

## INSIDE

**A PILGRIMAGE  
"THANK YOU"**  
Sister Susan Sisko, OSBM, Provincial, on  
Pilgrimage 2023  
Page 3

**CULTIVATING VOCATIONS**  
The Society of Saints Cyril and Methodius  
hosts opening of school year picnic  
Page 6

**A JOYFUL SOUND**  
Cantor Kevin Beres retires following 50 years  
at St. John Chrysostom in Pittsburgh, Pa.  
Page 7

## Synod on Synodality

METROPOLITAN ARCHBISHOP WILLIAM C. SKURLA ATTENDS MONTH-LONG EVENT IN ROME



Pope Francis greets Metropolitan Archbishop William C. Skurla Oct. 23 at the Synod on Synodality in Rome. The Synod was initiated by Pope Francis in October 2021 and is a multiyear process in which Catholics around the world supplied feedback to help guide the future of the Church. Photo © Vatican Media.

## Our Jubilarians: A Quartet of Harmony

SISTERS OF ST. BASIL GREAT MARK ANNIVERSARIES AT MOUNT ST. MACRINA

By Sister Margaret Kapusnak, OSBM  
the Sisters of the Order of St. Basil the Great

*"Christ plays in ten thousand  
places, lovely in limbs, and lovely in  
eyes not his."*

This verse from a poem by Gerard Manly Hopkins is a celebration of God's presence in all things, stating how everything is a reflection of God's glory. It fittingly describes our quartet of Jubilarians. In their 60 years as Sisters of St. Basil, they have reflected God's presence to countless people whose lives intersected with theirs.

Our Jubilarians continue to reflect God's glory as consecrated women being a praying, healing and life-giving presence wherever they are. Each one is active, enthusiastic and committed to the ministry and people she serves.

Father Jerome Botsko,

Monastery Chaplain, conveyed this in his homily at the Thanksgiving Divine Liturgy for the Jubilarians. The Gospel reading of the Parable of the Sower in which the seed is the Word of God lent itself to a description of their lives. They represent the good soil in their faithfulness to their vocations. Over the span of their religious lives, they have produced abundant fruit for God's Kingdom. We congratulate them and give thanks to God for them. Their accomplishments are briefly described below.

**Sister Margaret Ann Andracko's** ministry journey has taken her to parish schools, to Religious Education in the Archdiocese and Passaic Eparchy, to organizational work in the Van Nuys (Phoenix) Eparchy, to director of the House of Prayer, as an administrative assistant at Byzantine Catholic Seminary and then at Central

Catholic High School in Pittsburgh, Pa. For two different terms, in 1990 and in 2015, she was Assistant Provincial. In 2021, Sister Margaret Ann accepted a position in the Diocese of Erie as administrative assistant for the Office of Religious and for St. Mark's Seminary where she currently serves.

**Sister Sylvia Burnett's** ministry likewise took her to parish schools, then to retreat work and spiritual direction at Mount St. Macrina, the Jesuit Retreat Center in Clinton, Ohio and at Ecclesia Center in Girard, Pa. She also worked on research, planning and development for the Community, served as motherhouse director, and Councilor and director of grounds and facilities. Sister Sylvia continues to unravel the

Story continued on page 3

## Rev. Ron Barusefski appointed 16th Seminary Rector

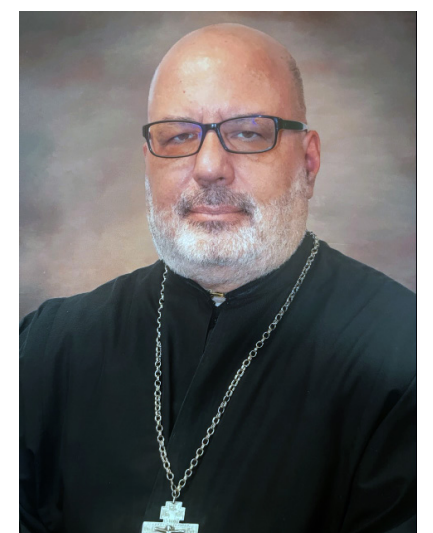
By The Byzantine Catholic Seminary of  
SS. Cyril and Methodius

On Tuesday, Sept. 19, Father Ron Barusefski was appointed the 16th Rector of the Byzantine Catholic Seminary of SS. Cyril and Methodius. The President of the Seminary, Metropolitan William Skurla, made the appointment having received the approval of Father Ron's Eparchial Bishop, the Most Reverend Kurt Burnette of Passaic.

Father Ron Barusefski is a vocation of Holy Ghost Byzantine Catholic Church, Jessup, Pa. He entered B.C.S. in the fall of 1981 and was graduated cum laude from Duquesne University with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Philosophy and Theology in 1985. After completing four additional years of theological study at the Seminary, he was ordained to the priesthood on May 14, 1989.

In the fall of 2011, after many years of parochial ministry, Father Barusefski began canon law studies at The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. He graduated with his licentiate in canon law on May 17, 2014, after completing his thesis entitled "The Competency of the Council of Hierarchs of the Byzantine Ruthenian Metropolitan Church USA Sui Iuris." Father Ron was then named pastor of St. John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic

Story continued on page 4



Rev. Ron Barusefski

# WORLD

THE BYZANTINE CATHOLIC

UPS 081500  
ISSN 07442289

Official publication of the  
Byzantine Catholic  
Archeparchy of Pittsburgh

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

Published monthly (12 issues)  
plus two seasonal special issues

**Byzantine Catholic Press Associates**  
66 Riverview Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15214  
Tel: 412.231.4000  
Fax: 412.231.1697  
E-mail: [bcw@archpitt.org](mailto:bcw@archpitt.org)  
Web site: [www.archpitt.org](http://www.archpitt.org)

Archbishop William C. Skurla  
*President*

David Mayernik Jr.  
*Editor*

Sister Elaine Kisinko, OSBM  
*Copy Editor*

Deacon Robert J. Shalhoub  
*Business Manager*

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

Periodicals Postage PAID at Pittsburgh, PA

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

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

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



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

## MISSION

The mission of *The Byzantine Catholic World* is to spread the Gospel message in the rich tradition of the Byzantine Catholic Church; to encourage faithful to reflect the image of Christ in everyday activities of life; to offer spiritual formation through changing times; and to celebrate community among Byzantine Catholics in the Archeparchy of Pittsburgh, throughout the Metropolitan Church in America, and around the world.

## 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](mailto:hpmsm@verizon.net).

■ 7 p.m. Friday, Nov. 10 to after lunch Saturday, Nov. 11, **Overnight Silent Retreat for Women.** Presented by Sister Carol, OSBM. Offering: \$40. Registration due: Nov. 4.

■ 9:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 9, **Christmas Preparation Retreat Morning.** Presented by Father Valerian Michlik. Includes conference, Sacrament of Reconciliation, reflection times, prayer service and lunch. Offering: \$40. Registration due: Dec. 4.

■ 10:30 a.m.-noon Tuesdays, Dec. 12 and 19, **Sanctuary Sessions for Sanity.** Guided prayer and quiet meditation time in the Shrine of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. Free-will offering. No registration required.

■ 10-11:30 a.m. Tuesdays, April 9, 16, 23 and 30, **Tuesday Morning Reading Series: Living in an Icon** with Sister Barbara Jean Mihalchick, OSBM. Offering: \$20 per session. Registration due: April 2.

■ 3 p.m. Friday, April 26 to 4 p.m. Sunday, April 28, **Icon Workshop: "Our Lady of Tenderness"** taught by Marylyn Barone. Offering: \$350. Commuters: \$325. Materials included. Registration limited to 15 and due April 19.

■ 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturday, May 18, **Mother-Daughter Retreat** with Sister Ruth Plante, OSBM. Conference, reflections, prayer service and lunch. Offering: \$40. Registration due: May 13. ■



### Society of Saints Cyril and Methodius

*Eastern Catholic Vocations Ministry*

**Join us** in our mission to foster and promote religious vocations in the Byzantine Catholic Church of the USA

We are lay men and women dedicated to praying for vocations and offering support and fellowship to seminarians, deacon students, and those in formation for religious life.

- Be a "Prayer Partner" to a seminarian, deacon student, or one who is discerning their calling to religious life
- Participate in events at SS. Cyril and Methodius Seminary and parish locations in the Pittsburgh area: Fellowship, Social, Spiritual
- Attend quarterly meetings in person or online Zoom
- Support our clergy and religious in their ministries
- Help Vocations Ministry to grow across the USA.

#### Welcoming New Members

Contact:  
Diane Pochron, President  
[pochron@pitt.edu](mailto:pochron@pitt.edu) • 412-303-6534

## Mt. St. Macrina Cemetery Announcement

**DORMITION EAST & WEST Sections are now open for single or double plot purchase.**

Dormition Section historically has been the burial section for the Sisters of St. Basil the Great and their Foundress, Reverend Mother Macrina Melnychuk. Last year the sisters made a communal decision to open two front rows of this prime section for sale.



Dormition West – near Main Entrance



Dormition East – near Bishops' Crypts

Current pricing for each Dormition plot is \$1,600.00

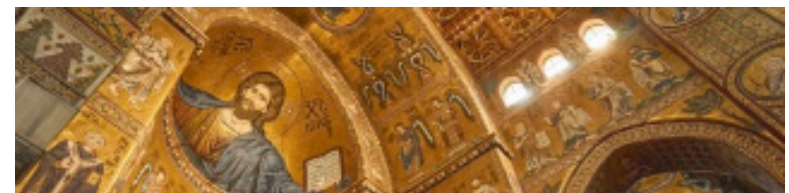
The required minimum downpayment per plot is \$500.00. Full payment must be made two years from initial contract date. *(Full payment must be made prior to burial in plot(s)).*

If full payment has not been after two years, the plots will revert back to Mt. St. Macrina Cemetery.

**Through November 30, 2023, special pricing is \$1,500 per plot.**

If interested in making plot(s) purchase, please read the memorial regulations policies first. These regulations are listed and may be downloaded on the website: [www.mtstmacrinacemetery.org](http://www.mtstmacrinacemetery.org); Menu: Offerings: Dormition

If you are in agreement with the policies, then call Sr. Seraphim at 412-559-8861 for purchase arrangements.



## LIGHT FROM THE EAST

*A Lecture Series Presented by Byzantine Catholic Campus Ministry*

### EASTERN CATHOLICISM: MEANING AND RELEVANCE

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 23 | 2:00 PM  
Presenter: Father David Abernethy

### WHAT IS A BYZANTINE CATHOLIC?

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 8 | 1:00 PM  
Presenter: Fr. Michael Kunitz, M.Div

### ICONS: FROM DARK TO LIGHT

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 12 | 1:00 PM  
Presenter: Fr. Miron Kerul-Kmec, Jr.

### VISIBLE AND INVISIBLE:

### THE LITURGICAL LIFE OF THE BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10 | 1:00 PM  
Presenter: Subdeacon Luke Iyengar, MAT, M.Div.

All Lectures Held At Holy Spirit Parish  
4815 Fifth Ave., Pgh, PA

All Sunday lectures (10/8, 11/12, and 12/10) will be preceded by Divine Liturgy at 11:00 a.m., and a breakfast, immediately following liturgy.

Learn more about individual lectures at: [www.byzatholicpgh.org](http://www.byzatholicpgh.org)





## Our Jubilarians: A Quartet of Harmony

Story continued from page 1

mysteries of broken marriages in her tribunal work for the Erie Diocese where she has served since 2007 as an auditor in the diocesan tribunal.

**Sister Susan Harvey** devoted 29 years in the parochial elementary schools around the Metropolia serving as teacher and principal. She taught at nearly every grade level from first through eighth. Following her years in the education apostolate, Sister Susan went on to serve in Pastoral Ministry and as assistant director for the Office of Religious Education for the Parma Eparchy. Returning to the education ministry, Sister Susan served on the staff of the newly organized school at St. Gabriel's Parish in Las Vegas, Nev. In 2014, Sister returned to the monastery, where she took on the position of Director of Associates while assisting with the Cemetery Ministry and the Card Shop, and various other ministries at the monastery.

Following her initial ministry as a teacher, **Sister Barbara Jean Mihalchick** moved on to retreat work and spiritual direction at the Retreat Center. In 1989, Sister Barbara Jean was elected to the position of Vicar General in the General Administration of the Order in Rome, Italy. During this time, Sister traveled to all parts of the Order, but especially to Eastern Europe where Sisters were re-structuring public religious life and ministries. There Sister offered on-going formation sessions with the young professed Sisters. Sister Barbara Jean returned from Rome in 2001. Following a sabbatical year, she joined the House of Prayer staff at Mount St. Macrina where she currently serves as program director and Vocation Director for the Province. Presently, Sister is in her second term as a member of the Provincial Council.

One gift that is not listed above is the gift of listening. For a combined 240 years of religious life, each Sister has listened, empathized, sympathized or just was present as a "reflection of God's glory." That might just be the greatest gift they gave and keep giving to the world.

No Basilian celebration is complete without a special meal. At the festive dinner afterwards, Sister Susan Sisko, Provincial, and all the Sisters offered their warm congratulations to the Jubilarians.

May God grant them many more happy, blessed and spiritually fruitful, years! ■



Sister Sylvia Burnett; Sister Margaret Ann Andrako; Father Jerome Botsko, Monastery Chaplain, Sister Susan Harvey; and Sister Barbara Jean Mihalchick.

### *Sister Christopher celebrates Diamond Anniversary: A legend in her own time*

There is nothing like a Jubilee to bring Sisters together in joyful celebration. Sunday, May 21 was such a day, for on that day, the Sisters of St. Basil in Uniontown honored **Sister Christopher Malcovsky** on her Diamond Jubilee of Religious Life.

Like all major events of the Province, the celebration began with a Divine Liturgy of Thanksgiving. As is customary on this occasion and before receiving the Holy Eucharist, Sister Christopher renewed her vows. In this, she was joined by the entire community.

In his homily, Archbishop William Skurla remarked on the many levels of service and the many different roles that Sister carried out in her 75 years of service. Speaking to the time when he was Bishop of Phoenix, he noted that faced with the enormous task of managing the apartment complex at St. Stephen's, Sister worked hard to get everything organized, and in so doing engaged others in the parish to help.

Her purpose went beyond practicalities of the buildings, and extended to spiritual counseling when needed. Sister's ministry in the Eparchy of Phoenix for nearly thirty years actually began in 1991, assisting in organizational work in what was then the Eparchy of Van Nuys.

Sister Christopher spent her beginning years as a Basilian in the teaching ministry. Her abilities led to the assignment as Motherhouse Superior and then as Provincial Superior for two terms. In 1983, she was elected as General Superior, the highest position in the Order based in Rome. In this capacity, she touched the lives of many Sisters,

particularly those still living under communism. Even at this date, she is fondly remembered for her courage in visiting those groups of Sisters during her tenure.

After completing her term of office in Rome, Sister Christopher returned to ministry in the Phoenix Eparchy where her responsibilities were mainly in parish ministry at St. Stephen. In addition, she also managed the 26 apartments for senior citizens on the parish campus. Besides engaging in direct ministry for the parish, Sister Christopher also organized and coordinated the Bishop's Appeal for the Eparchy, a task which she ably fulfilled over the course of her years in the West. She whole-heartedly dedicated her time, talents and energy to these many significant areas of service.

Though separated by miles, parishioners of St. Stephen Pro-Cathedral and the apartment residents still remember Sister Christopher for her prayerful and calming spirit as well as for her willingness to listen. For many of them, she is just a phone call away.

Because of health issues, Sister Christopher returned to the monastery at Mt. St. Macrina in 2018, assisting part time at the Religious Gift Shop or wherever needed. Presently, Sister Christopher is a resident at Mt. Macrina Manor where she previously offered her services as a volunteer.

At the festive dinner following the Liturgy, Provincial Sister Susan congratulated Sister Christopher and thanked her for her enthusiastic and faithful service. She then read a very special message from the Sisters in Romania who are celebrating their



Sister Susan Sisko, Provincial; Sister Christopher Malcovsky and Archbishop William Skurla.

## A Pilgrimage "thank you"



Dear Friends,

What a blessed and beautiful pilgrimage, and how graced we were to be a part of it!

In thanksgiving to Our Lord and His Holy Mother, we are grateful for the sunshine, the gentle breezes (that kissed us occasionally), and for blessing us once again with our faithful pilgrims who traveled to be a part of the 89th annual pilgrimage.

Thank you all for your prayers, your participation, and your generosity. Though Mt. St. Macrina has been a bit quieter these past couple of weeks, a silent walk on the property rings aloud with the power of your prayers, and the beauty of your singing. We hear it, we feel it, and it sustains us as we plan for our 90th Pilgrimage.

Children, teens, and young adults: Thank you for your energy, your enthusiasm, and your faithfulness. It was an absolute joy for us to witness your participation, spiritual energy, and enthusiasm for the Lord and Our Mother of Perpetual Help. You are the present, and you are the future of this pilgrimage, and of our Church, and we encourage you to embrace that role wholeheartedly.

To all our pilgrims, the extraordinary example of prayer and faithful participation you have shown throughout the years is the foundation of our annual pilgrimages and our church. You are the bedrock from which future generations will continue building strong and lasting faith structures. We are grateful for your continued support, and the support of all those who have come before you.

The Sisters of St. Basil have been blessed with your faithfulness and continued support of our Annual Pilgrimage. It is for all of you that we continue this ministry of love.

Sincerely in Christ,

**Sister Susan Sisko, OSBM**

*Provincial, Sisters of the Order of St. Basil the Great* ■

75th Anniversary as a Province. Sister Christopher holds a special place in their hearts, since it was through her that the Basilian Sisters in Romania became a part of the Order. Truly, one can say that Sister Christopher has been blessed with many happy and spiritually fruitful years, and all of us are grateful to share in this blessing! ■

# Rev. Ron Barusefski appointed 16th Seminary Rector

Story continued from page 1

Church in Bayonne, N.J., and administrator of St. Mary's Byzantine Catholic Church in Jersey City, N.J., and administrator of St. George Byzantine Catholic, Newark, N.J.. He was also appointed Vice-Chancellor and Adjutant Judicial Vicar of the Eparchy of Passaic.

In the summer of 2015, Father Barusefski was sent for doctoral studies in canon law at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas. After completion of his first year of doctoral studies, Father Ron was appointed the Director of Apostolic Formation and member of the External Formation Faculty at the Pontifical North American College in June 2016. While being responsible for the many different pastoral ministries afforded to the seminarians including parish and campus ministry, catechesis, and care for the poor and sick, he also shared the Byzantine Tradition with regular celebration of the Divine Liturgy and other liturgical services, as well as discussions and presentations. After completing his five-year term of office at the NAC in June 2021, Father Barusefski returned to full-time doctoral work. He has published his dissertation entitled "The Role of the Council of Hierarchs with special reference to the Byzantine Ruthenian Metropolitan Church sui iuris in the United States,"



Father Ron Barusefski leads a tour of The Byzantine Catholic Seminary of SS. Cyril and Methodius during the July 18 "Faith and Fun Day" for altar servers.

having defended it in June 2022.

On Aug. 1, 2022, Fr. Ron was appointed the Director of Human Formation at B.C.S. He has served in that capacity and as personal formational advisor to seminarians in the configuration stage of formation since that date.

Outgoing rector, Father Robert Pipta, welcomes Father Ron with prayers for growth and fruitfulness in his new ministry. The challenges of Seminary formation leadership are met while being inspired by the faith and fervor of those students who are being formed as leaders for the Church.

Upon his appointment, Father Ron stated, "Our faculty, staff,

and seminarians are all very grateful for the wonderful service that Bishop-elect Robert Pipta has faithfully given as rector for ten years, and I am especially grateful to have served this past year at our seminary with him. It is with a deep sense of humility and honor that I have received the appointment to succeed him as rector, and I ask for your continued prayers and support for myself and for our seminary community."

Let us raise up Father Ron in prayer, asking that God grant him many blessed years in health and happiness. ■

## Spreading the Word

Father Kevin Marks, Archeparchial Vocation Director and pastor at St. Michael in Campbell, Ohio and St. Michael in Hermitage, Pa. visited Franciscan University of Steubenville, Ohio during the annual Vocation Fair to promote

Byzantine Catholic vocations.

Assisting him were Father Brian Norrell, pastor of St. Mary in Weirton, W. Va., and Seminarian Chad Durante, an alumnus of Franciscan University of Steubenville. ■



Seminarian Chad Durante, Father Brian Norrell and Father Kevin Marks.



### TEXT MESSAGES

## The Saw Mill Run Boulevard Samaritan

By David Mayernik Jr.  
Editor



Have you been in an honest-to-goodness "Good Samaritan" situation? mean, an as close-to-actual-

Xerox copy-as-possible version of Luke 10:25-37 when Jesus tells the parable of a man who was beaten and left on the side of the road where a priest and Levite failed to offer him a helping hand but a Samaritan stopped and took pity on him?

It happened to me on Monday morning, Oct. 9.

I was driving to work at the Chancery on Pittsburgh's North Side when my car sputtered, stopped and I had to maneuver to the side of the road — my car one-half off the right-hand lane on Saw Mill Run Boulevard.

Now, this was particularly traumatic for me because since 2017 I've used hand controls to drive since I have neuropathy in both of my feet. I have a joystick on the left side of the steering wheel for my left hand to control the gas and brake and there's a knob on the steering wheel for my right hand.

It was an arduous, year-long process to get the hand controls and I had to take the Pennsylvania Driver's License Test again to get my license certified.

But back to the scene on Saw Mill Run Boulevard...

I sat in my car for 90 minutes with my emergency blinkers on, waiting for the AAA tow truck to arrive and watching the cars fly past me in my rearview mirror, hoping one didn't plow into my back bumper. It was a scary situation.

About 35 minutes in, I noticed a car coming up slowly behind me with its blinkers on. It then pulled up beside me on the busy road.

I rolled down my window.

The man in the other car asked: "Are you OK?"

"Yeah," I said. (It was a lie.) "Triple A is coming."

I said thanks and told the man I appreciated him stopping. I gave him a thumbs-up.

One out of who-knows-how-many hundreds of cars on a Monday morning stopped to offer words of encouragement.

So this is my public "thank you" to this anonymous driver.

Thanks for showing a little mercy, Saw Mill Run Boulevard Samaritan. ■



BYZANTINE CATHOLIC SEMINARY  
OF SS. CYRIL AND METHODIUS

*Hierarchical Liturgy commemorates  
20th anniversary of Diaconate Program*



By The Byzantine Catholic Seminary  
of SS. Cyril and Methodius

On Saturday, Sept. 23, Archbishop William Skurla celebrated a Hierarchical Liturgy of Thanksgiving which commemorated the 20th anniversary of the first graduating class of the School of Diaconate Studies at the Byzantine Catholic Seminary of SS. Cyril and Methodius.

In attendance were the living members of the class, along with

several of their spouses. May God grant them peace, health, and happiness for many years to come!

The four-year Diaconate Program, which consists of remote study and training throughout the year, along with a yearly two-week intense class period held during the summer at the seminary, has since produced dozens of Deacons who have faithfully served and assisted in our parishes in many aspects of ministry. ■

*Bishop-elect Robert Pipta celebrates  
final liturgy before ordination*

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

St. Elias in Munhall, Pa. was blessed to welcome Bishop-elect Robert Pipta to celebrate his final liturgy as a priest before his ordination as Bishop of Parma.

During liturgy, he was presented with a gift of a Panagia from the parishes of St. Elias in Munhall

and SS. Peter and Paul in Braddock, Pa.

St. Elias was grateful that he thought of the parish as his “home away from home” during his time in Pittsburgh.

We wish him all the best as he continues to follow God’s call. God grant him many years! Axios! ■



REFLECTION FROM MOUNT ST, MACRINA

**Worshipping as a community**

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



This is a transcript of her July 15, 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 continue looking at the Commandments — we’re on the third one now: “Thou shall keep holy the Lord’s day.” In fact, we Christians celebrate the Lord’s Resurrection on Sundays.

The worship of God set at a particular time began with the Old Testament — with the giving of the Commandments. Remember that the Commandments are part of our Covenant relationship with God. God’s promises to us are followed by our promises to God. Church law says that Sundays are to be observed as the foremost Holy Day of Obligation.

Yes, it says you must come together to worship the living God — Sundays, and now it extends also to Saturday evenings — because we are God’s children. We come together to focus on that relationship; we seek to be renewed so that all together we focus on Christ; we bring the strength of our Christ relationship to build up one another. We come to offer our common worship to our living God. This is why it’s an obligation rather than just an invitation.

We are God’s children. This

relationship with God needs to remain central and transforming. It’s meant to strengthen us in a way of life so that even our moral decisions would be coming out of this God relationship. It’s easy to separate the two, but as we come together in community on a Sunday in communal worship — in hearing the Word of God together, in praising God together — the desire, the hope is that our mentality, our decisions, our love for one another, is formed and transformed.


When we cannot worship in community nonetheless the call to remember the Covenant, to be faithful in praise and worship is still there. Therefore, if we have to, a time of serious prayer and an overflow in love and service will make holy the Lord’s day.

A good way to spend a Sunday after attending Liturgy, is putting aside work that isn’t necessary, is to bring family together or the parish community in a time of socialization. Other suggestions — make time to focus on cultural development or experiences; create a time that builds people up even by the change of schedule, the change of activity that in some way strengthens and enriches us and the Body of Christ.

So let us come together. And let us offer our time of service to assist the elderly, the sick; to visit with them; to build up one another in some way. That’s also the message of a Sunday.


Let us keep the sacred; an important element that balances and strengthens our lives.

God bless you. ■



**PBCAC**  
The Pittsburgh  
Byzantine Catholic  
Archeparchial Choir  
presents

*‘Neath the  
Star of  
Bethlehem  
Hymns & Songs  
of the Nativity*



**Sunday December 17 • 2:00 pm**  
St. Elias Byzantine Catholic Church  
4200 Homestead Duquesne Road  
Munhall, PA 15120

## Clergy retreat



Amid the pastoral splendor of the grounds at Antiochian Village near Latrobe, Pa., clergy of the Byzantine Catholic Archeparchy of Pittsburgh gathered for a commemorative photo during their 2023 retreat the week of Oct. 1. Photo by Nick Havrilla Sr. ■

## Cultivating vocations in the Society of Saints Cyril and Methodius

“BACK TO CLASS” CELEBRATION HELD AT ST. GREGORY IN UPPER ST. CLAIR, PA.

By The Society of Saints Cyril and Methodius

Vocations to the priesthood, diaconate, and religious life are at the very heart of the Church.

The declining number of vocations has been a cause for concern for the past few decades, commonly referred to as a “vocation crisis.” We don’t often think about the role that we as lay faithful have in the future of our Church, but we clearly have a part to play. For that reason, a new ministry has been formed to shine a light on those in formation and studying for the priesthood, diaconate, and religious life.

The Society of Saints Cyril and Methodius (SSCM) was recently given its blessing by Metropolitan Archbishop William C. Skurla as a Society to promote vocations in the Archeparchy of Pittsburgh.

The mission of SSCM is to foster and promote religious vocations, and the 26 charter members in the Archeparchy of Pittsburgh are extending an open invitation to join them.

This mission is carried out by members through:

- **Prayer for Vocations:** Members are dedicated to offering their prayers for those who are discerning a religious vocation.

- **Affirmation and Support:** SSCM members extend support to seminarians, deacon students, and those in formation for religious life. This support

includes prayers, friendship, mentorship, guidance, and any resources they are able to provide. SSCM believes that affirmation and assistance is vital in nurturing religious vocations.

- **Supporting Clergy and Religious:** The Society also recognizes the importance of sustaining and uplifting the clergy and religious who are now serving our Church. We make ourselves available to help in whatever way our gifts and talents can be offered.

SSCM organizes various events and activities for fellowship. One recent event was a “back to class” get-together for the seminarians held on Sept. 24 at St. Gregory Church in Upper St. Clair, Pa.

The afternoon began with a Moleben of Thanksgiving followed by a delightful blend of delicious food, camaraderie, and a brown bag auction of unique “home treasures” provided by SSCM members.

Laughter filled the air as the high bidders opened their brown bags to see what “treasure” they bought, making it a fun and memorable day for all involved.

If you’re looking for a way to make a meaningful difference in our Byzantine Catholic Church, consider joining SSCM and becoming a part of the journey to increase vocations.

For more information, contact SSCM president Diane Pochron [pochrond@pitt.ed](mailto:pochrond@pitt.ed) or SSCM chaplain Father Valerian Michlik [stgregoryusc@aol.com](mailto:stgregoryusc@aol.com). We hope to hear from you! ■





ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM IN PITTSBURGH, PA.

## Cantor Kevin Beres retires following 50 years of service

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

There are times when “thank you” just doesn’t seem to be sufficient. That was the case on Sunday, Sept. 10 when St. John Chrysostom parish community celebrated the 50-year career and retirement of our beloved cantor, Kevin Beres.

As one priest stated, Kevin is “one of the best [cantors]” and we could not agree more. Following Divine Liturgy Father Miron Kerul’-Kmec presented Kevin with the icon Synaxis of Holy Chanters and Hymnographers. The parish family then gathered in the social hall for a light lunch and cake and an opportunity to personally thank Kevin for his many years of service.

At the age of 14 Kevin expressed to his mother a desire to sing with the parish cantor Mr. Frank Kostilnik. She encouraged Kevin to talk with the cantor and as they say, the rest is history. Frank Kostilnik welcomed the enthusiastic teenager to the choir loft, and Kevin began singing with him, Michael Roman who chanted the Epistle in Church Slavonic and John “Lefty” Lopata who chanted the “Viruju” — the Nicene Creed — in Church Slavonic.

But Kevin’s training began much earlier. He always loved singing along with 45s on his

record player. He sang in grade school where he learned to read music. Most importantly, Kevin attended Slavonic liturgy with his maternal grandmother, Mary Dzura every Sunday and followed along with his prayer book learning to read Church Slavonic. Thus began a devotion to the church that continues to this day. Kevin cantored his first solo liturgy on Aug. 6, 1973, and received additional guidance on holy days with Lefty Lopata singing along for moral support. Steve Malatak from Holy Spirit, Pittsburgh’s North Side, cantored funerals and taught Kevin the funeral melodies in both English and Church Slavonic.

A few years later Joe Matvey completed the course at the Metropolitan Cantors Institute and joined Kevin as a cantor for St. John Chrysostom. Joe’s son David would also learn to cantor for the parish. Kevin inherited the role of lead cantor from Frank Kostilnik. Kevin became cantor at Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Greenfield) when Cantor George Gavula became ill. Kevin continued in that role until the closing of Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary church. In 2014 when +Fr. Thomas Schaeffer was Administrator of St. John the Baptist (South Side) and cantor Joseph Ruglovsky moved away, Kevin assumed the duties of



cantor.

As a student at the University of Pittsburgh, Kevin sang with the university’s Men’s Glee Club, traveling with them to California in 1989 to perform. He also sang with the Heinz Chapel Choir and for 3 weeks in 1990 toured Europe on the 100th Anniversary of the choir. In 2019 Kevin retired from the Post-Gazette as a Mailer, having started with the Pittsburgh Press in 1974.

In Aug. 2022 Kevin announced his intention to retire in Sept. 2023 as cantor and his wish to train a replacement. For one full year, Kevin trained two men to become cantors. Andrew Prizzi of St. John the Baptist and Eric

Williams of St. John Chrysostom assumed the duties of cantor for their respective churches effective Sept. 1.

In retirement, Kevin will continue to share his gift with the parish community, helping with holy days, funerals, and an occasional Divine Liturgy, and most importantly offering encouragement and support to his successors. So, while “thank you” may be somewhat insufficient, our gratitude for Kevin’s commitment to St. John Chrysostom and St. John the Baptist Church and his 50 years as cantor is truly heartfelt.

May God grant Kevin many more blessed, happy and healthy years. Mnohaja Lita! ■

## Preparing for winter

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

The weather was cool, but sunny on Saturday, Oct. 7 when parishioners of St. John Chrysostom in Pittsburgh’s Greenfield neighborhood gathered to work.

The goal was to weed and trim the outside flower beds and fields. Parishioner Donna Kocan maintains the lower-level flower beds throughout the year, weeding, planting, and mulching. Donna spends time almost daily at this task. However, the upper-level beds and fields need a team of workers to ready them for the upcoming winter.

More than 20 volunteers brought their tools and their energy; and five hours later the job was completed.

While most of the work was

done outside, a few volunteers focused their work on the inside of the church.

Working with parishioners, Father Miron Kerul’-Kmec extended his gratitude and appreciation to each volunteer for their time and energy in beautifying the church. ■



ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST IN PITTSBURGH, PA.

# A hidden gem

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

Doors Open Pittsburgh offers tours of various city neighborhoods throughout the year. These are opportunities for businesses and churches to share their history, architecture, and purpose. Visitors are encouraged to stroll the neighborhood; visit places new to them; ask questions; take photos; and gain a better appreciation of the neighborhood. Pittsburgh's vibrant South Side was a destination for 2023.

As one of many churches located in this historic neighborhood, several with deep ethnic roots, St. John the Baptist was among the stops on the tour. Founded in 1901, St. John the Baptist's faithful worshipped at two previous sites before they settled in their current location at 1720 Jane St. The first Divine

Liturgy at this final location was celebrated on Christmas Eve in 1958.

Doors Open — South Side was very well-attended this year. On Saturday, Sept. 23 Father Miron Kerul'-Kmec and parishioners, John Zavacky, Tam Revtai and Helenea O'Connor welcomed 65 visitors to the church. Questions about the Byzantine Catholic faith, the iconostas, and the parish community sparked several engaging conversations among the visitors and hosts. One young man stated that he "passes the church almost daily" but never stopped before. He shared that he was in awe of the beauty and peacefulness of the sanctuary. Echoing his sentiments, other visitors exclaimed St. John the Baptist Church to be the "hidden gem" of the South Side. We couldn't agree more! ■



SS. PETER AND PAUL IN WARREN, OHIO

# Mums the word

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

Crafts, food, and Mums! That's what was showcased in September as one of our fundraisers for our upcoming 100th Anniversary Celebration. It was a successful event, and the mums were beautiful. ■



ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM IN PITTSBURGH, PA.

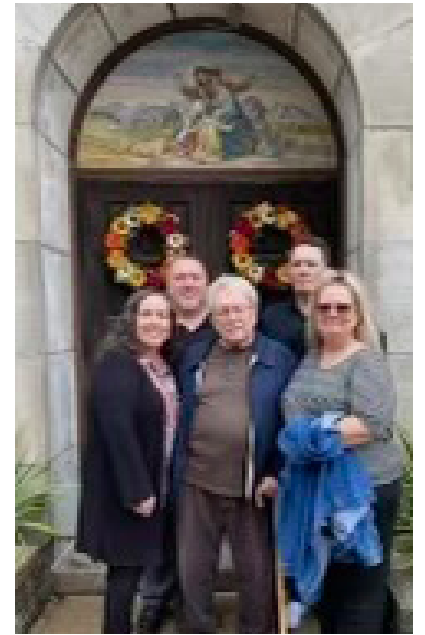
# Celebrating newest octogenarians

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

Celebrating milestones with a parish family builds and strengthens the community. The Fechko and Silvestri families understand the importance of parish family in their lives. When George Fechko and Cathy Silvestri celebrated their 80th birthdays, their respective families knew they had to include the parish family in their separate celebrations.

On Sept. 19, George Fechko celebrated his 80th birthday. George was only slightly surprised to see his children, three of whom live hours away from Pittsburgh, in church the morning of Sept. 24 since the Divine Liturgy intention was for his wife, Nancy of blessed memory. At the end of liturgy, Father Miron Kerul'-Kmec invited the entire parish community to the social hall for the celebration. And George was totally surprised. His four children, George, Nancy, Paul, and Mary put together a delicious lunch of Mineo's pizza and Triangle subs; and there was cake too.

George is a life-long member of St. John Chrysostom's Church in Ruska Dolina. He graduated from Allerdice High School, attended the University of Pittsburgh and enlisted in the Army where he served as a radio operator. George worked for Westinghouse Research Lab as a technician. He and Nancy were married for 55 years. In addition



to his four children, George has 15 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

Then it happened again on Oct. 8. Maria Silvestri and her fiancé Joe Mills planned a similar celebration for Maria's mom, Cathy, who turned 80 on Oct. 20. Once again the surprise celebration included family, friends, and the parish community of St. John Chrysostom. Everyone enjoyed a light lunch and birthday cake. Cathy grew up in Bentleyville and attended St. Michael's Byzantine Church in Donora. She is a retired city of Pittsburgh teacher and a Duquesne University alumnae. Cathy is very active with the Sisters of Saint Basil in Uniontown and the Carpatho-Rusyn Society.

May God grant both George and Cathy many more happy, healthy, and blessed years! Mnohaja Lita! ■





ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST IN UNIONTOWN, PA.

# Farewell, Father Vasyl

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

Following the Divine Liturgy on Aug. 26 and 27, farewell socials were held for Father Vasyl Symyon, who will be moving on to complete his doctorate.

In addition to attending Catholic University in Washington, D.C., he will be serving two parishes in the Passaic Eparchy.

Many thanks to Father Vasyl for all he did at St. John the Baptist Church. Best of luck and "S'Bohom!" ■



# Picnic & birthdays

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

The annual St. John the Baptist parish picnic was held Aug. 20. August birthdays were also recognized. Many clergy and

sisters from the area were in attendance.

In addition to delicious food, there was polka music, games, and basket raffles. All who attended had an enjoyable day. ■



# Welcome, Father Jim!

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

Following the Saturday, Sept. 9 Divine Liturgy a welcome social was held for Father James Fraser, the new administrator of St. John, and his wife and children.

Many attended to partake of a light meal with Father James and his family.

After the Sunday, Sept. 10 Divine Liturgy, a social was held to recognize parishioners with September birthdays. ■



# Exaltation of the Holy Cross

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

The Divine Liturgy for the Feast of the Exaltation of the Most Precious Cross began with parishioners coming forward to venerate the cross.

The cross was adorned with a floral wreath made by Kay Breakiron and Julia Pillar. In addition, those in attendance received anointing/mirovanije. ■





ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST IN UNIONTOWN, PA.

# Busy Sunday

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

On Sept. 17, St. John parishioners were involved in several community and parish events.

Catechetical Sunday and registration were held along with the blessing of students and teachers.

In addition, the yearly GCU Food Drive took place.

Through the generosity of St. John parishioners, a large amount of food and nearly \$400 was collected to be donated to the local St. Vincent DePaul Society Food Bank.

The 34th Annual Rosary Walk included St. John Church for the recitation of the Second Decade of the Rosary. All the Catholic churches in Uniontown participated. Despite the threat of rain, about 100 people attended. ■



ASCENSION OF OUR LORD IN CLAIRTON, PA.

# Parish picnic

*By Trish Roberts  
Ascension of Our Lord, Clairton, Pa.*

Ascension of Our Lord in Clairton, Pa. held its annual parish picnic on Sept. 24 inside their hall. Hot dogs and burgers were grilled outside and delicious homemade side dishes and desserts were donated by attendees.

Father Ivan Mina blessed the food and everyone lined up for the buffet luncheon. A basket raffle and 50/50 were held as everyone enjoyed the fellowship and fun. ■



# 17th annual Car Show

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

Sept. 24 found the St. John Parish family hosting their 17th Annual Car Show.

In spite of the rain several cars entered, but the weather did not

hinder the attendance.

All of the delicious food was sold and there were many lucky winners of the nearly 50 raffle prizes.

A good time was had by all despite the rain. ■



# October Birthday Social

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

October birthday celebrants were recognized at socials after the Divine Liturgies on Saturday, Oct. 14 and Sunday, Oct. 15.

The Saturday evening social included pizza, snacks, and birthday cake.

The Sunday social had a breakfast-like theme with snacks and a birthday cake. Both were sponsored by the St. John Social Ministry Committee.

Father James Fraser celebrated his birthday Oct. 21 and two of his children also celebrated October birthdays. Mnohaja lita! ■





HOLY TRINITY IN SYKESVILLE, PA.

# Blessing of students

*By Deacon Luke Crawford  
Holy Trinity, Sykesville, Pa.*

Holy Trinity Church in Sykesville, Pa. kicked off their Catechetical program Sunday,

Sept. 17 with a blessing of students and teachers by our pastor, Father Vasyl Banyk.

May God grant them many blessed happy years! ■



ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST IN SCOTTDALE, PA.

# Pirohi preparation

The ladies and gents at St. John the Baptist in Scottsdale, Pa. have started their pirohi making for upcoming events at this church. ■



SS. PETER AND PAUL IN DUQUESNE, PA.

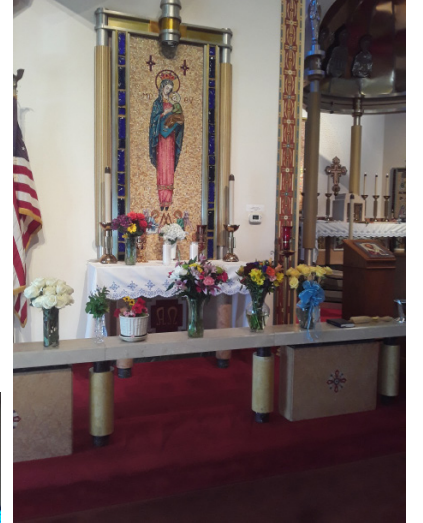
# 2023 at SS. Peter and Paul



Memorial Day



Feast of Elijah



Dormition of the Theotokos



Father's Day



Mother's Day



Palm Sunday



Blessing of Flowers



Feast of the Tranfiguration

ST. GREGORY IN UPPER ST. CLAIR, PA.

# Feast of St. Francis of Assisi

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

On a beautiful Wednesday evening, Oct. 4, faithful gathered at St. Gregory for the annual blessing of animals. This blessing

takes place every year in our parish family in honor of St. Francis of Assisi, known as the patron saint of animals. This year we had a turtle, hamster, and dogs who were very well- behaved during this prayerful event. ■



# “Seeing God’s Creation”

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

On Sunday, Oct. 1, the class for our older ECF students took place outdoors with a special focus on the Creation of the World.

Since it was a beautiful day our ECF teachers led a discussion

on “Seeing God’s Creation”. Afterwards, they continued with the Pothos Project as they meditated on the Book of Genesis 1: 2-28.

This class and project is a reminder for all of us of our calling to be good stewards of creation and life. ■



# Busy weekend

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

The weekend of Oct. 14 to 15 was quite busy at St. Gregory. Prior to the Saturday Vigil, Cole Brletich received the blessing to serve as an Altar Server. On Sunday morning, prior to the Divine Liturgy, Dominic Bernthaler, and Ethan Hughes received the blessing to serve as Altar Servers at St. Gregory.

Congratulations to our new Altar Servers and we ask Our Lord to bless them with many happy and blessed years.

Following the Sunday Divine Liturgy members of the Prayer Blanket Ministry gathered in our Church Hall to create “Prayer Blankets” to be given to our faithful during the upcoming Nativity/ Philip Fast-Advent. ■



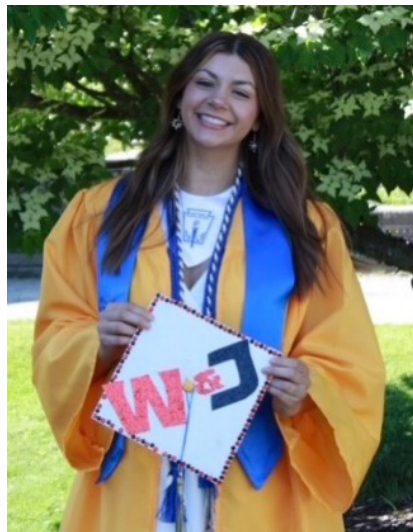


ST. ELIAS IN MUNHALL, PA.

# Making headlines

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

St. Elias parish congratulates Shannon Conley who graduated on May 26 from West Mifflin Area High School. She was the senior class Vice-President, Co-Captain of the marching band Starlette dance team, a four-year Varsity basketball player, and a member of National Honor Society. Shannon is attending Washington and Jefferson College where she is majoring in Communications and Digital Marketing and will also be playing basketball. ■



Shannon Conley

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

Patrick Conley, a parishioner at St. Elias in Munhall, Pa. is a Hospital Corpsman in the United States Navy currently stationed with 3rd Marine Logistics Group in Kaneohe, Hawaii.

Recently promoted to E5, he is planning to attend Marine Basic Reconnaissance Course to pursue the job of Special Operations Independent Duty Corpsman. Patrick joined the Navy in 2019 and recently reenlisted for an additional three years.

The St. Elias parish family is extremely proud of him and thanks him for his service to our country. ■



Patrick Conley

HOLY GHOST IN MCKEES ROCKS, PA.

# Gift of Mary

By Maria Iyengar  
Holy Ghost, McKees Rocks, Pa.

Following the Divine Liturgy on Sept. 24, Holy Ghost in McKees Rocks, Pa. was happy to share some fellowship over coffee and doughnuts, and then learn about a new ministry in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Pittsburgh, Gift of Mary!

Born out of a love for the most vulnerable, Gift of Mary is here to catch the women who fall through the cracks of the system. Every day women approach the Red Door to escape abuse and there are few

other options to help them.

“Gift of Mary” has become one of those vital safety nets. Approved by the Diocese and in collaboration with Move a Mountain Missions and the Red Door, Gift of Mary provides safety, a landing place, dignity, and future to women who would otherwise end up seriously injured or even dead.

Visit this link to learn more about how you can help with their vital work: <https://www.giftofmary.org/>. ■



ST. MARY IN YOUNGSTOWN, OHIO

# Welcome, Deacon John!

by Dave Ragan  
St. Mary, Youngstown, Ohio

Newly ordained Deacon John Welch assisted Very Rev. Richard I. Lambert on Sunday, Sept. 10 in his first Liturgy celebrated at his new assignment to St. Mary

Byzantine Catholic Church, Youngstown, Ohio.

Also attending were altar servers, Bill Dubos and Mike Kovach. The parishioners of St. Mary's welcome and congratulate Deacon John! ■

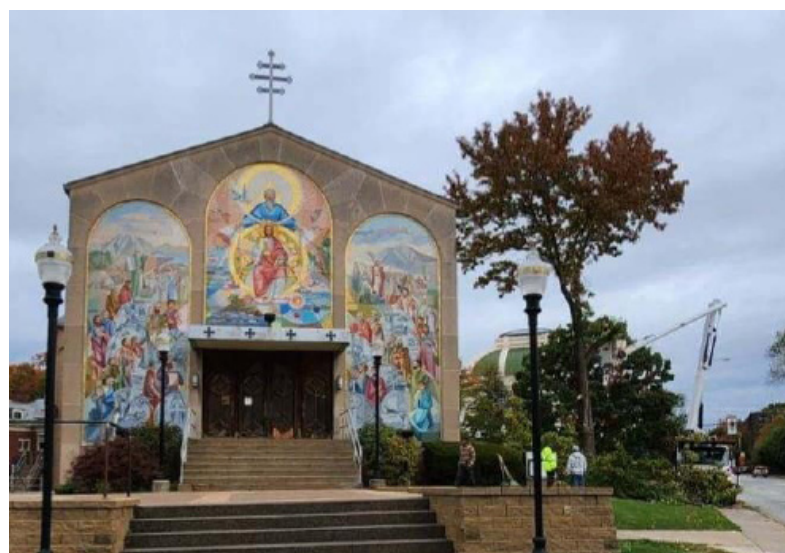


HOLY SPIRIT IN PITTSBURGH, PA.

# Shady situation

Posted Oct. 22 on Holy Spirit's Facebook page:

Finally took down a hollow tree before a strong wind sends it through the church windows, and trimmed a very large shade tree that should look lovely by next summer. Thank you to all who support our church and for Sidelines Tree Service for a great job! #PrayForPeace ■



# THOUGHTS FOR OUR DAY

By Archpriest David M. Petras



## THE MEANING OF THE SACRAMENTAL MYSTERY OF RECONCILIATION



In its first and ancient form, the sacramental mystery of reconciliation was a rite of forgiveness for those who had committed serious crimes that violated the promises made at baptism to renounce Satan and to commit to Christ. In the early Church, these were usually apostasy, the denial of faith in Christ in the face of torture and death from the persecutors of Christianity; murder, the taking of the life of another human being; and adultery, causing the death of the love in marriage between a husband and his wife. Marriage was a sign of the mystery of the love of God for his Church, and this was truly a serious breach of that love. The offenders could confess their own sin, or even be denounced by another. They needed to repent, and, if so, they were put into a program of penance by prayer and fasting. This often took years and in some cases absolution was not granted until the sinner was on their deathbed. It is clear, therefore, that this rite of forgiveness was rare, and in many churches, could only be granted once in a lifetime. This kind of public and grave repentance did not last long after the conversion of the empire, because it was too burdensome for people to undertake, there was a lessening of fervor for the faith, and the first and most serious sin, that of apostasy, became rare as the state no longer persecuted Christians.

Following the abandonment of an official form of public reconciliation, new ways for

the forgiveness of sins were developed. After all, there was the human reality. People promised at baptism to renounce all evil, but human nature was weak, and people continued to sin. There were also two kinds of sins: sins of malice, where someone acted to harm another out of hatred, and sins of weakness, due to the failure of the human spirit to avoid false

**The East did not have laws that were as specific, but the penitent was expected to make a full revelation of their spiritual state.**

pleasures. These could also be serious, as our Lord pointed out in the parable of the seeds, “The seed (baptism) sown among thorns is the one who hears the word, but then worldly anxiety and the lure of riches choke the word and it bears no fruit” (Matthew 13:22) and “though the just fall seven times, they rise again” (Proverbs 24:16). The Church was aware of the need for forgiveness, and that forgiveness could be granted often, for if the Lord commanded us, “I say to you, [forgive] not seven times but seventy seven times, (Matthew 18:22) would God himself not be less merciful? Forgiveness and reconciliation, then, were a part of faith in the face of our human inability to always do what is right. Even the

holy apostle Paul was to lament, “For I do not do the good I want, but I do the evil I do not want” (Romans 7:19). Eventually the method of dealing with sin was to adopt a monastic practice. In order to seek perfection, monks would confess daily to their spiritual guides ways in which they had failed, in order to receive comfort, encouragement to improve and direction in leading a life in Christ. Lay people imitated the monastic rite, and confessed their sins to a spiritual father, whom the Church designated must be an ordained priest. The sacramental mystery of repentance, before being a way of forgiveness for grave sins, now became a way of receiving spiritual guidance, of confronting sin in their lives, of following always more closely in the way of Christ. The penitents learned better the moral teachings of Christ from someone who had both been trained in the theology of the Church and how to exercise spiritual fatherhood.

The imitation of monastic confession became the form of the sacramental mystery of penance in both the Eastern and Western Churches. The West formulated laws about confession - it had to be to a priest, it had to be complete, it required only the confession of grave (mortal sins) and the priest was bound by the seal of confession never to repeat what he heard in this tribunal. The East did not have laws that were as specific, but the penitent was expected to make a full revelation of their spiritual state, and they were to confess only to a priest, who also was expected to keep confidential what he heard. In both East and West it came to be expected that one should cleanse

themselves by confession before receiving Holy Communion, but this never became a law except for grave sins that had made one unworthy of their baptism. For the lay person, confession became the usual way that one received the direction necessary to live a life in Christ.

In the West, after the Vatican II Council, confession became less practiced in the Western Church. Part of this may have been because confession had become a matter of routine and led to complacency about the meaning of sin in our lives. For others, it may have been a feeling that one did not have to confess to a human being, the priest, but only to God. Confession of sins, though, has been a part of the community of faith from the beginning. St. James was not referring to the sacramental mystery of penance, but he wrote, “confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed” (James 5:16). If confession can help heal us through one another, how much more through the grace of God given to the priest. After his Resurrection, our Lord gave the gift of the Holy Spirit to forgive sins to his apostles, “Receive the holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them” (John 20:22-23). We must certainly never become complacent in regard to sins, nor without care to seek to be freed from them. Yet we can thank God for his love and mercy and forgiveness in the sacramental mystery of confession, repentance and reconciliation, as well as receive words of encouragement in the struggle against the power of sin. ■

## 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](mailto:bcw@archpitt.org).

**St. John the Baptist Cathedral**  
Munhall, Pa.  
[www.stjohnsbyzantinecathedral.com](http://www.stjohnsbyzantinecathedral.com)

**Holy Ghost**  
McKees Rocks, Pa.  
[www.holyghost-byzantinecatholic.org](http://www.holyghost-byzantinecatholic.org)  
[www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com), then type Holy Ghost Church Live Stream

**St. John Chrysostom**  
Pittsburgh, Pa.  
[www.sjcbcc.com](http://www.sjcbcc.com)

**St. Gregory**  
Upper St. Clair, Pa.  
[www.facebook.com/stgregoryusc](https://www.facebook.com/stgregoryusc)

**St. Michael**  
Campbell, Ohio  
[www.facebook.com/st.michaelbyz.campbell](https://www.facebook.com/st.michaelbyz.campbell)

**St. Elias**  
Munhall, Pa.  
[www.facebook.com/StEliasByzantineCatholicChurch/](https://www.facebook.com/StEliasByzantineCatholicChurch/)

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

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

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



# At your service

PRIESTS SERVE FAITHFUL AT GREATER PITTSBURGH PROTOPRESBYTERY PASTA DINNER AT ST. ELIAS IN MINHALL, PA.

This year's Greater Pittsburgh Protopresbytery Pasta Dinner at St. Elias Church, Munhall, Pa. was served on Sunday, Oct. 15.

Nine of the Greater Pittsburgh Protopresbytery Clergy served faithful.

Although there was no charge for the meal, a good-will offering was taken along with a raffle.

This gesture of charity demonstrates appreciation to all retired priests who served our parishes.

Thanks to all who attended the event. ■



Father Vitalii Stashkevych, Father Vasyl Polyak, Father Michael Kunitz, Father Radko Blichar, Deacon Lawrence Hruska, Deacon Sean Petrisko, Father Frank Firko, Father Valerian Michlik and Father Miron Kerul'-Kmec.



Photos by Nick Havrilla Sr.



## 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](http://www.bcs.edu).

## Schedule of Services for November

<b>MON 13</b>	8 a.m. Divine Liturgy
<b>TUE 14</b>	6 p.m. Penitential Moleben for Philip's Fast <b>[LS]</b>
<b>THU 16</b>	7 a.m. Divine Liturgy
<b>MON 20</b>	5 p.m. Great Vespers
<b>TUE 21</b>	8 a.m. Festal Matins and Divine Liturgy <b>[LS]</b>
<b>MON 27</b>	8 a.m. Moleben to Christ Emmanuel
<b>TUE 28</b>	8 a.m. Moleben for Those in Illness
<b>THU 30</b>	7 a.m. Divine Liturgy

**[LS) Livestream**

## AROUND THE ARCHEPARCHY



**CHOIR CHRISTMAS PROGRAM 2023** — The Pittsburgh Byzantine Catholic Archeparchial Choir invites faithful, friends and family to experience the joy and splendor of the Nativity season on Sunday Dec. 17 as they present 'Neath the Star of Bethlehem: Hymns and Songs of the Nativity. This choral program of beloved music of the season will begin at 2 p.m. at St Elias Byzantine Catholic Church, 4200 Homestead-Duquesne Road, Munhall, Pa. Immediately following the program, the PBCAC, along with St Elias Church and pastor Fr. Vitalii Stashkevych, welcome all in attendance to gather in the parish social hall for a reception featuring holiday goodies and refreshments. All are warmly welcome! *The PBCAC celebrated 25 years of "heavenly harmony" in July 2023. As the Choir continues the next chapter in their grand history, St Elias Church has become their new "home," where rehearsals are held on select Tuesdays throughout the year under the direction of Darlene Fejka.*

**PHILOKALIA MINISTRIES AND FATHER DAVID ABERNETHY ON ZOOM** — 7:30 p.m. Wednesdays on Zoom, "The Ladder of Divine Ascent" by Saint John Climacus. [philokalia.link/climacus\\_signup](http://philokalia.link/climacus_signup). 7:30 p.m. Mondays on Zoom, "The Evergetinos" compiled by St. Makarios of Corinth. A window into the lives of men and women who, during the first few centuries of Christianity, attained to the highest ideals of the spiritual life. [philokalia.link/evergetinos\\_signup](http://philokalia.link/evergetinos_signup).

**ST. MARY'S SUPER TURKEY/HAM BINGO** — 2-5 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 12, St. Mary's Center, State Route 981, Trauger, Pa. Doors open at Noon. Frozen turkeys and ½ hams (not grocery gift certificates) will be given away if single wins. For multiple wins, money prizes will be awarded. Tickets cost \$30 for 25 games and include first set of cards, specials, and a light lunch. Extra cards, specials, and a WTA Quickie may be purchased at admission. Tickets must be reserved or paid for in advance. None sold at the door. Seating is limited. Call or text 412-526-0285 or 724-787-5631 for tickets. There will be opportunities for a 50/50, basket raffle, Instant Tickets, and the Lottery Tree. Also, pre-orders taken for Halupki and Haluski: Halupki, 6 for \$15, 12 for \$25; Haluski: \$8 per quart. They will be prepackaged and available for pick-up the day of the Bingo.

**ICON WRITING WORKSHOP-RETREAT** — Nov. 16 to 19, St. John the Baptist, 201 E. Main St, Uniontown, Pa. Instructor is Master iconographer Peter Pearson, who will be teaching the icon known as the HOLY FACE or VERONICA'S VEIL Paint an icon from start to finish while learning about the history, spirituality and aesthetics of Byzantine iconography. All supplies will be furnished. Peter has conducted workshops for almost 50 years and studied with master iconographers all across the United States. For more information or to register, contact Marko at 410-852-2249 or [ikon71355@gmail.com](mailto:ikon71355@gmail.com).

**ANNUAL STEELERS TAILGATE PARTY AT ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM** — Noon, Sunday, Nov. 19, St. John Chrysostom, 506 Saline St., Pittsburgh (Greenfield), Pa. Steelers vs. Cleveland Browns. Admission: \$15 includes food, desserts, and soft drinks. BYOB. Watch the game on big screens; basket raffles; football pools and big raffles including: Steelers and Penguins tickets; Fox Chapel Day spa package; Seven Oaks golf for four with cart; Seven Oaks Brunch for four and much more. For tickets, call John Niskach 412-209-8397 Advance ticket sale only; no admission at the door.

**"TASTE OF HEAVEN" COOKIE SALE** — 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 2. St. Gregory, 2005 Mohawk Road, Upper St. Clair, Pa. (near South Hills Village Mall). Purchase a container and walk along the tables selecting your favorites from a large assortment of homemade cookies and holiday treats. Additional nut horns, apricot horns, and other specialty cookies available pre-packaged. Come early for the best selection. For more information, call the Parish Office 412-835-7800

**ADVENT PIEROGI SALE** — Noon-5 p.m. Friday, Dec. 1, 8, and 15, St. Pius X, 2336 Brownsville Road, Carrick, Pa. Potato cheese, cottage cheese, and sauerkraut. Pre-orders at 412-881-8344. Please leave message.

## DATES TO REMEMBER

**NOV. 2 to 5**

Assembly  
*Hillsborough, N.J.*

**NOV. 5**

Standard Time ("fall back") resumes at 2 a.m.

**NOV. 8**

Ordination and Enthronement of  
Bishop-elect Robert Pipta as the Bishop of Parma  
*Holy Resurrection, Euclid, Ohio*

**NOV. 11**

Veterans Day  
*National observance*

**NOV. 13 to 16**

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Annual Meeting  
*Baltimore, Md.*

**NOV. 21**

Feast of the Entrance of the Theotokos

**NOV. 23**

Thanksgiving Day  
*Chancery closed Nov. 23 to 24*

See more upcoming events at [www.archpitt.org](http://www.archpitt.org)

**WORLD**  
THE BYZANTINE CATHOLIC

Official publication of the  
Byzantine Catholic  
Archeparchy of Pittsburgh

**Byzantine Catholic Press Associates**

66 Riverview Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15214  
Tel: 412-231-4000  
Fax: 412-231-1697  
Email: [bcw@archpitt.org](mailto:bcw@archpitt.org)  
Website: [www.archpitt.org](http://www.archpitt.org)

**NEXT ISSUE:**  
**DECEMBER 2023**

**SUBMISSIONS DEADLINE:**  
**NOVEMBER 17**