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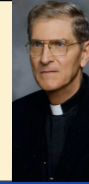
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## Axios, Bishop Robert of Parma!

BISHOP ROBERT PIPTA ENTHRONED NOV. 8 IN THE EPARCHY OF PARMA



Bishop Robert Pipta was ordained the sixth bishop of the Eparchy of Parma Nov. 8 at Holy Resurrection in Euclid, Ohio. Pictured are: Bishop Francois Beyrouti, Bishop Nil Lushchak, Metropolitan Archbishop William Skurla, Bishop Robert Pipta, Very Rev. Dennis Hrubciak and Bishop Kurt Burnette.

By David Mayernik Jr.  
Editor

Metropolitan Archbishop William C. Skurla ordained Bishop Robert M. Pipta as the sixth bishop of the Eparchy of Parma during the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy Nov. 8 at Holy Resurrection in Euclid, Ohio.

Pope Francis appointed him Bishop of Parma Aug. 31 and Nov. 8 — the Feast of St. Michael — was chosen as his day of enthronement. He succeeds Bishop Kurt Burnette, who had been serving as Apostolic Administrator of the Eparchy of Parma in addition to his duties as Bishop of the Eparchy of Passaic and Apostolic Administrator of the Eparchy of Phoenix and the Exarchate of Toronto.

Archbishop William served as principal consecrator and Bishop Nil Lushchak, Apostolic Administrator of Mukachevo-Uzhgorod, and the Most Reverend

Kurt Burnette, Bishop of The Eparchy of Passaic, served as co-consecrators. Cardinal Christophe Pierre, Apostolic Nuncio to the United States of America, was also present.

In attendance were 15 other archbishops and bishops, 92 priests and deacons, as well as 300 faithful, and a 76-person choir.

Bishop Robert is a priest of the Eparchy of Phoenix and had been serving as the rector of the Byzantine Catholic Seminary of SS. Cyril and Methodius in Pittsburgh, Pa. since May 1, 2014. Bishop Robert was born in April 1967 in Anaheim, Calif., earned a Bachelor of Arts in Music at the University of California, Irvine in 1990 and was a member of Annunciation Byzantine Catholic Church in Anaheim from shortly after its founding in 1969.

He served at the altar from the age of six and served as a weekday cantor during his college years.

He attended the Byzantine Catholic Seminary of Saints Cyril and Methodius from Sept. 1990 until his priestly ordination on April 21, 1994. As a priest of the Eparchy of Van Nuys (now Phoenix) he served Saint Stephen Pro-Cathedral (now Cathedral) in Phoenix, Arizona as parochial vicar from May 1994 until August 1997.

He then served as administrator of Saint Gabriel the Archangel Church in Las Vegas, Nevada until February 2004. He served as the pastor of Holy Angels Church in San Diego, Calif. until April 2014. He has served on the Intereparchial Liturgy and Music Commissions and had served as Eparchial Vocations Director for more than 19 years.

Cardinal Christophe said Bishop Robert has been prepared well for his new ministry.

“Your ministry as a priest has

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## “Living Our Faith: Moving Forward, Appreciating Our Past”

ASSEMBLY HELD NOV. 2 TO 5 IN HILLSBOROUGH, N.J.

By David Mayernik Jr.  
Editor

Bishop-elect Robert Pipta discussed the value of touch — in all its forms — during his Nov. 5 Divine Liturgy homily to close out this year’s four-day Assembly at St. Mary in Hillsborough, N.J.

“This is what our Church is supposed to do for us. It is supposed to touch us in all ways that fulfill us as human beings.”

He cited the day’s Gospel reading in which a woman finds herself in need of the touch of God and touches a “little, tiny bit” of Christ’s garment while engulfed in a crowd.

Bishop-elect Robert said while it is true our Byzantine Catholic lives are sometimes in crowds — Pilgrimages, Assemblies, church gatherings — priests know parishioners by their first names.

“It doesn’t necessarily mean we’ll be lost in a crowd,” he said.

“The Assembly gives us an opportunity to be thankful for our Church...we are healing, we have renewed life, that we have increased faith and we have the assurance of knowing that our Byzantine Catholic Church will guide us until that time we are called to the Lord.”

The 2023 Assembly of the Byzantine (Ruthenian) Metropolitan Church with the theme “Living Our Faith: Moving Forward, Appreciating Our Past,” was held at St. Mary Nov. 2 to 5.

Attendees included Metropolitan Archbishop William C. Skurla, Bishop Kurt Burnette of the Eparchy of Passaic, and Bishop-elect Robert, who was enthroned as Bishop of Parma Nov. 8 at Holy Resurrection in Euclid, Ohio.

According to organizers, the

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# WORLD

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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](mailto:hpmsm@verizon.net).

■ 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.

■ 10:30 a.m.-noon Feb. 22, 29 and March 7, 14, **Thursday Morning Bible Study:** "Identifying Lesser Known Prophets of the Passion" with Sister Melita Marie, OSBM. In-person and virtual. Offering: \$20 per session. Registration due: Feb. 19.

■ 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. ■

## Christ is born! Glorify Him!



Metropolitan Archbishop William Skurla (center) joined other local religious leaders Nov. 17 for the annual blessing of the Creche in downtown Pittsburgh, Pa. Photos by Andrea Harhai.



### Society of Saints Cyril and Methodius

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.

#### Welcoming New Members

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

Contact:

Diane Pochron, President  
[pochronpitt.edu](mailto:pochronpitt.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.mtsmacrinacemetery.org](http://www.mtsmacrinacemetery.org)

Menu: Offerings: Dormition

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



# Axios, Bishop Robert of Parma!

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formed you in loving service to the people of God.”

In his homily, Most Rev. John Michael Botean, DD, Bishop of the Romanian Eparchy of St. George in Canton, Ohio, said he reflected on words from the Gospel reading — “I watched Satan fall from the sky like lightning from the sky” — as Bishop Robert was kneeling before the Holy Table.

“There was something about that moment...somehow there was a dagger in the heart of evil.”

Bishop John, who has been a bishop for 27 years, said there are three “huge” duties in the life of a bishop: to teach, to sanctify and to govern; sometimes referred to as the “power” to perform those duties.

He suggested perhaps the correct word is not “power” but “capacity.”

“This is a gift, it’s not a talent,” he said. “I suggest to you that you take to heart these three duties of a bishop and look at them, perhaps, from a new angle.”

A reception and dinner followed the ordination at the Cleveland Marriott East in Warrendale, Heights, Ohio. ■



REFLECTION FROM MOUNT ST, MACRINA

# The many features of the Fourth Commandment

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



This is a transcript of her July 23, 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!

Now we move to the second part of the Decalogue. When you see (the Ten Commandments) pictured, usually One, Two and Three are on one side and all the others are on the other side of a double tablet.

The right side all refer to relationships with one another. The first three centered on our God relationship and, of course, that's the basis of the relation in a connection with other people.

"Honor your father and your mother." So this Covenant relationship invited by God is in the family context. It is an example of the love context that it needs to be in. After God, those whom God has vested with authority for our good; first of all, the universal experience of a father and a mother.

Jesus Himself, when he came into this world, chose the framework of family born of a woman; a foster father is involved, and more importantly, Jesus shows us His

relationship with his Heavenly Father, to Whom He speaks often. He keeps calling us to do what He does - that is to live by the will and desires of the Father. What is good for us is described in that relationship.

So the importance of this very first of the Commandments that talk about relationship with each other is about what makes goodness in a family: "Honor thy father and thy mother." This goes on to mean the relationship that parents have to their children, as well as the children to their parents. The stronger, the better the society is.

That is one of the duties of families: to contribute to the betterment of society by living the way God teaches us to live. So children know their parents' respect, gratitude, just obedience and assistance. This builds a human harmony and it affects all of human life.

Parents also, though, have responsibilities for the education of their children in faith, in prayer, in virtues, and in education for a life in this world. They have the duty to provide as much as needed for the physical and spiritual welfare of the children. They all should respect the vocation that a child feels called to and help them in their Christ relationship, always.

The Fourth Commandment also talks about our relationship with authority in society. So there is

## Cathedral of St. John the Baptist Schedule of Services - Christmas 2023

Very Reverend Andrew Deskevich, Rector



### Sunday, Dec. 24 Vigil, Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord Christmas Eve

9 a.m. Royal Hours  
8 p.m. Vigil Liturgy

### Monday, Dec. 25 Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord Christmas Day

9 a.m. Divine Liturgy

Cathedral of St. John the Baptist  
210 Greentree Road | Munhall, Pa. 15120 | 412-461-0944

View services LIVE on the web at  
[www.stjohnsbyzantinecathedral.com](http://www.stjohnsbyzantinecathedral.com)

obedience that is due, cooperation that is due; contributions that we citizens need to offer for the improvement and growth in society.

We have to think of the Holy Spirit to help us bring truth to society, to bring justice, build solidarity, respect freedom; all of

these qualities. It does imply also political involvement, taking care to offer your contribution and your best for the betterment of society.

Think about and look up the many features of the Fourth Commandment: "Honor thy father and thy mother."

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

## Father Vitalii Stashkevych launches YouTube channel

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

Father Vitalii Stashkevych, pastor of St. Elias in Munhall and SS. Peter and Paul in Braddock, has launched a YouTube channel and Facebook page titled "Daily Reflections with Father V" where he shares profound insights and reflections on the daily Bible readings and various spiritual topics.

It is an opportunity to come together as a community, no matter where we are, and delve into the wisdom of the Scriptures guided by Father Vitalii's thoughtful teachings.

Father Vitalii will be sharing his reflections every day, providing a moment of solace and inspiration for your daily life. Take a few minutes each day to center yourself, listen to the Word of God, and gain insights that will enrich your personal spiritual journey.

Subscribe to the YouTube channel and click the notification bell to receive updates. Or Like and Follow the



Father Vitalii Stashkevych

Facebook page to stay connected.

Invite your family, friends, and fellow parishioners to join us on this spiritual journey. Share the videos, comment with your thoughts, and help build a community of reflection and support.

Remember, in the hustle and bustle of daily life, these reflections can serve as a moment of pause, a chance to connect with the Divine, and an opportunity for personal growth. ■



# “Living Our Faith: Moving Forward, Appreciating Our Past”

ASSEMBLY HELD NOV. 2 TO 5 IN HILLSBOROUGH, N.J.

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gathering had three goals: to increase the appreciation of the Byzantine Ruthenian Church’s history (both in the “Old Country” and the United States) and Byzantine Ruthenian art and culture; to learn about the best practices occurring in our parishes today which are contributing to the growth of our communities with the hope that the attendees will incorporate this information into their parish activities; and to develop concrete steps to ensure the future and growth of our Church.

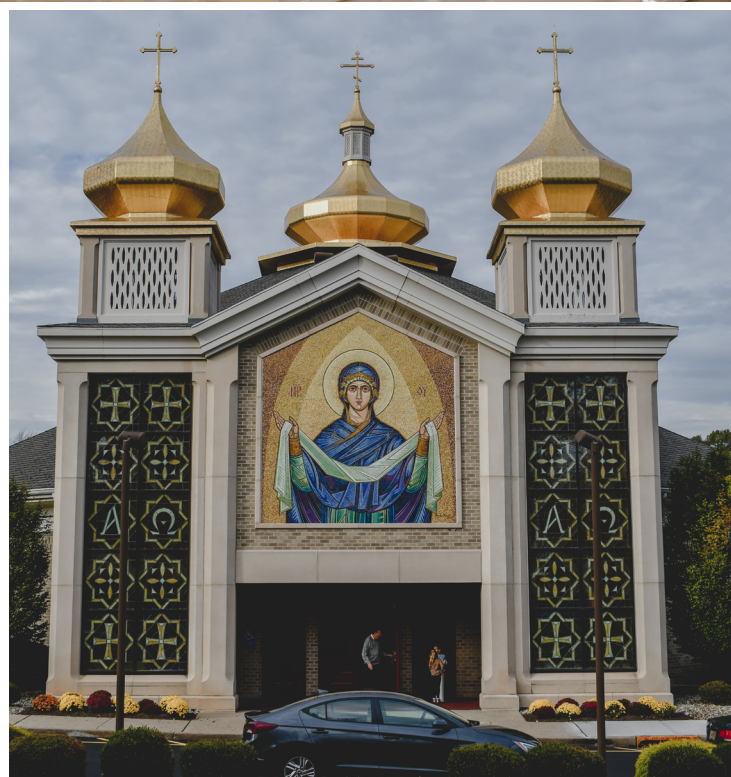
Special guests were Cardinal Timothy Dolan, Archbishop of New York, who offered the keynote address; Bishop Nil Lushchak, O.F.M., Apostolic Administrator of the Eparchy of Mukachevo, the Mother Church of the Byzantine Ruthenian Metropolitan Church of Pittsburgh; Dr. Paul Magocsi, author of “Our People: Carpatho-Rusyns and Their Descendants in North America”; and Father Christopher Zuger, who explored the history of the foundation of the Byzantine Catholic Church in America.

Bishop Kurt welcomed all attendees to St. Mary in Hillsborough.

“In these few days in Hillsborough, we were called together to re-hear the words of Our Lord and to recommit ourselves, our lives, our spirit, our purpose. Then we will go forth in the different parts of America and the world to tell people about Jesus Christ and his message. To tell them the good news that they are not accidents of a purposeless universe; rather they were made by an intelligent loving God, a great Artist. Teach them the new commandment of Jesus Christ: ‘Love one another as I have loved you.’ Comfort them, console them, and encourage them in their lives.”

Presentations by priests and laity during the Assembly were:

- Father Edward R. Cimbala, of St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church in New York, N.Y., discussed “Young Adults and Their Motives for Joining the Byzantine Catholic Church in New York City.”
- Adam Kemner, of Iowa Outreach in Muscatine, Iowa, discussed “Small But Mighty: Why Small parish Size is the Byzantine Catholic Church’s Biggest Potential Way Forward.”
- Father Thomas Loya, of Annunciation Byzantine Catholic Church in Homer Glenn, Ill., discussed “A Blueprint for the growth of the Byzantine Catholic Church in America.”



Photos by Gerald Wutkowski Jr.

- Father Thomas Shubeck and Brother Simeon, CFR, both of St. Thomas in Rahway, N.J., discussed “Poustinia: The New Evangelization in the Light of the Byzantine East, a new and evolving outreach to young adults of Theosis in Action.”
- Father Andrew Summerson, of St. Mary in Whiting, Ind., discussed “What’s a Byzantine Catholic Culture.”
- Lynn Wardach, of St. Mary in Taylor, Pa., discussed “Introducing ByziMoms and ByziKids” resources she designed to help teach the littlest members of our church.

- Dorothy Mayernik, of St. Gregory in Upper St. Clair, Pa., discussed “Bethany Ministry: Caring for the Sick, Homebound, and Grieving in the Parish Family.”
- There was also music, food and fellowship during a Saturday evening gala. Pajtási, a noted Rusyn/Slovak Band, was the musical entertainment, and the dinner menu featured a variety of ethnic foods.
- In his welcome message, Archbishop William, who recently returned from a month-long stay in Rome at the Synod of Bishops, said all Catholic,

Orthodox, and other Christian Churches of the world are also conducting their own assemblies.

“Despite wars and problems, the people and leaders continue to find creative ways to explain the faith to a world that has lost its faith or never heard of Jesus Christ,” he said.

“We pray that the Holy Spirit will open the hearts of our Byzantine Catholic churches and our families. From the time of the Apostles until now, each Byzantine Catholic generation has had to discover how to make our Church a path to personal encounter with Jesus Christ.” ■

# 10 top takeaways from the Synthesis Report and why they matter

By Peter Smith  
OSV News

(OSV News) — The Synod on Synodality’s first session at the Vatican has concluded, with its results wrapped up in a 41-page “half-time report” for the entire church to digest, reflect on and give feedback about ahead of the synod’s final session in Rome next October.

The report, a synthesis of the Oct. 4 to 29 meeting, is fundamentally an instrument for discernment, and it is designed to elicit further reflection and response from the whole church. The synod’s next session in Rome will have the task of making decisions about what concrete proposals to present before the pope. Ultimately, the pope will decide what to implement coming out of the Synod on Synodality.

The following are 10 takeaways about the synod’s synthesis report, with why it matters for Catholics in parishes and what happens next.

## 1. Synodality is about the church’s evangelizing mission, and baptism is why synodal governance matters.

The synod relates that “synodality is ordered to mission,” recognizing that the church’s members — with diverse backgrounds, languages and cultures — share the “common grace of baptism.” The synod’s themes of “communion, participation, mission” are the hallmarks for how the entire people of God in a synodal church — the laity, consecrated religious, deacons and priests with the bishops united with the pope — relate to each other and live together the call to holiness, proclaiming Jesus Christ’s good news to the world.

The synod explicitly says its work is rooted in the church’s dynamic and living tradition in the context of the Second Vatican Council’s teaching. But the synod also recognizes much remains to be done to clarify what “synodality” means, and to develop it into real processes and structures.

Part of that is figuring out how decisions are made in the church in a way that is faithful to its nature — including discerning how episcopal collegiality is exercised in a synodal church — because the church’s members have “differentiated co-responsibility for the common mission of evangelization.”

The synod’s “conversations in

the Spirit” — an experience of listening and sharing in the light of faith, and seeking God’s will in an authentically evangelical atmosphere” — is recognized as a helpful tool in this regard.

## 2. The synod calls for formation in “authentic discipleship,” united by the Eucharist and nourished by the Word.

The synod stresses that all the church’s members are called to be “all disciples, all missionaries” who have the “responsibility of demonstrating and transmitting the love and tenderness of God to a wounded humanity.” In other words, living discipleship is at the heart of being Catholic.

The synod suggested deepening the notion that a “mature exercise of the ‘sensus fidei’ requires not only reception of baptism but a life lived in authentic discipleship that develops the grace of baptism.” The synod recognizes this can help discern where the Holy Spirit is at work, as opposed to where the baptized are just advocating dominant thinking, cultural conditions or “matters inconsistent with the Gospel.”

In this regard, the synod stresses that “the Eucharist shapes synodality,” and so the Mass should be celebrated “with an authentic sense of friendship in Christ” that reflects beauty and simplicity. The synod proposes “liturgy celebrated with authenticity is the first and fundamental school of discipleship.”

It also proposes enriching Catholic life beyond the Mass with alternative forms of liturgical prayer, as well as popular piety, particularly Marian devotion — both of which form the faithful and can also help others outside the church encounter the Lord.

## 3. Synodality is not about having more meetings, but it is about discerning together how to go on mission at each level of the church.

The synod also emphasizes that synodality in the church calls Catholics to discern intentionally as a community how Jesus is calling them to live out their mission. It’s not about self-referential meetings, but rather a style of carrying out “evangelical proclamation, service to those experiencing poverty, care for our common home and theological research.”

The document emphasizes the need for formation, and also making spaces to receive the church’s teaching, and discern how to act on it. The church’s social doctrine needs to be



Pope Francis gives his blessing at the conclusion of the assembly of the Synod of Bishops’ last working session Oct. 28, 2023, in the Paul VI Hall at the Vatican. Catholic News Service photo/Vatican Media.

understood by the faithful so they can build up the kingdom of God.

Synodality is about gathering the disciple community together to discern what is their mission and how Jesus is sending them on mission. Any effective structural change to make the church’s members “co-responsible” presupposes “profound spiritual conversion,” both personal and communal, in order to carry out Jesus’ mission.

At the same time, the synod calls for further consideration on how the church’s theology and modern developments in science can dialogue, and effective ways to do that for the church’s discernment, particularly on complicated or controversial questions. Above all, the synod says, “Jesus’ actions, assimilated in prayer and conversion of heart, show us the way forward.”

## 4. A synodal church must reflect on what formation its priests, deacons and laity need to carry out their mission together.

The synod recognizes bishops and priests face disproportionate burdens of responsibility for the church’s mission. It also identifies clericalism as opposed to Jesus’ model of ministerial service, leading to “authoritarian attitudes,” and vocations stifled by privilege and power that refuse accountability.

The synod suggests extensive discussion and consideration of revising priestly formation to address this. Instead of forming priests in an “artificial environment separate from the ordinary lives of the faith,” they should develop through “close contact with the People of God and through concrete service learning experiences.”

The synod recognized there is universal agreement that priestly celibacy is “richly prophetic and

a profound witness to Christ.” But it also suggested further consideration of whether it is appropriate for the Latin Church alone to continue to insist on it — the Eastern Churches (Catholic and Orthodox) have a tradition of celibate and married clergy — when there are ecclesial and cultural contexts that make it more difficult for the church’s mission.

The synod is calling for a deepening reflection on the vocation of the deacon, “above all in the exercise of charity.”

The synod indicated the importance of expanding women’s access to theological formation, their inclusion in decision-making and responsibility in pastoral care and ministry, and even the exploration of new ministries where women could decisively contribute. It noted the debate over women and the diaconal ministry, and expressed openness to continuing research and examining what has been done so far.

It also touched on lay ministry and called for more creativity in how these roles are thought of and lived at the service of mission: for example, developing the ministry of lector beyond its liturgical role, such as preaching in appropriate contexts. It also envisioned possibly a lay ministry taken up by married couples to support married and family life.

## 5. Disciples listen to people and accompany them like Christ in whatever their personal, familial or social situations.

The synod says “listening is the word that best expresses our experience. This is listening given and received.” Listening really is where the church discerns the mission Jesus is calling his

*Continued on page 7*



# 10 top takeaways from the Synthesis Report

Story continued from page 6

disciples and their particular communities.

It also emphasized the church needs to give its closeness, listening and accompaniment to those who feel alone in remaining faithful to the church's teaching on marriage and sexual ethics, as well as to those on the margins because of "their marriage status, identity or sexuality."

The synod suggests further consideration of the point that listening "does not mean compromising proclamation of the Gospel or endorsing any opinion or position proposed" — but rather being like Jesus, who listens and loves unconditionally to share his good news.

It also emphasized the church needs to extend its closeness to the lonely and abandoned, the elderly and sick.

The synod document called for further discernment about "Eucharistic hospitality" — the situation of people of different churches receiving Communion — and "inter-church marriages."

## 6. The Catholic Church needs strong Eastern Churches collaborating with the Latin Church.

The synod indicates it is vital for Catholics to realize that the Catholic Church is a communion of coequal sister churches — Latin Church (the biggest and headed by the pope) and 23 different Eastern Catholic Churches, all enjoying communion through their unity with the pope. The synod calls for all Catholic communities and clergy to learn about each other and actively work together modeling "unity in diversity."

It stresses that the Latin Church's members (for the most part known as Roman Catholics) need to help Eastern Catholics in situations where they do not have access to their own churches to live out their traditions. The synod said "Latinization" (making Eastern churches conform to the traditions and practices of Latin churches) is "outdated."

The synod indicated that Eastern Churches must work out their relationship to role of the pope, whose role is rooted in the Latin Church, specifically in whether his assent is needed in the selection of bishops, and the fact that Catholics of these Eastern Churches are no longer confined to traditional patriarchal territory but are now all over the world.

It proposes a permanent council of patriarchs and major archbishops to the Holy Father, and that Eastern Catholics should be adequately represented throughout the Roman Curia.



Pope Francis gives the homily at Mass in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican Oct. 29, 2023, marking the conclusion of the first session of the Synod of Bishops on synodality. Catholic News Service photo/Vatican Media.

## 7. The synod suggests a new path for ecumenism, particularly thanks to the martyrs.

There has been a lot of discouragement about dialogue between Catholic and other Christian confessions achieving its goal of actual unity — but the synod appears to have made significant suggestions for moving ahead.

Among the proposals was that an "ecumenical martyrology" be developed, which would allow the church to commemorate Christian martyrs who share a common baptism but not the same confessional boundaries. The point has been emphasized most recently by the early 21st-century martyrdoms, such as in the Middle East, where Islamist militants killed Orthodox and Catholics for being Christians — among them the 21 Coptic Orthodox martyrs of Libya.

The synod emphasized that local churches can engage ecumenically with other churches in carrying out the work of the Gospel, and the importance of continuing to involve Christians of other churches and traditions in synodal processes "at all levels."

Among the proposals is to find a common date for the celebration of Easter with an eye to the year 2025, the 1,700th anniversary of the Council of Nicaea.

## 8. The synod emphasizes the church needs to evangelize digital spaces intentionally as a dimension of its mission.

The synod views the digital realm not as a separate field but a "crucial dimension of the church's witness in contemporary culture." This means understanding digital culture in order to evangelize it and engaging the church's younger generation — clergy, religious and

lay — in carrying out the mission here.

The synod proposes discernment on how the church can be involved in helping make the online world "safe" for families — noting the dangers of intimidation, disinformation, sex exploitation and addiction — and how the church can make the digital realm "spiritually life-giving."

This challenges parishes and dioceses about how to engage here, especially forming and accompanying "digital missionaries" and networking them together. It also suggests creating collaborative opportunities with influencers, particularly in areas of "human dignity, justice and care for our common home."

## 9. Sex abuse is undermining the church's missionary life, and the synod recognizes that a truly synodal church needs to get this right.

The synod stated, "Sexual abuse and the abuse of power and authority continue to cry out for justice, healing and reconciliation." It acknowledges this synodal process has seen the Holy Spirit pour out fruits of "hope, healing, reconciliation and restoration of trust."

Furthermore, listening to and accompanying those who have suffered abuse in the church have helped people feel no longer invisible. At the same time, the synod makes clear "the long journey towards reconciliation and justice" remains and requires "addressing the structural conditions that abetted such abuse" and "concrete gestures of penitence."

A synodal church requires a "culture of transparency,"

respect for existing procedures to safeguard minors and people when they are vulnerable, and "further structures dedicated to the prevention of abuse." It noted bishops are in a difficult situation of reconciling their "role of father with that of judge," and suggested exploring the possibility of giving the judicial task to another body specified in canon law.

## 10. The bishops must now figure out how to take these ideas to the pews for further discernment and bring that back to the synod.

The synod synthesis' 41-pages are broken up into three sections with vital topics that truly interest and affect the entire People of God.

At this point, the synod leaves it to worldwide episcopal conferences to discern the next steps to take. During the synod's first session, Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio of the U.S. Archdiocese for the Military Services, who is president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, acknowledged that the bishops would have to foster greater participation, including encouraging pastors to buy in. U.S. participation rate in the synod's preparatory process was 1% of U.S. Catholics.

The prospect of getting this feedback within a year may seem daunting to bishops. If the document is really going to be thoroughly discerned and feedback provided within 11 months, the lay faithful will likely have to raise their voices and volunteer to work with their pastors and bishops to get it done in time for the second October session. ■

*Peter Jesserer Smith is national news and features editor for OSV News.*

ST. MARY IN MONESSEN, PA

## Deacon John Hanchin honored for 20 years of ministry

Father Stephen Wahal offered the Sunday, Oct. 8 Divine Liturgy at St. Mary in Monessen, Pa. for Deacon John M. Hanchin on the occasion of his 20th anniversary since his ordination as a deacon.

The late +Archbishop Basil Schott ordained him along with nine other classmates in 2002. These classmates were: Deacons Paul Boboige, +Stanley Cholewinski, John Custaney, +George Fatula, +Paul Pipta, Paul Simko, Dennis Prestash, Lance Weakland and Raymond Zadzilko. +Archbishop Judson Procyk of Blessed Memory selected these men to be the first deacon class of the Archeparchy of Pittsburgh.

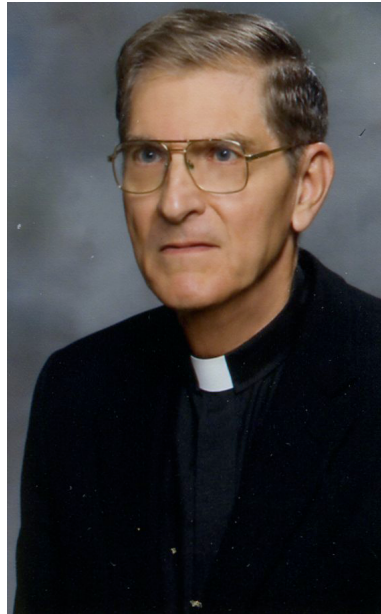
Deacon John served as the deacon at this Liturgy of Thanksgiving for 20 years of ordination. The Divine Liturgy was enhanced by the presence of traditional Deacon Tyler Wisniewski, who served at the altar along with three of his seminarian classmates from the Byzantine Catholic Seminary on the North Side of Pittsburgh, Pa. Patrick Ace-Feher, a graduate student at California, PennWest University, also served at the altar.

Deacon John gave the homily, in which he reflected on how the humility of the Theotokos, the God-Bearer, led to his vocation and characterized his ministry as a deacon.

For example, he said that as Professor of English at California University of Pennsylvania, he had prayed to God by asking the Blessed Mother, under the title of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, to help him discern whether to serve as a deacon. He then attributed his sacred vocation to the Blessed Mother's intercession.

It was his parents, especially his father Michael, who taught him his love for Mary, the Theotokos, the God-Bearer. For it is by imitating her humility that we give praise to our Lord Jesus Christ, who loves each one of us.

In order to give due credit to the Blessed Mother, he asked the congregation to join him in prayer to thank her for his sacred vocation to the Holy Diaconate and for his 20 years of ministry. The congregation had this prayer on a holy card devoted to Mary as



Deacon John M. Hanchin

Our Lady of Perpetual Help.

Also in his sermon, Deacon John thanked the late +Monsignor Andrew Parvensky as well as Father Stephen for their support. Finally, he thanked his beloved wife Ruth, who had to make sacrifices while he served the sick and shut-ins of St. Mary; St. Michael in Donora, Pa.; Holy Ghost in Charleroi, Pa; and many other Byzantine Catholic parishes in the past 20 years. Also present at the Liturgy was his brother Larry and wife Cindy from Dublin, Ohio.

Finally, in order to show honor to Blessed Virgin Mary, Deacon John's wife Ruth had a fireside basket of fresh autumn flowers placed reverently by Mary's beautiful image on the Icon screen.

Following the Liturgy, the congregation was invited to the church hall for light refreshments.

### Rev. Deacon John Milan Hanchin, Ph.D.

*In Thanksgiving to God and the Theotokos on the Occasion of My Twentieth Anniversary of Ordination to the Diaconate for the Byzantine Metropolitan Church of Pittsburgh  
5 October 2003 - - 5 October 2023*



**PRAYER TO THE THEOTOKOS**  
WE FLY TO THY PATRONAGE,  
O VIRGIN MOTHER OF GOD. DO NOT  
TURN AWAY FROM US IN OUR NECESSITIES,  
BUT O PURE AND MOST BLESSED LADY,  
DELIVER US FROM ALL DANGER O MOST  
GLORIOUS EVER-VIRGIN MARY, MOTHER OF  
CHRIST OUR GOD. RECEIVE OUR PRAYERS  
AND TRANSMIT THEM TO THY SON AND OUR  
GOD THAT HE, FOR THY SAKE, ENLIGHTEN  
AND SAVE OUR SOULS.

- ETERNAL MEMORY -  
METROPOLITAN ARCHBISHOP BASIL  
TO MY PARENTS, MICHAEL & MARGARET AND  
RUTH'S PARENTS, JOHN & HELEN AND  
ALL THE DECEASED PARISHIONERS OF ST. MARY  
BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH, MONESSEN, PA

OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP, PRAY FOR US.

ST. ELIAS IN MUNHALL, PA.

## Seminarians visit

*By Mary Caryl Planiczki  
St. Elias, Munhall, Pa.*

St. Elias in Munhall, Pa. was very pleased to welcome to liturgy three men studying at our Byzantine Catholic Seminary.

We offer prayers for them and all of our seminarians as they continue their studies and discernment for the holy priesthood. Father Vitalii Stashkevych is pastor. ■



ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST CATHEDRAL IN MUNHALL, PA.

## Veterans Day blessing

Very Rev. Andrew Deskevich blessed the living and deceased members of St. John the Baptist

Cathedral in Munhall, Pa. who had served in the Armed Forces on Veterans Day weekend. ■



Photos by Nick Havrilla Sr.

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST CATHEDRAL IN MUNHALL, PA.

# Holiday Basket Extravaganza

St. John the Baptist Cathedral in Munhall, Pa. held its fifth annual Holiday Basket Extravaganza fundraiser on Sunday, Nov. 12 in the Social Center.

Led by Very Rev. Andrew Deskevich and co-chaired by Diane Pochron, Patty Bovee and many enthusiastic hard working parishioners, the event proved to be a stellar success garnering nearly 200 supporters.

The theme of the afternoon was a centerpiece house made of candy canes and gingerbread surrounded by gifts to be later auctioned off.

Our patrons enjoyed a full Kathederal Kitchen breaded pork chop meal with, of course, gingerbread and chocolate desserts.

Vendors were also present offering timely presents for the upcoming gift-giving season. ■



Photos by Nick Havrilla Sr.

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST CATHEDRAL IN MUNHALL, PA.

# Fall Craft Show

St. John the Baptist Cathedral in Munhall, Pa. held its annual Fall Craft Show on Oct. 21.

Directed by Very Rev. Andrew Deskevich, the occasion was quite a success with a steady and heavy flow of patrons throughout the

day!

Along with a full house of crafters, the Cathedral Kitchen and a dedicated bake sale were in full swing adding to the excitement. Needless to say, the affair was most successful! ■



Photos by Nick Havrilla Sr.

ASCENSION OF OUR LORD IN CLAIRTON, PA.

# Spaghetti dinner fundraiser

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

A homemade spaghetti dinner fundraiser was held on Oct. 15 at Ascension of Our Lord in Clairton, Pa.

A committee of parishioners included high school students from local schools and colleges who volunteered to serve and bus tables.

A basket raffle, gift card raffle and strip tickets were available for purchase and a single serving bake sale had a wide array of homemade cakes and cookies for guests to choose from. Music was provided by Nicholas Tomkowicz.

The church was open for opportunities for a guided tour highlighting the history of the church and the icons. ■



ST. NICHOLAS IN GREENSBURG, PA.

# Fall breakfast

By John Gomolak  
*St. Nicholas, Greensburg, Pa.*

St. Nicholas in Greensburg, Pa. held its fall breakfast Oct. 29.

After Father Regis Duscina gave the blessing, a breakfast was prepared and served by three

members of the parish.

Everyone enjoyed the breakfast and socializing with each other.

Pirohi are being made by parishioners for Thanksgiving and Christmas. ■





ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST IN UNIONTOWN, PA.

# Carpatho-Rusyn Festival

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

Sunday Oct. 29 marked the 41st annual Carpatho-Rusyn Festival at St. John the Baptist in Uniontown, Pa.

The kitchen staff worked tirelessly to prepare large amounts of pirohi, haluški, holupki, kolbassi, pagač, and soup. A wide variety of baked goods were donated by parishioners.

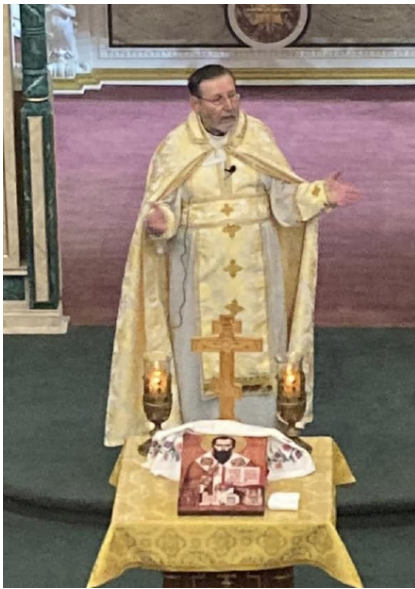
The day began with a Divine Liturgy concelebrated by Father Jim Fraser, Father Vasyl Symyon and guest homilist

Father Mitch Pacwa of EWTN.

The festivities included Rusyn music by Sokyra, raffle items, displays, and demonstrations.

Mark Jesko explained iconography, Julia Pillar demonstrated pysanky, and Mary Gido showed the techniques of bobbin-lace making. Gerry Dorobish provided activities and crafts for children.

A very enlightening church tour was led by Father Jim. St. John Ethnic Craft Club sold a wide variety of religious, secular, and Christmas crafts. Many parishioners worked together to make this event a success. ■



# Celebrating Nov. birthdays

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

Parishioners who were celebrating November birthdays were recognized on Nov. 12.

Breakfast casseroles and snacks were served, along with a birthday cake.

St. John Social Ministry prepared the birthday celebration. ■



# Polish Fest at Pitt

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

On Sunday, Nov. 12, Mark Jesko and Bonnie Balas represented Lemko Rusyns at the University of Pittsburgh's Polish Fest, which was held at the Cathedral of Learning.

Mark demonstrated drop-pull eggs and Bonnie demonstrated embroidery.

Their sales table included parish cookbooks, basket covers, and icon ornaments. Maryann Sivak and Mary Gido also participated in the event. ■



# Seminarian visit

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

Deacon Tyler Wisniewski and Seminarian Nicholas Krivacs came to visit the St. John ECF Classes on Sunday, Oct. 22.

Although the seminarians socialized with all students, they mainly spoke with the upper

grade students and presented a slide show depicting their lives as seminarians.

They also had a session with the catechists to talk about the ECF Program.

The seminarians were presented with a gift card and a bag of goodies. ■





ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST IN SCOTTDALE, PA.

# Spaghetti dinner

St. John the Baptist in Scottsdale, Pa. held their annual spaghetti dinner last month. The Altar Society and members of the parish prepared the event. A basket raffle was also held. ■



ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST IN LYNDORA, PA

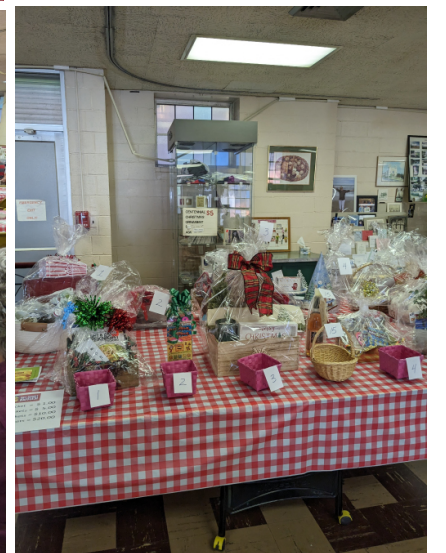
# Spaghetti dinner returns

By Elizabeth Pocchiari  
St. John the Baptist, Lyndora, Pa.

St. John the Baptist in Lyndora, Pa. recently had a spaghetti dinner, back by popular demand.

They haven't had one since 2011.

Everyone was happy to taste the delicious homemade sauce and meatballs again. There was also a basket raffle. ■



HOLY SPIRIT IN PITTSBURGH (OAKLAND), PA.

# “Icons: Windows to Heaven”

By Father David Sloan Abernethy  
Holy Spirit, Pittsburgh (Oakland), Pa.

Following the Nov. 12 Divine Liturgy and brunch, Deacon Tim Fariss gave a wonderful lecture on “Icons: Windows to Heaven” at Holy Spirit Parish in Oakland as part of the Byzantine Catholic Campus Ministry program.

The talk was very well received and followed up by a lively question and answer period. ■



# Fall rummage sale

By Elizabeth Pocchiari  
St. John the Baptist, Lyndora, Pa.

St. John the Baptist in Lyndora, Pa. had their fall rummage sale last month.

They were also selling homemade halupki and pierogi which sold out in 20 minutes on both days of the sale. ■





ST. GREGORY IN UPPER ST. CLAIR, PA.

# Trunk or Treat 2023

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

Even though the weather this year was rainy on Sunday, Oct. 29, that did not dampen the excitement for this year's Trunk or Treat.

Following the Divine Liturgy, our parishioners with cars all decorated, were ready in the

church parking lot to hand out treats to our children.

We continued in the church hall with games and crafts enjoyed by all.

Sincere thanks to our ECF Teachers, and all our parents who helped organize this fun fall event. ■



# Harvest Dinner Dance

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

On Friday evening, Nov. 3, parishioners, and friends were looking forward to the Harvest Dinner Dance 2023.

For all of us this was a delightful evening of delicious cuisine and music. We express our sincere

thanks to all who helped organize this happy event; especially our dance instructors, our kitchen chefs, and faithful who helped with the set up and clean up.

We look forward to upcoming events that bring us together as a parish family. ■



# Veterans Day blessing

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

Saturday and Sunday, Nov. 11 to 12, was a weekend dedicated in our parish family to our Veterans.

The celebrant of the Divine Liturgy was Father Thomas Dansak, bi-ritual priest of the Diocese of Pittsburgh, who also served as a Navy Chaplain for 30 years.

At the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy, Father Thomas offered prayerful supplications for all the living and departed men and women who have



served and continue to serve our nation under God. ■



ST. MICHAEL IN CAMPBELL, OHIO

# “Spooktacular” evening

ECF students at St. Michael in Campbell, Ohio had an evening filled with games, crafts,

music and yummy treats during their annual Halloween party on Tuesday, Oct. 24. ■



# Veterans Day blessing

By Father Kevin Marks  
St. Michael, Campbell, Ohio

Our St. Michael Parish honored our veterans at the weekend Liturgies. Veterans in attendance received a special blessing and a gift.

Happy Veterans Day weekend to our St. Michael Parish veterans! ■



ST. MICHAEL IN HERMITAGE, PA.

By Father Kevin Marks  
St. Michael, Hermitage, Pa.

Our St. Michael Parish honored our Veterans at the weekend Liturgies. Veterans in

attendance received a special blessing and a gift. Happy Veterans Day weekend to our St. Michael Parish Veterans! ■





## THOUGHTS FOR OUR DAY

By Archpriest David M. Petras

### THE PROCESS OF FORGIVENESS



In the story in Genesis, Adam and Eve become subject to death because they tried to seize a divine life for themselves: the snake said to the woman: “You certainly will not die! [The Big Lie] God knows well that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods, who know good and evil” (Genesis 3:4-5). This is ultimately the meaning of sin — that which brings death, both physical and spiritual, as St. Paul warns, “for the wages of sin is death,” but immediately adding, “but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:23). The Word of God was sent into the world to bring life, as Jesus says in the Gospel of John, “I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly” (John 10:10). God’s love for us destroys the power of sin.

In Mark 2:1-12, we read the gospel of the paralyzed man who was healed by Jesus when he was lowered through a hole in the roof by his friends. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “As for you, your sins are forgiven” (v. 5). We are broken and sinners, but if we can have faith, creation can be made good again - this is our hope. Sin is an offense against God, so those who do not have faith grumble, “Who but God alone can forgive sins?” (v. 21). Who but God alone can repair the damage done by rebellion against his plan? And so this story is key in the Gospel, Jesus is God, the Son of the Father, as he created the world, and is always “the same,” he alone can repair the damage. But Jesus

is also a human being, and as such, has imparted the power to forgive sin to the Church, which is his body, and in which we find healing and forgiveness.

Jesus also said, “If you forgive others their transgressions, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your transgressions” (Matthew



**The process of forgiveness begins when a person, of their own free will, becomes sorry for their sins, and turns again toward God.**

6:14-15). We can believe in God only if we are willing to forgive and to be forgiven. There are no conditions to giving forgiveness, the ability to refuse forgiveness belongs to the trespasser, but we cannot deny to offer it. People often make repentance and submission a condition for forgiveness, which means they fall into self-righteousness — the exact opposite of a Christian life. Forgiveness, however, is an absolute condition for being a follower of Christ, and God has made it a part of the way we celebrate his divine action in the community, so that by the way we worship God together, we together find mutual forgiveness. God’s gift to the Church is the sacramental mysteries, the ways in which we worship. All sacramental mysteries forgive sins.

We know about the sacrament of confession, which is for grave sins committed after baptism, but even the Council of Trent, for example, taught that, at least in principle, all sins could be forgiven by the eucharist: “For the Lord is appeased by this offering, he gives the gracious gift of repentance, he absolves even enormous offenses and sins” (Session 22, 1562). Sin cannot remain in the presence of God. When we receive him in faith, he frees us from the death of sin and brings us into the fullness of life. Therefore, when the priest asks for the Holy Spirit to make the bread and wine the Body and Blood of Christ, he asks this: that they may bring about ... the forgiveness of sins.”

Likewise, in the sacramental mystery of the Anointing of the Sick, the first prayer of the blessing of oil (and in practically every prayer of the sacrament) says: “Send down your Holy Spirit and sanctify this oil, making it for your servant[s] (Name/s), about to be anointed, a complete deliverance from their (his, her) sins and an inheritance of the kingdom of heaven.” This does not make confession unnecessary, since it is a matter of our salvation as a community united in the mystical Body of Christ, the Church, and the means established by it, in the power of the Holy Spirit. It is God’s dispensation. Neither sacramental mystery — anointing or communion — replaces confession. However, it must be clearly understood that the Church law is that only “mortal sins” are required to be confessed to a priest. These are serious sins where one deliberately disobeys the law out of hatred or malice, so that this person can be said to have reneged on their baptismal promises to renounce the devil

and commit themselves to Christ. Many of the sins we commit are not out of hatred or contempt, but simply because we are humanly weak, as Scripture says, “Though the just fall seven times, they rise again, but the wicked stumble from only one mishap” (Proverbs 24:16).

The process of forgiveness begins when a person, of their own free will, becomes sorry for their sins, and turns again toward God. The moment we repent and return to God, in his infinite mercy we are forgiven. However, this does not mean that any further process is unnecessary. We sometimes have a tendency to think in very narrow categories, in instances of time and in the state of our own individual souls. Forgiveness, however, has many facets, and requires our reintegration into God’s community and his way of life. This is fully manifested by confession and absolution by the blessing of a priest. This is required for grave sins, but lesser sins, mostly from human weakness, may be forgiven by Communion or anointing itself, or even by our prayer or other acts of penance. The reality is that in forgiveness we are not the ones in control of the process. God’s infinite (without limits) mercy is in control. God seeks us first, “Surely goodness and kindness shall follow me all the days of my life” (Psalm 22(23):6). The truth is that “in God we trust.” We should not allow our fear or pride to be an obstacle to God’s mercy which is beyond our power of understanding. And so we pray, “Have mercy on us, O God, according to your great mercy, we pray you, hear and have mercy.” “Lord, have mercy; Lord, have mercy; Lord, have mercy.” ■

## 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>



## 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 December

<b>FRI</b>	<b>1</b>	5 p.m. Vespers with 17th Kathisma
<b>SAT</b>	<b>2</b>	5 p.m. Great Vespers
<b>SUN</b>	<b>3</b>	8 a.m. Festal Matins and Divine Liturgy
<b>MON</b>	<b>4</b>	8 a.m. Divine Liturgy
<b>TUE</b>	<b>5</b>	7 a.m. Parastas for the Departed
<b>WED</b>	<b>6</b>	8 a.m. Festal Matins and Divine Liturgy
<b>FRI</b>	<b>8</b>	8 a.m. Divine Liturgy
<b>SAT</b>	<b>9</b>	5 p.m. Great Vespers
<b>MON</b>	<b>11</b>	8 a.m. First Royal Hour for Nativity [LS]
<b>TUE</b>	<b>12</b>	7 a.m. Third Royal Hour for Nativity
<b>THU</b>	<b>14</b>	7 a.m. Sixth Royal Hour for Nativity [LS]
<b>FRI</b>	<b>15</b>	8 a.m. Ninth Royal Hour for Nativity
<b>SAT</b>	<b>16</b>	5 p.m. Great Vespers
<b>SUN</b>	<b>17</b>	9 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).

**CHRISTMAS CRAFT/BAKE SALE** — Noon-4 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 2 and 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 3, St. John the Baptist, 201 E. Main St., Uniontown, Pa. The Ethnic Craft Club will host its annual Christmas Craft/Bake Sale in the upstairs Social Room. The sale will feature decorations, wood crafted items, folk crafts, religious articles, parish cookbooks (Carpathian Cookery), imported items, homemade candy, various baked goods (long rolls, cookies, breads, etc.), and many other articles that would make fine Christmas gifts or holiday decorations. Raffle prizes available. There is no admission fee. Handicapped accessible. Parking in lot behind school. For information call: 724-438-1382 M-F between 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Leave message.

**"TASTE OF HEAVEN" COOKIE SALE** — 9 a.m.-noon 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 PIROGY SALE** — Noon-5 p.m. Friday, Dec. 1, 8, and 15, St. Pius X, 2336 Brownsville Road, Carrick, Pa. Frozen pirogy sale. Potato cheese, cottage cheese, and sauerkraut. Pre-orders at 412-881-8344. Please leave message.

**NATIONAL PRAYER VIGIL FOR LIFE** — The National Prayer Vigil for Life will be held from Thursday afternoon, Jan. 18, through Friday morning, Jan. 19, 2024, at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, DC. The Opening Mass begins Thursday, Jan. 18 at 5 p.m., followed by a Holy Hour for Life starting at 7 p.m. The Closing Mass begins Friday at 8 a.m. Please visit the 2024 National Prayer Vigil for Life website and the Frequently Asked Questions section on the USCCB website for complete information on the schedule and additional details.

## DATES TO REMEMBER

**DEC. 3**

St. Nicholas Celebration  
*St. John the Baptist Cathedral, Munhall, Pa.*

**DEC. 6**

Feast of Our Holy Father Nicholas of Myra

**DEC. 8**

Feast of the Maternity of Holy Anna

**DEC. 17**

"Neath the Star of Bethlehem": Hymns & Songs of the Nativity  
Pittsburgh Byzantine Catholic Archeparchial Choir  
*St. Elias, Munhall, Pa.*

**DEC. 25**

Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ  
*Chancery closed*

**DEC. 26**

Feast of the Synaxis of the Holy Theotokos

**DEC. 27**

Feast of the Holy Protomartyr Stephen

**DEC. 31**

Vigil of the Feast of the Circumcision of our Lord  
Vigil of the Feast of St. Basil the Great  
New Year's Eve

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

Official publication of the  
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