



# EPARCHIAL NEWSLETTER

## Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Van Nuys

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CHRIST IS BORN! GLORIFY HIM!

CHRISTOS RAZDAJETSJA! SLAVITE JEHO!



*Do not be afraid!  
For behold, I proclaim to you good  
news of great joy that will be for  
all the people.*

*For today in the city  
of David  
a Savior has been  
born for you who is  
Messiah and Lord.*

*Luke 2:10-11*

Christ is Born!

Dear Friends and Family,

*I*t is winter in the deserts, mountains, and coast of the West. The peaks of the mountains are covered with fresh snow of the season. Days are shorter. Night air is crisper. Creatures prepare for the new season. Life's rhythm slows and awaits winter's passing.

For another year, troops will again celebrate the Lord's birth far away from their homeland. Fires and rain have changed the course of many lives this year. Many in the world are homeless, lonely and afraid.

Amid the world's winter darkness, we find a Savior has been born. And we are told, "Do not be afraid!"



As Savior, Jesus is looked upon as the one who rescues humanity from sin. As Savior, Jesus delivers all of humanity from the condition of alienation from God. He has been born for us. He has been born for all. He saves us from our sins and a world filled with darkness. He is the Light among us. He who has been born into this world is our Savior and Redeemer. "Emmanuel! God is with us!" He is our Light. Our Hope is among us.

Today, let us rejoice and herald the King of Kings. May we be a light to each other and reflect the light of God's ever-present Love to one another. Let His Light shine within us not only this Christmas but every day throughout the New Year.

I extend my special blessings to each of you and your families this Christmas. May your hearts be filled with the everlasting peace Jesus brings to us on Christmas morning.

*William C Skurla*

Most Reverend William C Skurla, DD  
Bishop of the Eparchy of Van Nuys

## *A Word from the Safe Environment Coordinator...*

The Eparchy's education of the Safe Environment Program began on September 28, 2003 at St. Stephen Pro-Cathedral in Phoenix. The majority of the parishes have already participated in the Program including the parishioners, parents, catechists, paid staff and volunteers.

As a new member of the Eparchy of Van Nuys' Pastoral Center staff, these presentations have given me an opportunity to visit with the parishioners in each parish. Warm and gracious hospitality, whether it be providing transportation or accommodations has been superb. The little added touch of hospitality with coffee and doughnuts or a potluck dinner before or after the presentation was most welcome and appreciated.

I am truly grateful for this opportunity to meet all of you who have welcomed me into your parish community. May the information I have given you make our parish communities a Safe Environment for our children.

Sincerely,  
Sister Joanne Lickvar OSBM,  
Safe Environment Coordinator



*Clergy Retreat 2003: Clergy and Religious from Eparchy of Van Nuys gathered in Malibu, CA for an annual retreat at Serra Retreat Center from October 6-10.*

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## *Music commission holds first meeting*

**By Father Michael Hayduk,  
Secretary treasurer,  
Intereparcial Liturgy Commission**

PITTSBURGH The Intereparcial Music Commission met for the first time on May 22, 2003. The most recent meeting was held December 3-4. This group existed originally as part of the Intereparcial Commission of Sacred Liturgy, but at the Council of Hierarchs meeting in January of this year it was decided that this would become a separate commission.

The episcopal chairman is Bishop Andrew Pataki of the Eparchy of Passaic (NJ). Each eparchy is represented. The members are professor J. Michael Thompson of the Archeparchy of Pittsburgh, professor Daniel J. Kavka of the Eparchy of Passaic, professor Nicolette M. Boros for the Eparchy of Parma and Father Robert M. Pipta for the Eparchy of Van Nuys. All members were present for the first meeting.

Thompson's settings of the work of the Intereparcial Liturgy Commission were discussed. Other members shared their backgrounds and various perspectives on the use of chant in our church. An intensive and thorough review of the music of the enarxis (from the litany of peace through "Holy God") of the Divine Liturgy was begun.

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## *Report of Compliance: A Safe Environment*

The Eparchy of Van Nuys was notified in mid-November of full compliance with the U.S. Bishops' "Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People."

The compliance concluded September's audit by the Gavin Group of Boston, MA. The audit focused on specific eparchial policies established regarding sexual abuse of minors. The Group also reviewed the eparchy's safe environment programs and pastoral outreach programs.

Through continuing education of clergy, religious, catechists, employees and volunteers, the Eparchy's commitment is to provide a safe environment for all.



## Bishops make Pilgrimage to Rome

This fall, new bishops were invited to attend a Pilgrimage to the Tomb of St Peter. The Colloquium for bishops was held in Rome, Italy from September 10-19, 2003. Bishop William C Skurla, DD, Eparch of Van Nuys and Eparch of Parma, Most Reverend John Kudrick, DD, were among the attendees. More than 100 bishops from around the world were present.

The Colloquium covered diverse topics including *The Bishop as Guardian of the Faith, Sanctifier of His People, and The Church's Social Doctrine*. The conferences gave the bishops not only the opportunity to meet with each other, but also provided a beneficial contribution to their ministry as bishops.

An audience with Pope John Paul II was one highlight of their time spent in Rome. Bishops William and John traveled with the rest of the group to Castel Gandolfo,



Bishop William greets John Paul II, Pope of Rome

residence of the Pope, to have the opportunity to meet privately with the pontiff.

Time for worship and private prayer were provided. Free time for the Bishops included a brief sightseeing tour of the Eternal City. Bishop William and Bishop John visited with General Superior, Sister Alphonsa Danovich, OSBM and the Sisters of St Basil in Rome before their return home to the U. S.



Bishops united in prayer at Basilica of St Peter, Rome

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## USCCB GENERAL MEETING

**WASHINGTON** Members of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops opened their fall general meeting in Washington, D.C. by hearing a challenge from their president to direct “the energy of the whole Church” to the eradication of sexual abuse and the healing of its victims. Bishop Wilton D. Gregory of Belleville, IL serves as president of the USCCB. The Eastern Catholic Bishops of the U.S. including the bishops of the Metropolia met during the conference to discuss common problems and to schedule future activities.

The conference was held in Washington from Nov 9-13 and was televised on EWTN.

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## Catechetical Workshop

On November 22, Reverend Jack Custer of the *Byzantine Catholic Seminary of Saints Cyril and Methodius*, Pittsburgh, PA, presented a catechetical workshop, *The Bible for Beginners*. The workshop took place at St. Thomas the Apostle Byzantine Catholic Church, Gilbert, AZ. Father Custer is Dean and chair of the Biblical Studies department at the Seminary.

Over thirty persons representing parishes in Gilbert, Phoenix and Tucson were present for the all-day workshop. The day closed with the celebration of Great Vespers. The participants were delighted with the presentation and invited Father Custer to return during the Great Fast.



## Bishop's Appeal 2004

The annual Bishop's Appeal of the Eparchy of Van Nuys will begin on January 6, 2004.

Information will be mailed to you soon.  
Goal per household is a pledge of \$200.

**“...with your support of the Bishop's Appeal,  
you respond to the Lord!”**

## Beatification of Bishop Basil Hopko

*“Faithful to Christ, Faithful to the Church”*

Byzantine Ruthenian Catholic Bishop Basil Hopko was beatified and declared Blessed on September 14, 2003 by Pope John Paul II during services in Bratislava, Slovakia. Solemn translation of the relics of the newly beatified Bishop Martyr took place in Presov, Slovakia on Saturday, September 20.

Among the concelebrating hierarchs present at the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy in Presov were Bishops William C Skurla, DD, Eparch of Van Nuys and John M Kudrick, DD, Eparch of Parma. Ignace Moussa I Cardinal Daoud, Prefect of the Congregation of the Eastern Churches presided in the place of the Holy Father. Bishop Jan Babjak of Presov was the main celebrant.

After Liturgy in the town square, the relics were transferred in procession led by clergy, religious and laity to St John Cathedral, Presov.

The process of Blessed Bishop Basil Hopko’s Cause of Beatification and Canonization began in the U.S. in 1986. Due to the collapse of communism in the early 1990s, the process was then transferred to the Presov Eparchy in 1996 by the late Archbishop Judson Procyk, Metropolitan of Pittsburgh.

The Feast of Blessed Basil Hopko will be commemorated each year on May 11, the date of his Episcopal consecration.



*Blessed Bishop-Martyr Basil Hopko  
1904 - 1976*

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## Tucson Hosts Slavic Festival

On Saturday, October 4, Saint Melany Byzantine Catholic Church of Tucson hosted its second Annual Slavic Octoberfest. Food, music and dance of Slavic culture and the spiritual treasures of Byzantine Catholic Christianity was celebrated and shared with all who attended.

This year, under a southwestern-turquoise sky and mild temperatures, over one thousand people came to enjoy dance and music exhibitions. These represented over a dozen Eastern European countries. The Kaliny Dancers, University of Arizona’s Balalaika Orchestra, Croatian, Polish, Czech and Saint Melany’s own Rusyn Dancers were some of the ensembles that entertained the crowd. Featured traditional foods were Kielbasa, Pirohy, Halupki and Speedies (lamb kabobs). Kolach and Kolachky pastries were also available. The festival offered a lovable mascot, Basil the bear. Traditional crafts of Carpathian wood carving, Icon writing and Pysanky (egg painting),

games and puppet shows for the children rounded the event. Over 200 people toured the Church led by Deacons Michael Milazzo and James Hill. They came away touched spiritually by the sights, smells and sounds of the Byzantine Faith.

The day drew to a close with an evening of Polka dancing under the desert stars and the grand prize drawing for the \$1,000.00 top prize. Proceeds from the festival will be used toward parish improvements. The event was broadcast live by KSAZ radio and the Mayor of Tucson proclaimed the first week in October as official “TUCSON SLAVIC FESTIVAL WEEK.” Among the distinguished visitors were Bishop William Skurla and representatives of the Mexican Consulate.

This yearly event falls on the first Saturday of October. If you are planning a fall trip to Tucson for 2004, circle your calendars for Festival 2004.





*Bishop William addresses "Alive in Christ" boys*

## **"ALIVE IN CHRIST!"**

**by Rev Robert M Pipta**

The Eparchy of Van Nuys Vocations office hosted its first "Alive in Christ" Ascetical Boot Camp retreat for young men from the 7<sup>th</sup> to the 10<sup>th</sup> of August. Youth campers, young adult team leaders, dads, and clergy brought the total number of attendees to 64. Participants came from throughout the Eparchy and represented communities in San Diego, Anaheim, Fontana, Newberry Springs, Las Vegas, Phoenix, Gilbert, Tucson, and Albuquerque. Significant financial sponsorship came from Saint Gabriel Church of Las Vegas and the Serra Club of Gallup, New Mexico.

The event was coordinated by Byzantine Catholic dads Luke Macik and Matt Blain of New Mexico. Fr. Robert Pipta of Las Vegas served as director. The mountains of the Cibola National Forest near Gallup, New Mexico were the perfect setting for all to reflect on God's will in their lives. In addition to the "Tabor" campsite, dads from Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Albuquerque built a Shrine dedicated to Blessed Theodore Romzha, complete with iconostasis.

Workshops throughout the weekend included topics on holiness, the life of Bishop Theodore Romzha, penance, the Jesus Prayer, and the vocations of marriage, monasticism, and priesthood. Liturgical services included compline (followed by silence and sleep), matins, vespers, moleben, and Divine Liturgy. These reinforced the potential in the young Byzantine Catholics to become holy, prayerful, and active in the Church.

Nicholas Weil of Anaheim, age 14, described his favorite events: "At the all-night Vigil, clergy began praying at 10:30 pm. Teams were assigned an hour to pray. Clergy ended the Vigil at 6:30 am and prepared for 7:30 Divine Liturgy. It was exciting to think that all night long there would be someone praying!"

The hike to the ridge was another favorite. A story was told about a man who devoted his life completely to prayer. The Pilgrim was able to meld the Jesus prayer with his heartbeat and breathing, so when he took a breath or his heart beat he would be saying the Jesus prayer." John Danovich, age 9 from Phoenix, was so impressed that he said the Jesus prayer over 1000 times, according to his mother!

Through the weekend, there was plenty of time for "Altar Servers in Jeopardy" and "Theological World Series." Other activities included "Sharks and Minnows" and "Capture the Flag." On Saturday night, team skits and roasted marshmallows were enjoyed around a campfire.

Bishop William gave Sunday's talk titled "Discernment and Serving the Church." Bishop answered many questions asked by the youth at camp about discernment. They concerned vocations, clerical formation, the seminary, ordinations and the Church.

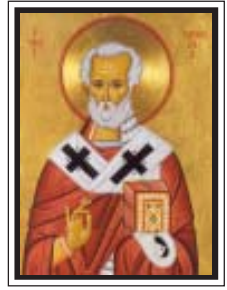
Sunday's Divine Liturgy was celebrated by Bishop William. Joining the retreatants in worship were faithful from the Gallup Outreach associated with the Albuquerque community.



*"Saint Michael's Men" won the most points during the weekend. Each was presented with an icon from Bishop William Skurla.*

# EPARCHIAL CALENDAR

- November 5** Pastoral Visitation: **Annunciation Parish, Anaheim, CA**
- November 11** Pastoral Visitation: **St Basil the Great, Los Gatos, CA**
- November 12-13** Pastoral Visitation: **St Melany, Tucson, AZ**
- November 18** Pastoral Visitation: **St Irene, Portland, OR**
- November 19** Pastoral Visitation: **St George, Olympia, WA**
- December 2** Pastoral Visitation: **Holy Angels, San Diego, CA**
- December 6** **Feast Day of St Nicholas of Myra**  
**St. Stephen Pro-Cathedral, Phoenix, AZ**  
Annual Family Celebration sponsored by **GCU Lodge #999**  
**Liturgy: 5:00 PM** followed by dinner at 6:30 PM
- December 12** **Feast Day of Our Lady of Guadalupe**
- December 13-14** Pastoral Visitation: **Cathedral of St. Mary, Sherman Oaks, CA**
- December 14** **St. Nicholas Dinner: St. Nicholas of Myra Church, Fontana, CA**
- December 25** **Nativity of Our Lord**
- December 27 - 28** Pastoral Visitation: **Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Albuquerque, NM**
- December 28** **Ordination of Michael O'Loughlin to Holy Order of the Sub-Diaconate**
- Dec 30 - Jan 3** **Eparchy of Van Nuys Winter Youth Retreat: St. Nicholas of Myra Church, Fontana, CA**
- January 6** **Theophany - Baptism of Our Lord**  
**Beginning of Bishop's Appeal 2004**
- January 17 - 18** Pastoral Visitation: **St Stephen Pro-Cathedral, Phoenix, AZ**



*St Nicholas of Myra*  
*Feast Day: December 6*  
*Patron Saint of Children,*  
*Travelers, Byzantine*  
*Faithful*



*Happy Holidays*  
*from the*  
*Pastoral Center Staff*

*Best Wishes*  
*for a Happy New Year*  
*2004*

O Mother of the Americas,  
imprint Jesus' name upon our  
hearts,  
just as you  
wove your image upon cactus  
cloth. Teach your children to  
cry out: O Christ Our God, our  
hope, glory to you.

*Feast Day*  
*Our Lady of Guadalupe*  
*December 12*

