut off from the world at one point or another in our lives.

As if we’re trapped in our own little bubble and nothing can get in or out.

I know I do.

Maybe that’s why social media web sites such as Facebook and Twitter are so popular. Many people seem to have a deep need to share their personal lives with others.

The Internet was billed as bringing people together but I think sometimes all this sharing drives us further apart.

But there is some good in cyberspace.

To prove my point, I decided to type “Byzantine Catholic” into the search bar on Twitter and see what results showed up.

Ans I found people are talking about the message of the Byzantine Catholic Church and how attending Divine Liturgy or meeting someone involved in the Church has had a positive impact on their lives.

For example, this was posted on Jan. 16:

Went to Byzantine Catholic Liturgy for first time. Nice people, will go again

And this on Jan. 11:

Took my GF (girlfriend) to the local Byzantine Catholic Church, and she loved it!

And on Jan. 15:

There used to be a small Byzantine community that I used to celebrate with back when I lived in OKC, and receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation in a Byzantine Catholic Church in Las Vegas was an experience I will never forget.

There’s even a Twitter account calling itself “Ruthenian Byzantine Catholic Calendar” (@RuthByzCathCal) which provides a “Daily calendar of Saints, Readings, and Feasts of the liturgical calendar.”

It should do everyone’s heart good that there are people talking about our Byzantine Catholic faith and spreading the word.

Sometimes it’s a positive experience breaking through the dome. ■



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 hpmsm@verizon.net.

■ **Reading Series:** 10-11:30 a.m. Thursday mornings Jan. 13, 20, 27 and Feb. 3. The book is titled “The Grace of Yes: Eight Virtues for Generous Living” by Lisa M. Hendey. Offering: \$20. The series will be conducted on Zoom and led by Sister Barbara Jean Mihalchick, OSBM. ■

Knights of Columbus documentary

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 increase devotion to the foster father of Jesus, protector of the Holy Family and patron of the Church, the film premiered on ABC affiliates across the United States this fall.

“St. Joseph teaches us that we really find ourselves when we live for others,” said Patrick Kelly, supreme knight of the Knights of Columbus. “He models for each one of us the importance of prayer, obedience and courage in our lives. The Knights of Columbus is very pleased to offer this inspiring documentary for all to watch and to discover in St. Joseph a powerful example and intercessor.”

Featuring reenactments, interviews with scholars and inspiring witness stories, the documentary provides an opportunity to learn about Jesus’ foster father from a historical perspective and shows how devotion to him can be life-changing.

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

REFLECTION FROM MOUNT ST. MACRINA

Blessed are the peacemakers

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



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/sistersofstbasil.uniontown>.

This is a transcript of her Aug. 24, 2020 reflection.

Glory to Jesus Christ!

This month we’re going to look at: “Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God.”

Well, I used to look at the Beatitudes and think about the “peace” one, “Well, that’s easy, I’m pretty much a peaceful person.” But as I began to prepare it for today, it doesn’t say “be peaceful” and end there. It says: “Blessed are the peacemakers.”

We all know the saying “you can’t give what you don’t have,” so, indeed, it does mean being a person of peace and that can be pretty challenging, can’t it?

In our faith experience, we’re taught to acquire virtues by prayer, by turning to the Scriptures — especially looking at Jesus and putting on the mind and heart of Christ — and in this particular virtue, “peace.” Certainly it means to bring our heart to a peaceful stance. And that often means we need to forgive. I really encourage that when you approach every Divine Liturgy or Mass, that you come with a heart of forgiveness for others. Be at peace.

In fact, peace — as the Beatitude says: “Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God” — is a characteristic of God Himself and a gift of God Himself. We don’t create peace; it’s God’s Essence and He shares it with us.

And so, to be like him, we must ask for that gift of peace and enact it because now we are called to be peacemakers.

Are you? Am I? When you walk into a situation where there’s hatred, conflict, can you bring love? Can you bring a word of encouragement that says: “This can be worked out. Let’s seek peace together.”

If you come to somebody who’s been injured, who is in darkness, who needs an experience of peace from someone else, will you be that blessing, that peacemaker?

If we’re filled with the Lord’s

Continued on page 12

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. ■



Pre-Cana Program

for engaged couples
Ss. 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 archpitt.org – Office of Religious Education link

Celebrating Christmas

HOLY TRINITY IN SYKESVILLE, PA.

Posted Dec. 25, 2021 on Facebook:
Our children of Holy Trinity did an amazing job enacting the birth of Christ. We are proud of them! Thank you to our ECF teachers who helped with practice and planning. ■



Pictures by Amanda Strasavich

ST. MARY IN WINDBER, PA.

Posted Dec. 24, 2021 on Facebook:
Christ is born!
Glorify Him!
I extend to you my heartfelt prayers and best wishes for the festive season and New Year. May the Lord bless you, your families, and friends with peace, good health, and love!
With prayerful best wishes,
And with love in Christ,
Father Ivan Rusyn ■



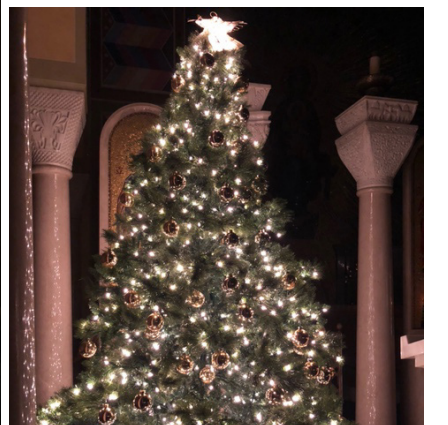
ST. GREGORY IN UPPER ST. CLAIR, PA.



SS. PETER AND PAUL IN PUNXSUTAWNEY, PA.



ST. ELIAS IN MUNHALL, PA.



Feast of the Theophany

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST CATHEDRAL IN MUNHALL, PA.

The Feast of the Theophany was celebrated Jan. 5 at St. John the Baptist Cathedral in Munhall, Pa. Metropolitan Archbishop

William Skurla officiated at the Divine Liturgy and blessed water for this coming year. ■



SS. PETER AND PAUL IN TARENTUM, PA.

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

A wonderful custom is to visit and bless houses of our faithful during the Theophany season.

It is not just only part of history of the Byzantine Catholic Church; it is a sign of restoration of the Grace of the Holy Spirit upon the particular household, which is a domestic church, as well.

We usually bless the things or places the previous blessing

could be compromised: churches, cemeteries, etc. So, in the same way Jesus Himself, with his blessing from the Jordan River, visits Christian families in that time.

Also, the icon of St. Nicholas of Myra, well-known saint of the Christian East, is kept in our household to protect the holiness of the Christian family.

May Jesus, who was baptized in Jordan by John the Baptist, bless all our families. ■



SS. PETER AND PAUL IN PUNXSUTAWNEY, PA.

Posted Jan. 6 on Facebook:

Christ is Baptized! In the Jordan! Tonight in a beautifully decorated Church we celebrated

the Great and wonderful Feast of Theophany. Thanks to everyone who came and helped with the beautiful singing. ■



ST. MICHAEL IN CAMPBELL, OHIO

Posted Jan. 10 on Facebook:

On Thursday Jan. 6, the Great Sanctification of Water took place

at the Theophany Divine Liturgy. The newly sanctified holy water is available in the church. ■





ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM IN PITTSBURGH, PA.

by Elizabeth Harbist
St. John Chrysostom, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Christ is Baptized! And the people responded: In the Jordan!
In the evening of Jan. 6, the faithful braved Pittsburgh's first significant snow event to celebrate Theophany Divine Liturgy at St. John Chrysostom in Ruska Dolina.

The snow was just beginning to coat the streets and sidewalks upon arrival. Inside, the church was warm with candlelight and incense while cantor Kevin Beres led the joyful in the singing of "To Jordan's Water."

Father Miron Kerul'-Kmec shared that the Feast of Theophany brought back many memories. As a young boy, the sound of candles touching the water during the blessing of water in the village church in Vysna Olsava, Slovakia, had a profound lasting impact on him.

Now Father Miron is making new memories with his church family in Pittsburgh.

Armed with newly blessed holy water and faith, parishioners navigated slick snow-covered streets and highways on their journeys home well-prepared for the year ahead. ■



SISTERS OF ST. BASIL THE GREAT IN UNIONTOWN, PA.

Father Jerome Botsko blessed water for the Sisters of St. Basil the Great at the Monastery at Mount St. Macrina in Uniontown, Pa. ■



ST. ELIAS IN MUNHALL, PA.

With snow falling outside, Father Will Rupp blessed water on the Feast of Theophany, Jan. 6, at St. Elias in Munhall, Pa. ■



SS. PETER AND PAUL IN WARREN, OHIO

Homemade Cookie Sale

by John Mosko
SS. Peter & Paul, Warren, Ohio

'Twas a week before Christmas,
the cookies were made;
Parishioners did the baking,
of course, all homemade.

Arranged on trays by members,
young and old;
After each Liturgy, that's when
they were sold.

We thank you all who
baked and bought,
the proceeds won't go for naught;
You see our 100th Anniversary
will be here,
in a matter of just a few years.

Let us all pray
to the Chosen One,
that the pandemic will end so
we can all have some fun! ■

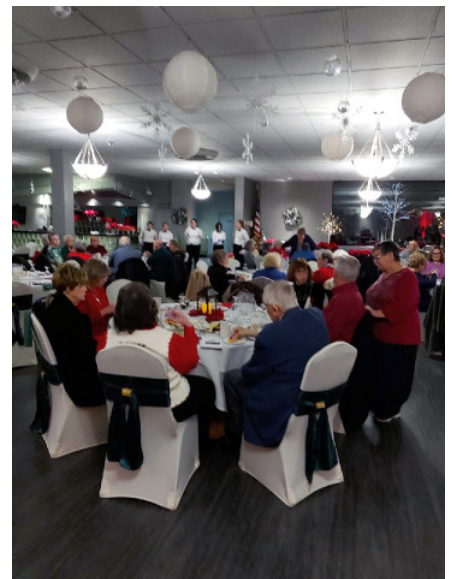


St. Nicholas Dinner

by Lisa Mosko
SS. Peter & Paul, Warren, Ohio

Once again a delicious dinner was served at DiLucia's Banquet Center for SS. Peter and Paul's annual St. Nicholas' Feast Day Celebration. After dinner, parishioners joined together and sang Christmas carols. A 50/50 drawing was held. Everyone who attended found a favor at their place setting with a number on it. If your number was drawn, you received a really nice door prize. If you were lucky enough to have a favor with a special heart on it, then you got to take home a beautiful Christmas lantern centerpiece.

We all had a good time! ■



ST, JOHN THE BAPTIST CATHEDRAL IN MUNHALL, PA.

Hot meal for a cold day

Outpacing a major winter snowstorm, St. John the Baptist Cathedral in Munhall, Pa. served a goulash takeout dinner Jan.15 to 16 that was prepared in the "Kathedral Kitchen."

Under the direction of Very Rev. Andrew Deskevich and the hard work of dedicated parishioners, the two-day fund raising event was quite successful. ■





ST. GREGORY IN UPPER ST. CLAIR, PA.

Blessing of St. Basil's Bread

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

At the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy on Sunday, Jan. 2, the Blessing of St. Basil's Bread (Vasilopita) took place in our parish family.

The tradition of Saint Basil's Bread dates to the Fourth Century, when St. Basil the Great, the father of philanthropy, wanted to distribute money to the poor in his eparchy/diocese. He commissioned some women to bake sweetened bread, in which he placed gold coins.

Thus, the poor families in cutting the bread to nourish themselves were pleasantly surprised to find

the coins.

After the Divine Liturgy, the bread was then distributed in our Church Hall to our parishioners

This year our young parishioner Ana received the bread piece which contained the coin of Saint Basil.

Following the Divine Liturgy, our parishioners were looking forward to this year's Christmas play, "The Birth of Jesus," presented by the students of our Eastern Christian Formation program.

We are grateful to our ECF students who shared with our community the Good News of Jesus's birth. ■



ST. MARY IN WINDBER, PA.

Celebrating St. Nicholas

by William Koshute
St. Mary, Windber, Pa.

The parishioners of St. Mary Church of the Dormition, Windber celebrated the Feast Day of our patron, St. Nicholas Bishop of Myra, on Sunday, Dec. 5 with a festive party in the church hall.

Parishioners of all ages gathered for a luncheon and desserts, with accordion accompaniment by parishioner Ed Zabloney.

The children gathered to hear the story of our Byzantine patron St. Nicholas and his work and concern for the poor, led by Doug Ledney.

This was followed by fun and games for the children and the singing of "O kto kto Nikolaja l'ubit," or "O Who Loves Nicholas the Saintly."

During the singing of his carol, St. Nicholas appeared in the church hall to visit all the children and parishioners bringing gifts and blessings.

Father Ivan Rusyn thanked St. Nicholas for making his trip in from Lycia and wished him a safe return, a blessed Christmas and a healthy, happy New Year! ■



HOLY GHOST IN MCKEES ROCKS, PA.

Appreciation Dinner

by Maria Iyengar
Holy Ghost, McKees Rocks, Pa.

Volunteers from Holy Ghost in McKees Rocks, Pa. gathered for dinner Dec. 30 at Golden

Corral for the parish's annual appreciation dinner.

Father Frank Firko hosted the event, which included prayer, fellowship and good food. ■



ST. MICHAEL IN CAMPBELL, OHIO

Centennial Year

by Father Kevin Marks
St. Michael, Campbell, Ohio

On Sunday, Jan. 2, our Parish officially opened our Centennial Year!

Following the Sunday Divine Liturgy, a prayer service was held

along with the ribbon cutting signifying this great Jubilee Year for us!

Our grand celebration will be this July 31, 2022. Happy 100th Anniversary this year! Honor the Past, Give Thanks to the Present, Ensure the Future! ■



ST. ELIAS IN MUNHALL, PA.

Rolling, stuffing, boiling

Posted Jan. 9 on Facebook: Rolling, cutting, stuffing, pinching, and boiling. The St. Elias pirohi makers are already working on our delicious dumplings for the Great Fast fish fries! ■



HOLY SPIRIT IN PITTSBURGH (OAKLAND), PA.

ST. PIUS X IN CARRICK, PA.

Welcome, Father Michael!

by Mary Dzurichko
Holy Spirit, Pittsburgh (Oakland), Pa.

Holy Spirit Church in Oakland, Pa. celebrated a welcome Divine Liturgy for our new administrator, Father Michael Kunitz, on Sunday,

Jan. 2 followed by an expanded fellowship meal.

It was an enjoyable time of conversation and we all wish for a successful future for Father Michael and our parish! ■



by Beth Gulyasy
St. Pius X, Carrick, Pa.

On Saturday Jan. 15, St. Pius X in Carrick, Pa. also had a "meet & greet" with Father Michael Kunitz and his wife Janine.

After Divine Liturgy, we gathered for lunch and conversation.

We are so happy to have them join our praying community! ■





THOUGHTS FOR OUR DAY

by Archpriest David M. Petras

CONVERSION




The mystery of baptism begins with our conversion, which may be defined as a change, or a turning from one direction to another, “a change in spirit or mind, or a change in conviction or way of life.” In the Jewish work, *The Testament of Abraham*, for example, we read: “Then the Lord God spoke with Michael, saying, “Turn Abraham around to his house and do not let him go around all creation which I made, for he has no mercy upon the sinners, but I have mercy upon the sinners that they may turn and live and repent of their sins and be saved.” The opposite word, “to backslide,” is also found in the New Testament. “Now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and destitute elemental powers? Do you want to be slaves to them all over again?” (Galatians 4:9).

Conversion can be internal, that is, within a particular faith, as, for example, when a person belongs to a certain religious group, but then becomes more committed, or changes from apathy to fervor. Baptism as an infant, of course, does not indicate conversion, but the person baptized as a baby must, at some point in his or her life, experience a personal choice to commitment in the faith. Sometimes this conversion can be a life-time process. Conversion may also be external, that is from one religious group to another, as, for example, from paganism to Christianity.

Today, of course, baptism in infancy is the more usual way into the Church, with some

kind of conversion experience expected later. In the beginnings of Christianity, which lasted for the first three or four centuries, adult conversion was the more general norm. The Acts of the Apostles contains around two dozen conversion stories. These conversions are depicted as sudden and complete. The Ethiopian eunuch, for example, is reading the Old Testament prophecies

 Today, of course, baptism in infancy is the more usual way into the Church, with some kind of conversion experience expected later.

when the deacon Phillip comes alongside his chariot and explains their Christian meaning. Before they travel too far, the eunuch spots some water and asks for baptism. One must remember that Scripture sometimes tells a story which is reduced to its more dramatic elements. Conversion more often was a process that spread over time, and involved instruction and gradual enlightenment into the meaning of the faith. This is called a rite of passage. There are three stages in passing from one status to another: separation, transition and incorporation. We cross a boundary from one way of being to another. Conversion means that a distinct difference in the way we think and behave within

a community must happen.

Most early Christian conversions were from paganism. It was the enemy and was treated with contempt. St. Paul wrote, “While claiming to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for the likeness of an image of mortal man or of birds or of four-legged animals or of snakes. Therefore, God handed them over to impurity through the lusts of their hearts for the mutual degradation of their bodies” (Romans 1:23-24). The early Christians saw pagans as morally decadent. Tertullian said that their gods are names for men long dead and that mortals could become gods through great and heroic deeds. Inevitably, the Emperor was considered to be deified, and the main dispute between Christians and pagans was over incense offered to the Emperor. In this way, paganism was the ultimate civic religion. The total safety and health of society was seen to reside in doing the right rituals to placate the gods. While very few believe in a system of gods, some of the elements of paganism persist in human society to this day.

One of its main differences between Christianity and paganism was that pagans did not have an organized body of teachings. This would have been impossible, at any rate, with the multiplicity of various gods. The people saw no difficulty in this, since either the locales or spheres of influence of the various gods didn't conflict. At the same time, there was a force leading towards monotheism which was somehow superior. The modern neo-pagan revival is not a return to the ancient pantheon of gods, but the revival of the natural

religion, a veneration for a divine power behind all creation, as well as various methods to plug into that power. Have you noticed how many shows there are now about witches, usually portraying them in a very favorable light? The system of gods was waning when Christianity came on the scene. Paganism was not entirely morally bankrupt, and there was an element of true devotion, of belief in God and death after life. The weakness of paganism was their fantastic system of gods, and the lack of any clear theology or moral system.

Christian conversion differed from the pagans in that there was a definite dogmatic teaching and moral code to be adhered to. It was this that attracted the pagans. It also differed from the Jewish approach in that it was completely open to all members, of whatever race, social status or sex. Baptism became the ritual celebration of conversion. Within two decades of Jesus' death and resurrection Paul spoke of baptism as having been in place from the beginning, and the evangelists took the central role of baptism for granted. Jesus was baptized and commanded his disciples to baptize (Matthew 28:19). As Christians, we must turn to the one God, who brings all people into unity, as our Lord prayed, “I pray not only for them, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, so that they may all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us, that the world may believe that you sent me,” (John 17:20-21) for Jesus is “the way and the truth and the life” (John 14:6). All conversion, of course, starts with God's call to us to life. ■

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
Munhall, Pa.**
www.stjohnsbyzantinecathedral.com

**Holy Ghost
McKees 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
Munhall, 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. Stephen
North Huntingdon, Pa.**
www.facebook.com/ststephenbyzantinecatholicchurch

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

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 February

| | | |
|------------|-----------|--|
| TUE | 1 | 7 a.m. Matins (R) 6 p.m. Great Vespers (M) [LS] |
| WED | 2 | 8 a.m. Festal Matins and Divine Liturgy (R) [LS] |
| THU | 3 | 8 a.m. – Divine Liturgy (R) |
| FRI | 4 | 7 a.m. 1st Hour and Divine Liturgy (M) 5 p.m. Vespers (R) |
| SAT | 5 | 9 a.m. Divine Liturgy (R) 5 p.m. Great Vespers (M) |
| SUN | 6 | 8 a.m. Festal Matins and Divine Liturgy (R) |
| MON | 7 | 8 a.m. Divine Liturgy (R) |
| TUE | 8 | 7 a.m. Moleben for Those in Illness (R) |
| WED | 9 | 7 a.m. Divine Liturgy (R) |
| THU | 10 | 8 a.m. Divine Liturgy (R) |
| FRI | 11 | 7 a.m. 3rd Hour and Divine Liturgy (M) 5 p.m. Vespers (M) [LS] |
| SAT | 12 | 9 a.m. Divine Liturgy (R) 5 p.m. Great Vespers (R) |
| SUN | 13 | 7 a.m. Festal Matins (R) |
| MON | 14 | 8 a.m. Divine Liturgy (R) |
| TUE | 15 | 7 a.m. Moleben to SS. Cyril and Methodius (R) |
| WED | 16 | 7 a.m. Divine Liturgy (R) |
| THU | 17 | 8 a.m. Divine Liturgy (R) |
| FRI | 18 | 7 a.m. 1st Hour and Divine Liturgy (M) 5 p.m. Parastas for All Souls (R) |
| SAT | 19 | 9 a.m. Divine Liturgy for All Souls with Panachida (R) 5 p.m. Great Vespers (R) |
| SUN | 20 | 8 a.m. Festal Orthros and Divine Liturgy (M) |
| MON | 21 | 8 a.m. Divine Liturgy (R) |
| TUE | 22 | 7 a.m. Divine Liturgy (R) |
| WED | 23 | 7 a.m. Matins (R) |
| THU | 24 | 8 a.m. Divine Liturgy (R) |
| FRI | 25 | 7 a.m. Orthros (M) [LS] 5 p.m. Vespers (R) |
| SAT | 26 | 9 a.m. Divine Liturgy (R) 5 p.m. Great Vespers (M) |
| SUN | 27 | 8 a.m. Festal Matins and Divine Liturgy (R) |
| MON | 28 | 8 a.m. Matins (R) [LS] 6 p.m. Great Compline with Canon (R) [LS] |

(M) Melkite tradition (R) Ruthenian tradition [LS] Livestream

AROUND THE ARCHEPARCHY



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.



Blessed are the peacemakers

Story continued from page 4

light and ways through our life of prayer, through Scripture, then we can overflow it in the moments that it's called for.

I encourage you to use the Peace

Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi, who gives us practical ways to be peacemakers in given situations. Where there is hatred, bring love; where there is injury, pardon; and so forth.

It's a blessing to be filled with these ideas from his prayer.

God bless you. ■

DATES TO REMEMBER



FEB. 14
Valentine's Day

FEB. 20
Sunday of Meatfare

FEB. 27
Sunday of Cheesefare

FEB. 28
First day of the Great Fast

See more upcoming events at www.archpitt.org

WORLD

THE BYZANTINE CATHOLIC

Official publication of the
Byzantine Catholic
Archeparchy of Pittsburgh

**Byzantine Catholic Press
Associates**

66 Riverview Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15214
Tel: 412-231-4000
Fax: 412-231-1697
Email: bcw@archpitt.org
Website: www.archpitt.org

NEXT ISSUE:
MARCH 2022

**SUBMISSIONS
DEADLINE:**
FEBRUARY 20