



Metropolitan Archbishop William C. Skurla and the Council of Hierarchs of the Byzantine Catholic Metropolitan Church of Pittsburgh will be hosting the 3rd assembly of our Church on Thursday, November 2 to Sunday, November 5, 2023, at St. Mary's Byzantine Catholic Church, Hillsborough, NJ. The Assembly's theme is Living Our Faith: Moving Forward, Appreciating Our Past.

The Assembly will consist of two tracks. A clergy track will be presented on Thursday and Friday, November 2nd and 3rd. A laity track will occur from Friday to Sunday, November 3rd to 5th. This gathering aims to increase the

appreciation of the Byzantine Ruthenian Church's history (both in the "Old Country" and the United States) and Byzantine Ruthenian art and culture. The second goal of the assembly is to learn about the best practices occurring in our parishes today, which are contributing to the growth of our communities, with the hope that the attendees will incorporate this information into their parish activities. A third goal is to develop concrete steps to ensure the future and growth of our Church. The synodal meetings revealed these three topics to be the most important to those participating.

The cultural aspect of the Assembly will consist of presentations by Dr. Paul Magocsi on the history of the founders of the Byzantine Catholic Church in America. His influential book, *Our People: Carpatho-Rusyns and Their Descendants in North America*, has just been released in a new and expanded edition. Dr. Magocsi will also present on the art and culture of this community. His book on the artists of the Transcarpathian School will be published shortly.

Fr. Christopher Zuger will explore the history of the foundation of the Byzantine Catholic Church in America. Next year marks the 100th anniversary of the arrival of Basil Takach, the first bishop of the Byzantine Ruthenian Catholic Church in America. Fr. Zuger is the author of *The Forgotten: Catholics of the Soviet Empire from Lenin through Stalin and Finding a Hidden Church*. His third book, which focuses on the history of the Byzantine Ruthenian Church from its founding to the present, will be released in November.

The Eparchy of Passaic's collection of works by artists of the Transcarpathian School will be displayed throughout the assembly venue. Maria Silvestri, a renowned promoter of Rusyn history, art, and culture, will curate this exhibit featuring works by Adalbert Erdelyi, Josyf Bokshay, Shubo, Andrii Korska, and other artists.

Cardinal Timothy Dolan will offer the keynote address at the opening dinner on Friday evening.

As music and dancing play a significant part in the cultural heritage of Carpatho-Rusyns, attendees will have an opportunity to enjoy music, food, and fellowship at a gala Saturday evening. Pajtási – a noted Rusyn/Slovak Band, will be the musical entertainment, and the dinner menu will feature a variety of ethnic foods.

To discover the best practices utilized in Byzantine Catholic parishes throughout the United States, the assembly committee will issue a call for presentation proposals from individuals or teams, clerical, religious, and lay. Presentations may be based on personal experience or academic research. The ideal would be a combination of the two. The request for proposals may be found on the Assembly website and at any parish or chancery office of the Metropolitan Church of Pittsburgh.

Registrations may be made through the Assembly website or by mail beginning June 15. The fee includes meals, breaks, presentations, materials, and the gala on Saturday evening. The Assembly cost is \$250 for individuals and \$400 for couples. The Maria Theresa Foundation will underwrite the registration fees of individuals and couples between the ages of 18 and 35.

Special rates for hotel accommodations have been arranged at the Hilton Garden Inn in Bridgewater, NJ. The reservation link and hotel information may be found on the Assembly Website. The hotel is a fifteen-minute drive to St. Mary's in Hillsborough. For more information, contact the Assembly coordinators, Fr. Ed Cimbala, at 212-677-0516 or Fr. Yuriy Oros at 609-394-5004.

**The assembly website is byzantineassembly2023.org,
and the email is byzantineassembly2023@gmail.com.**