

WORLD

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Christ is Baptized! In the Jordan!

FEAST OF THEOPHANY CELEBRATED AT BRIDGEWATER CROSSING IN BEAVER, PA.



Father Geoffrey Mackey, pastor of St. George in Aliquippa, Pa. and St. Mary in Ambridge, Pa. administered the Great Blessing of Water in observance of the Feast of Theophany Jan. 8 at Bridgewater Crossing in Beaver, Pa. The park marks where the Beaver River flows into the Ohio River. Photo by Gretchen Roderick. For more photos, see page 8.

Archbishop Gugerotti assumes the Office of Prefect of the Dicastery for the Eastern Churches

This story was first published Jan. 17 on the website of the Eparchy of Košice in Slovakia.

On Monday, Jan. 16, Archbishop Claudio Gugerotti began his service as Prefect of the Dicastery for the Eastern Churches.

Upon arriving at the office, he was greeted by the Secretary of the Dicastery, Archbishop Giorgio Demetrio Gallaro, and the Sub-Secretary Mons. Flavio Pace together with the employees of the dicastery.

At noon, in the Hall of Honor, in the presence of envoys of the Catholic Patriarchs and Senior Archbishops to the Holy See,



Archbishop Claudio Gugerotti (right) with Archbishop George Gallaro and M. Marcela Rucan, OSBM, General Superior of the Sisters of St. Basil the Great.

rectors of the Eastern Colleges in Rome, some superiors-general or local superiors of the Eastern male

and female orders and religious orders present in Rome, the rector of the Pontifical Eastern Institute and the consuls of the dicastery, a letter from the Holy Father Francis was read out, naming Mons. Gugerotti as prefect of this Vatican office.

The new prefect subsequently took the creed and the oath of allegiance. He then addressed a greeting address to those present, in which, above all, he expressed gratitude and filial devotion to the Holy Father.

Finally, after the blessing and subsequent singing of the Marian antiphon Alma Redemptoris Mater, the new prefect greeted all those present in person. ■

“From the bottom of our hearts”

\$13,157 COLLECTED FOR SLOVAKIA SCHOOL SERVING UKRAINIAN REFUGEES

By David Mayernik Jr. Editor

Luba Kráľová, principal of Kolýsočka-Kolíška, a school for kindergarten students in Presov, Slovakia, had considered closing its doors due to lack of funding.

Now such an extreme measure won't need to be taken after parishioners at St. Gregory in Upper St. Clair, Pa., along with other individual contributions from the Archdiocese of Pittsburgh, raised \$13,167 to fund the school.

After visiting the school last summer and seeing it was serving Ukrainian refugee children alongside Slovak and Rusyn students, Father Valerian Michlik, pastor of St. Gregory in Upper St. Clair, Pa., knew action had to be taken and a collection began.

The kindergarten received the money Dec. 22 via wire transfer.

Principal Kráľová wrote a letter to St. Gregory thanking all donors. It is published on page 3.

She said the funds will support

Continued on page 3

Vatican Appointments

From the Vatican Press Office's Jan. 23 Daily Bulletin:

■ The Holy Father has appointed **Bishop Milan Lach, S.J.**, as auxiliary bishop of the eparchy of Bratislava for Catholics of Byzantine Rite, transferring him from the office of bishop of the Ruthenian eparchy of Parma, United States of America, and assigning him the titular see of Ostracine.

■ The Holy Father has appointed **Bishop Kurt Burnette** of the Ruthenian eparchy of Passaic as apostolic administrator sede vacante of the Ruthenian eparchies of Parma and Holy Protection of Mary, Phoenix, both in United States of America.

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Archbishop William C. Skurla
President

Sister Elaine Kisinko, OSBM
Copy Editor

David Mayernik Jr.
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.

■ 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 Isiah 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.

■ 7 p.m. Friday, April 21 to after Brunch Sunday, April 23, **Women's Weekend Retreat.** Presenter: TBA. Offering: \$95. Registration due: April 14.

■ 7 p.m. Sunday, May 21 to after lunch Friday, May 26, **Directed Retreat.** Presenters: TBA. Offering: \$350. Registration due: May 15. ■

Carpathian Cookery cook book available

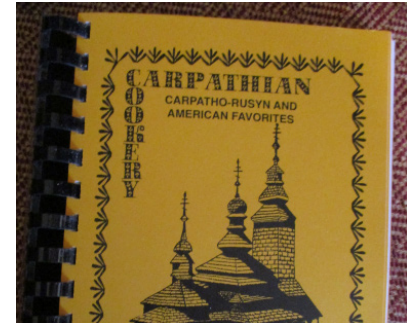
The Carpathian Cookery cookbook, now in its 20th printing and having sold nearly 18,000 copies, is available for sale.

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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“From the bottom of our hearts”

\$13,157 COLLECTED FOR SCHOOL IN PREŠOV, SLOVAKIA SERVING UKRAINIAN REFUGEES

Story continued from page 1

the kindergarten and pay for salaries, Social Insurance Fund contributions and health insurance for two Ukrainian teachers from Dec. 2022 to June 2023.

“Your financial assistance will subsequently help us to keep our temporary Ukrainian classroom operating and employ two Ukrainian teachers who will teach our Ukrainian children in accordance with the Ukrainian educational program,” she wrote.

“Until your recent contributions, we had started thinking about closing this class after the New Year.”

Koľyšočka–Kolíska opened its doors to Ukrainian students and their families on June 1, 2022.

Principal Kráľová wrote more than 30 children have attended the Ukrainian class, nine of which are currently enrolled as of Dec. 2022.

The building was renovated and donated by the Slovakian government and is about 45 minutes away from the border

Gréckokatolícka farnosť
Hryhorija Bohoslova
Pittsburgh
Prešov 12. 23. 2022'

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Dear Parishioners of St. Gregory's Byzantine Catholic Church in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania,

I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for your incredibly generous financial donation for OZ Koľyšočka–Kolíska. Today, on December 22, 2022, €12,073.17 (after wire transfer fees), exchanged from your \$13,167, was deposited into our account. We appreciate your gift immensely and thank you on behalf of those that are most affected by your efforts. Typically, our school services are for the children of Ruthenians from almost all of northeastern Slovakia, but starting on June 1, 2022, after the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, we now also support Ukrainian children, the children of refugee women and refugees from Ukraine, who now temporarily live in Prešov or near Prešov.

Your financial donation will mainly be directed towards supporting the activities of the Koľyšočka private kindergarten located at 68 Solivarská Street, in Prešov, which was established by the Koľyšočka–Kolíska Community Association on September 1, 2021.



Children of Koľyšočka–Kolíska, a school for kindergarten students in Prešov, Slovakia.

Additionally, it will help to pay for the salaries, Social Insurance Fund contributions, and health insurances of two Ukrainian teachers from December 2022 to June 2023, if the war in Ukraine lasts until the end of June 2023 as we currently assume it will. Until now, the activities of our Ukrainian class, starting on June 1, 2022, has been supported only

by private persons or private organizations. Support from the Archdiocesan Charity in Košice and other individual donations have allowed us to open our Ukrainian classes and operate in full capacity for the last three quarters of the year.

For the Slovak Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport, the establishment of SMŠ

Koľyšočka/became a stumbling block that further strained and prevented them from sending the already promised subsidies from the European structural funds (dedicated specifically to children from Ukraine, the children of refugees temporarily living in Prešov, and more specifically, our kindergarten.) The ministry reported that since we were operating in this educational capacity for a short, intermittent period, they would send us state subsidies for each Ukrainian child. With this in mind, we opened our first class for these children in our kindergarten on June 1, 2022. So far, more than 30 children have attended our Ukrainian class, 19 of which are currently enrolled as of December 2022. The fluctuation of Ukrainian children is due to a variety of factors including parents returning to Ukraine, others moving further into Western Europe, and the remaining children advancing to the first year of primary school. However, the Slovak Republic, through the Ministry of Education, has not yet sent us these authorized subsidies, although they were promised to all primary and secondary schools accommodating children of Ukrainian refugees in Slovakia as of March 2022. We consider these obstructions by the Ministry of Education to be absurd, but there is nothing we have been able to do. We have also contacted the media, but so far nothing has changed from the Ministry's side.

Your financial assistance will subsequently help us to keep our temporary Ukrainian classroom operating and employ two Ukrainian teachers who will teach our Ukrainian children in accordance with the Ukrainian educational program. Previously, we had been financing our class of 20-30 Ukrainian refugee children from our own resources and other private resources for more than half a year, and for our small civic association, maintaining these operations without outside help has been an unsustainable activity; until your recent contributions, we had started thinking about closing this class after the New Year.

So, from the bottom of our hearts, thank you once again for your great financial support. For our OZ Koľyšočka - Kolíska, it is the highest financial aid to date that has been addressed to us by private individuals.

With gratitude, regards, and respect,

Luba Kráľová
Principal of Koľyšočka–Kolíska



POPE BENEDICT XVI 1927-2022

Benedict XVI : Eight years as pope crowned long ministry

POPE BENEDICT APPOINTED METROPOLITAN ARCHBISHOP WILLIAM SKURLA ON MARCH 12, 2012

By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Retired Pope Benedict XVI, who had an impressive record as a teacher and defender of the fundamentals of the Catholic faith, will likely go down in the history books as the first pope in nearly 600 years to step down.

He died Dec. 31 at the age of 95, nearly 10 years after leaving the papacy to retire to what he said would be a life of prayer and study.

Pope Francis is scheduled to hold his predecessor's funeral Jan. 5 in St. Peter's Square. Matteo Bruni, director of the Vatican press office, said the funeral rites would be simple according to the late pope's wishes.

As the retired pope neared death, he received the anointing of the sick Dec. 28 at his residence, Bruni said.

His body would rest in St. Peter's Basilica starting Jan. 2 so people could pay their respects and offer their prayers, he said.

Immediately after the pope's death at 9:34 a.m., Bruni said, his personal secretary, Archbishop Georg Ganswein, phoned Pope Francis, who immediately went to the late pope's bedside to pray and offer his condolences to those who had cared for him in the last years of his life.

Archbishop Ganswein told Vatican News on Jan. 1 that Pope Benedict's last words were, "Lord, I love you."

It was about 3 a.m. on the day he died, the archbishop said. "In a faint voice, but in a clearly perceptible way, he said in Italian: 'Lord, I love you!' I wasn't there at the time, but the nurse told me shortly after, those were his last understandable words, because afterwards he couldn't express himself."

A close collaborator of St. John Paul II and the expert theologian behind many of his major teachings and gestures, Pope Benedict came to the papacy after 24 years leading the doctrinal congregation's work of safeguarding Catholic teaching on faith and morals, correcting the work of some Catholic theologians and ensuring the theological soundness of documents issued by other Vatican offices.

As pope, he continued to write as a theologian, but he also made historically important gestures for Catholics who had difficulty accepting all the teachings of the Second Vatican Council, particularly on the liturgy. In 2007, he extended permission to use the "extraordinary" or pre-



Pope Benedict appointed Archbishop William Skurla Metropolitan Archbishop of Pittsburgh on March 12, 2012 (above) and presented him with the omophorion (Eastern name for pallium) at St. Peter Basilica in Rome on June 29, 2012.

Vatican II form of the Mass and, shortly thereafter, extended a hand to the traditionalist Society of St. Pius X. In addition to lifting the excommunications of four of the members of the bishops society who were illegally ordained in 1988, he began a long and intense dialogue with the group. In the end, however, the talks failed.

His papacy, which began when he was 78, was extremely busy for a man who already had a pacemaker and wanted to retire to study, write and pray when he turned 75. He used virtually every means at his disposal — books and Twitter, sermons and encyclicals — to catechize the faithful on the fundamental beliefs and practices of Christianity, from the sermons of St. Augustine to the sign of the cross.

Pope Benedict was the first pope to meet with victims of clerical sexual abuse. He clarified Church laws to expedite cases and ordered bishops' conferences to set strict rules against abuse.

Although he did not expect to travel much, he ended up making 24 trips to six continents and presided over World Youth Day mega-meetings three times: in Germany in 2005, Australia in 2008 and Spain in 2011.

In a historic visit to the United States in 2008, the pope brought his own identity to a clearer focus for Americans. He presented a moral challenge on issues ranging from economic justice to abortion. He also took the Church's recognition of the priestly sexual abuse scandal to a new level, expressing his personal shame for what happened and personally praying with the victims.

Before he turned 40, he served as an influential adviser during the Second Vatican Council, 1962-65, and as pope, he prioritized correcting what he considered overly expansive interpretations of Vatican II in favor of readings

that emphasized the continuity of the council with the millennial traditions of the Church.

Under his watch, the Vatican continued to highlight the Church's moral limits on issues such as end-of-life health care, marriage and homosexuality. But the pope's message to society at large focused less on individual issues and more on the risk of losing the basic relationship between man and the Creator.

Surprising those who expected a pontificate to the letter of a man who had spent so many years as the Vatican's top doctrinal official, Pope Benedict XVI emphasized that Christianity is a religion of love and not a religion of rules.

The German-born pontiff did not try to match St. John Paul's popularity, but the millions who came to see him in Rome and abroad appreciated his smile, frequent improvisations and ability to speak from the heart.

Some of Pope Benedict's most memorable statements came when he applied simple gospel values to social issues such as the protection of human life, the environment, and the economy. When the global financial crisis worsened in 2008, for example, the pope insisted that financial institutions must put people before profit. He also reminded people that money and worldly success are passing realities, saying, "Whoever builds his life on these things, on material things, on success, on appearances, is building on sand."

He constantly warned the West that unless its secularized society rediscovered religious values, it could not hope to engage in real dialogue with Muslims and members of other religious traditions.

In his encyclicals and books on "Jesus of Nazareth," the pope perfected that message, asking readers to discover the essential

connections between sacrificial love, works of charity, dedication to the truth and the Gospel of Christ.

The retired pope took an in-depth look at his papacy and resignation, his relationships with St. John Paul II and Pope Francis and a host of other topics in "Last Testament," a book of interviews with journalist Peter Seewald published in 2016.

In the book, Pope Benedict XVI insisted once again that he was not pressured by anyone or any event to resign and that he did not feel he was running away from any trouble. However, he acknowledged that "practical government was not my forte, and this was certainly a weakness."

Insisting that "my hour had passed and I had given everything I could," Pope Benedict said he never regretted resigning, but he did regret hurting friends and faithful who were "truly distressed and felt abandoned" because of his resignation.

Less than a month after his resignation, he already looked more fragile and walked with much more difficulty than when he left office. Video footage released by the Vatican on March 23, 2013, when his successor, Pope Francis, visited him at Castel Gandolfo, underscored the "diminishing energy" that Pope Benedict said led him to resign.

Pope Benedict moved into the papal summer villa at Castel Gandolfo on February 28, 2013, the day his resignation became effective. He remained in the villa south of Rome for two months, a period that included the conclave that elected Pope Francis as his successor and the first month of the new pope's pontificate. The retired pope returned to the Vatican on May 2, 2013, living in a monastery remodeled as a residence for himself, his secretary and the consecrated women who cared for their home before and after his resignation.

On his only trip outside Italy after retirement, he flew to Germany in June 2020 for a five-day visit to his ailing 96-year-old brother.

Answering questions from reporters on a flight back from Brazil in July 2013, Pope Francis spoke with admiration about the retired pope's humility, intelligence and prayer. The unusual situation of having a pope and a retired pope living in the Vatican was working very well, Pope Francis said. Having the retired pope nearby to consult or ask questions, Pope Francis said,

Continued on page 5



Story continued from page 4

was "like having a grandfather at home, a very wise grandfather."

A year after his retirement, Pope Benedict had an established daily routine. Archbishop Georg Ganswein, his personal secretary, said his days began with Mass, morning prayer and breakfast. Although mostly hidden from public view, he was not cloistered, but continued to welcome old friends and colleagues, engage in dialogue, or offer spiritual advice. He spent hours reading and dealing with correspondence before 4 p.m. walking through the garden and praying the rosary.

In the early days of his retreat, to the delight and surprise of pilgrims and cardinals, Pope Benedict appeared at important events with Pope Francis, including the opening of the Holy Door of St. Peter's Basilica on December 8, 2015.

At a June 2016 celebration at the Apostolic Palace, where Pope Benedict once lived and worked, Pope Francis, senior officials of the Roman Curia and some friends gathered with him to mark the 65th anniversary of the retired pontiff's priestly ordination.

Pope Francis told Pope Benedict that, with him in residence, the monastery in the Vatican Gardens "emanates tranquility, peace, strength, fidelity, maturity, faith, dedication and loyalty, which does me so much good and gives strength to me and to the whole Church."

Pope Benedict responded to Pope Francis: "More than the beauty found in the Vatican Gardens, your goodness is the place where I live, I feel protected."

He prayed that Pope Francis would continue to "guide us all along this path of divine mercy that shows the way of Jesus, towards Jesus and towards God."

Mercy was a prominent theme in a 2015 interview with Pope Benedict. The Catholic focus on mercy really began with St. John Paul, the retired pope told Belgian Jesuit Father Jacques Servais in the written interview, which wasn't published until March 2016.

From his experience as a young man during World War II and his ministry under communism in Poland, St. John Paul "affirmed that mercy is the only true and ultimately effective reaction against the power of evil. Only where there is mercy does cruelty end, only there does evil and violence cease," said Pope Benedict, who worked closely with the Polish pope for decades.

"Pope Francis," he said, "fully agrees with this line. His pastoral practice is expressed precisely in the fact that he continually speaks of God's mercy."

Pope Benedict had said he



Pope Benedict XVI reaches out to people after celebrating Mass at Nationals Park in Washington April, 17, 2008. Catholic News Service photo/Nancy Wiechec.

planned to live a "hidden life" in retirement, and to a large extent he did. But when he made contributions to public debates, they became front-page news. In April 2019, for example, what he described as "notes" about the clerical sexual abuse crisis were published; and, in January 2020, Cardinal Robert Sarah, prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments, published an essay he wrote about priestly celibacy in a book.

In the text on abuse, which the retired pope said was prompted by the Vatican's February 2019 summit on the crisis, Pope Benedict XVI attributed the abuse crisis to a loss of certainty about faith and morals, especially beginning in the late 1960s. To cope with the crisis, he wrote, "what is required first of all is the renewal of faith in the reality of Jesus Christ given to us in the Blessed Sacrament."

The 2020 text on celibacy became the center of a media storm, not only because of its content, but also because Catholics were waiting for Pope Francis' official response to the Synod of Bishops for the Amazon and suggestions made there that in remote areas the Church might consider ordaining some married men to bring the sacraments to Catholics who usually spend months without receiving them.

Since both marriage and the priesthood demand a man's total devotion and dedication to his vocation, "it does not seem possible to realize both vocations simultaneously," Pope Benedict wrote in his essay.

The retired pope's contribution to the discussion became even more controversial when Archbishop Ganswein informed the media and the original editor that while Pope Benedict contributed an essay to Cardinal Sarah's book, he did not want to be included as a co-author of the volume.

As inevitable as his election seemed after St. John Paul's death in 2005, Pope Benedict XVI's path to the papacy was long and

indirect.

Joseph Ratzinger was born on April 16, 1927 in the Bavarian town of Marktl am Inn, the third and youngest child of a policeman, Joseph Sr., and his wife, Maria. Young Joseph joined his brother, Georg, at a minor seminary in 1939.

Like other young students in Germany at the time, he was automatically enrolled in the Hitler Youth program, but soon stopped going to meetings. During World War II, he was drafted into the army and, in the spring of 1945, left his unit and returned home, spending a few months in an Allied prisoner-of-war camp. He returned to the seminary in late 1945 and was ordained six years later, along with his brother.

At a meeting with young people in 2006, Pope Benedict said witnessing the brutality of the Nazi regime helped persuade him to become a priest. But he also had to overcome some hesitation, he said. On the one hand, he wondered if he "could faithfully live celibacy" all his life. He also recognized that his true inclinations were toward theology and wondered if he had the qualities of a good shepherd and the ability to "be simple with simple people."

After a brief stint as parish priest, the future pope began a teaching career and earned a reputation as one of the Church's foremost theologians. At Vatican II, he made important contributions as an expert in theology and embraced the early work of the council. But he began to have doubts about an emerging anti-Roman bias, the idea of a "church from below" based on a parliamentary model, and the direction of theological research in the Church, criticisms that would become even sharper in later years.

In a 2005 speech that served as something of a manifesto for his young papacy, Pope Benedict rejected what he called a "hermeneutic of discontinuity

and rupture" by interpreting Vatican II as a radical break with the past. Instead, the pope called for reading the council through a "hermeneutic of reform" in continuity with the Catholic tradition.

In 1977, St. Paul VI appointed him archbishop of Munich and Freising and, four years later, Pope John Paul called him to preside over the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, where he exerted great influence on issues such as liberation theology, dissent from Church teachings, and pressure for women's ordination. Serving in this position for nearly a quarter of a century, then-Cardinal Ratzinger earned a reputation in some circles as something of a grand inquisitor, seeking to do away with independent thinking, an image belied by his passion for debate with thinkers inside and outside the church.

As pope newly elected in 2005, he explained that he took the name Benedict to evoke the memory of Pope Benedict XV, a "courageous prophet of peace" during World War I, and said he wanted to put his ministry at the service of reconciliation and harmony among peoples.

Like his namesake and predecessors, he was tireless in his calls for an end to violence in the world's troubled places and for dialogue as the only true and lasting solution to conflicts. Another key to building a better world, he repeatedly said, is to respect each person's right to seek and worship God.

After the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States and amid reports of an increase in religiously inspired violence in various parts of the world, Pope Benedict also repeatedly and clearly condemned all violence committed in the name of God.

One of the biggest tests of his papacy came after a lecture at Germany's Regensburg University in 2006, when he quoted a medieval Christian emperor who said the Prophet Muhammad had brought "only evil and inhuman things, such as his command to scatter by the sword the faith he preached."

Protests followed in the Muslim world and Pope Benedict XVI apologized for offending Muslims with his words, distancing himself from the text he had quoted. Soon after, he accepted the invitation of an international group of Muslim scholars and leaders to launch a new dialogue initiative, "The Common Word," which analyzes the teachings shared by Christians and Muslims. ■



A reflection on creativity

by Sister Seraphim Olsafsky, OSBM
Sisters of St. Basil the Great
Mount St. Macrina, Uniontown, Pa.



I've always felt the urge to play with colors. The rich hues of God's beauty move my spirit.

Dabbling in paints and dipping a brush into a rich gold or sublime magenta is not only a joy but an experience of losing track of everything — time, self, worries and concerns. It's almost like entering another world.

Many people say, "I'm not a creative person." Many believe that creativity belongs only to a group of artists, musicians, writers and architects. This is a fallacy. All of us are called to be creative because we are made in the image and likeness of God, the Ultimate Creator.

From the moment we were called into being, this gift has been given to each of us to some degree. We are called to develop it, and to use it in the building of God's kingdom.

Creativity is an essential part of what it means to be human. It is also a difficult concept to define.

Countless descriptions and quotes about creativity exist. The very perspective you have on life can be your "creative gold." This gift has to be nurtured.

Some of the ways to do this are by cultivating a spirit of play and childlike wonder; living a life that inspires you; and spending time in quiet solitude.

Creativity emerges from our deep inner world. Set aside some time to be still, and allow ideas to simply flow.

Try something new, something different — write a brief story, bake something out of the ordinary, take a class at the local library or college, get involved in an activity you would not ordinarily do. Creativity exists in every dimension of life.

It may be as simple as arranging wildflowers for the table, creating a new recipe, cutting the lawn in a unique design, or working on a difficult equation or an innovative computer program.

Teaching, managing, organizing, decorating and developing projects all offer multiple opportunities for creativity to flourish. It will take work but your creative spirit will ultimately win.

The author of "The Book Thief" rewrote the first part of his very popular novel 150 to 200 times. It is obvious creativity comes with a price: a great work ethic and dedication. The reward is beyond measure, and holds a deep sense of the power of the Infinite Creator working within you.

The Community requested that I select several of my paintings and create a packet of all occasion greeting cards — birthday, congratulations, sympathy, and wellness.

Inside of each card is an inspirational message and a verse from the Bible. VICNAJA PAMJAT! is on the back of the sympathy card and MNOHAJA LITA! BLAHAJA LITA! is on the back of the wellness card.

These all-occasion cards are sold in a package of 10. Each card is 4 1/4 inches x 5 1/2 inches.

The proceeds from the sale of the cards benefit the Sisters of St. Basil the Great. ■



Two paintings by Sister Seraphim Olsafsky, OSBM, which are part of a packet of all occasion greeting cards.

Order All Occasion Greeting Cards

Ordering Instructions:

Complete the order form below. Enclose this form in an envelope with the amount due.

Please note that only CHECKS OR MONEY ORDERS in U.S. funds will be accepted for payment.

Questions? Please call 724-439-8644.

Please mail your completed form & check to:

Sisters of St. Basil the Great Card Shop
500 W. Main St., P.O. Box 878
Uniontown, PA 15401

SHIP TO:
 Name: _____
 Street Address: _____
 City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____
 Telephone Number: _____

SHIPPING & HANDLING—UNITED STATES

\$6 for orders of \$15.00 or less

\$7.50 for orders \$15.01-\$35.00

\$8.50 for orders \$35.01-\$49.99

\$10.50 for orders \$50.00-\$99.99

Orders of \$100 or more, add 9%. Additional postage may apply.

CHECKS/MONEY ORDERS IN US FUNDS ONLY.

PA Residents add 6% _____

Subtotal _____

Shipping/Handling _____

Total Amount Due _____

Quantity	Cost /Item	Shipping & Taxes (See chart above)	Total Cost
	\$14.50		



Pre-Cana Program

for engaged couples
Ss. Cyril & Methodius Seminary
Saturday March 4 & 18, 2023

Topics covered:

- ❖ Communication, Forgiveness & Intimacy
- ❖ Finances & Budgeting
- ❖ Love & Life in the Divine Plan
- ❖ 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



IN PREPARATION FOR **The Great Fast 2023**

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 2023 on Pure Monday, Feb. 20** (the first day of the Great Fast), **and on Great and Holy Friday, April 7.**

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, transfers, 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. ■

Open House at Mount St. Macrina



The Sisters of St. Basil the Great held an Open House Jan. 8 at Mount St. Macrina in Uniontown, Pa. They posted on Facebook Jan. 9: *Thanks to everyone who came to our Open House at the House of Prayer. We hope you enjoyed it as much as we did.*

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

Sister Barbara Jean Mihalchick and Sister Carol Petrasovich hosted an Open House on Sunday, Jan. 8.

Attendees were treated to delicious desserts and refreshments. The House of Prayer was beautifully decorated for Christmas.

Several parishioners from St. John the Baptist in Uniontown, Pa. came to this event to show their support and appreciation for the Sisters of St. Basil the Great. ■



REFLECTION FROM
MOUNT ST, MACRINA

Put on the armor of the Cross

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



This is a transcript of her Feb. 25, 2022 reflection. It can viewed on the Facebook page of the Sisters of St. Basil the Great at <https://www.facebook.com/sistersofstbasil.uniontown>.

Glory to Jesus Christ!

When I was growing up in Trenton, N.J., there was a week in the spring that was called “Clean Up, Paint Up, Fix Up Week.” People were asked to devote themselves to projects around their homes and improve their neighborhoods.

I’m sure many started well but I’m not sure how many finished the week well and avoided the distractions of doing all kinds of other things.

Some may think of this launch of the Great Fast — the Lenten time — in those terms: a “clean up” time. In fact, we are called to that; but at the depth of the heart, at the depth of one’s spirit, at the depth of one’s relationship with God and others.

The prayers say prepare yourself for the struggle of the Fast; to do “inner cleaning,” so to speak, with God’s help and the Church and the Sacraments.

Yes, it will put us into a time of struggle, if we are willing to grow spiritually — prayer, fasting, and almsgiving are the things we are encouraged to do in the three chapters of St. Matthew’s Gospel: Five, Six and Seven.

In the Lenten prayer book, the Triodion, there is a paragraph that suggests help for us in this struggle. It says: “Put on the armor of the Cross to combat the enemy.”

Think of the Cross often. Turn to the cross often. Bless yourself often. Give attention to the Cross wherever you see it and experience it. Use the armor of Christ for this spiritual warfare.

Take faith as an unshakable rampart — or like a wall of protection.

Put on prayer as your breastplate.

Put on charity as your helmet, that is, loving thoughts and loving actions toward others.

Use fasting as your sword to cut out evil from your thoughts and your heart. The “sword” is fasting.

And why? To receive the Crown from Christ. The crown of a deeper, loving relationship with Him that overflows to others and into all that I do.

That’s the Crown I would seek.

Blessings on your Lenten journey. Let us pray for each other. God bless you. ■

Feast of Theophany

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST CATHEDRAL IN MUNHALL, PA.

Very Rev. Andrew Deskevich blessed water and anointed the faithful following the Divine Liturgy celebrating the Theophany at St. John the Baptist Cathedral in Munhall, Pa. ■



Photos by Nick Havrilla Sr.

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST IN UNIONTOWN, PA.

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

Father Vasyl Symyon prayed the Great Blessing of Water after the Divine Liturgies for Theophany.

Parishioners received a blessing and were able to partake of the blessed water. ■



ST. GEORGE IN ALIQUIPPA, PA.

ST. MARY IN AMBRIDGE, PA.

Father Geoffrey Mackey, pastor of St. George in Aliquippa, Pa. and St. Mary in Ambridge, Pa. administered the Great Blessing of Water in observance of the Feast of Theophany Jan. 8 at Bridgewater Crossing in Beaver, Pa. The park marks where the Beaver River flows into the Ohio River. ■



Photos by Kathy Kapaldo

ST. GREGORY IN UPPER ST. CLAIR, PA.

Father Valerian Michlik celebrated the Feast of Theophany with the Great Blessing of Water at St. Gregory in Upper St. Clair, Pa. ■





ST. ELIAS IN MUNHALL, PA.

Father Vitalii Stashkevych blessed the water for parishioners to take home on the joyous Feast of Theophany at St. Elias in Munhall, Pa. ■



ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM IN PITTSBURGH, PA.

Father Miron Kerul'-Kmec celebrated the Feast of Theophany at St. John Chrysostom in Pittsburgh, Pa. ■



SS. PETER AND PAUL IN BRADDOCK, PA.

The Great Sanctification of Water followed the Vigil of Theophany Divine Liturgy Jan. 5 at SS. Peter and Paul in Braddock, Pa. Father Vitalii Stashkevych is pastor. ■



SS. PETER AND PAUL IN ERIE, PA.

SS. CYRIL AND METHODIUS IN GIRARD PA.

Parishioners from SS. Peter and Paul Byzantine Catholic Church in Erie, Pa. and SS. Cyril and Methodius Byzantine Catholic Church in Girard, Pa. joined together on Jan. 6 to celebrate the

Feast of Theophany.

Father John J. Mihalco led the parishioners in blessing of Holy Water at the Feast of the Theophany. ■



SS. PETER AND PAUL, WARREN, OHIO

Ringling in the new year

by John and Lisa Mosko, Betty Zombar
SS. Peter and Paul, Warren, Ohio

A New Year's Eve party was hosted by SS. Peter and Paul's Parish Guild in Warren, Ohio.

Appetizers were donated by parishioners and enjoyed by all as they played a trivia game where the winner with the most points won a Chick-fil-A gift card.

Bingo was played, and we even had some polka dancers. A

dinner of kielbasa and sauerkraut, pierogies, haluski, and hotdogs were served. Plenty of desserts were on hand, which were also donated by parishioners.

The Peach Bowl featuring Ohio State vs. Georgia was shown on the big screen.

It was a fun and enjoyable evening as we welcomed in the New Year! ■



100th birthday celebration

by John and Lisa Mosko
SS. Peter and Paul, Warren, Ohio

What an honor it was for our Parish to have our long-time parishioner Helen Kuhar and her family at a Divine Liturgy celebrating her 100th birthday.

Following the Liturgy, a delicious

cake and refreshments were available in the Social Hall.

Father Will Rupp gave the blessing, and we all sang "Happy Birthday."

God grant Helen many happy and blessed years! ■



ST. MARY IN MONESSEN, PA.

Volunteer Luncheon

*by Ruth Hanchin
Secretary, Ladies Guild
St. Mary, Monessen, Pa.*

Members of the St. Mary's Ladies Guild attended the Volunteer's Luncheon Dec. 7 at the House of Prayer at Mount St. Macrina in Uniontown, Pa.

Following a prayer service, lunch was served, games were played and Christmas carols were sung.

Guild members in attendance were Vice President Dorothy Stefan, Treasurer Alvera Zolock, Culinary Kay Zebula and Brenda Rusnak.

Also in attendance were Sister Barbara Jean Mihalchick, OSBM and Kim Show, Sister Carol Petrasovich, OSBM's secretary.

Sister Carol welcomed volunteers to the luncheon who are represented from other churches in the area.

Dorothy Stefan presented Sister Carol with a card and monetary gift to the House of Prayer. These donations are used for future Days of Prayer, which the Guild attends during the Lenten and other seasons.

A beautiful Icon of the Nativity was displayed in the House of Prayer and was accented by two lit Christmas trees on both sides.

The rest of the afternoon was spent in fellowship.

Christ is Born! Glorify Him! ■



Dorothy Stefan; Sister Carol Petrasovich, OSBM; Brenda Rusnak; Kay Zebula; and Alvera Zolock.

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST IN UNIONTOWN, PA.

Day of Reflection

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

The Mon-Valley Presbytery held its annual day of reflection and confessions Dec. 11 at St. John the Baptist in Uniontown, Pa.

An Emmanuel Moleben preceded a motivating talk by Father Stephen Wahal, which was entitled "All I Want for Christmas."

Following the service, a light lunch was provided for those who attended. ■



ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST IN UNIONTOWN, PA.

Caroling at the Monastery

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

ECF students and parishioners of St. John the Baptist in Uniontown, Pa. joined together at the Mount St. Macrina Monastery Dec. 18 to sing Christmas carols for the Sisters

of St. Basil the Great.

The Sisters were presented with a monetary donation from the parish. The Sisters reciprocated with snack bags for the children and refreshments for all in attendance. ■



Blessing of Cheat Lake

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

The Blessing of the Waters took place on Jan. 15 at Cheat Lake, W. Va.

Father Vasyly Symyon; Father James Fraser, Holy Protection of the Mother of God, Morgantown, W. Va.; Father Aaron J. Sandbothe, St. George Maronite,

Uniontown, Pa.; and other local priests took part in this tradition.

Matthew Minerd cantored the event.

Many families attended and at the end of the service those brave enough jumped in the lake to retrieve the cross, including Father James! ■



Rosary for peace

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

The Sunday rosary, which is prayed each week for peace in Ukraine, had a special guest on Jan. 15.

The prayer group was honored to have Sister Valentina of Romania join them in saying the rosary.

She was in the area assisting Sister Barbara Jean Mihalchick at the House of Prayer. ■





ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST
IN PITTSBURGH (SOUTH SIDE), PA

Food, toy collection

by Barbara Rebovich
St. John the Baptist, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Pittsburgh Deaf Blind Lions Club and St. John the Baptist in Pittsburgh (South Side), Pa. again collaborated to collect and donate non-perishable foods, new unwrapped toys for children and gift cards for tweens in need.

Together the total was \$2,267,

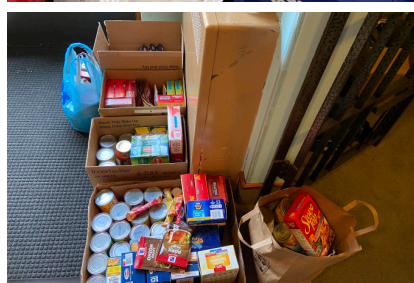
which was matched by the Greek Catholic Union.

This money was donated back to St. John for further repairs in the church.

I would like to thank all the parishioners from St. John the Baptist and St. John Chrysostom for the donations of food and toys. You were all very generous. ■



Bev and Barbara Rebovich present Father Miron Kerul'-Kmec with a check from the Greek Catholic Union.



Barb Rebovich presents toys and \$175 worth of gift cards to the Brashear Association.

Plastic collection

by Barbara Rebovich
St. John the Baptist, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Five hundred lbs. of plastic bags and wrap was collected by the Pittsburgh Deaf Blind Lions Club, St. John the Baptist in Pittsburgh (South Side), Pa.; St. John Chrysostom in Pittsburgh (Greenfield), Pa.; family and friends.

The environment is very important to the Lions. We found a way to decrease some pollution by recycling these plastic products, giving the weighed amount to Trex recycling program.

This company uses plastic for the manufacturing of patio decks and furniture.

In return for the 500 lbs., we will receive a free durable plastic composite bench.

Once we obtain the bench, it can be customized with the Lions logo and placed in the community.

This was a huge undertaking. Thank you to all who helped us reach our goal. For information about this, go to Trex recycling. ■



Example of bench

HOLY SPIRIT IN PITTSBURGH (OAKLAND), PA.

A year in growth

by Father Michael Kunitz
Holy Spirit, Pittsburgh, Pa.

On Sunday, Jan. 15, a new access ramp was blessed at the parish church of Holy Spirit in Pittsburgh, Pa.

Parishioners long-confined to their homes on Sunday mornings due to mobility issues were able, for the first time in years, to be physically present for the Divine services.

This occasion marks the latest of a series of projects which have been undertaken at the parish over the past year.

A temporary Iconostasis and renovated confessionals now better meet the ritual and pastoral needs of parishioners.

New outreach initiatives have also been instituted to breathe life back into the community after the pandemic.

Regular Adult Eastern Christian Education classes (see page 16), Catechism for the youth, and an expanded liturgical schedule have all been implemented so that the spiritual and intellectual life of the Parish can continue to grow.

Additionally, the launch of the Archeparchy's much awaited Byzantine Catholic College Ministry program works closely with the parish. Its location amid Carnegie Mellon, Pitt, and Carlow universities make the parish ideal for meeting



the pastoral need of Byzantine Catholic college students. Some are even calling Holy Spirit the "University Parish."

For many, serious doubts exist as to whether the Church will recover after having lost so many and so much from the pandemic. With determination, hard work, and the guiding grace of God, it is possible to rebound.

Time and again, the faithful of our Byzantine Catholic Church have demonstrated their resilience, adaptability, and unwavering faith in the face of impossible odds, coming out the other side stronger than before.

The time of this malaise will pass, not just for Holy Spirit parish, but for the whole Church if we have the courage and strength to persevere. ■



ST. ELIAS IN MUNHALL, PA.

Happy anniversary

by Mary Caryl Planiczki
St. Elias, Munhall, Pa.

The St. Elias parish family in Munhall, Pa. congratulates our pastor, Father Vitalii Stashkevych, on the fifth anniversary of his ordination to the holy priesthood. Thank you for all you do for our parish and the church and may God continue to bless you and your beautiful family. May God grant you many more blessed and happy years! ■



In the kitchen

by Mary Caryl Planiczki
St. Elias, Munhall, Pa.

St. Elias parishioners in Munhall, Pa. are hard at work preparing potato cheese pirohi for the Lenten fish fries.

Grandparents and parents join

together to teach the young the fine art of pirohi pinching!

Doors are open every Friday during the Great Fast (except for Good Friday) from 11:30 a.m.-6 p.m. Great food and baked goods, too! ■



Christmas scenes

by Mary Caryl Planiczki
St. Elias, Munhall, Pa.

St. Elias in Munhall, Pa. was pleased to welcome three seminarians to liturgy before Christmas. Tyler, Thomas, and

Nicholas assisted Father Vitalii Stashkevych.

We thank God for directing these young men to our seminary and pray for them as they continue their discernment. ■



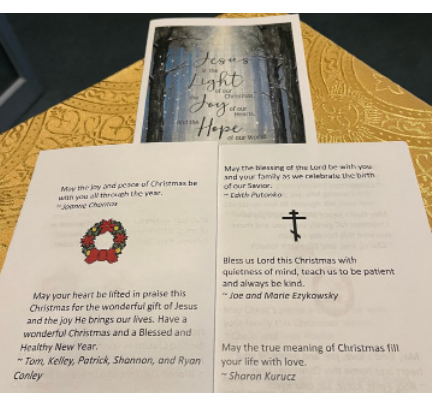
by Mary Caryl Planiczki
St. Elias, Munhall, Pa.

St. Elias parishioners worked inside and out to beautify the church in preparation for Christmas.

Luminaries from Christmas Eve were still lighting the way

to St. Elias in Munhall, Pa. to celebrate the joyous liturgy on Christmas morning.

Parish Christmas cards were distributed with Christmas greetings from the parishioners to all. ■





SS. PETER AND PAUL IN WARREN, OHIO

Feast of St. Nicholas

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

Following the Dec. 4 Divine Liturgy at SS. Peter and Paul in Warren, Ohio, our parishioners headed to DiLucia's Banquet Center for a delicious dinner.

A 50/50 drawing was held along with a St. Nicholas Instant Lottery Raffle.

We all enjoyed singing Christmas carols. The children's faces lit up when they saw St. Nicholas. He brought presents to all the children. They were a big help passing out door prizes as St. Nicholas pulled the winning numbers that matched the numbers on our favors. A good time was had by all! ■



Phillip's Fast almsgiving

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

Elaine Vislosky and Pat James, representing SS. Peter and Paul in Warren, Ohio, presented checks totaling \$3,110 to Tia Ciferno, executive director of

Bella Women's Center, a free women's health clinic in Warren. Our parishioners donated \$1,555 to this worthy cause and our Parish Guild matched that amount. ■



SS. PETER AND PAUL IN ERIE, PA.
SS. CYRIL AND METHODIUS IN GIRARD PA.

Celebrating three Feasts

by Richard Vasil
SS. Peter and Paul, Erie, Pa.

Parishioners from SS. Peter and Paul in Erie, Pa. and SS. Cyril and Methodius in Girard, Pa. joined together on Jan. 6 and 8 to celebrate the Feasts of Theophany, Christmas, and St Nicholas.

Father John J. Mihalco led

the parishioners in blessing of Holy Water at the Feast of the Theophany.

Afterward, parishioners from SS. Peter and Paul and SS. Cyril and Methodius joined together for a traditional Christmas dinner.

The Jan. 8 dinner was highlighted by a visit from St. Nicholas. ■



St. Nicholas celebration



Christmas Dinner

HOLY GHOST IN MCKEES ROCKS, PA.

Care packages

Holy Ghost in McKees Rocks, Pa. gathered donations for Caring Heights personal care center during the pre-Christmas season through the local GCU lodge.

The staff of Caring Heights provided a list of needed items for use in the social activities of the center.

The gifts were collected and delivered in time for the holidays by GCU President Tina Burns with members Norma and Peter Kascur coordinating the effort.



The center staff were very pleased and thankful for the scope and quantity of the donation. ■



ST. GREGORY IN UPPER ST. CLAIR, PA.

Triple celebration

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

Sunday, Jan. 1 was a triple celebration in our parish family.

At the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy, the Blessing of St. Basil's Bread —Vasilopita — took place in our parish family.

The tradition of Saint Basil's Bread dates back to the fourth century, when St. Basil the Great, the father of philanthropy, wanted to distribute money to the poor

in his eparchy. 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 Ana received the bread piece which contained the coin of Saint Basil. Congratulations! ■



ASCENSION OF OUR LORD IN CLAIRTON, PA.

Celebrating St. Nicholas

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

Ascension of Our Lord in Clairton, Pa. celebrated St. Nicholas on Dec. 11 with a luncheon.

Father Ivan Mina led everyone in singing St. Nicholas' song as he arrived with treats and coins for

the children.

The Holy Name Society provided Christmas stockings of treats for the kids and they received a gift bag from the GCU lodge.

Everyone enjoyed the trivia games and prizes and pitched in to help clean up afterward. ■



Christmas Community Concert

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

On Sunday afternoon, Jan. 8, we welcomed clergy and faithful to St. Gregory's for a spectacular Christmas Community Concert.

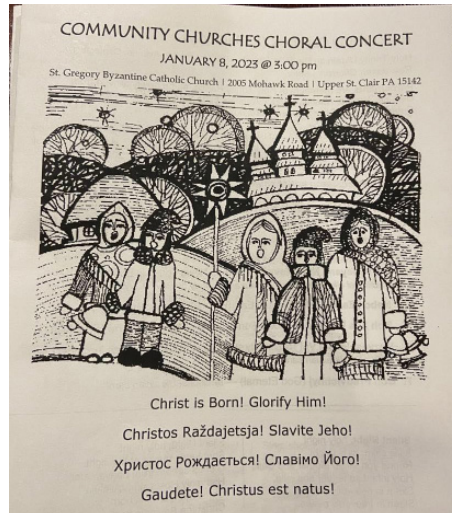
Holy Trinity Ukrainian Catholic Carolers of Carnegie, Pa.; St. Gregory's Chant Group; and the Schola Cantorum of St. Michael the Archangel Roman Catholic Parish presented a beautiful program of seasonal choral and

chant music in celebration of the Nativity of Our Lord.

Each group sang selections and staged festive scenes from their respective traditions in Latin, Ukrainian, Ruthenian and English.

The end finale was a powerful sing-along of all the singers together with the faithful.

Following the concert, we gathered in our Church Hall for fellowship and refreshments. ■





THOUGHTS FOR OUR DAY

by Archpriest David M. Petras

THE RITES OF INITIATION: ONLY ONE IS HOLY



In the New Testament, the first Letter of St. Peter is a revelation about the meaning of baptism.

When we are baptized, we have a new status in relation to God. The sacred writer says, “you are ‘a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of his own, so that you may announce the praises’ of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light” (1 Peter 2:9). The fathers called baptism, “enlightenment,” because we have come out of the darkness of worldly ignorance into the “joyful light of the holy glory of the Father Immortal, the heavenly, holy, blessed One, Jesus Christ” (Hymn of Vespers). We have become a people chosen by God, as St. Peter immediately adds, “a people of his own,” for “once you were ‘no people,’ but now you are God’s people” (1 Peter 2:10). Even more we are kings and priests, “a royal priesthood.” While God alone is holy, as we chant in the Liturgy, “One is holy, one is Lord, Jesus Christ, to the glory of God the Father,” by baptism, we become associated with the holiness of God. 2 Peter 1:4, records, “he has bestowed on us the precious and very great promises, so that through them you may come to share in the divine nature, after escaping from the corruption that is in the world because of evil desire.”

The French word for “holy” is “saint,” which we have taken over into English. We usually use this as a title for people of heroic virtue, canonized by the Church

in order to give us models for life according to God’s law. St. Paul frequently calls those who have been baptized “saints.” He begins his letter to the Romans, “to all the beloved of God in Rome, called to be saints [holy]. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ” (1:7). He likewise calls the Corinthians, the Colossians, the Ephesians and the



We are liberated from the power of evil, and are given the strength to do good.

Philippians “saints” in his address to them. This is the vocation of the baptized, as St. Paul teaches, “Immortality or any impurity or greed must not even be mentioned among you, as is fitting among holy ones, no obscenity or silly or suggestive talk, which is out of place, but instead, thanksgiving” (Ephesians 5:3-4). Holiness, of course, is more than purity, it is integrity, the wholeness of life, “having it all together.” In its highest expression, it is love which comes from God.

When we are baptized, we make a commitment to holiness. We renounce the evil one, and all the works of pride and hatred that come from darkness. We accept Christ, who is the Light and the



Life of all human existence. In our faith, we believe that God created us for goodness. The Book of Genesis affirms, “God looked at everything he had made, and found it very good” (1:31). There is, therefore, no essential reason that we cannot choose good, except that from the beginning, we chose disobedience to God’s will, and it remains always a problem for our human nature — the inability to choose what is right. By baptism, we freely make the choice for righteousness, but the ability to carry out this decision comes only from the strength of God’s grace. This helps to explain why we can baptize infants, for even though they do not have the maturity of soul to consciously choose what is right and avoid evil, they are still able to receive God’s grace given through water and oil, through the holy communion which is his body and blood.

In our Creed, we say, “I profess one baptism for the remission of sins.” We are liberated from the power of evil, and are given the strength to do good. The mystery of baptism is a divine reality. We enter into the life of God, one in the Holy Trinity. It is not something that we ourselves can initiate, as St. Nicholas Cabasilas observes, “It is not we ourselves who were moved towards God, nor did we ascend to him; but it was he who came and descended to us” (The Life in Christ, I, § 6). This is St. Paul’s basic teaching about baptism, in the epistle which is read in the rite of baptism, and at the Paschal Vigil, the day of baptism, “We were indeed buried with him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory

of the Father, we too might live in newness of life” (Romans 6:4). It is the transformation of our own lives, in all its individuality, and in all its uniqueness, by the death and life of Christ.

In every Liturgy, we sing, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts. Heaven and earth are filled with your glory.” Holiness is indeed an attribute of God. We have free will, and we can choose God, but we cannot attain holiness by our human strength alone, we need God acting in us. He has created us in our human nature, but he sanctifies us “to share in the divine nature” (2 Peter 1:4). This transformation is real, not just theoretical. By baptism in water and the Spirit, we can become a new person, and we can actually behave differently than just “natural human beings.” We can act as deified people, saints, as it were. An ancient letter, to Diognetus, describes Christians, “They are in the flesh, but they do not live after the flesh. They pass their days on earth, but they are citizens of heaven. They obey the prescribed laws, and at the same time surpass the laws by their lives” (§ 5). Of course, we take no pride in this, for we are not “self-made,” but receive it as a gift from God. Again, St. Nicholas Cabasilas explains, “Just as it is impossible to live this natural life without receiving the organs of Adam (that is, a natural physical body) and the human faculties necessary of this life, so likewise no one can attain that blessed world alive without being prepared by the life of Christ and being formed according to his image” (The Life in Christ, II, § 9). We are holy only in Christ. ■

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/>

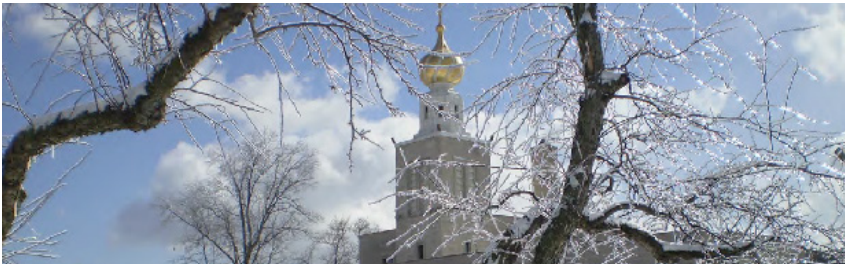
St. Michael
Hermitage, Pa.
<https://www.facebook.com/stmichaelbyz.hermitage>

St. Stephen
North Huntingdon, Pa.
www.facebook.com/ststephenbyzantinecatholicchurch

St. Mary
Windber, 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. 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

WED	1	5 p.m. Great Vespers (R)
THU	2	8 a.m. Festal Matins and Divine Liturgy (R)
FRI	3	5 p.m. Vespers with 9th Kathisma (R)
SAT	4	9 a.m. Divine Liturgy (R) 5 p.m. All-Night Vigil (R)
MON	6	8 a.m. Divine Liturgy (M)
TUE	7	7 a.m. Divine Liturgy (R)
WED	8	7 a.m. Divine Liturgy (R)
THU	9	7 a.m. Matins with Great Doxology (R)
FRI	10	5 p.m. Parastas for the Departed (R) [LS]
SAT	11	9 a.m. Divine Liturgy with Panachida (R) 5 p.m. Great Vespers (R)
MON	13	8 a.m. Divine Liturgy (R)
TUE	14	7 a.m. Divine Liturgy (R)
WED	15	7 a.m. Matins (R)
THU	16	7 a.m. Divine Liturgy (M)
FRI	17	5 p.m. Vespers with 10th Kathisma (R)
SAT	18	9 a.m. Divine Liturgy (R) 5 p.m. Great Vespers (R)
SUN	19	8 a.m. Festal Matins and Divine Liturgy (R)
MON	20	8 a.m. Matins (R) 6 p.m. Great Compline (R)
TUE	21	7 a.m. First Hour (R)
WED	22	7 a.m. Midday Office (R) 5 p.m. Presanctified Divine Liturgy (R) [LS]
THU	23	7 a.m. Moleben for Those in Illness (R)
SAT	25	9 a.m. Divine Liturgy (R) 5 p.m. Great Vespers (R)
SUN	26	8 a.m. Festal Matins and Divine Liturgy (R) 5 p.m. Vespers (R)
MON	27	8 a.m. Matins (R)
TUE	28	7 a.m. Third Hour (R)

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

AROUND THE ARCHEPARCHY



13th ANNUAL COMEDY NIGHT — 7:30 p.m. Friday, Feb. 17, St. Gregory Byzantine Catholic Church, 2005 Mohawk Road, Upper St. Clair, Pa. Performers include Teresa Logan and Moody McCarthy (*Last Comic Standing*) with host David Kaye. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. Tickets are \$35 each and include draft beer, snacks and sodas/mixers. For guests 21 years old and older. 50/50 raffle and gift auctions. Tickets on sale at Rectory or contact Mike Kiss at 412-818-1295.

ADULT EASTERN CHRISTIAN FORMATION — Formation in our faith does not stop after we've graduated from High School. Education in the faith is a process which continues throughout our whole lifetime and does not even stop on the day we die. Spiritual, intellectual, and practical growth in our faith is formed as much in our public as is in our private prayer lives and is likewise formed as much in our public endeavors for educational enrichment as it is in our private endeavors for educational enrichment. To that end, each month Father Michael Kunitz will be hosting these Adult Eastern Christian Formation opportunities at Holy Spirit, 4815 Fifth Ave., Pittsburgh (Oakland), Pa. and St. Pius X, 2336 Brownsville Road, Pittsburgh (Carrick), Pa. for anyone interested in attending. **Preparing for Great and Holy Lent:** 6:30 p.m. Feb. 18, Holy Spirit; 1 p.m. Feb. 18, St. Pius X. **Tithing: How Do We Give?:** 12:30 p.m. March 12, Holy Spirit; 1 p.m. March 11, St. Pius X. **Celebrating the Resurrection:** 12:30 p.m. April 16, Holy Spirit; 1 p.m. April 15, St. Pius X. **Living the Sacrament of Crowning:** 12:30 p.m. May 14, Holy Spirit; 1 p.m. May 13, St. Pius X. **Burning Questions: Open Q&A:** 11:30 a.m. June 18, Holy Spirit; 6:45 p.m. June 17, St. Pius X. **A Citizen of Heaven Living on Earth:** 11:30 a.m. July 16, Holy Spirit; 6:45 p.m. July 15, St. Pius X. **The Dormition of the Theotokos:** 11:30 a.m. Aug. 13, Holy Spirit; 6:45 p.m. Aug. 12, St. Pius X.

MEATFARE SUNDAY FELLOWSHIP — Feb. 12, Holy Spirit, 4815 Fifth Ave., Pittsburgh (Oakland), Pa. A pre-Lenten potluck meal following the 11:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy on the Sunday of Meatfare. All are welcome.

PRE-LENTEN PANCAKE BREAKFAST — Feb. 12, St. Pius X, 2336 Brownsville Road, Pittsburgh (Carrick), Pa. A pancake breakfast will be served following the 9 a.m. Divine Liturgy on the Sunday of Meatfare. All are welcome.

ST. PIUS X LENTEN PIROHI SALE — Noon-5 p.m. Fridays during Lent (excluding Good Friday) starting Feb. 24, St. Pius X, 2336 Brownsville Road, Pittsburgh (Carrick), Pa. Pirohi available for purchase are: Potato and Cheese, \$11 dozen, \$5.50 ½ dozen; Sauerkraut, \$12 dozen, \$6 ½ dozen; Cottage Cheese, \$15 dozen, \$7.50 ½ dozen; Lekvar (Prune), \$15 dozen, \$7.50 ½ dozen; Cabbage & Mushroom, \$11 dozen, \$5.50 ½ dozen; and Haluski, \$9 quart, \$7 Pint. Pre-order by calling the church office at 412-881-8344. Please leave a phone number. Cooked pirohi available with pre-order.

HOLY GHOST PIROHI SALE — Fridays during Lent, Holy Ghost School Kitchen, 206 Helen St. McKees Rocks, Pa. No Holy Week sales. Phone orders taken 9 a.m.-noon Wednesdays prior to the sale at 412-331-5155. Limited orders on the day of sale. Eat-in available.

DATES TO REMEMBER



FEB. 12
Sunday of Meatfare

FEB. 14
Valentine's Day

FEB. 19
Sunday of Cheesefare

FEB. 20
First day of the Great Fast

See more upcoming events at www.archpitt.org



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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 2023

SUBMISSIONS DEADLINE:
FEBRUARY 17