Vatican City,

2016 May 7

The Holy Father has:

- accepted the resignation ***{retirement}*** from the pastoral care of **The Eparchy of Parma** {of the Ruthenians, U.S.A.}, presented by **Bishop John Kudrick** {in accordance with canon 210 para. 1 of the Code of Canons of the Oriental Churches}, and appointed {**Metropolitan} Archbishop William Charles Skurla of Pittsburgh** {of the Byzantines} **as Apostolic Administrator** *sede vacante* **of the same hierarchy**.

- appointed **Bishop John Stephen Pazak, C.Ss.R.**, formerly of The Eparchy of "Sts. Cyril and Methodius of Toronto" {of the Slovakians of Byzantine Rite, Canada}, as **Bishop of The Eparchy of "Holy Mary of Protection" of Phoenix** {of the Ruthenians - Catholics 2,706, priests 29, permanent deacons 11, religious 8} U.S.A. He succeeds **Bishop Gerald Nicholas Dino**, whose resignation ***{retirement}*** from the pastoral care of the same hierarchy {in accordance with canon 210 para. 1 of the Code of Canons of the Oriental Churches} was accepted by the Holy Father.

- appointed **Bishop John Stephen Pazak, C.Ss.R**., of **The Eparchy of "Holy Mary of Protection" of Phoenix** {of the Ruthenians, U.S.A.}, as **Apostolic Administrator** *sede vacante* of **The Eparchy of Sts. Cyril and Methodius** of the Slovakians of Byzantine Rite in Canada.

**Pope Benedict XVI**

**Resignation communicated on 11 February 2013**

Dear Brothers,
 I have convoked you to this Consistory, not only for the three canonizations, but also to communicate to you a decision of great importance for the life of the Church.

**After having repeatedly examined my conscience before God:**

***I have come to the certainty that my strengths, due to an advanced age*,
*Are no longer suited to an adequate exercise of the Petrine ministry*.**

**I am well aware that this ministry, due to its essential spiritual nature,**

**Must be carried out not only with words and deeds,**

**But no less with prayer and suffering.**

 However, in today's world, subject to so many rapid changes and shaken by questions of deep relevance for the life of faith,

**In order to govern the bark of Saint Peter and proclaim the Gospel:**

**Both strength of mind and body are necessary,**

**Strength which in the last few months,**

**Has deteriorated in me to the extent that**

**I have had to recognize**

**My incapacity to adequately fulfill the ministry entrusted to me!**

 For this reason, and well aware of the seriousness of this act, with full freedom I declare that I renounce the ministry of Bishop of Rome, Successor of Saint Peter, entrusted to me by the Cardinals on 19 April 2005, in such a way, that as from 28 February 2013, at 20:00 hours, the See of Rome, the See of Saint Peter, will be vacant and a Conclave to elect the new Supreme Pontiff will have to be convoked by those whose competence it is.

 Dear Brothers, I thank you most sincerely for all the love and work with which you have supported me in my ministry and I ask pardon for all my defects. And now, let us entrust the Holy Church to the care of Our Supreme Pastor, Our Lord Jesus Christ, and implore his holy Mother Mary, so that she may assist the Cardinal Fathers with her maternal solicitude, in electing a new Supreme Pontiff.

 With regard to myself, I wish to also devotedly serve the Holy Church of God in the future through a life dedicated to prayer!

May 7, 2016

 Dear faithful of the Eparchy of Parma,

 In 2002, **I was humbled that the Church considered me God-chosen for the office of**

**Bishop of Parma. It has become apparent that now in 2016 the Eparchy of Parma needs**

**leadership that I cannot provide**.

 **The Holy Father** in his paternal concern for the Eparchy and for myself **has allowed me to retire with the understanding that I may be asked to accept another office in the future**. Until the next bishop is chosen, Metropolitan William Skurla will serve as apostolic administrator.

 I thank all who collaborated with me and I assure you of my prayer, for which I’ll now

have more time. I hope to offer assistance where I am able.

**I pray our ongoing relationship will be marked especially with mercy and forgiveness**!

 I look forward to joining the Eparchy in offering our support to my successor. In the last 14 years I experienced God’s presence and wonderful cooperation with Him.

 I am certain that will continue to ensure our deepening of discipleship and sacramental practice, an accepting of our individual vocations, and the strengthening of our parishes.

In Christ our Hope,

+Bishop John

**Most Reverend William C Skurla DD**

**Metropolitan Archbishop of Pittsburgh**

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May 7, 2016

 Dear Clergy and Religious of the Eparchy of Parma,

 I am honored to announce to you today that I have been appointed by the Holy Father to serve as the Apostolic Administrator for the Eparchy of Parma. We thank Bishop John

for his many years of service to the Eparchy, and we wish him well during his retirement.

 From now until the enthronement of a new Bishop of Parma, I will assist in the running

of the affairs of the Eparchy. I will meet with the staff and committees soon.

 If you need to contact me, my information is on the letterhead of this email. As always, I will continue to respond to do my best to assist during this time of transition. Because I

will continue in my other responsibilities, it will be a very busy time for me.

 Because I was born in Minnesota, it will be like coming home to the Eparchy of Parma

for this assignment. During the past years, I have met most of you, and I look forward to meeting the newer members during my time as Apostolic Administrator.

 You are in my daily prayers. Please pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit as Pope

Francis considers the needs of the Eparchy in the selection of the fifth Bishop of Parma.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend + William C. Skurla, D.D.

Metropolitan Archbishop of Pittsburgh

**Just as it is easy for us to be immersed and to lift up our heads again,**

**So it is easy for God to bury the old man and show forth the new.**

**This takes place three times,**

**That you may know that the power of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit**

**Brings all these things to fulfillment!**

**Saint John Chrysostom**

**Second Birth**

At Baptism we receive the gift of a new birth from above!

 At the time of our baptism the Church gives us the gift of a new birth from above, and welcomes us into the Body of Christ, which is the Church Herself. It is our membership in Christ’s Church that gradually strengthens us as we progress in purity, receiving the fullness of the Grace we first received in Baptism.

 Immediately following our Baptism we are anointed with Holy Chrism, and receive the indwelling of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which consolidates the new life we have received in our Baptism. From this our life develops those hidden talents all of us received at the moment of our birth. And with the Baptism, God appoints us a guardian angle, who will be responsible for us throughout our lifetime and after our departure from this life.

 From this moment on Our Saviour clothes Himself with us and clothes us with Him. Christ, is the new Man, and the very image and likeness of God. Our human spiritual being is merged with this Christ, and Christ becomes our Spirit. This leads to the healing of our nature, and our renewal as children of the Most High.

**Saint Maximus the Confessor says*:***

**The nature of virtue in each of us is the unique Logos of God**

**Because the nature of all virtues is Jesus Christ**!

 From the moment of our Baptism Christ enters the deepest Sanctuary of our being, and will remain hidden. As we progress in virtue Christ becomes more and more evident within us, and causes us to be transformed by the work of the Holy Spirit, and others will know we

**Are Christians by our love**!

**For in the baptismal rite, death ensues through the slaying of sin;**

**Threefold immersion initiates the lying in the tomb three days,**

**And the raising out of the water is like him that rose again from the tomb.**

**The very nature, therefore, of the act teaches us**:

**That that is the recognized day for the general reception of the grace,**

**Upon which the power of the gift and the character of the action originated**

**Saint Leo the Great**

**To know Him and the power of His Resurrection consists in this movement by which**

**Christ descends into our very depths to raise us up into:**

**The Light of Life! This is the movement of baptism, descent and rising up,**

**With all the spiritual realism**

**That the power of The Holy Spirit will realize within us day after day in our personal lives**!

**Repentance:** The centrality of repentance in the life of A Byzantine Catholic

**In our struggle on the path to God, repentance must be the central theme.**

 Only in repentance will we find the true meaning of life, for only in repentance can one enter into communion with God. This life has been given to us for one purpose, that we might be deified, and be united with God, as was His purpose from the very beginning.

 In our fallen state, our brokenness keeps us separated from God, for our darkened nous can not see clearly. Repentance changes our nous, clearing the way for complete union with Christ, and making us whole.

**In order to fulfill the commandments of Christ, you must know them**!

**They are expounded in the Gospels.**

**Read the Holy Gospels, penetrate its spirit, make it the rule of your life**!

**Act in accord with the teachings of the Gospels.**

**This is the one light in our life**!

**Saint Nikon of Optina**

**Thoughts for the Day**

**We have the power of the Holy Cross,**

**Our holy symbol,**

**The divine grace of Christ,**

**Only as long as we have the holy marking of the Holy Baptism,**

**Meaning we have denied the devil and sided with Christ**

**And received the Holy Marking,**

**The seal of the Gift of the Holy Spirit**!

**Ask for repentance in your prayer and nothing else!**

**Neither for divine lights,**

**Nor miracles, nor prophecies, nor spiritual gifts**

**Nothing but repentance!**

**Repentance will bring you humility, humility will bring you the Grace of God,**

**And God will have in His Grace everything you need for your salvation,**

**Or anything you might need to help another sou**l!

**Elder Paisios of Mount Athos**

**Struggling With Self**

To win the battle we must focus only on your own sins

 When we take our eyes off our own sins we focus only on the sins of the other.

**As their sins get our attention,**

**We fail to struggle with the passions that keep us from the wholeness that God intended,**

**And We move ever closer to the abyss of our own fall!**

**Ignoring our own sickness**

**We break down the doors of the fortress that guards our own heart**!

 If we are to take ourselves out of the mire of sin and be made whole, our eyes must never look to the sins of others

**For a man cannot be disquieted or concerned about other people’s affairs**

**If he is satisfied with concentrating on the work of his own hands**

**Saint John Cassian**

**As we daily commemorate The Holy Resurrection,**

**Let us focus on the continued struggle with self,**

**Ever moving forward in our quest to acquire:**

***A humble and contrite hearts!***

**Let us breathe in the joy of Pascha,**

**And the Resurrected One shall lift us up,**

**And our life will never be the same**!

Pharisaism

Jesus never apologized for offending the Pharisees

 The legalistic and cunning minds of the Pharisees, ***the basis of their hypocrisy***, was the focus of much of Christ’s condemnation. The Pharisees were good actors, seeming to be pious and staunch purveyors of correctly practiced religion, yet they were personally offended by the corrections delivered to them by this upstart rabbi!

 Just as they thought their coming together to challenge this man would silence Him, Christ told them they were facing divine wrath, and called them on their sin of pride. Even though they let it be known they were offended by Him.

**The Pharisees never received an apology from the man who called them**

**On their *hypocritical practice* of faith in *purely legalistic form*.**

**While they were strict in their Temple tithe,**

**And their external forms of liturgical practice,**

**They cared less about justice and love,**

**And their love of God was surface only**!

**Their practice of religion was purely external,**

**But their religion lacked love and mercy!**

 This Nazarene rabbi, Who was the source of all Goodness and Truth, and Who was quick to forgive the bodily corruption of those who repented, was unmoved by the practice of religion by those who turned their backs on mercy, humility, and love, as the primary principle of True Faith.

 It would seem so obvious, but this truth must become paramount to our thinking, since it is often forgotten. Mankind can get so caught up in all the ecclesiastical, social, political, and cultural aspects of our life within The Byzantine Catholic Church, that the gospel image and teachings of Jesus Christ, are replaced by a dead religiosity!

**The danger of living a faith based in official religion is**

**That the basic confession of**

**The Christ**

**The Son of the living God**

**Can become secondary in our thinking**!

**And lead us to a pharisaic practice of our faith**!

 Before anything else, Byzantine Catholics are called to be disciples of Christ, and members of Christ.

**Whether we be cradle Byzantine Catholics, or converts,**

**We are all in need of personally encountering Jesus as a man,**

**And beholding Him crucified.**

 Only when we’ve done this can we truly worship Him as God’s incarnate Word, and one with the Holy Trinity.

**He who has the bride is the bridegroom;**

**But the friend of the bridegroom,**

**Who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice.**

**Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled.**

**He must increase, but I must decrease!**

***Is the soul by itself a man?***

***No*, it is but the soul of a man.**

***Can the body be called a man?***

***No*, it can but be called the body of a man.**

**If, then neither of these is by itself a man,**

**But that which is composed of the two together is called man,**

**And God has called man to life and resurrection,**

**He has called not a part**

**But the whole**!

**Which is the soul and the body**!

**The resurrection is of The Christ which died; for the spirit does not die!**

**Saint Justin Martyr**

**The Caregiver**

Caregivers must also care for themselves

 People of my generation are being called upon to be caregivers for parents, brothers, sisters, or other family members. Extended families were common during most of our nations history, where multiple generations living in one home was the norm. The elderly were seldom sent to live in institutions.

 It is important our own spiritual and social needs, as we take on the extra burden of attending to the physical, medical, and social needs of their family member. Caregivers have every right to have a life of their own, taking care to attend to their own needs for friendships, social engagements, and church life.

 The caregiver must not feel guilty, or feel they are betraying their loved one, when they step out with friends for dinner and a movie. They should not feel they are abandoning their responsibility by attending the divine services, or partaking in a Bible study.

**A priest, must tend to my own needs if I am to minister to others.**

 When we allow ourselves to be depleted, spiritually and emotionally, we do a disservice to those whom we serve.

 We should not feel a though we are betraying our family member or a parishioner when we spend an evening with friends, or take time out with other family members for a special outing.

 When we allow ourselves to become depleted, the people in our care will ultimately suffer, for a priest who becomes resentful, can slip into being abusive, without even realizing it.

 Whether you be a caregiver, social worker, or a priest, anyone who is in service to others, must be sure to take care of themselves, lest they become ineffective in their service to others!

 When flying on an airline, we are instructed by the flight attendant, when the oxygen apparatus falls down, to place it over our own face before taking care of the person next to us.

**Likewise, if we do not take care of our own**:

**Spiritual, emotional, and social needs,**

**We shall ultimately fail in our ministering to others**!