




WORLD

THE BYZANTINE CATHOLIC

THE OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH VOL. 68 NO. 1 JANUARY 2023

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Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

LIVING NATIVITY AT MOUNT ST. MACRINA LIGHTS UP THE NIGHT



This year's Living Nativity, sponsored by Mount Macrina Manor on the grounds of Mount St. Macrina in Uniontown, Pa., took place Dec. 11. Among the volunteers lending their talents were the Laurel Highlands High School cheerleaders, St. Mary's Troop 620 and local businesses. For more photos, see page 15.

St. Stephen in Leisenring, Pa. honored by state for 130 years

By Bob Gillingham
St. Stephen, Leisenring, Pa.

St. Stephen Byzantine Catholic Church in Leisenring, Pa. was honored Dec. 11 with a Citation from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Senate in celebration of its 130th Anniversary this year.

Pennsylvania State Sen. Pat Stefano, who has represented the 32nd Senatorial District since 2014, presented the Citation to Father Jerome Botsko and the Parish after the Divine Liturgy.

Senator Stefano said, "Today I have a Citation from the Pennsylvania Senate to celebrate the 130 years of St. Stephen Byzantine Catholic Church."

Senator Stefano further remarked that immigrants from Eastern Europe flooded our area in search

of a better life. Leisenring and other areas in proximity became their home place.

Senator Stefano concluded his presentation by saying, "I am glad that after 130 years this beautiful church still exists and is still integral to our community."

Father Jerome, in accepting the award on behalf of the parish, remarked briefly that St. Stephen is the first Byzantine Catholic Church in western Pennsylvania,



Pa. state Sen. Pat Stefano and Theresa Karaffa

that the early parishioners saved their money to build the church, and that from then to now the parishioners have always been involved in the development of the church.

Father Jerome thanked Senator Stefano for the honor represented by the Citation.

Theresa Karaffa, one of the authors of the book "St. Stephen the Protomartyr Byzantine Catholic Church Leisenring Pennsylvania, A History in Celebration of the 130th Anniversary 1892-2022," presented Senator Stefano with a copy of the book.

Theresa Karaffa thanked Senator Stefano for the Citation on behalf of the parish. Looking at the 196-page book, Senator Stefano quickly moved to the blank 196th

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ETERNAL MEMORY SISTER LEOCADIA SEVACHKO

What joy to go from praying in the Chapel at the Manor to be welcomed into the embrace of the Lord. These last moments of Sister's earthly life were spent in God's presence, shortly to be followed by meeting Him face to face.

Sister Leocadia was called home to the Lord on Wednesday, Nov. 23. She had been a member of the Sisters of St. Basil the Great for 77 years.

The daughter of the late Michael and Victoria (Backus) Sevachko, she entered the Sisters of St. Basil from St. Nicholas parish in Youngstown, Ohio on Oct. 12, 1945 and made her Final Profession of Vows on Aug. 28, 1953 in the presence of the late Bishop Daniel Ivancho.

The first to enter the community, Sister Leocadia had the distinction of being one of three sisters in community; Sister Dorothy and Sister Bernarda.

Well-prepared with a Bachelor of Science in Education degree from Carlow College in Pittsburgh, Pa. and a Master of Science in Education from LaSalle University in Philadelphia, Pa., Sister Leocadia was assigned to the teaching apostolate. She spent well over 57 years in elementary education. Her enthusiasm and her energy as a teacher informed all she did. God only knows the effect of her

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Sister Leocadia Sevachko

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Archbishop William C. Skurla
President

David Mayernik Jr.
Editor

Sister Elaine Kisinko, OSBM
Copy Editor

Deacon Robert J. Shalhoub
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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

Upcoming events at the House of Prayer

The following events will take place at Mount St. Macrina House of Prayer, 510 W. Main St., Uniontown, Pa. To register for programs or more information, call 724-438-7149 or email hpmsm@verizon.net.

■ 1:30-3:30 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 8, **Open House**. Come and spend some time with the Staff in the warmth of the House of Prayer!

■ 6:30 p.m. Friday, Jan. 27 to After Lunch Saturday, Jan. 28, **Winter Respite**. Silent Overnight Retreat with presenter Sister Carol. Offering: \$40. Registration due: Jan. 23.

■ 10-11:30 a.m. (in person), 6:30-8 p.m. (virtual) Monday, Feb. 6, 13, 20 and 27, **Monday Reading Series**. "Falling Upward" by Father Richard Rohr with presenter Sister Barbara Jean. Offering: \$15 per session. Registration due: Jan. 30.

■ 9:30 a.m.-noon Friday, Feb. 24, March 31 and April 28, **Personal Morning of Prayer**. Are you ready to let go of some of the business and pressures of your life to come apart and rest awhile? Spend time in silence, meditation and prayer. Free Will Offering.

■ 10 a.m.-noon Saturday, Feb. 25, **Day of Recollection**. "Grieving" with presenter TBA. Offering: \$35. Registration due: Feb. 20.

■ 6:30-8 p.m. Wednesday, March 1, **Evening of Recollection for Women**. Presenter: Father James Tringhese. Offering: \$35. Registration due: Feb. 24.

■ 6:30-8 p.m. Tuesday, March 7, **Evening for Men**. Presenter: Father James Tringhese. Offering: \$35. Registration due: March 1.

■ 10-11:30 a.m. March 9, 16, 23, 30, **Thursday Bible Study**. "Meeting the Prophets Jeremiah and Isaiah During Lent" with presenter Sister Melita Marie, OSBM. Offering: \$15 per session. Registration due: Feb. 23.

■ 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Saturday, March 11, **Lenten Day of Prayer**. Presenter Sister Ruth, OSBM. The Sacrament of Reconciliation will be offered along with a conference and prayer service. Offering: \$40 includes lunch. Registration due: March 6. ■

Carpathian Cookery cook book available

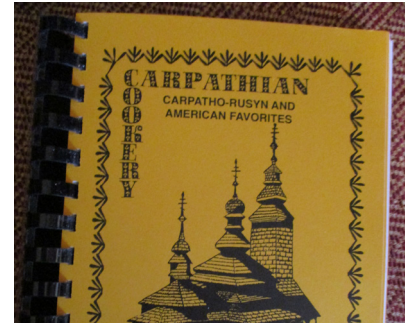
The Carpathian Cookery cookbook, now in its 20th printing and having sold nearly 18,000 copies, is available for sale.

This cookbook was requested by the Library of Congress to be in their ethnic cooking collection.

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.

There is a variety of paska bread and kolachi (filled roll) recipes, as well as meatless dishes and Lenten recipes, suitable for the Great Fast, as well as the Pre-Christmas Fast.

The cost of the cookbook is



\$14 plus \$5 postage and handling (\$19).

If ordering from Canada, please send a \$36 U.S. Postal money order payable in U.S. dollars (\$14 plus \$22 postage) to reflect the difference in the exchange rate and postage cost.

To order please 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), for more information.

You may contact us at: carpathiancookery@gmail.com. ■

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Listen to the cries of the newborn Prince of Peace, pope says on Christmas

By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — With the birth of Jesus, God became flesh to share the joys and sorrows, hopes and fears of all people, especially the poor and those living daily amid danger, Pope Francis said in his Christmas message.

“He comes as a helpless child. He is born in the cold night, poor among the poor. In need of everything, he knocks at the door of our heart to find warmth and shelter,” the pope said Dec. 25 before giving his blessing “urbi et orbi” (to the city and the world).

Tens of thousands of people gathered in St. Peter’s Square under warm, sunny skies for the blessing and for the pope’s message inviting people to pay less attention to presents and more to prayer, particularly for Ukraine and other places where war and strife challenge the angels’ proclamation of “peace on earth.”

“Let us leave behind the hue and din that deadens our hearts and makes us spend more time in preparing decorations and gifts than in contemplating the great event: the son of God born for us,” Pope Francis told people in the square and those listening by radio or watching on television or online.

“Brothers and sisters,” he told them, “let us turn our eyes to Bethlehem and listen to the first faint cries of the Prince of Peace. For truly Jesus is our peace.”

The incarnation, passion, death and resurrection of Jesus “opened the way that leads from a world closed in on itself and oppressed by the dark shadows of enmity and war, to a world that is open and free to live in fraternity and peace,” the pope said.

To follow Jesus’ path of peace, he said, “we must divest ourselves of the burdens that weigh us down and block our way,” the same obstacles that prevented King Herod from welcoming the birth of Jesus: “attachment to power and money, pride, hypocrisy, falsehood.”

In the “small and innocent face” of the baby Jesus lying in the manger, he urged, “let us see the faces of all those children who, everywhere in the world, long for peace.”

In his 10th Christmas message as pope, Pope Francis denounced the “grave famine of peace” around the globe.

Mentioning specific hot spots, he started with Ukraine, praying for those celebrating Christmas “in the dark and cold, far from their homes due to the devastation caused by 10 months of war.”

The pope urged people to continue being generous in making donations and welcoming people displaced by the fighting. His almoner, Cardinal

CHRISTMAS SCENES 2022



This January 2023 issue of The Byzantine Catholic World didn't want to go to press without a few photos of Christmas celebrations at parishes across the Archeparchy of Pittsburgh.

Look for more photos in the February issue. Happy New Year!

HOLY TRINITY IN SYKESVILLE, PA.



The youth of Holy Trinity in Sykesville, Pa. performed the Birth of Christ on Christmas Eve. Father Vasyl Banak is pastor.

ST. GREGORY IN UPPER ST. CLAIR, PA.



Christmas Eve at St. Gregory in Upper St. Clair, Pa., where Father Valerian Michlik is pastor.

SS. PETER AND PAUL IN PUNXSUTAWNEY, PA.



Christmas Eve at SS. Peter and Paul in Punxsutawney, Pa., where Father Vasyl Kadar is pastor.

Konrad Krajewski, was spending Christmas in Ukraine, delivering generators and warm clothing and other aid in the pope’s name.

May God “enlighten the minds of those who have the power to silence the thunder of weapons and put an immediate end to this senseless war,” he prayed.

And while Ukraine dominates the news, Pope Francis also prayed for peace in Syria, Yemen, Myanmar and across the Sahel region of Africa.

Turning to the Holy Land, “where in recent months violence and confrontations have increased, bringing death and injury in their wake,” he prayed that “there, in the land that witnessed his birth, dialogue and efforts to build mutual trust between Israelis and Palestinians may resume.”

In Lebanon, where economic and political crises continue, the pope prayed that the country can “finally rebound with the help of the international community and with the strength born of fraternity and solidarity.”

In Central and South America, where “political and social tensions” continue in several nations, the pope prayed that the light of Christ would inspire political leaders and all people of good will.

And he offered special prayers for “the people of Haiti who have been suffering for a long time.”

Knowing that many people in St. Peter’s Square and watching around the world would soon be sitting down to a festive and abundant meal, Pope Francis asked that they be mindful of “all those, especially children, who go hungry while huge amounts of food daily go to waste, and resources are being spent on weapons.”

Russia’s war on Ukraine, a major supplier of grain for the world, is putting whole nations at risk of famine, he said, condemning the use of food as a weapon of war.

Unfortunately, he said, just like 2,000 years ago, “Jesus, the true light, comes into a world sick with indifference — a terrible sickness — a world that does not welcome him and indeed rejects him, as it does with many foreigners, or ignores him, as we all too often do with the poor.”

Pope Francis prayed that this Christmas “may we not forget the many displaced persons and refugees who knock at our door in search of some comfort, warmth and food. Let us not forget the marginalized, those living alone, the orphans and the elderly who risk being set aside, and prisoners, whom we regard solely for the mistakes they have made and not as our fellow men and women.” ■

ETERNAL MEMORY SISTER LEOCADIA SEVACHKO

Story continued from page 1

teaching and the special way she touched lives, and perhaps even changed them. Sister Leocadia wanted to be remembered for her deep faith, her spirit of trust, and her love of teaching. All who knew her can testify that these qualities were an integral part of her life.

Sister's assignments also included a number of years when she served as both teacher and principal as well as in Catechetical Ministry during the summers. Following this long period of active ministry, Sister Leocadia returned to the Monastery, and when her health declined, the Manor became her new home. Here, she was blessed to enjoy the companionship of her sister, Sister Bernarda, whose visits were the highlight of her day. Both were enthusiastic sports fans, and they spent happy hours following the Cleveland sports

teams and cheering them on.

In speaking of Sister Leocadia at the Funeral Divine Liturgy, Metropolitan Archbishop William Skurla noted that she was sustained and nourished by the Bread of Life. This transformed her ministry into a blessing for all.

At the invitation of Metropolitan, Father Kevin Marks expanded upon this transforming effect of her life. He stated that we might question the timing of Sister's death. However, coming as it did in preparation for Christmas, the timing was perfect. With her joyful spirit, Sister was truly a gift. Now, she will enjoy her first Christmas in her new home in the Kingdom. One can picture her sharing her joy as she was welcomed by all her parents, relatives, and friends.

In addition to her members in community, Sister Leocadia is survived by her sister, Sister Bernarda, several nieces, nephews,

grand-nephew, grand-niece, and cousins. She was preceded in death by her parents, Sister Dorothy, her sister Marie and brother Matthew.

The Parastas Service was concelebrated on Sunday, Nov. 27 by Very Rev. Andrew Deskevich and Rev. Jerome Botsko, Monastery Chaplain. The Funeral Divine Liturgy was celebrated by Metropolitan Archbishop William Skurla on Monday, Nov. 28 with concelebrants Very Rev. Andrew Deskevich, Rev. Jerome Botsko, Rev. Kevin Marks, and Rev. James Ragan. Noah Hicks served at the altar, and Rev. Stephen Wahal was in attendance.

Interment followed in the Dormition Section of Mount Macrina Cemetery.

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

REFLECTION FROM
MOUNT ST, MACRINA

Unlocking the Gospel reality

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



This is a transcript of her Jan. 6, 2022 reflection. It can be viewed on the Facebook page of the Sisters of St. Basil the Great at <https://www.facebook.com/sistersofstbasil.uniontown>.

Glory to Jesus Christ! As we approach this new Holy Day – Theophany, the Baptism of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ – we are called to open to the revelation of the Holy Trinity.

I think of that Scripture early in the Gospel of Matthew as a "key." When I am trying to learn something, particularly something new, I look for the sentence, phrase or paragraph that is the "key" for me that unlocks the bigger picture.

When we think about the Gospels, the Baptism of Jesus is the "key" that can unlock the understanding of the whole Gospel reality – Christ's history and His message.

As Jesus comes to the river where John the Baptist is baptizing people for repentance, for forgiveness of their sins, Jesus arrives, of course, perfectly sinless – the Son of God.

In His Baptism, the Holy Trinity is revealed to us – the "key" opens us to the bigger picture, the whole picture.

In this moment, Matthew's Gospel says, the Father's Voice is heard saying, "This is My Beloved Son" and Jesus is identified.

The appearance of the dove signifies the Holy Spirit and the transformation that is occurring. The Baptism that John was using for repentance becomes the Baptism that we receive not just because of the forgiveness of sin but for a whole new life of grace; transformed, as we are, to be sons and daughters of our loving Father.

This is the "key" that opens it all up. In fact, it is the "key" that helps us even to understand the Cross. In Jesus taking on baptism, He is opening to the whole transformation that His Death and Resurrection bring into our lives: the life of Grace.

My friends, let us be grateful, let us enter into the meditation of this Great and Holy Transfiguring moment in the life of Christ and seek the grace of being transformed into His image and likeness.

God bless you. ■

St. Stephen in Leisenring, Pa. honored by state for 130 years

Story continued from page 1

page, and stated "Our history is important. I'm interested in what this parish will continue to write on this blank page. More progress."

The photograph at right shows Senator Stefano making the presentation. Also pictured are altar server Stephen Schomer, Father Jerome Botsko and Theresa Karaffa.

If interested in purchasing a copy of the book, please send check or money order for \$20 USD to St. Stephen Byzantine Catholic Church, St. Stephen Book, P.O. Box 128, Leisenring, Pa. 15455. All money goes to St Stephen Byzantine Catholic Church. ■



Pre-Cana Program

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- ❖ Love & Life in the Divine Plan
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For information about registration, fees, etc. go to archpitt.org – Office of Religious Education link



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ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST CATHEDRAL IN MUNHALL, PA.

Christmas brunch

The Cathedral of St. John the Baptist in Munhall, Pa. held its annual Christmas brunch Dec. 18.

St. Nicholas surprised those children in attendance with an appearance and provided special gifts for each!

The catered brunch was well received and enjoyed by all. ■



Photos by Nick Havrilla Sr.

Feast of St. Nicholas

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST IN UNIONTOWN, PA.

by Bonnie Balas, Julia Pillar and Masrk Jesko
St. John the Baptist, Uniontown, Pa.

Through the month of November, "A Gift from St. Nicholas" collection was offered by parishioners of St. John the Baptist in Uniontown, Pa.

Through the generosity of St. John's parishioners, a significant amount was collected which would be given to the nearly 70 seminarians studying for the priesthood in Ukraine.

During the St. Nicholas Day Celebration for parish children,

ECF children engaged in an interactive activity about the life of St. Nicholas.

St. Nicholas visited the children and gifted each one with a bag of goodies. The children also enjoyed a Santa hat Dairy Queen treat.

The Liturgy for the Feast of Saint Nicholas was celebrated on the evening of December 6. Those in attendance received a blessing from Father Vasyl Symyon, as well as an anointing with holy oil which came from the relics of St. Nicholas in Bari, Italy. ■



ST. MICHAEL IN CAMPBELL, OHIO

The ECF program at St. Michael in Campbell, Ohio held its final class before Christmas break with students making a craft of St. Nicholas, who made a very special visit and was welcomed by Father Kevin Marks. ■



SS. PETER AND PAUL IN PATTON, PA.



Parishioners at SS. Peter and Paul in Patton, Pa. and Father Roman Andriitso welcome St. Nicholas.

HOLY GHOST IN MCKEES ROCKS, PA.



Parishioners at Holy Ghost in McKees Rocks, Pa. and Father Frank Firko welcome St. Nicholas.



ST. NICHOLAS IN GREENSBURG, PA.

by John Gomolak
St. Nicholas, Greensburg, Pa.

St. Nicholas in Greensburg, Pa. held its annual namesake St. Nicholas Day celebration with a breakfast in the church hall. Father Regis Dusecina is pastor.

Breakfast was prepared and served by parishioners Valerie Barber and Bonnie and Michael

Mihalchik.

After the breakfast, ECF children sang Christmas carols until St. Nicholas (Michael Mihalchik) arrived to hand out gifts to the children.

St. Nicholas also visited with our senior parishioner, June Repnik.

Everyone enjoyed the festivities. ■



CHURCH OF THE RESURRECTION IN MONROEVILLE, PA.

Church of the Resurrection in Monroeville, Pa. observed the holy meal on Dec. 18, the Sunday before Christmas with St. Nicholas making a surprise visit. Father Don Bolls is pastor. ■



ST. GREGORY IN UPPER ST. CLAIR, PA.

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

A week after our St. Nicholas Archeparchial celebration, St. Nick made it to the South Hills of Pittsburgh.

On Sunday, Dec. 11, the children of our parish family were invited by Father Valerian Michlik to come forward to welcome good old St. Nicholas. As the children and faithful sang that beautiful

hymn "O who loves Nicholas the saintly-O kto kto Nikolaja l'ubit"; St. Nicholas entered our Church to the delight of all the children.

Following the Divine Liturgy, our celebration continued on in our Church Hall. It was a beautiful day as we all enjoyed fellowship and the wonderful breakfast prepared by our St. Gregory's Men's Club. ■



SS. PETER AND PAUL IN TARENTUM, PA.

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

SS. Peter and Paul in Tarentum, Pa. had a very special guest on Sunday, Dec. 4.

St Nicholas himself visited our young parishioners and shared with them his sweet gifts. The ECF children had prepared their own program of meeting with St. Nicholas.

Many nice Christmas carols and songs to St. Nick were sung there.

This event full of fun and joy. ■

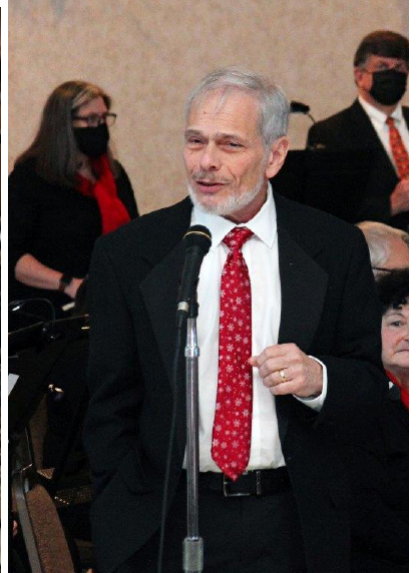


ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST CATHEDRAL IN MUNHALL, PA.

Music in the air

The Cathedral of St. John the Baptist in Munhall, Pa. was treated to a Christmas musical performance Dec. 11 by the East Wind Symphonic Band

It was a relaxing afternoon listening to old favorites from Christmas past. ■



Photos by Nick Havrilla Sr.

SS. PETER AND PAUL IN PATTON, PA.

Solemn Installation

On Sunday, Oct. 23 the solemn Installation of Father Roman Andriitso as administrator of SS. Peter and Paul, Patton Pa. and Saint John the Baptist, Northern Cambria, Pa. was held at SS. Peter and Paul Church.

Following the Liturgical Service, a reception with refreshments was hosted

Parishioners of the parish in our Johnstown Protopresbyter District [Deanery] were invited to attend.

The faithful together with the priests and deacons of the Johnstown Protopresbyter District gathered for this occasion to extend a cordial welcome to Father Roman and his family. ■



Very Rev. James Spontak, Protopresbyter (left), presides at the Solemn Installation of Father Roman Andriitso.



Friendly faces

by Father Roman Andriitso
SS. Peter and Paul, Patton, Pa.

On Sunday, Dec. 4, St. Nicholas together with Father Roman Andriitso, pastor of

SS. Peter and Paul in Patton, Pa., visited our sick parishioners and the House of Personal Care.

We thank all the organizers of this event. ■



Working together

by Father Roman Andriitso
SS. Peter and Paul, Patton, Pa.

Parishioners of SS. Peter and Paul in Patton, Pa. are working together for a better future for the parish. More than 500 rolls were made.

A big thank you to everyone who helped support our parish. It was great to see faces we know and faces we got to know. Many thanks to all the employees who made it possible. ■



ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST IN UNIONTOWN, PA.

Christmas craft, bake sale

by Bonnie Balas, Julia Pillar and Mark Jesko
St. John the Baptist, Uniontown, Pa.

During the Dec. 3 to 4 weekend, a Christmas Craft and Bake Sale was held at St. John the Baptist in Uniontown, Pa. The event was sponsored by St. John Social Ministry and St. John Ethnic Craft Club.

Many customers flocked to the delicious bake sale table, which featured traditional long rolls and other holiday goodies.

They also purchased craft items, such as icon ornaments and Christmas decorations. Many were attracted to the Christmas-themed raffles. ■



Thanksgiving food drive

by Bonnie Balas, Julia Pillar and Mark Jesko
St. John the Baptist, Uniontown, Pa.

At the conclusion of the Nov. 20 ECF classes before the Thanksgiving break, ECF students and parishioners attended a brief Thanksgiving prayer service in the church which was led by Father Vasyl Symyon.

Those in attendance brought in bags full of non-perishable food items and money which totaled nearly \$300.

The donations would benefit the local St. Vincent de Paul Food Bank to be given to the needy for Thanksgiving meals. ■



Angel Tree

by Bonnie Balas, Julia Pillar and Mark Jesko
St. John the Baptist, Uniontown, Pa.

Marcia Harrer took the initiative to obtain "Angel Tree" tags which were offered for the ECF students. Parishioners were encouraged to help Santa Claus by taking the tags and purchasing gifts for needy children.

Fifty filled gift bags and two bicycles were donated by the parish for this worthy cause. Many toys were also donated which would be given to the Uniontown City Mission as Christmas presents for needy children in the shelters. ■



Nativity display

by Bonnie Balas, Julia Pillar and Mark Jesko
St. John the Baptist, Uniontown, Pa.

Throughout the Dec. 3 to 4 weekend various Nativity sets were on display as part of the Christmas Craft and Bake Sale.

Visitors were in awe of the

thirty-plus Nativities that were on display.

The creches that were featured belonged to parishioners and friends of St. John Church as well as those from the collection of Robert Morgan. ■





SS. PETER AND PAUL IN PORTAGE, PA.

First Penance Celebration

by Father James Spontak
SS. Peter and Paul, Portage, Pa.

The First Penance celebration took place at SS. Peter and Paul in Portage, Pa., on Sunday, May 29, in conclusion of the 2021-2022 Eastern Christian Formation classes.

This event was for the First Confession of Max Dean Erzal and Bryce Tyler Harrington. They are shown in the photo below with their Catechists, Sara Erzal and Molly Harrington, who prepared them for the Mystery of Confession, together with members of their families. ■



ST. MARY IN BEVERDALE, PA.

Deacon Daniel volunteers

by Father James Spontak
SS. Peter and Paul, Portage, Pa.

For more than 10 years, Deacon Daniel Perich from Saint Mary in Beaverdale, Pa. has volunteered his professional services in construction and building repairs to benefit the SS. Cyril and Methodius Byzantine Catholic Seminary in Pittsburgh, Pa.

Each summer, Deacon Daniel has performed repairs and maintenance tasks as needed on the Seminary building and rooms.

He is retired from a career with Major Builders in Johnstown, Pa. and with his own business.

He completed the Deacon Formation Program at the Seminary and was ordained to the Diaconate in Oct. 2011.



Deacon Daniel Perich

His formation experience at the Seminary inspired him to offer his talents generously as a volunteer to benefit the Seminary. ■



SS. PETER AND PAUL IN TARENTUM, PA.

Golden jubilee

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

SS. Peter and Paul in Tarentum, Pa. had the privilege to celebrate the golden jubilee (50 years!) of the priesthood of Monsignor Lawrence Dominick on Dec. 18, the Sunday of the Ancestors.

The anniversary Divine Liturgy was followed by a delicious feast luncheon.

The friends, faithful, and clergy wish Monsignor Lawrence many blessed years! Thank you for all your prayers and service to God and the people! ■



Special guests from Seminary

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

SS. Peter and Paul in Tarentum, Pa. was happy to have special guests on Sunday, Nov. 6.

We were visited by seminarians and prospective students from SS. Cyril and Methodius Byzantine Catholic Seminary in Pittsburgh, Pa.

The students took part in the "Come and See" open house program at the Seminary.

It was a great chance to pray together and enjoy a good conversation.



The Seminary is the spiritual heart of the Archeparchy of Pittsburgh and it is very important to take care of it.

The event concluded with a cake party. Best wishes to our seminarians! ■



ST. GREGORY IN UPPER ST. CLAIR, PA.

Wedding jubilarians

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

On the weekend of Nov. 26 to 27, prayerful supplications were offered for all our couples in the parish that have celebrated a milestone wedding anniversary in 2022.

As part of our celebration, a special blessing service took place at the conclusion of each Divine Liturgy.

Following the Sunday Divine Liturgy, we enjoyed a special cake and fellowship. May the Lord's blessings be upon them as they journey together in faith and love!



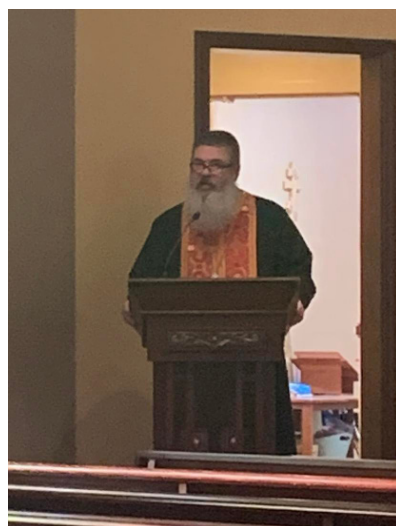
Deanery Advent Service

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

On Sunday afternoon, Nov. 20, St. Gregory's welcomed the clergy and faithful for the Deanery Emmanuel Moleben Advent Prayer Service.

Our St. Gregory's Chant Group led the responses of this beautiful Divine Service. The homily/spiritual reflection was offered by Father David Abernethy.

Afterward, we gathered in our Church Hall for refreshments and fellowship. ■



Saluting health professionals

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

Following the Sunday Divine Liturgy on Nov. 20, we gathered in our Church Hall for a special program, honoring our St. Gregory's health care professionals.

In anticipation of Thanksgiving Day our "thank you" this year was to all our parishioners who work in health care, from nurses and physicians to other health care professionals.

At the beginning of the program the poem "For Our Health Workers" was recited by our ECF student Louis M.

Afterwards, our first speaker, Dr. Aaron V. Mares spoke about his calling to become a doctor. Currently, our parishioner Aaron is the Head Team Primary Care Sports Medicine Physician for the Pittsburgh Steelers, the Associate Medical Director of the Pittsburgh Marathon and EQT 10 Miler, and a medical consultant for several local high school teams.

Next, we enjoyed the presentation by two nurses, who are sisters and also work on the same floor of Children's Hospital

in Pittsburgh! Maire Borra and Morrin McEwen offered us a delightful presentation on the joys and challenges of being part of the Division of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology at Children's Hospital which is the largest, most comprehensive childhood cancer and blood disease center in western Pennsylvania, Eastern Ohio, and northern West Virginia.

Our last speaker, Anne S. Hast, spoke about her calling to become a nurse. Anne shared with us her years as an experienced healthcare leader with extensive experience in clinical, education, management and administration.

At the conclusion of this wonderful event, all St. Gregory's health care professionals were invited to come forward for a special Prayer for Healthcare Workers which was offered by our ECF student Jessica K.

All health care professionals received a Holy Card with the Patron Saint of Healthcare, St. Camillus. The hymn "God grant you many years" was sang by all as we honored our dedicated St. Gregory's health care professionals. ■





ST. GREGORY IN UPPER ST. CLAIR, PA.

Taste of Heaven

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

All was ready for this year's 12th annual Taste of Heaven Cookie Sale at St. Gregory in Upper St. Clair, Pa.

We were scheduled to open the doors at 9 a.m., but already our first patrons started lining up at 7:45 am.

This was a good sign that this

year's holiday fundraiser would be a successful event.

The smiles on our patrons faces said it all as they carried delicious cookies home for their loved ones.

We express our sincere thanks to our St. Gregory's Women of Faith for organizing this event, and to all our bakers and volunteers for their hard work and dedication. ■



Fore!

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

On St. Nicholas Day, Dec. 6, St. Gregory's parishioners gathered for an evening of fun and fellowship at TopGolf in nearby Bridgeville, Pa.

We all enjoyed this dynamic,

technology-driven golf entertainment experience. The buffet provided great food for all of us. It was a wonderful evening for all of us as we celebrated St. Nicholas Day. Sincere thanks to our St. Gregory's Men's Club for organizing this holiday event. ■

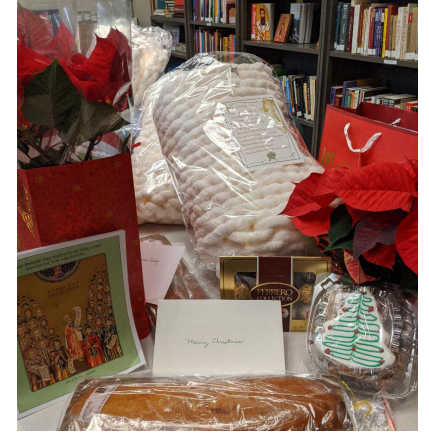


Gifts of comfort

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

On the Sunday before Christmas, Dec. 18, members of our Bethany Ministry gathered in our parish library to prepare Christmas gift bags for our homebound parishioners.

During this upcoming week, our Bethany Ministry members will visit our homebound parishioners to deliver these gifts to them. ■



Created with love

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

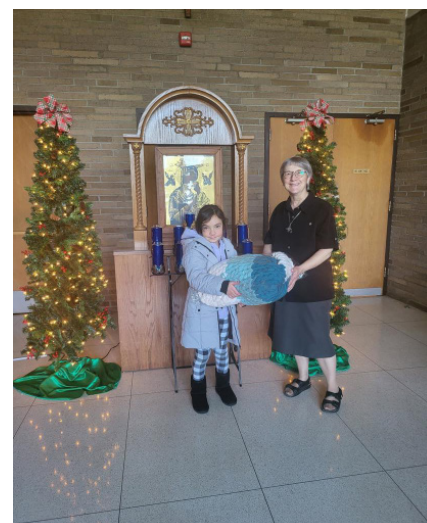
On Tuesday, Dec. 20, our parishioners Reader John and Andrea Cencich, and Eliana, were on a mission to deliver 33 prayer blankets and shawls to Mount St. Macrina in Uniontown, Pa.

These blankets and shawls were created with love by the members of our St. Gregory's Prayer Blanket Ministry. This

parish ministry is led by Andrea Cencich, who generously provides all materials as well.

On behalf of the Sisters of St. Basil the Great, the provincial Sister Susan Sisko, OSBM, received and thanked our parish family for this visit and lovely gift for all the sisters.

We express our sincere thanks to our Prayer Blanket Ministry for their hard work and dedication. ■



THOUGHTS FOR OUR DAY

by Archpriest David M. Petras



THE RITES OF INITIATION: WATER, OIL, BREAD AND WINE



Our Christian faith is not a gnostic religion, that is, one with secret symbols and an elite membership.

In this way, it flies in the face of the human impulse to make religion a privileged search for a hidden and secret meaning to the existence of the universe and humankind. Instead, Christ came into the world to speak the word of God clearly, and to make human beings his friends as he says in the Gospel of St. John, "I have called you friends, because I have told you everything I have heard from my Father" (John 15:15). Even better, he has become our brother, "he is not ashamed to call them "brothers," saying: "I will proclaim your name to my brothers, in the midst of the assembly I will praise you" (Hebrews 2:11-12). St. Paul tells us that what the mystery is has been opened to us, "... the mystery hidden from ages and from generations past. But now it has been manifested to his holy ones, to whom God chose to make known the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; it is Christ in you, the hope for glory" (Colossians 1:26-27). The way to Christian faith is through baptism, when we respond to the Gospel by rejecting evil and attaching ourselves to Christ, for this is what the risen Lord commanded his disciples, "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit," (Matthew 28:19) so that "all of you who were baptized into

Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ" (Galatians 3:27).

Baptism, then, is the entrance into the life of God for all who are willing to accept the Gospel, to renounce evil and to worship Jesus as Lord and God. However, this does not happen by some sort of pompous celebration filled with false knowledge, gaudy rites and rich accessories. One becomes



Water is the most important element of baptism, but oil is also of importance in our initiation as Christians.

a Christian by the ordinary substances of water and oil, of bread and wine. At the center of baptism, of course, is the element of water. There is no substance more necessary to life than water. A human being cannot survive without water for more than a few days. Water then becomes the physical sign of the fullness of life that God bestows on us, both spiritually and materially. Jesus revealed the meaning of baptism in water to the woman at the well in Samaria, "If you knew the gift of God and who is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him and he would have given you living water" (John 4:10). The water of baptism is the water of life. "Living water" for the ancients meant flowing water,

and so, in baptism, the water must flow around the body of the person being initiated. Water also cleanses us, so that St. Paul calls baptism a bath, "But when the kindness and generous love of God our savior appeared, not because of any righteous deeds we had done but because of his mercy, he saved us through the bath of rebirth and renewal by the holy Spirit, whom he richly poured out on us through Jesus Christ our savior" (Titus 3:4-6). We cannot, by our human efforts, rid ourselves of sin, but God does this through the water of baptism. Through baptism, we choose life.

Water is the most important element of baptism, but oil is also of importance in our initiation as Christians. The Christian faith is enlightenment, and St. John writes, "But you have the anointing that comes from the holy one, and you all have knowledge" (1 John 2:20). When we entered the Church, we were anointed, first with the oil of gladness, identifying us with Christ, who is the Messiah, the "Anointed One;" second, of the whole body in preparation for the cleansing of baptism (this anointing is no longer practiced); and the third, with holy chrism, the oil of fragrance, the "seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit."

The Church uses olive oil, which was a staple of the ancient Mediterranean world. Oil, of course, was used for food, sometimes as a flavor, and sometimes for cooking. Oil was also used like soap, before a bath, one anointed oneself with oil, and then scraped it off, taking the dirt with it. This second usage has been replaced by soap, and is no

longer done at baptism. In both cases, it was a common substance used in everyday life. It was also important as a sign to mark those set aside as king, or as prophet, or as priest. In baptism, then, we become co-heirs with Christ of the Kingdom of God (Romans 8:17); as a prophet, we are given the grace to keep the will of God; and we become priests, as St. Peter said, "But you are 'a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of his own'" (1 Peter 2:9). The anointing with chrism, fragrant oil gives us the multitude of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, "charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, generosity, gentleness, faithfulness, modesty, self control, chastity."

By means of the simple substances of water and oil, made sacramental by God's blessing, we are initiated into his holy people. Then we are nourished by the staple foods of bread and wine. Grapes and wheat are the creation of God's nature, made by human labor into the nourishment of bread and wine, though, of course, human labor itself is the creation of God. Initiation is completed when we partake of this food, which by the power of the Spirit is transformed into the Body and Blood of Christ. It is thus truly "yours of your own," as we proclaim when we offer it in the Divine Liturgy. In the end, then, by a small portion of what seems like ordinary food, we are filled with the spiritual nourishment of divine grace, the incarnate Body and Blood of Christ, and we "come to share in the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4), for we become what we eat. ■

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/stgregoriyusc

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

Away in a manger

FAITHFUL FLOCK TO MOUNT ST. MACRINA IN UNIONTOWN, PA. TO VIEW LIVING NATIVITY

The following was posted Dec.12 on Mt. Macrina Manor's Facebook page:

Words can't express the gratefulness for everyone who helped make this year's Live Nativity such a success! It was a beautiful night to experience this glorious re-creation of our lord Jesus Christ. A Big Thank You to all the volunteers that made this amazing event possible: to everyone in the Nativity, Laurel Highlands High School Cheerleaders, employees, family members, several local businesses, radio stations, Joseph's Tree Farm, St. Mary's Troop 620, Greenfield Farms, Jason Scott, Jesse McLain, and The Sisters of St. Basil. Without all of your help this event would not have been possible.

Hope everyone has a Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year. ■





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. Enter through the chapel door that faces Perrysville Avenue. It's recommended visitors call 412-321-8383 in advance. For more information about the Seminary, go to www.bcs.edu.

Schedule of Services for January

THU 5	9 a.m. Office of Readings (R) [LS]
THU 12	7 a.m. Moleben for Vocations (R) [LS]
FRI 13	5 p.m. Vespers with 6th Kathisma (R)
SAT 14	9 a.m. Divine Liturgy (R) 5 p.m. Great Vespers (R)
SUN 15	8 a.m. Festal Matins and Divine Liturgy (R)
MON 16	8 a.m. Divine Liturgy (M)
TUE 17	7 a.m. Divine Liturgy (R)
WED 18	7 a.m. Divine Liturgy (R)
THU 19	7 a.m. Moleben for Those in Illness (R)
FRI 20	5 p.m. Vespers with 5th Kathisma (R) [LS]
SAT 21	9 a.m. Divine Liturgy (R) 5 p.m. Great Vespers (R)
MON 23	8 a.m. Divine Liturgy (R)
TUE 24	7 a.m. Divine Liturgy (R)
WED 25	7 a.m. Divine Liturgy (R)
THU 26	7 a.m. Parastas (R)
FRI 27	5 p.m. Vespers with 8th Kathisma (M)
SAT 28	9 a.m. Divine Liturgy (R) 5 p.m. Great Vespers (R)
SUN 29	8 a.m. Festal Matins and Divine Liturgy (R)
MON 30	8 a.m. Divine Liturgy (R) [LS]

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

AROUND
THE ARCHEPARCHY

COMMUNITY CHORUSES CHRISTMAS CONCERT —

2 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 8, St. Gregory, 2005 Mohawk Road, Upper St. Clair, Pa. Mark your 2023 calendar for a spirited inaugural event! The Chant Group of St Gregory Byzantine Catholic Church in Upper St Clair, Pa. will be joined by the Schola Cantorum of St. Michael the Archangel Roman Catholic Parish (St. Bernard Church in Dormont, Pa.) and the Holy Trinity Ukrainian Catholic Church Carollers of Carnegie, Pa. for a program of seasonal choral and chant music in celebration of the Nativity of our Lord. The concert will be followed by a hospitality reception in the church hall. Each group will sing selections and stage festive scenes from their respective traditions in Latin, Ukrainian, Ruthenian and English. All are welcome to attend this ecumenical gathering of joyous voices. The event also will be live streamed online at St. Gregory's web site. For background information on the participating groups, visit www.stgregoryusc.org (St Gregory Church), www.htucc.com (Holy Trinity Church), and www.smamusic.org (St. Michael the Archangel Parish).



**The Archeparchy of Pittsburgh Chancery
will be closed Friday, Dec. 30 and Monday, Jan. 2
in observance of New Year's Day.**

Regular hours resume
Tuesday, Jan. 3, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

**The Chancery will also be closed Friday, Jan. 6
in observance of the Feast of Theophany.**

66 Riverview Ave.
Pittsburgh, Pa. 15214
412-231-4000

DATES TO
REMEMBER

JAN. 1

Feast of the Circumcision of Our Lord
Feast of St. Basil the Great
New Year's Day

JAN. 6

Feast of Theophany

JAN. 16

Martin Luther King Jr. Day
National observance

JAN. 20

March for Life
Washington, D.C.

JAN. 26 to 28

15th anniversary celebration in Presov, Slovakia of the
elevation of the Archeparchy of Presov to a Metropolitan See

See more upcoming events at www.archpitt.org

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

**NEXT ISSUE
FEBRUARY 2023**

**SUBMISSIONS
DEADLINE:
JANUARY 20**