



COME AND SEE



Byzantine
Catholic Eparchy
OF PASSAIC

PUBLISHED BY THE OFFICE OF
EASTERN CHRISTIAN FORMATION

“The Church
must breathe
with her
two lungs!

— Pope St.
John Paul II,
Ut Unum
Sint #54





PART 1

WHO WE ARE

WELCOME

What is this great Mystery? The Creator of the Cosmos is in the womb of a Virgin. A cave in Bethlehem contains the infinite God. He who is without flesh, takes on flesh. When Caesar Augustus ruled this world, the Author of Life was born in a manger. What is this great Mystery?

My dear friends, the most important event in the history of the universe was the life of Jesus Christ, his conception, his birth, his miracles, his teaching, his passion and death, his conquest of death, and his gift of his Holy Spirit. By sacrificing himself on the cross, he washed away our sins with his precious blood and renewed all creation. Jesus remains with us today in his Body which is the Church. Jesus said to Peter (which means rock), *“You are rock, and on this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. I will give to you the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven.”*

Welcome to our church, a church whose history and traditions go back to the first Apostles and to the formation of the Bible. Our Liturgy is from Antioch, the city where we were first called “Christians”. Our art is the art of the first Christians in the catacombs.

Welcome to our church, a church with apostolic succession, whose bishops are in full communion with the successor of Peter, the Pope of Rome. Rome is the ancient city of martyrs, of which St. Paul said, *“I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed through all the world.”*

Welcome to our church, a church that received the faith 12 centuries ago from Saints Cyril and Methodius, and was affirmed again in 988 when Kiev was baptized.

If you are seeking Caesar Augustus and the powers of this world, then go elsewhere. If you are seeking the God who lay as a child in a cave in Bethlehem, then you are welcome here.

We begin every Eucharist with the words, “In peace, let us pray to the Lord.” If you are searching for a place to pray to the Lord, “in Spirit and in Truth”, if you are seeking a place where you can find inner peace, “the peace of God that surpasses all understanding”, then welcome to our church.

MOST REV. KURT BURNETTE

*Bishop of the
Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Passaic*

GLORY TO JESUS CHRIST!

Dear Friends,

We are excited to share with you about who we are and what we believe and to invite you to a journey to learn more about Byzantine Catholic Church and its traditions. One of many roles of the Office of Eastern Christian Formation (Religious Education) is to ensure continuing formation for people of all ages at our parishes and all the people of good will who want to advance in their knowledge about faith and God, make spiritual progress in their lives and come closer to God.

The role of the Church and the priest is to help a person to encounter the living God by creating that sacred space, where a meeting between the two would take place. Religious education helps us to understand our identity as God’s children and to live it. Knowledge empowers us. Knowledge about God helps us grow, it helps us to be who we “are and be that well” (*cf. St. Francis De Sales*).

As human beings we constantly live in search. Our human minds always wonder about things, trying to find explanation and understanding. The quest for integral human fulfillment and our own destiny, other more or less important matters can leave us with many questions. In our lives it is very important to find the right answers to all the questions we have. Most especially it is important when it concerns our faith and our spiritual journey. Finding the truth and

getting the right answer is always liberating and helps us to make better choices, it brings us inner peace. It can be life changing.

Life presents us with many great questions. God has the answers. In our continuous efforts to bring religious education of the Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Passaic to a new level, which would correspond to the demands of today and to the needs of people, we are happy to present to you our new program “Come and See.” The aim of this program is to share with you the Good News – the transforming message of the Gospel within the context of the Byzantine Catholic Tradition. We hope this work will help you to find answers to life questions you were looking for, will strengthen your faith, will educate you about Byzantine Catholic Tradition, but the most important thing – will ultimately help you to grow closer to God. We hope this program will allow you to meet personally with Jesus through the prayers, Sacraments, parish life, serving others and living your vocation.

If this work helps at least one person to discover the meaning of life and of vocation, and/or if it helps at least one person to remain faithful to his/her call, or if it brings at least one person closer to God, or if it helps at least one person to find his/her path to the Church and to God, to answer important life questions – it will fulfill its purpose.

“Come and See” is a resource which can be beneficial to all the existing Byzantine Catholics and serve them as the ABCs about our Church and Tradition, but we also see it as an invitation to all those who

are in search of a new spiritual home, who want to learn more about God and build lasting personal relationships with Him. This program also serves as an invitation to learn more about us. In the chaos of today it is an exciting opportunity to share with you what we have.

As Jesus invited John’s followers to where He was living (*cf. John, 1:39*), we warmly extend our welcome to you, to pray with us at our parishes, to learn more about our beautiful Eastern Byzantine Catholic Tradition. We invite you to experience our spirituality, to learn more about our Church, and to grow closer to God with us. We are looking forward to seeing you!

May the Holy Spirit guide you through this wonderful adventure and exciting journey of learning about God and our faith! Let us walk together in the footsteps of the Lord, learning from Him and serving Him the best we can. Wishing you all many God’s blessings!

If you have any further questions about religious education and are looking for ways to deepen your knowledge about faith and God please do not hesitate to contact our Office at: directf@eparchyofpassaic.com. It is our mission and privilege to serve your educational and spiritual needs!

With kind personal regards and every best wish I remain sincerely Yours in Christ,

REV. DR. VASYL CHEPELSKY

Director of the Office of Eastern Christian Formation

“I BELIEVE IN ONE, HOLY, CATHOLIC, AND APOSTOLIC CHURCH”

Thanks to the Holy Spirit working through the Apostles, the Church quickly spread from Jerusalem throughout the entire Roman Empire and beyond. From five major port cities grew the five Apostolic Sees or Patriarchates, three of which gave rise to the various Eastern Christian traditions:

1. Antioch (Syria)

Founded by the Apostle Peter before he made his way to Rome, Antioch is the birthplace of two traditions: the East Syrian and West Syrian. The East Syrian tradition is represented by the Chaldean, Syro-Malabar, and Armenian Churches. The West Syrian tradition is represented by the Maronite, Syrian or Syriac, and Syro-Malankara Churches.

2. Alexandria

The Church in Alexandria was founded by St. Mark. It too is the birthplace of two major traditions: the Coptic and the Ethiopian traditions.

3. Constantinople or Byzantium

Often believed to have been founded by the Apostle Andrew, the Byzantine tradition is the largest family of Eastern Christian Churches.

THE APOSTOLIC ORIGINS OF EASTERN CHURCHES

The Catholic Church is a communion of 24 “Sister Churches”

The Byzantine-Ruthenian Church *sui iuris* (literally “of its own right”) is:

- Self-governing
- Equal in dignity to the Roman Catholic Church
- In communion with the Bishop of Rome
- Unique in its clergy, laws, institutions, liturgies, forms of spirituality, methods of theology

Dogma and Discipline

We profess the same Faith as other Catholics but express that Faith in our own way.

Dogma is the essential core of the Faith that all Catholics share.

Disciplines give expression to the Church’s teaching. They are important but they vary from Church to Church and can change over time.

Examples of disciplines in the Byzantine Church include:

- The possibility of ordaining married men to the priesthood
- Infant reception of Holy Communion and Chrismation (Confirmation)
- Touching the right shoulder and then the left when making the Sign of the Cross

What does it mean to be a Ruthenian

The word Ruthenian originally was used by the Catholic Church to describe the Byzantine (Greek) Catholics of Eastern Europe, predominately those who were under the Austro-Hungarian Empire. During the late nineteenth century – early twentieth century many of these faithful traveled to the United States seeking employment, and their own Greek Catholic parishes. In 1924, Rome established the Pittsburgh Eparchy for the Ruthenians with Bishop Basil Takach as the first hierarch.

“THE CHURCH MUST
BREATHE WITH HER
TWO LUNGS!”
(*UT UNUM SINT*, # 54)

Did you know that most of the Catholic Church’s 24 churches originated in the Eastern half of the Roman Empire before evangelizing areas of Asia and Eastern Europe? Of course, Jesus Himself was not Western, but a Jewish man from Palestine.

“The light of the East has illumined the universal Church, from the moment when ‘a rising sun’ appeared above us: Jesus Christ, our Lord, whom all Christians invoke as the Redeemer of man and the hope of the world.”
(St. John Paul II, *Oriente Lumen*, #1).

Since the Second Vatican Council, leaders of the Church have been challenging Catholics around the world to develop an understanding and appreciation of the rich theological, liturgical, and spiritual traditions of Eastern Catholicism.

“I can unite in myself, in my own spiritual life, the thought of the East and the West, of the Greek and Latin Fathers, I will create in myself a reunion of the divided Church and from that unity in myself can come the exterior and visible unity of the Church. For if we want to bring together East and West we cannot do it by imposing one upon the other. We must contain both in ourselves, and transcend both in Christ.” – Thomas Merton, *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*

Today there are nearly 18,000,000 Eastern Catholics worldwide, from the Holy Land, Eastern Europe and beyond. Each country and each culture add to the richness of expression of the rite that they adopt as their own.

EASTERN CATHOLIC CHURCHES IN THE WORLD

Worldwide (2017)



United States (2017)



Ukrainians	Syro-Malabars	Maronites	Melkites	Armenians	Chaldeans	Romanians
Syro-Malankaras	Ruthenians	Hungarians	Slovaks	Syrians	Copts	Eritreans
Ethiopians	Italo-Albanians	Former Yugoslavia	Bulgarians	Greece & Turkey		

Source: Annuario Pontificio 2017. Compiled by Ronald G. Roberson, CSP

EPARCHY OF PASSAIC

The Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Passaic spans the entire eastern seacoast of the U.S., with 92 parishes serving 10 States - and more on the way!

Parishes Per State

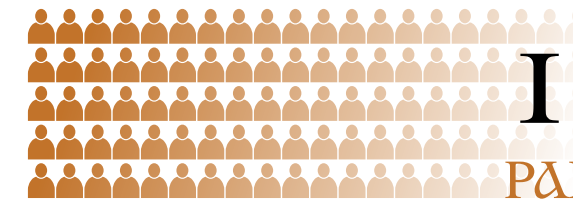
Connecticut: 4
Florida: 8
Georgia: 1
Maryland: 5
New Jersey: 21
New York: 10
North Carolina: 1
Pennsylvania: 37
South Carolina: 2
Virginia: 3



92

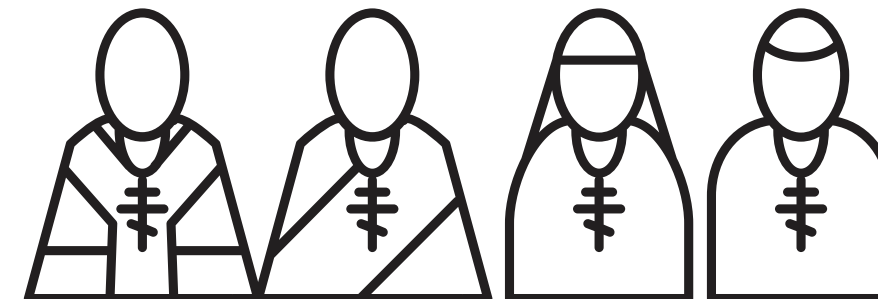
PARISHES

FROM CONNECTICUT TO FLORIDA
AND MORE ON THE WAY!



12,000

PARISHIONERS



67

PRIESTS

26

DEACONS

13

FEMALE
RELIGIOUS

10

MALE
RELIGIOUS



JULY 6, 1963

The Eparchy of Passaic
was established by
Pope St. Paul VI

EPARCHIAL SEAT

St. Michael the Archangel Cathedral
Passaic, NJ



First BISHOP

MOST REVEREND
STEPHEN KOCISKO



His Holiness Pope Francis



Most Reverend William C. Skurla
Metropolitan Archbishop
of the Archeparchy of Pittsburgh



Most Reverend Kurt Burnette
Fifth Bishop of the Eparchy of Passaic



Clergy
of the Eparchy of Passaic



LITURGICAL SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

with the Roman Catholics

Notable Similarities:

- Seven Sacraments
- Canon of Scripture
- Communion with the Holy Father in Rome
- Strong devotion to the Mother of God
- Veneration of the saints.

Notable Differences

- Liturgical use and veneration of icons
- The way we make the Sign of the Cross
- Our liturgical calendars
- Ordination of married men to the priesthood
- Reception of Holy Communion
- Altar: priest faces East
- Iconostasis (icon screen)
- Standing for liturgical services
- Strong patristic tradition
- Emphasis on participation in the Heavenly Liturgy.





WHY JOIN US?

Christ is among us!

During the Divine Liturgy we give ourselves to God, and in the Eucharist, Christ gives Himself to us. Come stand in His presence!

We love to sing!

The entire congregation joins together to worship Almighty God in song. As St. Augustine said, "Singing belongs to one who loves." Come chant with us!

Small and beautiful!

Our parishes may be smaller in size but we know each other by name and care for one another. Come and join us!

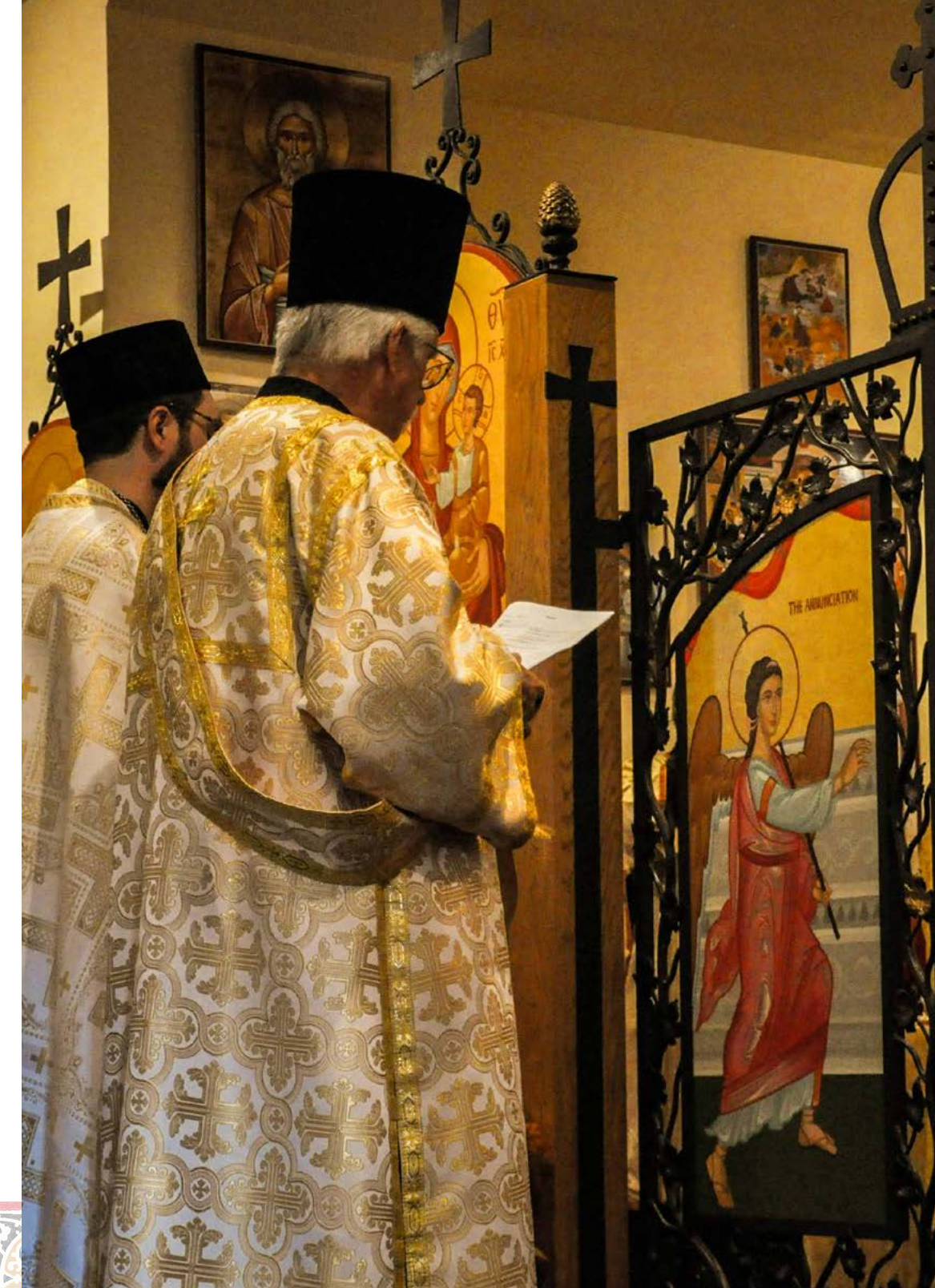
We are Catholics!

Our Sunday Divine Liturgy fulfills the obligation of any Catholic who desires to worship with us.

Come and be welcome!

COME AND VISIT WITH US

- Worship God together with us as part of the Mystical Body of Christ
- Deepen your knowledge about the Byzantine Catholic Faith and Traditions
- Build your personal relationship with Jesus
- Discover a life of meaning, joy and fulfillment
- Be a part of our local parish communities through liturgical services, charitable work and service to your neighbor
- Attend our social and cultural events
- Share your gifts and talents with us
- Be supported in your spiritual journey by a community that will share your joys and sorrows
- Experience God's presence through the beauty of iconography, architecture and music
- Welcome God into your heart.





CONTACT US

Our Eparchial Chancery Office welcome any questions you may have for us.

Chancery Office

445 Lackawanna Ave.
Woodland Park, NJ 07424

Phone number: (973) 890-7777
Fax number: (973) 890-7175

Hours of Operation:
Monday – Friday 8:30am – 4:30pm
The Chancery Offices are closed on
Holy Days and national holidays.

eparchyofpassaic.com
facebook.com/EparchyofPassaic



SAFE ENVIRONMENT

“Let the children come to me, and do not prevent them; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these” (Matt. 19:14).

We are dedicated to ensure the safety of children and young people entrusted to our pastoral care throughout the Eparchy and comply with the mandates of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People of the USCCB.

As an Eparchy, we want to ensure that no child is prevented from encountering Christ through our Byzantine tradition. To contact our Safe Environment Office, simply call the Chancery Office at (973) 890-7777 or reach out to the National Child Abuse Hotline at (800) 442-4453.





PART 2

OUR FAITH AND TRADITIONS

SEEKING THE MEANING OF LIFE

“Show me your ways, Lord, teach me your paths. Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long.”

— Psalm 25:4-5

Who am I? Where did I come from? What am I here for? Does life have a meaning? What is the main goal of my life? How do I find happiness? What happens when I die? Why is there so much suffering and injustice in the world? Does God exist? Who is He? If God is good, why does He allow us to suffer? Who is Jesus? What does it mean to have a personal friendship with Jesus? Is it truly life changing? What is the Catholic Church, and should it become my spiritual home?

“Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit everlasting life?”

— Mark 10:17

Dear Brother or Sister in Christ,

We are sure these and many more questions crossed your mind at some point in your life. We all look for answers to these questions. Our ability to find satisfying answers is our path to living a meaningful life. While we cannot answer many of the *why* questions for you, we know where to seek the answer, in front of Jesus, in prayer, talking to Him and listening to what He has to say. We invite you to join us in our spiritual journey to discover Who God is and what His plan is for our lives, to experience His love and closeness to us and to find peace, to form close personal friendship with Him and to grow closer to Him every day in our Byzantine Catholic Tradition.

“Religions do not aim merely to answer the question about our provenance; all religions try in one way or another to lift the veil of the future. They seem important precisely because they impart knowledge about what is to come, and so show man the path he has to take to avoid coming to grief” (p. 2)

“In every age, man’s questioning has focused not only on his ultimate origin; almost more than the obscurity of his beginnings, what preoccupies him is the hiddenness of the future that awaits him. Man wants to tear aside the curtain; he wants to know what is going to happen, so that he can avoid perdition and set out toward salvation” (p. 1)

— Joseph Ratzinger—Pope Benedict XVI,
Jesus of Nazareth: From the Baptism in the Jordan to the Transfiguration

“Suffering, which is present under so many different forms in our human world, is also present in order to unleash love in the human person.”

— Pope St. John Paul II,
Salvifici Doloris, #29

“Now I rejoice in what I am suffering for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ’s afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church.”

— Colossians 1:24

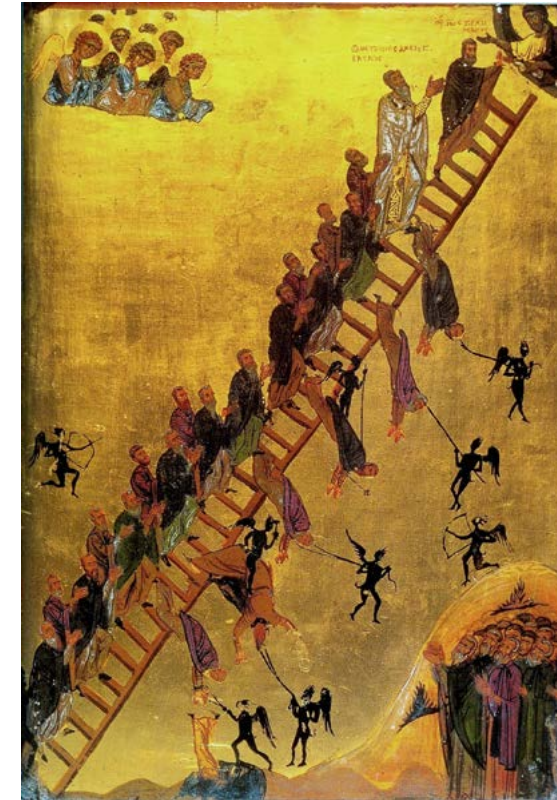
HUMAN SUFFERING

In one form or another we encounter suffering every day of our life. Suffering always brings many *why* questions. It forces us to look for the answers. God is not the Author of Suffering. He does not want us to suffer. Suffering, aging and death entered human history with sin. Catholic tradition, following the teaching of St. Paul, teaches us that all suffering is a participation in the suffering of Christ on His Cross. If we unite our suffering with that of Christ – it can have a redemptive and salvific meaning. Suffering is meant not only to help us enter into Christ’s passion, but also to strip us of attachment to all that is not God. God doesn’t want just part of us, but all of us. So often we allow our passions and desires



to fixate on the things of this world, even the good things of this world. But, as the Byzantine Liturgy reminds us, we are called to “set aside all earthly cares” so that we can be more fully attached to God and His love for us. The ultimate answer to all human suffering can be found in the person of Jesus Christ.

We can consider suffering like a tool that is used to conform us to the image of Christ. With God as the sculptor, we are formed into something beautiful though the process itself may include smoothing, shaping, and purification.



The Icon of Ladder of Divine Ascent (above) is a late 12th century icon that represents the theological teachings of St. John Climacus, depicting monks ascending the ladder towards Jesus in Heaven.

THEOSIS

One of the central themes of Byzantine spirituality is the theme of “theosis” (divinization) – the process of transformation through which we become more and more like God.

Through the reception of the Sacraments/ Mysteries, various ascetic practices, and with the aid of an experienced spiritual father or mother, we are purified of our disordered passions that keep us tied to this world and impede our union with God.

This process of purification leads us eventually to “theosis,” a complete unity between the individual soul and God whereby we contemplate Him without concepts or images.

“Repentance lifts a man up. Mourning knocks at heaven’s gate. Holy humility opens it.”

— St. John of the Ladder

“Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.”

— 2 Peter 1:4

THE MYSTERY OF OUR FAITH

Byzantine Catholics believe in One God in the Holy Trinity – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In fact, the doctrine of the Trinity professed by all Catholics today was hammered out in the Christian East over the course of four centuries.

In response to fierce debates over how the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit could all be called one God, the Church held two Ecumenical Councils first in Nicaea, then in Constantinople. Together, these Councils worked out the Church's understanding of God as a Trinity of Persons. It is also from these Councils that we get the Creed we pray every Sunday.

The Cappadocian Fathers

These saints helped express the understanding of the mystery of the Holy Trinity that we hold even to this day.

- Basil the Great
- Gregory the Theologian
- Gregory of Nyssa

“Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.”

— Hebrews 11:1,3

“Faith is to believe what you do not yet see; the reward for this faith is to see what you believe.”

— St. Augustine



“I am amazed that there are some who are entirely in doubt as to whether the holy Virgin should be called ‘Theotokos’ or not. For if our Lord Jesus Christ is God, how is the holy Virgin who gave [Him] birth, not [‘Theotokos’]?”

— St. Cyril
of Alexandria

THEOTOKOS

Meaning

The one who gave birth to God.

Doctrine

This doctrine asserts that the one person conceived and carried in Mary's womb (Christ) was, from the moment of conception, fully and truly both God and Man.

Council of Ephesus

The doctrine was officially proclaimed.

ANGELS

Byzantine Catholics have a very strong devotion to the angels. Very often we can see an angel depicted on the deacons' doors of the iconostasis – a reminder of the angel that was set to guard the entry to Paradise after man's fall (Gen. 3:24).

The most prominent place where you will see the angels in the Byzantine tradition is on the liturgical fan called the “ripidion.” It is a reminder of Isaiah's vision in the temple. This fan is carried in many processions, most notably during the “Great Entrance,” as the congregation sings the “Cherubic Hymn.”

Troparion to One's Guardian Angel

O Angel of God, my holy Guardian, keep my life in the fear of Christ God, strengthen my mind in the true way and wound my soul with heavenly love, so that guided by You, I may obtain the great mercy of Christ God.

“When you close the doors to your dwelling and are alone you should know that there is present with you the angel whom God has appointed for each man... This angel, who is sleepless and cannot be deceived, is always present with you; he sees all things and is not hindered by darkness. You should know, too, that with him is God, who is in every place; for there is no place and nothing material in which God is not, since He is greater than all things and holds all men in His hand.”

— St. Anthony the Great

“Beside each believer stands an Angel as protector and shepherd, leading him to life.”

— St. Basil the Great



SAINTS

Byzantine Catholics look to many saints for their heavenly intercession. Those most commonly encountered include St. Nicholas, the Apostles, and saints from the Old Testament like Daniel and Elijah.

Each Church *sui iuris* has saints that are unique to them. Each calendar day is dedicated to the memory of a particular saint, for example, saints important in the Byzantine Tradition such as SS. Cyril and Methodius.



Saints Cyril and Methodius: Apostles to the Slavs

Cyril and Methodius were Byzantine Greek brothers born in the 9th century who became missionaries among the Slavic people.

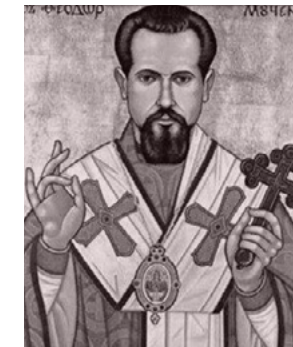
They are credited with greatly influencing the cultural development of the Slavic people, particularly through devising the Cyrillic alphabet, the first alphabet used to transcribe the Old Church Slavonic language.



Their pupils continued their missionary work after their deaths, and SS. Cyril and Methodius are now known in the Byzantine Church as “Equals to the Apostles.”

Additionally, St. John Paul II declared SS. Cyril and Methodius, along with St. Benedict, the co-patrons of Europe.

Theodore Romzha



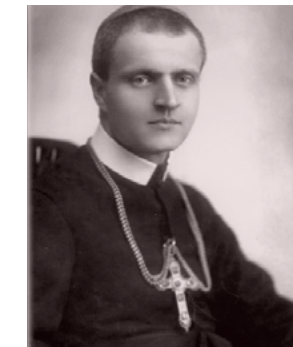
Born in 1911, and ordained in 1936 after studying in Rome, Blessed Theodore Romzha was consecrated bishop of the Mukachevo Eparchy on September 24, 1944. A month later,

the Soviet Army occupied the Mukachevo Eparchy, and within a year incorporated it into Soviet Ukraine.

The Soviets ordered the young Bishop Romzha to renounce his allegiance to the Holy See, to submit to the Patriarch of Moscow, and to encourage his flock to do the same. He replied “I would rather die than betray my Church!”

On October 31, 1947, at the young age of 36, Bishop Romzha was poisoned by a mysterious nurse in the Mukachevo hospital while recovering from a Soviet-staged highway accident. He was beatified by Pope St. John Paul II on June 27, 2001.

Paul Peter Gojdich O.S.B.M.



Son of a married priest, Paul Peter Gojdich was born in 1888; ordained as a celibate priest in 1911; and entered St. Nicholas Monastery as a Basilian monk in 1922. Despite his initial reluctance, Fr.

Peter accepted an appointment as Apostolic Administrator for the Prešov Eparchy in 1926 and was ordained bishop in 1927.

In 1950, Bishop Gojdich was imprisoned by the Soviet Army for his loyalty to the Catholic Church, although they claimed he was being tried for “treason and espionage.” He was condemned to life imprisonment. He was often tortured, while his communist captors tried unsuccessfully to persuade him to renounce his allegiance to Rome and submit to the Patriarch of Moscow. He died in prison in 1960, and was beatified by Pope St. John Paul II in 2001.

Basil Hopko



Born in 1904 in Eastern Slovakia and ordained in 1929, after World War II Fr. Hopko was entrusted with the eparchial religious press for the Mukachevo Eparchy. He published an annual

religious almanac and numerous spiritual booklets, four of which he himself authored.

Fr. Hopko was consecrated auxiliary bishop in 1947, imprisoned by the Communist authorities in 1950, and pressured to renounce Rome and submit to the Patriarch of Moscow. When he refused, he was sentenced to 15 years in prison.

He was released from prison for health reasons in 1966, but kept under strict house arrest at a home for the aged in Osijek, Czech Republic. He died in 1976 and was beatified by Pope St. John Paul II in 2003.



ENTERING INTO PRAYER

For Byzantine Catholics, all prayers are liturgical in the sense that the liturgy provides the seeds of contemplation that we take to personal prayer.

The Divine Liturgy, Vespers, Compline, Matins, Hours and other liturgical services sanctify each day. These services are composed largely of biblical Psalms and Canticles interspersed with hymns composed by the great hymnographers of the 7th -11th centuries. Devotions to the Theotokos include the richly

poetic Akathist Hymn, connected especially with the Great Fast, and the Paraklesis (or Office of Consolation), which is prayed in times of distress and during the Dormition Fast (August 1-14). Prayer services called molebens may be prayed for specific needs or in honor of the Theotokos or one of the saints.

Because of the communion of the saints no one is an only-child. By being a member of the Church we acknowledge our brothers and sisters in Christ are also God’s sons and daughters. We pray using a formula of words that the Church, as a community, is using because, in a sense, we are all praying together.



FOLLOWING THE 10 COMMANDMENTS

As fallen human beings, we have a remarkable propensity to justify our sinful actions, oftentimes convincing ourselves that a wrong action was actually good. Sometimes, because our intellect has become obscured by our disordered passions, the right decision or course of action isn’t clear to us. We need a roadmap that helps us make the right decisions according to God’s design and original plan for our lives.

This is exactly what the Ten Commandments are. They provide a sure guide for us, helping us to order our lives properly around the love of God, and the love of neighbor that flows from the love of God.

THE SEVEN MYSTERIES

The seven Mysteries continue God’s saving plan to “bring everything together under Christ” (cf. Ephesians 1:9–10). Each one of these Mysteries, therefore, makes that saving action present to us here and now (cf. Colossians 1:27).

Mysteries of Initiation

Baptism – Baptism initiates us into Christ’s Kingdom, making us heirs to that Kingdom. Through Baptism we die to sin and rise to life in Christ (Galatians 3:27), are reborn of water and spirit (John 3:5–6), cleansed of sin (Acts 22:16), and enlightened by the gift of faith (Acts 8:37).

Chrismation – Chrismation seals us as heirs of the Kingdom, giving us “the gift of the Holy Spirit,” which helps us live lives worthy of the Kingdom (cf. Hebrews 6:2; Acts 8:14–17; 19:6).

Eucharist – Christ nourishes us with His Body and Blood, helping us to mature in His image and grow in His likeness (John 6:51–58; Luke 22:19–20; Mark 14:22–25; Matthew 26:26–29).

Unlike the Roman tradition, the Byzantine tradition does not separate the three Mysteries of Initiation, but celebrates them simultaneously, whether the candidate is an infant or an adult.

Mysteries of Healing

Repentance – Proverbs 24:16 tells us that even virtuous people fall seven times. But Christ has given us the Mystery of Repentance to make His mercy and forgiveness always available (cf. John 20:21–23; James 5:14–17).

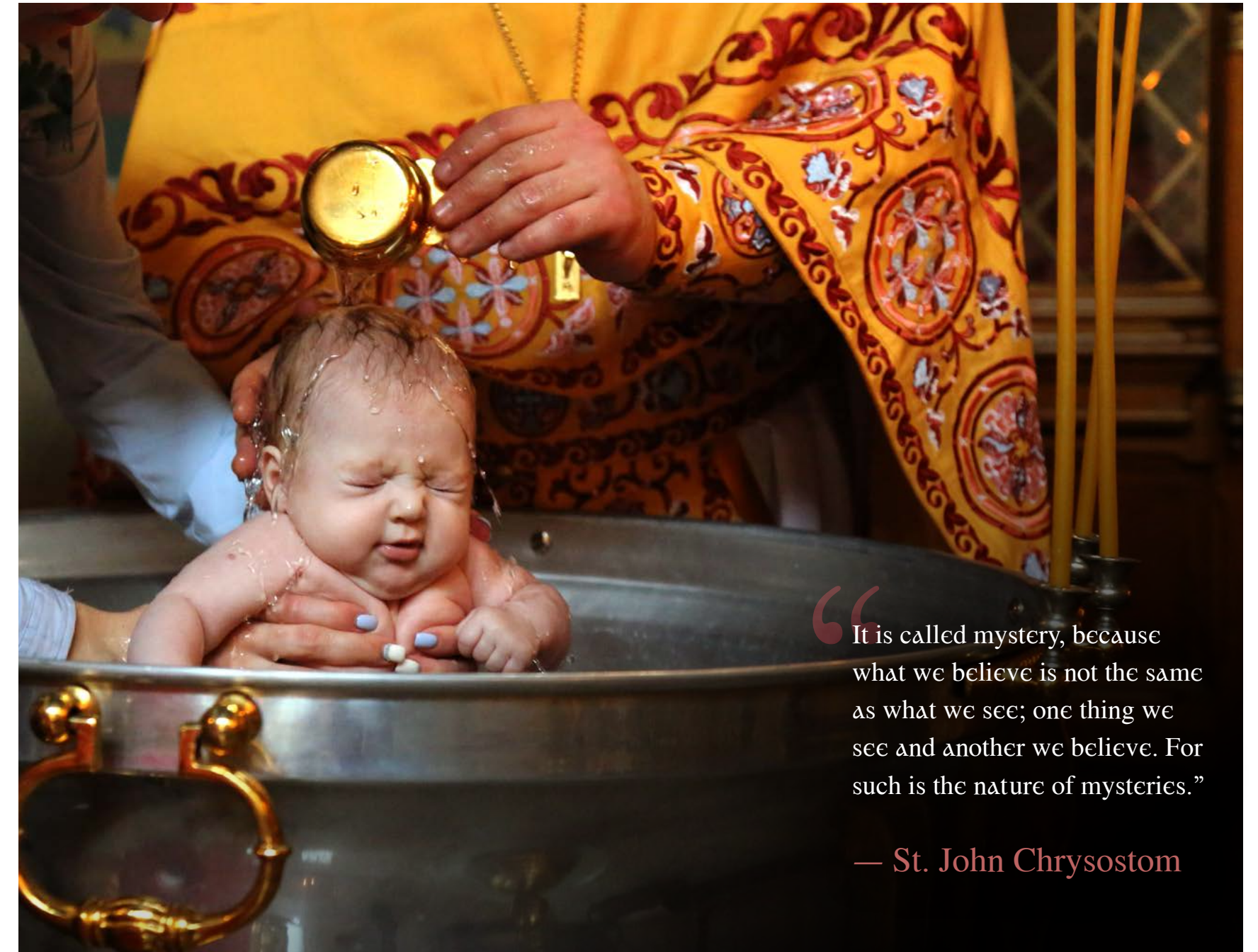
Holy Anointing – The Mystery of Holy Anointing was given to us so that our suffering in this life can be put in its proper perspective – the mystery of Christ’s victory over death (cf. James 5:14–15; Mark 6:13). The East has always offered the Mystery of Holy Anointing to any person suffering from illness of body, mind, or spirit.

Mysteries of Service

Marriage – Marriage is a natural relationship instituted by God from the beginning. But in Christ we see its deeper mystery as a revelation of Christ’s relationship to the Church, and as a living icon of the Holy Trinity (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:1–12; Ephesians 5:21–33).

Holy Orders – Christ established the priesthood so that the fruits of His death and Resurrection, made available through the Mysteries, would be made available to all mankind throughout the ages (Lk. 22:19; Mt. 28:18; John 20:22 – 23).

The East has maintained the ancient practice of ordaining married men to the priesthood, choosing to reserve the call to celibacy “for the sake of the kingdom” for the monastic life. Bishops are celibate.



“It is called mystery, because what we believe is not the same as what we see; one thing we see and another we believe. For such is the nature of mysteries.”

— St. John Chrysostom

“Whose sins you forgive
are forgiven them, and
whose sins you retain
are retained.”

— John 20:23

“Therefore confess your sins
to each other and pray for
each other so that you may
be healed.”

— James 5:16

CONFESSION

All Catholics may approach a Byzantine Catholic priest for the Sacrament of Repentance. Before approaching be sure to prepare yourself by making a good examination of conscience.

Then:

- Approach the priest who will be standing before the icon of Christ at the iconostasis.
- Express your desire to confess and receive absolution.
- State the sins for which you are seeking forgiveness.
- Be attentive as the priest offers some spiritual exhortation.
- Bow as the priest places the epitrachilion (stole) over your head, lays his hands on you, and prays the “Prayer of Absolution.”
- Respond “Amen” when he finishes the prayer.
- If the priest has assigned a penance, make sure to perform it accordingly.

“It is easier for the earth to exist
without the sun than without the
Holy Sacrifice of the Mass!”

— Padre Pio

THE DIVINE LITURGY

The Divine Liturgy is the central experience of Faith for Byzantine Catholics. Through it, we participate in the supernatural life, receive inspiration for our spiritual lives, and are catechized in a profound and foundational way. Simply meditating on the prayers of the Divine Liturgy totally immerses one in the mysteries of salvation and the teachings of the Church.

The Liturgy connects the whole Church – Her past, present and future, uniting us with all the saints and angels, as well as the believers from all times (the Pilgrim Church, Suffering Church and Glorified Church).



The Divine Liturgy is composed of three main parts:

- The **Prothesis** (or proskomedia), the service preparing the holy gifts
- The **Liturgy of the Catechumens**, or Liturgy of the Word
- The **Liturgy of the Faithful**, or Liturgy of the Eucharist

We have three Liturgies that are used throughout the year:

- The Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, celebrated on most Sundays throughout the year and most weekdays.

- The Divine Liturgy of St. Basil, celebrated only ten times during the liturgical year, most notably on the first five Sundays of Lent and Christmas Eve.
- The Divine Liturgy of St. Gregory the Dialogist, also known as the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, celebrated during the weekdays of Lent especially on Wednesdays and Fridays.

Any Catholics may attend the Divine Liturgy at a Byzantine Catholic Church, receive Holy Communion, and fulfill their Sunday Obligation or Feast Day Obligation.

SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN DIVINE LITURGY AND MASS

Similarities:

- For both traditions, the Liturgy/Mass is the primary communal service of the Universal Church
- Every Sunday is treated as a “weekly-Easter”
- There are two main elements: the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist
- Singing the Psalms
- A homily that reflects on the readings or a liturgical theme
- The recitation of the Creed
- Praying the “Our Father”
- Partaking in the Mystery of Holy Eucharist

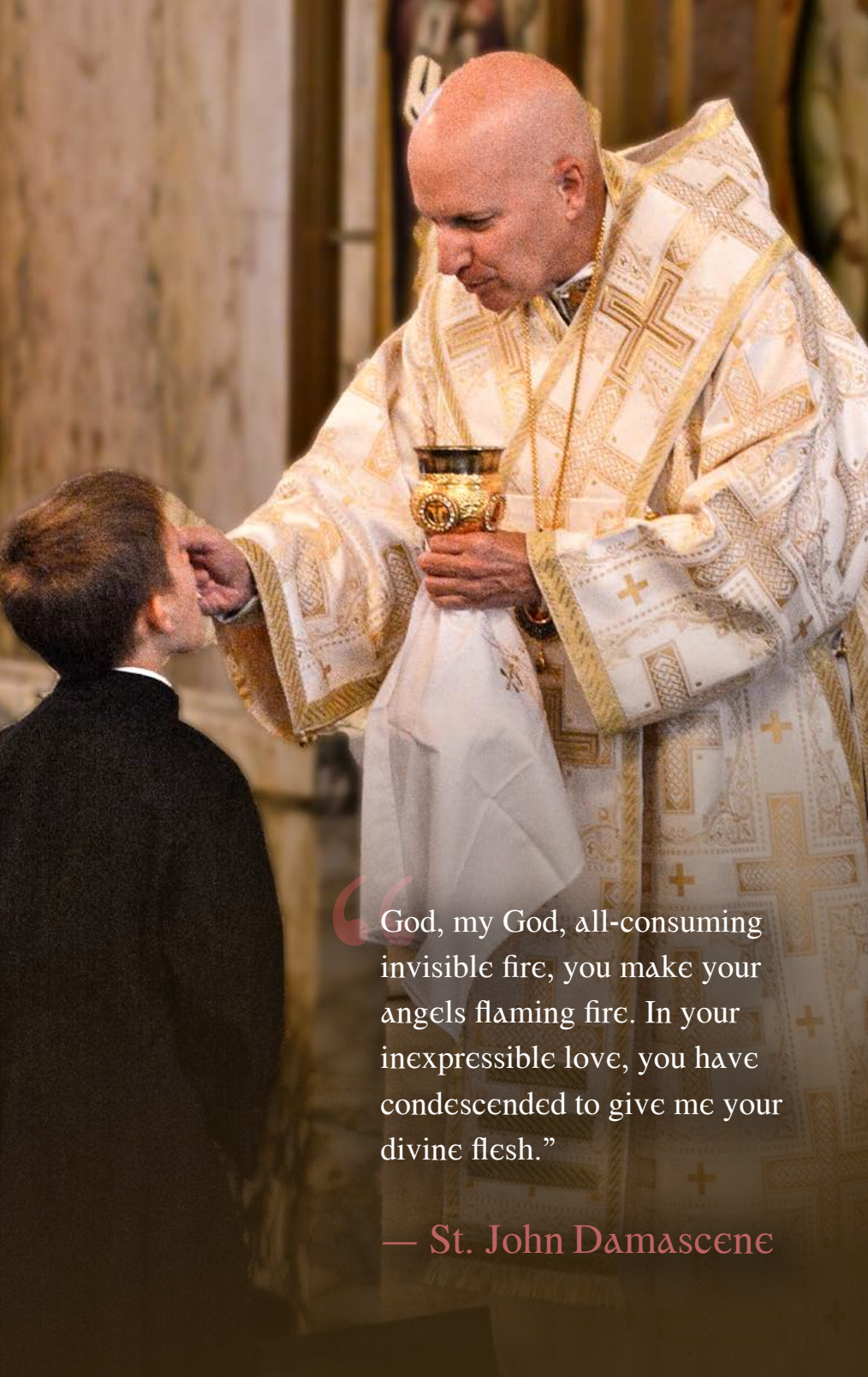
Differences:

- Annual cycle of readings vs. 3 year cycle of readings in the Roman Catholic Church
- Extensive use of Incense
- Entirely sung Liturgy
- Emphasis on making present the Kingdom of God on earth
- The priest faces the same direction as the people, liturgical East
- The Epiclesis: the calling down of the Holy Spirit to transform the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ.
- Infants can receive Holy Communion



“Everyone ought to examine himself, before he eats of the bread and drinks from the cup.”

— 1 Cor. 11:28



“God, my God, all-consuming invisible fire, you make your angels flaming fire. In your inexpressible love, you have condescended to give me your divine flesh.”

— St. John Damascene

GUIDELINES FOR RECEIVING HOLY COMMUNION

You may approach for Holy Communion if:

- You are member of a Catholic Church.
- You made a sacramental confession at least during Easter or Christmas this past year.
- You attend Mass or the Divine Liturgy regularly.
- Your lifestyle is consistent with the teaching of the Catholic Church.
- You have kept the liturgical fast – at least one hour with no food and drink prior to Divine Liturgy – water and medicine does not break the fast.
- You have been in church from the beginning or at least heard the Gospel.

If you are unable to receive Communion, you are still welcome to approach the priest for a blessing (please indicate that you want to receive the blessing only when you approach).

If one publicly remains in a grave sin (e.g. living in adultery, promoting abortion) that person should not approach for Communion until he/she is reconciled to God.

Byzantine Catholics receive Holy Communion under the forms of bread and wine mixed together and administered on a spoon. As you approach the priest:

- Remain standing.
- Please tell him your name so that the prayer can be personalized for you.
- Tilt your head back, widely open your mouth, but do not extend your tongue.
- No response is required for the prayer.
- The priest will use a spoon to retrieve Holy Communion from the chalice, and will drop it into your mouth without touching you with the spoon.
- Please do not close your lips upon the spoon.
- Consume Holy Communion and return to your pew.

Once you have returned to your pew, engage in silent prayer until all other communicants have received Holy Communion.

“For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.” In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.” For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.”

— I Corinthians,
11:23-26





YEARLY CYCLE OF READINGS

In the Byzantine tradition, readings follow a one-year cycle taken from the “*Apostol*” and the “*Evangelion*.”

The first reading is taken from the “*Apostol*,” a selection from the writings of St. Paul and the other Apostles.

The “*Evangelion*” is the book that contains the selections from the Gospels, arranged in the order that they are read throughout the year.

The readings contained in these books are arranged according to themes of the liturgical year. During the year we read the entire New Testament except for Apocalypse.

LITURGICAL CHANT

All services are sung with the full and active participation of the congregation. When we are attentive to the words we sing, we realize that we are truly singing our theology.

The Byzantine-Ruthenian Catholic Church uses a unique style of chanting called “prostopinije.” This ancient style of chant developed in the Carpathian Mountains and is noted for its rich spirituality and beautiful simplicity. Because it follows the rhythmic cadences of speech, it is easily learned and suitable for congregational singing.

In the singing of the liturgical services, the congregation is led by a single cantor or a group of cantors. The singing can alternate from a single voice, to alternating groups, or the entire congregation singing at once.



“He who sings —
prays twice.”

— St. Augustine

LITURGICAL POSTURES AND GESTURES

Byzantine Catholics ‘glorify God with their bodies’ (1 Corinthians 6:20) through different postures for prayer and worship:

- **Standing:** It is the normal posture for prayer. In the Byzantine Catholic Tradition, standing is a symbol of the resurrection. Byzantine Catholics stand for most of the service. In America, pews have become common through the influence of other traditions.
- **Prostration:** There are two basic kinds of prostrations, known as Great Metania, and Small Metania. Both are preceded by the Sign of the Cross.
 - **Great Metania:** the worshipper prostrates the whole body, throwing the weight forward onto the hands and touching the ground with the forehead.
 - **Small Metania:** The worshipper bows from the waist, touching the ground with the fingers of the right hand.
- **Bows (reverence):** At certain times the worshipper merely bows the head; sometimes this is accompanied by the Sign of the Cross.



LITURGICAL COLORS AND MEANING

From the iconography to the priest's vestments, the Byzantine Divine Liturgy is a feast of colors. Traditionally there is no set "color scheme" for the Byzantine tradition, apart from the guidelines for when light colors are to be worn, and when dark colors are to be worn.

Today, the **Byzantine-Ruthenian Catholic Churches in the U.S. follow this system of liturgical colors:**



**GOLD, WHITE,
OR SILVER**

**Symbol of
God's light**
Sundays and
Feasts of Our Lord



BLUE

**Color of the sky for
the woman who bore
Him Whom the heavens
cannot contain**
Feasts for the Mother of God



GREEN

**Color of plants and
symbol of new life**
Season of Pentecost



**RED OR
DARK PURPLE**

Color of blood
Presanctified Liturgies
during Great Lent, Sunday
of the Holy Cross (the third
Sunday of Lent), Good Friday,
Procession of the Cross,
and Feast of the Holy Cross





BISHOP'S INSIGNIA

- 1:** Miter
- 2:** Cross
- 3:** Omophorion
- 4:** Crozier or Paterissa (Bishop's Staff)
- 5:** Encolpion

LITURGICAL VESTMENTS

- 6:** Sticharion
- 7:** Epitrachelion (Priest's Stole)
- 8:** Phelonion
- 9:** Orarion (Deacon's Stole)



ICONS AND ICONOGRAPHY

Icons play a central role in the liturgical and spiritual lives of Byzantine Catholics. They adorn the walls and sanctuaries of our Churches and are frequently carried in processions. It is not uncommon for a Byzantine Catholic to have an “icon corner” in their home designated for prayer.

Rich theology of icons manifests to us something of the hidden spiritual realities that they represent. Icons are windows into the spiritual world. They help us to look into eternity and they make the historical events of our salvation, as revealed in Scripture, present to us. They are truly “theology in color.”



Pictures depict children making icons for the Sunday of Icons

Through their many symbols, icons allow us to touch the mysteries they represent. They tell us the story of what happened in the events they depict. It is common to hear of someone “writing” icons rather than “painting” them.

We do not worship the icons, but only persons they depict. As a picture of a loved one helps us to keep him or her close to our heart, so too

do the icons helps in our prayer to be in the presence of God, to feel close to Him, the Mother of God, and all the saints and angels. They help us to know that God, the Theotokos, and the saints and angels are always close to us.

“The invisible things of God have been made visible.”

— John Damascus

The Veneration of Icons

- Approach the icon and make two bows
- Kiss the icon on feet or hands (never the face)
- You may place a candle before the icon
- Make an additional metania and then depart

During Lent, a complete prostration to the ground may be made instead of the metania bow. Before entering the pew, the custom is normally to bow to the altar and make the Sign of the Cross.

“The icon hovers on the frontier between appearance and reality. The spiritual world surrounds us. But because of our immaturity we do not detect this kingdom of splendors.”

— Father Pavel Florensky

“Icons are opened books to remind us of God.”

— Leontius of Cyprus

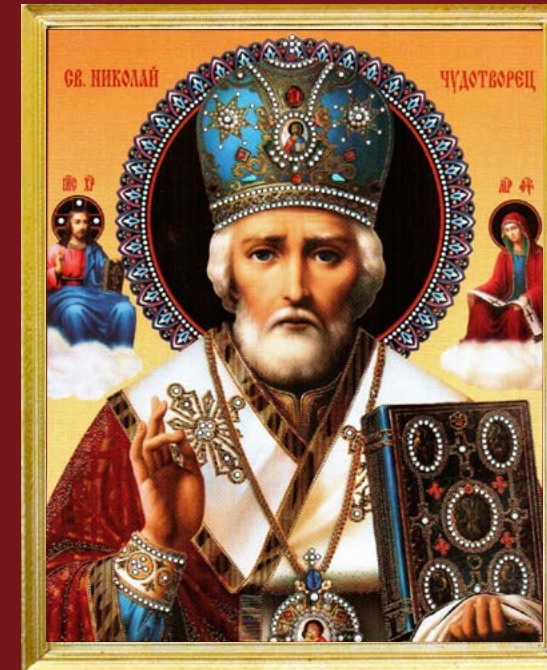
“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”

— Genesis 1:27

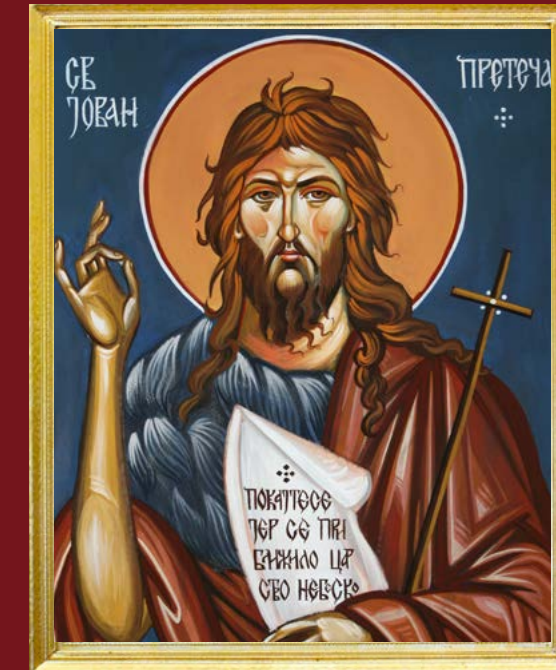
These are just a few examples of the most popular icons found in the Byzantine Catholic Churches

ICON OF MOTHER OF PERPETUAL HELP

One of the most beloved icons in the Byzantine-Ruthenian tradition.



ICON OF
ST. NICHOLAS



ICON OF
ST. JOHN
THE BAPTIST



ICON OF
STS. CYRIL AND
METHODIUS



THE LITURGICAL YEAR

The Byzantine liturgical year begins on September 1 by recognizing God as the Creator and Sustainer of all:

O maker of all creation, under whose control are the seasons and the years, being Our Lord, bless the beginning of the year with abundance and, through the intercession of the Mother of God, preserve our Country and the people in peace, and save us.

The Byzantine liturgical calendar is inherited from the Old Testament and can be divided into three “seasons.” The Season of the Nativity is “fixed,” meaning that its dates do not change from one year to another. The Seasons of Pascha (Easter) and Pentecost are “moveable,” meaning that they vary from year to year depending on the date determined for Easter.

Although each Feast Day is an opportunity to enter more fully into the mystery of our salvation, these 12 have particular significance.

Three of the Feasts are dependent on the date of Pascha:

- Palm Sunday
- The Ascension of Our Lord
- Pentecost

The other nine Feasts are part of the “fixed cycle”:

- The Nativity of the Theotokos
- The Exaltation of the Holy Cross
- The Presentation of the Theotokos
- The Nativity of the Lord (Christmas)
- Theophany of the Lord
- The Presentation of the Lord
- The Annunciation
- The Transfiguration
- The Dormition

You’ll notice that we do not include Pascha in our list of twelve Great Feasts. This is because Pascha is above all feast days.

FASTS AND REGULATIONS

Fasting is an important part of the Byzantine faith, finding its roots in the Scriptures (Matthew 6:16). The Byzantine Eparchy of Passaic observes four major seasons of fasting.

- **The Phillip's Fast**, the forty day fasting period preparing for Christmas, November, 15 - December 24.
- **The Great Fast**, the forty day fasting period before Pascha, Clean Monday - Palm Friday.
- **The Apostles Fast**, the variable 8-42 days fasting period, All Saints Monday - June 28.
- **The Dormition Fast**, the fourteen day fasting period before the Dormition, August, 1 - August, 14.

Types of fasting

Simple fast or abstinence forbids the use of meat or meat products, but not of egg or dairy. It is observed on all Wednesdays and Fridays of the Great Fast.

Simple abstinence or equivalent penance is observed on all Fridays of the year except during the festive observances as found in Typicon.

Strict Fast forbids the use of meat, eggs and dairy products and is to be observed on Pure Monday and Great Friday.

Strict fast as well as Simple fast or abstinence binds all the faithful of the Eparchy of Passaic who receive the Eucharist.

Dispensations

Expectant and nursing mothers, infants and those who are in poor health are exempt from the laws of strict fast. Pastors, for a just cause, may grant to individuals and families a dispensation or commutation of the prescribed strict or simple fasts to another equivalent penance.

Non-Fasting periods:

- The week following the Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee
- Bright Week (Week following Pascha)
- Pentecost Week
- The Post-Feast of the Nativity of the Lord, December 25 – January 4.
- Major feasts of the Lord and the Theotokos if they fall on a fast day.

The liturgical texts tell us that above all we fast to be reminded of our desire for God and our dependence upon His providence for our sustenance.

The spirituality of the Great Fast is reflected above all by the *Prayer of St. Ephrem*, which is traditionally prayed daily.

*O Lord and Master of my life,
Spare me from the spirit of apathy and meddling,
Of idle chatter and love of power.
Instead, grant to me, Your servant,
The spirit of integrity and humility,
Of patience and love.
Yes, O Lord and God,
Grant me the grace to be aware of my sins
And not to judge others,
For You are blessed,
Now and forever.
Amen*



BYZANTINE TRADITIONS

Throughout the year, the Good News is brought home through traditions that celebrate the various feasts.

The following are just a few examples:

Christmas Eve

Families often prepare special dishes for the Holy Supper (Velija), specific to their country and family traditions. The Holy Supper is a fasting meal with 7 or 12 symbolic courses without meat or dairy products. Carols are sung, and vertep (a re-enactment of the Nativity) is often performed.

Blessing of the houses with Holy water from Theophany

Water is blessed on January 6 and then brought to the homes of the faithful for a blessing by the priest.

This tradition has two meanings – spiritual and pastoral: 1) to ask in prayer God’s blessing upon the house and its inhabitants for the upcoming year and 2) to give the priest an opportunity to learn more about the family, their particular needs, their joys and sorrows, as well as for the family to provide an opportunity to learn more about their priest.

Clean Monday

The beginning of the Great Fast (in the Byzantine Catholic Church there is no Ash Wednesday). The night before there is a Vespers Service with the Rite of Forgiveness, where the priest asks forgiveness from the congregation and each parishioner asks forgiveness from the priest and other members of the parish family.

Sunday of Icons - the First Sunday of Great Fast

Children at our parishes during religious education classes are taught about the iconography and have a procession in the church followed by the blessing of the icons to commemorate the memory of the final defeat of Iconoclasm and the restoration of the icons to the churches in 843 AD.

Flowery (Palm) Sunday Traditions

We recall our Lord’s entry into Jerusalem six days before His Passion by blessing branches. Since palm trees do not grow in Eastern Europe, budding willow branches have become traditional instead. These branches are kept in family homes and brought to the graves of loved ones.

“Open to me the doors of repentance, O giver of life as we worship in your temple this morning. Teach us how to purify the temples of our bodies, and in your compassion, purify me by the goodness of your mercies.”

From the Matins for the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee





Pascha Blessing of Baskets

Since we fast from meat and dairy products throughout Great Lent, we show our joy on Pascha by bringing these products with us for a special blessing after the Pascha Liturgy.

This blessing also hearkens back to the Old Testament feast of Passover, where the Hebrew people were commanded by Moses to eat the Passover lamb, which prefigured the “Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.”

A special symbol of the Resurrection is the pysanky – the elaborately decorated Pascha eggs of the Slavic tradition.

Pascha bread called “paska.” This sweet cake-like bread reminds us of Christ, the true bread who remains with us until the end of time.

Included are meat products such as ham, pork, lamb, or, more commonly, sausage. These symbolize the sacrificial animals of the Old Testament, which prefigure the sacrifice of Christ.

Dairy products like butter or cheese remind us of the prosperity and peace of Christ that was foretold by the Prophets.

Bright Monday, the second day after Easter

This day symbolizes cleansing. People gather around the Church to sing Pascha songs and children splash each other with water from head to toes.

Pentecost

The Church and homes are decorated with green colors, branches of the trees, as we celebrate the descent of the Holy Spirit, who gives us life.

Other Blessings

Candles are blessed on the feast of the Meeting of the Lord with Simeon (February 2). The first fruits of the season are blessed on the Transfiguration of the Lord (August 6). Flowers are blessed on the Dormition of the Theotokos (August 15). In each case, the items blessed by the priest at the Liturgy are brought home to be enjoyed by the family and shared with others.

Anointing with Oil

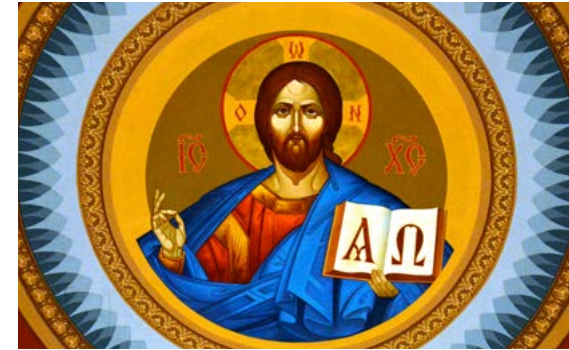
Anointing with Holy Oil (Mirovaniye) is a sacramental blessing that takes place for each solemn Feast, usually at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy of the week when the feast is celebrated.

This oil is applied to the forehead by the priest with the Sign of the Cross, while proclaiming the appropriate greeting for the season. In response, you should proclaim the appropriate response and then receive a piece of blessed bread.

Greetings and responses include:

- Christ is among us! He is and ever shall be!
- Christ is Born! Glorify Him!
- Christ is Baptized! In the Jordan!
- Christ is Risen! Indeed He is Risen!
- Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory Forever!





BYZANTINE CHURCH ARCHITECTURE

Byzantine Churches face east and the whole structure follows the floorplan of the Tabernacle (Exodus 25) and the Temple (Hebrews 9). They are traditionally divided into three parts, the narthex (entryway), the nave (where the congregation gathers), and the sanctuary. An iconostasis always divides the sanctuary from the narthex.

The sanctuary symbolizes the heaven, while the nave - the earth. The “cupola,” or “dome” above the nave symbolizes the sky and has an image of Christ the Pantokrator to remind us that He is our head and we are His body.



The Byzantine Sanctuary is the Holiest place in a Byzantine Catholic Church. It is located behind the altar screen called **iconostasis**. It contains the following:

Altar table: It is located in the center, just behind the Holy doors or Beautiful gate. On top of the altar is the tabernacle, the book of the Gospel, and the antimension. Behind the altar a candelabra containing seven candles is found.

Tabernacle or artophorion: It is the sacred vessel used to reserve the Eucharist for the sick;

it is usually shaped in the form of a Church. The presence of Christ in the tabernacle is signaled by a vigil lamp.

Table of Preparation or Prothesis: This table is found in the sanctuary to the left of the altar. This is the table used for the service of preparing the prosphora (bread) and wine; this service is known as proskomedia or office of oblation. On top of the prothesis rest the chalice (cup), the diskos (plate), the lance (liturgical knife), a liturgical spoon (for the distribution of Holy Communion), the asterisk

or star (a metal stand that holds the cover for the Eucharistic bread or prosphora).

Antimension: A rectangular piece of silk or linen decorated with the image of Christ’s entombment and the image of the four Evangelists that is blessed by the bishop on Holy Thursday. A small relic of a martyr is sewn into it. During the Divine Liturgy (Eucharist), the antimension is placed on the center of the altar. The antimension serves as an altar in case of pastoral necessity and the Eucharist cannot be celebrated without it. Only the priest, deacon or bishop can touch the antimension when fully vested.

“To go in a spirit of prayer from one place to another, from one city to another, in the area marked especially by God’s intervention, helps us not only to live our life as a journey, but also gives us a vivid sense of a God who has gone before us and leads us on, who himself set out on man’s path, a God who does not look down on us from on high, but who became our travelling companion.”

— Pope St. John Paul II,
Letter concerning
pilgrimage to places
linked to the history
of salvation



MAIN SITES FOR PILGRIMAGES FOR THE EPARCHY OF PASSAIC

Places for Pilgrimages:

- **Uniontown, PA:** Sisters of St. Basil the Great Our Lady of Perpetual Help Province
- **Sloatsburg, NY:** Sister Servants of Mary Immaculate
- **Carpathian Village, PA:** St. Nicholas Shrine
- **Sugarloaf, PA:** Holy Annunciation Monastery
- **Sybertsville, PA:** Holy Dormition Franciscan Friary



CREDIT

We thank the following people for permission to use their icons in this book:

- Peter Dziuba and Ognian Denev
- Christina Dochwat

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Beneath your compassion
we take refuge,
O Virgin Theotokos.
Despise not our prayers
in our need but deliver us
from dangers,
for you alone are
pure and blessed.



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Catholic Eparchy
OF PASSAIC

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