

Metropolitan William Skurla's 2022 Paschal Message

Christ is Risen! Indeed He is Risen!

On Easter morning, Jesus arose from the darkness of death from the tomb. The apostles and disciples were filled with fear. In a flash of light, Christ overcame sin and death. He opened the path to eternal life for us. The whole world is invited to listen to the Easter story, to follow His teachings which will bring them to new life with the Risen Lord now and to the life to come in heaven.

As we celebrate the Lord's Resurrection this year, we continue to emerge from the third year under the dark cloud of virus. The current sixth wave of infections due to the new variants is less deadly and more manageable than the past waves. Gradually, people are adjusting to the new normal of life. We pray for those who have suffered and passed during the past year.

Unfortunately, another deeper darkness has descended upon the world. The current invasion and war between Russia and Ukraine has shocked the world. The Ukrainian soldiers have fought bravely beyond all expectations. There is hope that the killing will stop. However, thousands have died with damage in the billions of dollars. Ten million people have been displaced from their homes. We pray for the end of the madness and their return to their homes in peace.

Our people and churches have responded with the largest collection in the history of our Byzantine Catholic Church. So far, the Archeparchy and other Eparchies have collected over \$500,000 to help feed and support the homeless.

Bishop Nil of Mukachevo sends thanks on behalf of those in their time of desperate need. The stories from the bishop's calls confirm the images in the news which are chilling. The people living day to day without food and in fear is heart breaking. We continue to send our support and daily prayers that the suffering will end. We give thanks to all who are helping. And, we pray that the Mother of God will protect everyone from harm.

We remember to continue to pray the Act of Consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary:

"O Mary, Mother of God and our mother, in this time of trial we turn to you. As our mother, you love us and know us: No concern of our hearts is hidden from you. Mother of mercy, how often we have experienced your watchful care and your peaceful presence! You never cease to guide us to Jesus, the prince of peace....

Holy Mother, amid the misery of our sinfulness, amid our struggles and weaknesses, amid the mystery of iniquity that is evil and war, you remind us that God never abandons us, but continues to look upon us with love, ever ready to forgive us and raise us up to new life. He has given you to us and made your Immaculate Heart a refuge for the church and for all humanity. By God's gracious will, you are ever with us; even in the most troubled moments of our history, you are there to guide us with tender love....

O Mother, may your sorrowful plea stir our hardened hearts. May the tears you shed for us make this valley parched by our hatred blossom anew. Amid the thunder of weapons, may your prayer turn our thoughts to peace. May your maternal touch soothe those who suffer and flee from the rain of bombs. May your motherly embrace comfort those forced to leave their homes and their native land. May your sorrowful heart move us to compassion and inspire us to open our doors and to care for our brothers and sisters who are injured and cast aside.

Holy Mother of God, as you stood beneath the cross, Jesus, seeing the disciple at your side, said: "Behold your son" (Jn 19:26). In this way, he entrusted each of us to you. To the disciple, and to each of us, he said: "Behold, your Mother" (Jn 19:27). Mother Mary, we now desire to welcome you into our lives and our history.

At this hour, a weary and distraught humanity stands with you beneath the cross, needing to entrust itself to you and, through you, to consecrate itself to Christ. The people of Ukraine and Russia, who venerate you with great love, now turn to you, even as your heart beats with compassion for them and for all those peoples decimated by war, hunger, injustice and poverty....

Through your intercession, may God's mercy be poured out on the earth and the gentle rhythm of peace return to mark our days. Our Lady of the "fiat," on whom the Holy Spirit descended, restore among us the harmony that comes from God. May you, our "living fountain of hope," water the dryness of our hearts. In your womb Jesus took flesh; help us to foster the growth of communion. You once trod the streets of our world; lead us now on the paths of peace. Amen."

May next Easter be a celebration with the darkness of pandemic and war lifted by the light of the Resurrection of Christ.

Christ is Risen!

Most Reverend William C. Skurla, D.D., Metropolitan Archbishop of Pittsburgh

Christ is risen! Indeed He is risen!
Christos Voskrese! Voistinnu Voskrese!
Christos Anesti! Alithos Anesti!

The Feast of the Great Martyr George is *Bright Saturday, April 23*. As his name in Greek means "tiller of the soil" it is especially fitting to remember him and ask his intercession in the spring, at the time tilling the soil and planting seeds. His fame as a martyr spread from East to West and has been celebrated since antiquity.

2023 Synod of Bishops: To prepare for the *Synod*, Pope Francis is asking Catholics to take part in a survey asking how we can better live out the mission of Christ. Copies are in the narthex.

Each parish is asked to return a summary of the responses to the questionnaire, as well as the individual questionnaire with responses, to the Chancery in May. Please return the completed surveys by Sunday, May 1. There will be a container in the narthex for the completed surveys.

Annual Spring Basket Auction at *St. John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church*, 719 Chestnut Avenue, Northern Cambria, Saturday, April 30 5:00 to 7:00 pm; Sunday, May 1, 11:00 am to 3:00pm. Drawing at 3:00pm on Sunday. Winners will be called and can pick up their baskets between 4 and 6 pm. Tickets: \$5.00 for 26 tickets; available at the Church Hall. Takeout food available. Coronavirus guidelines: Wear masks; Keep 6 feet apart; follow arrows marked on floor.

The Pittsburgh Byzantine Catholic Archeparchial Choir returns to St. John's Cathedral in Munhall, April 24, Thomas Sunday. The *Moleben for the Living*, in thanks for the return to social events after a hiatus due to the pandemic, will be at 3:00 p.m. The Choir's presentation "*Rejoice and Be Glad!*" will follow, featuring many renditions of the Paschal greeting. A cake-and-coffee reception will follow the program in the Cathedral's lower level. The Archeparchial Choir, in 2023 observes their 25th anniversary year, and consists of singers from parishes of the Archeparchy.

Saints Peter & Paul Byzantine Catholic Church--

143 Church Drive—Portage, Pennsylvania 15946 814-736-9780

St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church—Beaverdale;

Ss. Peter & Paul Byzantine Catholic Church--Dunlo

Father James A. Spontak

Deacon Daniel Perich

Email: james_armand_spontak@verizon.net; www.ByzantineCatholic.net;

Mysteries of Christian Initiation: There is to be **preparatory instruction** for parents and godparents prior to the celebration of the **Mysteries of Christian Initiation – Baptism, Chrismation, and Eucharist.** Christian Initiation may be celebrated with the Sunday Divine Liturgy. Those selected to be sponsors must be persons who are qualified to be a sponsor according to the norms of Church law and practice.

Crowning in Marriage: A **six month period of preparation** is to precede the marriage. Couples are to meet with the pastor before other arrangements are scheduled. The **Pre-Cana Program** offered by the Archeparchy in the spring of each year is a **required** part of the marriage preparation for all couples.

Holy Anointing & Pastoral Care of the Ill: Please contact the pastor prior to surgery or in the event of illness to require the **Mystery of Holy Anointing.** When you or a family member are hospitalized or enter a nursing home or other facility, **please inform the pastor.**

Mystery of Repentance (Confessions): **Saturdays: 3:00 p.m. (Portage) and 4:30 pm (Beaverdale/Dunlo).** Also, **½ hour before services [except Sunday],** and by appointment.

Bulletins and “Troitsja” Candle:

Sunday April 17 Pascha: Candle: *Volunteers*

Bulletins: *Volunteers*

Sunday April 24

Candle: *Evan Lenz*

Bulletins: *Lexie & Easton Slanoc*

Sunday May 1:

Candle: *Lexie Slanoc*

Bulletins: *Ryan & Evan Lenz*

Eastern Christian Formation: There are no **ECF Classes** on Sunday, April 17, Pascha—the Resurrection of our Lord. Our final day of **ECF Classes** is Sunday, April 24, Thomas Sunday

A meeting for **Catechists** is scheduled for Sunday, April 24 following classes

Planning Meeting Annual Festival is scheduled for Thursday, April 28 at 7:00 pm in the social room of the church hall. Our **Annual Festival/Church Picnic.** Is on Sunday, July 10, 2022.

Remember in Prayer: The Health of Steve Paluch; Jason Thornton; Charlett Thornton; Catherine McGough; Carol Slifko; Deacon Daniel Perich; Donna Block; Holly Pawvluk; Michael & Pauline Barelick; Ray Havrilak, brother of Catherine McGough; and all the ill, homebound. The **2023 Synod of Bishops, “For Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission.”** **HOMEBOUND PARISHIONERS:: SS Peter & Paul (Portage):** Dorothy Billy; Louise Halovich; Joseph Mandichak; Michelle Maskal; Dorothy Majer; Stella Raptosh; Cathy Walters;. **NURSING & CARE FACILITIES: Homewood,** Martinsburg: *Charles Plishka* [Beaverdale]; **Rebekah Manor,** Portage: *Helen Zaher*; **Autumn View:** *June Nezneski*; **The Palms** [McKeesport]: *Marian Simala*; **John Paul II Manor,** Cresson: *Kathryn Mackovyak*; **Cambria Care,** Ebensburg: *Dorothy Resconich*; **Forest Hills Personal Care,** Sidman: *Kathryn Malley.*

Liturgical Schedule *Pascha—Resurrection of our Lord* April 17, 2022

Pascha - The Glorious Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ

Saturday April 16

Portage 7:00 PM Resurrection Matins & Paschal Divine Liturgy
Followed by Blessing of Paschal Food & Social

Sunday April 17

Dunlo 8:00 AM Procession & Paschal Divine Liturgy
Followed by Blessing of Paschal Food—Blessing in the Church]
Portage 10:30 AM Paschal Divine Liturgy

Monday April 18

Portage 6:00 PM Bright Monday
Divine Liturgy & Procession with the Resurrection Gospels

Tuesday April 19

Portage 9:00 AM Bright Tuesday
Divine Liturgy

Bright Saturday--Feast of the Holy Great Martyr George

Friday, April 22

Beaverdale 5:00 PM Great Vespers with Litija

Saturday April 23

Portage 9:00 AM Divine Liturgy

Portage 3:00 PM Mystery of Repentance [Confessions]

Beaverdale 4:30 PM Mystery of Repentance [Confessions]

Second Paschal Sunday - Sunday of Thomas

Saturday April 10

Beaverdale 5:00 PM Vigil Divine Liturgy]

Sunday April 11

Portage 9:00 AM Sunday Divine Liturgy [+Audrey Pyo by Terry & Janice Krug

The Week of Pascha—Bright Week:

Prayerful best wishes for a joyful celebration of Pascha—the Resurrection of our Lord.

- We share the greeting ***“Christ is risen!”***, ***“Indeed He is risen!”*** from now until Ascension, which is derived from the greeting of the disciples [Luke 24:34].
- There is no fasting during Bright Week.
- Through the fifty days from Pascha [Sunday of the Resurrection] until Pentecost, there is no kneeling at any time of prayer.
- On ***Bright Monday***, there is a procession which stops at the four sides of the church, and at each side we read the accounts of the resurrection from each of the four Gospels.