



EPARCHIAL NEWSLETTER

Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Van Nuys

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Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory Forever!

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Byzantine Church Inaugurates Year for Vocations

The Vocation Directors and Metropolitan Archbishop Basil Schott with the support of Bishops of the Byzantine Ruthenian Metropolitan Church celebrated the beginning of a special year of prayer for vocations at the annual Labor Day Pilgrimage to Our Lady of Perpetual Help at Mount Saint Macrina in Uniontown, PA. The traveling icon, "I Have Chosen You" was specially designed for this program.

The Pilgrim Vocation Icon was distributed to representatives of each of the four Eparchies during the annual Labor Day pilgrimage. Icons and prayer programs were mailed to each of the parishes and missions throughout the Metropolia. The parish icon will travel from home to home to encourage prayers.

Vocation is the result of the Christian community's active prayer that "the master of the harvest will send out laborers for the harvest." With Faith and Hope in this command, the intention of the Vocation Icon Program is to promote fervent and devotional prayer among the faithful. In particular, this program will seek to



"I HAVE CHOSEN YOU"

*"You did not choose me,
but I chose you and appointed
you that you should go
and bear fruit and that
your fruit should abide"*

(John 15:16).

encourage prayer in the family, "the domestic church." The family is a community of faith, life and love and a place that fosters the human, Christian and vocational growth of children.

It is vital for future vocations to plant the seed and to nourish prayer in the family. The Vocation Icon

Program will encourage the idea of religious and priestly vocations in the families and community.

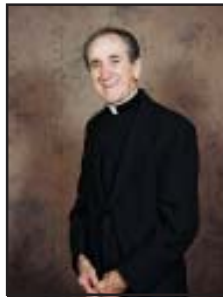
Weekly, the icon is presented to a family along with the special prayer package. Daily prayers before the icon will be offered for religious and priestly vocations. Each Sunday morning, the icon is returned to the Church to be accepted by the next family in keeping with the awareness of the need for vocations.

The parish community encourages individuals in whom certain talents and gifts are recognized to prayerfully consider a life committed to the service of Christ through public ministry. The process of discerning vocations and potential vocations is not just the responsibility of one, but of the entire community.

The Vocation Icon Program offers hope that praying for vocations will be kept in the minds and hearts of parishioners. It will encourage individual families to discuss and promote religious and priestly vocations.

OFFICIAL APPOINTMENTS:

Reverend Julian Gnall, formerly of the Order of Saint Benedict has been accepted as an enrolled member of the clergy of the Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Van Nuys effective Nov. 2, 2004. Father Julian resides in San Diego, CA. We welcome him to the Eparchy. May God grant him many happy years in service to the Lord.



CLERGY RETREAT 2004

The Eparchy of Van Nuys' Clergy Retreat was held in Spokane, WA at Immaculate Heart Retreat Center from September 20-24. Most Reverend Lawrence Huculak, OSBM, Bishop of the Ukrainian Eparchy of Edmonton served as Retreat Master for the clergy.

While in Washington, Bishop William and the clergy joined with the parishioners of Saints Cyril & Methodius in celebrating their 25th Anniversary. A Divine Liturgy and dinner took place on Sep. 22.

YEAR FOR VOCATIONS

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The Icon

The icon "I Have Chosen You" comes from the words of Jesus in the Gospel of John. It portrays many aspects of discerning a spiritual vocation.

In the icon, Christ is shown in dialogue with a man and a woman, representatives of all who are invited to serve through ordination or religious life. Both individuals are moving out of the world, symbolized by the woman partially in the border, towards Christ. The scroll in Our Lord's hand represents His teachings. An angel holding a scroll that reads "discernment" guides and protects those contemplating the request of the Lord. The scene takes place outdoors on desolate ground. Symbolic of life and vitality, the tree breaks the barren landscape. The Church is not an earthly institution of buildings and structures but is new life in Christ. As Jesus saw Nathaniel under the fig tree and called him to discipleship (John 1:48), Jesus intimately knows those whom He calls. The tree's lower branch connects the man and woman to the trunk, representing the vocations as the branches of Christ's vine (John 15:5).

One does not choose to serve Christ, but rather is chosen by Him specifically for His service. One is called to blossom and bear fruit through the graces received in ordination or consecrated religious life by the Divine Gardener (John 15:2).

Vocation Directors Meet in Anchorage

Reverend Robert Pipta, Vocation Director of the Eparchy of Van Nuys joined approximately 200 diocesan vocation directors and others involved in vocation ministry from the United States, Canada, Belgium, Scotland, and Australia at the 41st Annual Convention of the *National Conference of Diocesan Vocation Directors (NCDVD)* in Anchorage, Alaska, on September 25-30. The convention theme was "Diocesan Priesthood in a New Frontier."

Prior to the conference, the Intereparchial Vocation Directors from the Pittsburgh, Parma and Passaic (Arch) eparchies met with Bishop William Skurla. They discussed the Vocation Icon Program, "Called by Name" Program, establishment of parish vocation committees, and catechetical materials to be used for Vocations Awareness Week. The meeting was hosted by Saint Nicholas of Myra parish. After the meeting, Bishop Skurla, Rt. Rev. Wesley Izer, SDB, pastor, and clergy concelebrated the Divine Liturgy with the faithful of Saint Nicholas and Directors in attendance.

The Acatist Hymn to our Lord Jesus was celebrated Monday morning by the Vocation Directors of the Metropolia. At the conclusion of the service, the Vocation Icon, "I Have Chosen You" was presented to Dorothy Foss, the outgoing Executive Director of NCDVD.

The harvest is truly plentiful but the laborers are few. Pray, therefore, the Lord of the harvest that he send laborers into his harvest.

Matthew 9:37-38



A Thanksgiving Message from The Pastoral Center:



Dear Faithful,

Glory to Jesus Christ!

The harvest is here--from the cotton fields of the Southwest to the Orchards and Vineyards of the Northwest, extending northward into the Alaskan frontier. As we give thanks to God on Thanksgiving Day, special family recipes are prepared. The table is set for the feast. We gather near to those we love and give thanks to the Lord. Bowing our heads, we prayerfully thank God for the bountiful harvest we have received.

We also give thanks for the men and women who have given their lives to work in the Lord's Vineyard as priests, deacons, and to the consecrated religious life. We thank them as we pray for new men and women to follow their example of living in the image and likeness of Christ.

As we enter the period of forty days called "Philip's Fast," we approach a special time to spiritually prepare ourselves to receive our Lord on the day of His birth next month. Our preparations include fasting and almsgiving. They also include visiting the sick and feeding the poor. Encourage one another. Pray for each other. Pray for vocations. Through our extra prayers and with peaceful hearts, we will be ready to receive Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ this Christmastime.

I thank each of you for your prayers and for your continued support. Thank you for generously sharing your time and talents. May your blessings be many.

You are remembered in my prayers this Thanksgiving.

+ William C Skurla

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



Left to Right: Fr. Acquaro, Sir Michael Bacovcin and Bishop William.

Cantor Honored Papal Knight of Saint Gregory the Great

Cantor Michael Bacovcin of Saint Thomas the Apostle Church, Gilbert AZ, was honored for more than 45 years of service and dedication to the sacred music tradition of the Byzantine Catholic Church. On October 30, Cantor Michael was conferred into the Order of Saint Gregory the Great.

The Pontifical Order of Saint Gregory the Great was first established by Pope Gregory XVI (1831-1846). The privilege is conferred on persons who are distinguished for notable accomplishments during their lifetime.

The conferral of knighthood followed the liturgical celebration of Great Vespers at Saint Thomas. Bishop William Skurla, Eparch of Van Nuys, presided over the investiture ceremony and was assisted by Father Philip Acquaro, pastor of the Gilbert Parish. Bacovcin was honored that evening at a dinner in the parish hall.

Mr. Bacovcin, born in Glen Lyon, Pennsylvania in 1927, lived and worshipped in Czechoslovakia from 1937-1946. He is a veteran of the U.S. Army and is married to his wife Anne for 51 years. They are parents of three children and have eight grandchildren and one great-grandchild. Mr. Bacovcin first became an Assistant Parish Cantor in 1957 at St. Nicholas Church of Edison, New Jersey. Since 1985, he has been Cantor at Saint Thomas the Apostle Byzantine Catholic Parish in Gilbert, Arizona.

Sister Celeste Strohmeier, O.S.B.M.

“You have chosen a holy and blessed way of life,” Metropolitan Basil Schott told Sister Celeste at the commencement of the ceremony of her profession. “Consider now all that it demands. This way of life requires continuous effort, and its goal is not realized without suffering. As you now respond to the graciousness of God in your life and express your commitment, you are in the presence of the Saviour himself.” Sister Celeste Strohmeier made her final profession of perpetual vows as a Sister of the Order of Saint Basil the Great on Saturday, October 2, at the Monastery Chapel of the Sisters of Saint Basil in Uniontown, PA.

May God grant Sister Celeste peace, health and happiness for many blessed years!



Left to Right: Rita and Regis Strohmeier, Archbishop Basil, Sister Celeste Strohmeier, O.S.B.M.

Safe Environment Corner

Building Children's Self Esteem

Children with low self esteem can be more vulnerable to abuse by others. What can you do to build your child's self esteem? Listen, ask and communicate. Spend quality time with your children. Listen to their concerns on issues important to them. Make sure your children know they are special and make them feel special. Address your children's physical and emotional needs so they do not need to seek the attention of others.

Parents should: Teach your children to be alert to their surroundings. Teach your children how to handle a situation in which someone in authority doesn't respect their boundaries. Teach your children it is okay to say "NO" to anyone who makes them feel uncomfortable or unsafe. Help your children develop self-confidence. Talk calmly to your children about crime and dangers. Reinforce the concept that children are special and unique. Be genuinely interested in your children's activities and be there for them.

EPARCHIAL CALENDAR

- September 3-6:** 70th Pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Perpetual Help at Mount Saint Macrina, Uniontown, PA
- September 4-11:** Ad Limina Visit, Rome, Italy
- September 19:** Catechetical Sunday: "Stewards of God's Treasure"
- September 20-24:** Eparchial Clergy Retreat, Immaculate Heart Retreat Center, Spokane, WA
- September 22:** 25th Anniversary Celebration of Saints Cyril & Methodius Church, Spokane, WA
- September 25-30:** National Catholic Diocesan Vocation Directors, Anchorage, AK
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- October 1:** Protection of the Mother of God
- October 4-6:** Liturgical Commission Meeting, Pittsburgh, PA
- October 25-28:** Metropolitan Hierarchs Meeting, Pittsburgh, PA
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- November 5-7:** LifeQuest: Mount Saint Macrina, Uniontown, PA
- November 8:** Feast Day: Saint Michael the Archangel and all the angels.
- November 14:** Philip's Fast begins.
- November 14-18:** United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington, D.C.
- November 21:** Entrance of the Mother of God
- November 25:** Thanksgiving Day
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- December 4:** Saint Nicholas Banquet Benefit sponsored by GCU Lodge 999 at Saint Stephen Pro-Cathedral, Phoenix, AZ.
- December 6:** Feast Day of Saint Nicholas of Myra
- December 12:** Feast Day of Our Lady of Guadalupe
Saint Nicholas Dinner, Saint Nicholas of Myra, Fontana, CA.
- December 25:** Nativity of Our Lord
- December 29-Jan. 1:** ByzanTEENS Winter Retreat at Saint Stephen Pro-Cathedral, Phoenix, AZ for ages 12-19.

