



# Eastern Catholic Life

“In the beginning was the word...”

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## Eparchial Priest Retreat 2012



*Clergy on annual retreat: seated (left to right): Fathers David Baratelli, Peter Tomas, Msgr. John Sekellick, Fathers Nicholas Kraynak, Joseph Bertha (Retreat Master), Edward Cimbala (Eparchial Administrator), Michael Venditti, Msgr. Robert Senetsky, Fathers Edward Higgins, and Frank Hanincik. Standing, Second row (l. to r.): Fathers Edward Semko, Richard Rohrer, Peter Donish, James Demko, Michael Mondik, Michael Kerestes, Ronald Hatton, James Badeaux, Gary Mensinger, Harry Untereiner, Michael Yurista, Gregory Hosler, Sal Pignato, Charles Yastishock, Jack Custer, Michael Salnick, Vasyl Chepelskyy, Ihor Kovalchuk (visiting priest), Michael Popson, Eduard Shestak, Gregory Noga, John Cigan, Alex Shuter, Mykhaylo Prodanets, and James Hayer. Standing, top row (l. to r.): Fathers Marcel Szabo, Nicholas DeProspero, Martin Vavrak, John Basarab, John Zeyack, Robert Slesinski, and Leonard Martin, SJ.*

The clergy of the Eparchy of Passaic once again packed their cassocks and prayer books and journeyed to the Jersey Shore for the annual Eparchial Priest Retreat at San Alphonso Retreat House in Long Branch (West End) New Jersey. The retreat house is run by the Redemptorist Fathers and has long been a favorite retreat location for the eparchial priests.

The Very Reverend Edward Cimbala, Administrator of the Eparchy of Passaic, welcomed the priests to annual retreat. In his opening remarks, he noted that this year has been designated by the Holy Father as the “Year of Faith.” Because of this, he encouraged the priests to host regional parish missions and to encourage as many people as possible to attend. He further noted that Father Frank Hanincik, of Trumbull, CT, will be available to serve as a guest speaker for regional missions during the *Year of Faith*. He also encouraged the priests to continue to promote the DDA (Stewardship) program, and spoke to them about the plans for the forthcoming 50th Anniversary of the Eparchy celebration.

The Retreat Master for this year was one of our own eparchial priests – Father Joseph Bertha, PhD, Pastor of Saint Michael Byzantine Catholic Church in Pittston, PA and Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church in Swoyersville, PA. Well known for his expertise in iconography, Father Joseph spoke to the priests on the topic of “Joseph: the Icon of Christ the Eternal High Priest.” The retreat centered on a series of talks based on the

story of Joseph the Patriarch, as recorded in the Book of Genesis, and how his relationships with his brothers and father, Jacob, relate to ministry in the priesthood. Father Joseph was also invited by Bishop Gerald Dino of the Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Phoenix to present the same retreat to the clergy of that eparchy.

Following arrival and dinner, the priests began the retreat with the celebration of the Akathist to the Mother of God. The beautiful and traditional service traces the life of the Mother of God in spiritual hymn. The centerpiece icon chosen for the Akathist and all discussions, was the miraculous icon of Our Lady of Mariapoch - a personal favorite of Father Bertha who encouraged the priests to turn to the Mother of God for assistance in their priestly ministries.

For each presentation, Father Joseph distributed color copies of four icon panels depicting the life of the Patriarch Joseph. He then related the images of the icon to aspects of ministry in the life of a priest and challenged the priests to ask themselves where they would place themselves in the icon scenes. For instance, the icon depicts Joseph being led away to slavery and transported to Egypt. Father Bertha then asked the priests how readily they would allow themselves to be enslaved to the will of God? He went on to explain that God often transposes each of us into places and situation in which we feel uncomfortable. Yet, we submit willingly to this and rely upon

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*Kingston Parish Celebrates 125 Years!  
Story and Photos on pages 5-7*