

Magnificat

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Advent
2016

In Celebration of His Coming

Faith then comes by hearing.

Rom. 10:17

St. Paul's observation - made almost off-handedly in the midst of a larger argument concerning justification - was certainly true in his own day. Christianity spread by word of mouth.

As described in the early chapters of the Acts of the Apostles, the preaching of those who had followed Jesus during His earthly life witnessed powerfully to His Resurrection and brought many to the Faith.

The more zealous and articulate among these early converts, in turn, spread the word to others, and Christians were soon to be found throughout the Roman world.

You came down from the bosom of the Father
and condescended, O Lover of Mankind,
to take on our poverty.
Mercifully willing to be born in a cave,
as a babe you suckled at your mother's breast,
O Creator, who gives nourishment to all the world.
Following the Star, the Magi bring gifts to You,
O Lord and Master of the universe:
with the Fathers and the Angels, they cry out in wonder:
Glory to God in the highest,
who comes as man to bring peace on earth!

From Matins
Sunday before Christmas

The letters of St. Paul, which scholars tell us are the earliest Christian writings we possess, were meant to be heard. Read aloud in the churches to which they were addressed, and circulated to other nearby Christian communities, their correction, explanation, and exhortation touched

generations of the faithful long before the advent of printing and other forms of mass communication. The same is true for the other writings of the New Testament, particularly the Gospels.

As the original witnesses, those who had walked with Jesus and seen and heard Him in the flesh, began to pass, their reminiscences and recollections of His actions and teaching, which had been the subject of

We are a Catholic Monastery of the Byzantine Rite, under the jurisdiction of the Eparch of Chicago, and belonging to the Ukrainian Metropolis in the United States of America, which is in union with the Pope of Rome, supreme pastor of the universal Church. We embrace Evangelical poverty, chastity, obedience, and stability of life, according to the Rule of Saint Benedict and the traditions of the Christian East. In our skete at Jacob's Falls, on the shore of Lake Superior in Michigan's Keweenaw Peninsula, we devote ourselves to a common life of prayer and work for the praise, love, and service of God and for the upbuilding of His Kingdom through the arts.

their own preaching, came to be written down. The Gospels are not, then, disinterested history, but, rather, theological documents written for the specific purpose of confirming the faithful in their belief (cf. Lk. 1:1-4; Jn. 20:31). The fruit of the first generation of Christian preaching, they perpetuate that preaching by being read aloud to succeeding generations of assembled Christians down to the present day.

The public reading of Scripture remains integral to Christian worship. In the Churches of the Byzantine tradition, the entire New Testament – with the exception of the Book of Revelations – is read in more or less continuous fashion at Divine Liturgy through the course of the year, and the daily celebrations of the Divine Office call for the cyclical chanting of the Book of Psalms. Major feasts disrupt the cycle with special Scripture readings at Divine Liturgy pertaining to the particular celebration; Matins has a proper Gospel, and Vespers three specially appointed readings – usually from the Old Testament – as well.

Christmas, or more properly, the **Feast of the Nativity According to the Flesh of our Lord God and Savior, Jesus Christ**, ranking fourth – after Pascha, Pentecost, and Theophany – in the Byzantine Liturgical calendar, is graced with extensive Scripture, not only on the day, itself, but also on the Vigil, the two preceding weekends, and the one following, as well. Numerous Old Testament passages witness to prophetic foreshadowings of Christ's birth, and selections from the Epistles illuminate its enduring significance, but testimony to the specific events and circumstances of the Lord's birth comes from the Gospel readings.

The narratives are drawn from the first two chapters of the Gospel of Matthew and from the

second chapter of St. Luke's. During the Holy Week Liturgies, the Church weaves the accounts of all four Evangelists into one continuous Passion narrative. Although they agree on essential details – Jesus, a descendent of David and putative son of Joseph, was conceived of the virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit, was born in Bethlehem of Judea during the reign of King Herod the Great, and was raised in the Galilean town of Nazareth – the many differences between Mathew's and Luke's telling of the story make a coherent composite narrative of Jesus' birth impossible, using only the words of Scripture. The Church, then, is content to let the two accounts stand on their own.

Remembering the Fathers
before the Law,
let us worship Christ Jesus,
who descends from them in the flesh;
for Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,
whose faith showed forth
the grace of the Spirit,
are the foundation
of the Prophets and the Law.

From Matins
Sunday before Christmas

As is often the case, St. Matthew takes pride of place. Although many sections of his first two chapters figure prominently in various important feasts of the Lord – Annunciation, Circumcision, the Encounter with Anna and Simeon, to say nothing of the Birth of John the Baptist and various Marian Feasts – St. Luke's account of the Lord's birth (2:1-20) is read only on Christmas Eve, at the Third Hour and at the Vespereal Liturgy. All the rest belongs to St. Matthew.

At Divine Liturgy on the Sunday before Christmas we hear the beginning of his Gospel: *The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham*. In the long genealogy that follows (Mt. 1:2-17), the Evangelist situates Jesus firmly within the people of Israel, the tribe of Judah, and the family of David. The lineage ends with Joseph, who, unlike all the previous men on the list, is not identified as the father of the One who follows, but, rather, the husband of His mother. Though the relationship was legal, rather than biological, it is through Joseph that Jesus is rightly called Son of David. The remain-

der of the reading (1:18-25) explains how He is also Son of God.

Joseph, having learned of Mary's pregnancy – for which he had not been responsible – decided to end their betrothal quietly. But God sent him a message in a dream instructing him to receive Mary as his wife, for the conception was the work of the Holy Spirit, and the Son to be born would be a savior to His people. Quoting the Septuagint Greek text of the prophet, Isaiah (7:14), the Evangelist attests to the prophetic prediction of this virginal conception, and to the nature of the Child to be born as God among us. Joseph heeded the message and took Mary as his wife, but had no sexual relations with her; when the Child was born he named Him Jesus (Savior) as he had been commanded in the dream.

These verses (Mt. 1:18-25) contain the essential core of the Christmas message: Jesus, born of the Virgin Mary by the action of the Holy Spirit, is God-With-Us from birth; both human and divine, He will save us from our sins. We will hear them again at the First Royal Hour of Christmas Eve and at Christmas Matins.

St. Luke's Nativity account interrupts the flow at the Third Royal Hour, but St. Matthew returns at the Sixth with his account of the Star and the visit of the Magi (2:1-12). At the Ninth Hour he recounts the flight of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph into Egypt, King Herod's slaughter of the Holy Innocents, and the settling of the Holy Family in Nazareth after the tyrant's death (2:13-23). We will hear these sobering verses again, as well – on December 26, the Synaxis of the Most Holy Theotokos, on December 29, the Feast of the Holy Innocents, and on the Sunday after Christmas.

Thus, St. Matthew is our guide throughout the Christmas season. The first two chapters of his Gospel provide the bones of the celebration. Abundant readings from the Old Testament and from the New Testament Epistles flesh it out. And the whole is splendidly arrayed and adorned in the ecclesial poetry that enshrines the Scriptural texts.

As hearing the Scriptures in our Services keeps alive for us the preaching of the first generation of Christian teachers, so hearing and singing the ecclesial poetry move us with the understanding and insights of later centuries. The bishops, monks, and nuns, who composed the

texts during the Church's first thousand years, were well versed in Scripture, and were often great theologians, as well. We are privileged and blessed to hear their song and to join our voices to theirs across the centuries in the Church's unending hymn of praise.

The texts for Christmas are particularly rich and moving. Never maudlin or sentimental, they draw upon details of the Nativity narrative that incite

wonder and provoke astounding theological contrasts and comparisons. Many of these details are drawn from St. Luke, so that St. Matthew's telling of the story is presented in a decidedly Lucan atmosphere.

While the Church has seen fit to avoid forcing the two Gospel narratives into a single tableau – although a combined Service of the Royal Hours comes close – her hymnographers have had no such scruples. The poetry presents a holistic view of the Event, and images from both Gospels often occur in the same text. So, too, do theological concepts from elsewhere in Scripture, or even from later centuries. Thus

To the Son,
who was ineffably born of the Father
before all ages,
and without seed
became incarnate of the Virgin
in these latter days,
let us lift up our voices
and cry aloud:
O Lord, who have raised up
our fallen nature,
O Christ our God, holy are You!

From Matins
Sunday before Christmas



references to the pre-existence of Christ, to the manger and swaddling clothes, to the loosing of mankind from the bonds of sin, to the Magi and their Star, to the shepherds' wonder and the angels' song, and to the decree of Caesar Augustus, all happily mingle in the celebration. Most startling, perhaps, is the prominence given the Magi and the Star at Christmas Vespers, while the Gospel appointed for the Divine Liturgy that night is taken from St. Luke (2:1-20), who gives no inkling of their appearance.

This joyful anomaly will not be with us this year. As happens from time to time, when Christmas falls on Sunday or Monday, the liturgical Typicon prescribes that the Royal Hours be celebrated on the preceding Friday in order to

preserve their connection with a day of strict fast, which Saturday (in remembrance of the Creation) and Sunday (in celebration of the Resurrection) never are. In such case, there is no Vespersal Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great on Christmas Eve, since the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom has already been celebrated in the morning. The schedule opposite provides the details.

The schedule also notes the Scripture appointed for each Service, the flesh and bones of our Christmas observance. We hope you will make time to read and pray over them, joining us in spirit during this holy season. We keep all of you very much in our hearts and prayers as we joyfully celebrate the Lord's coming among us as man.

Services, Christmas 2016

Sunday, 18 December 2016 -- Sunday Before Christmas

5:30 pm (Saturday)	Great Vespers	1) Genesis 14:14-20; 2) Deuteronomy 1:8-11.15-17; 3) Deuteronomy 10:14-21
10:00 am	Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom	1) Hebrews 11:9-10.17-23.32-40; 2) Mt. 1:1-25

Friday, 23 December 2016 -- Prefestive Day of Christmas

8:00 am	The Royal Hours Pss: 5, 44(45), 45(46) Pss: 66(67), 86(87), 50(51) Pss: 71(72), 131(132), 90(91) Pss: 109(110), 110(111), 85(86)	1st: 1) Micah 5:2-4; 2) Hebrews 1:1-12; 3) Matthew 1:18-25 3rd: 1) Baruch 3:36-4:4; 2) Galatians 3:23-4:5; 3) Luke 2:1-20 6th: 1) Isaiah 7:10-16;8:1-4,8-10; 2) Hebrews 1:10-2:3; 3) Matthew 2:1-12 9th: 1) Isaiah 9:6-7; 2) Hebrews 2:11-18; 3) Matthew 2:13-23
5:30 pm	Vespers of the Paramony	

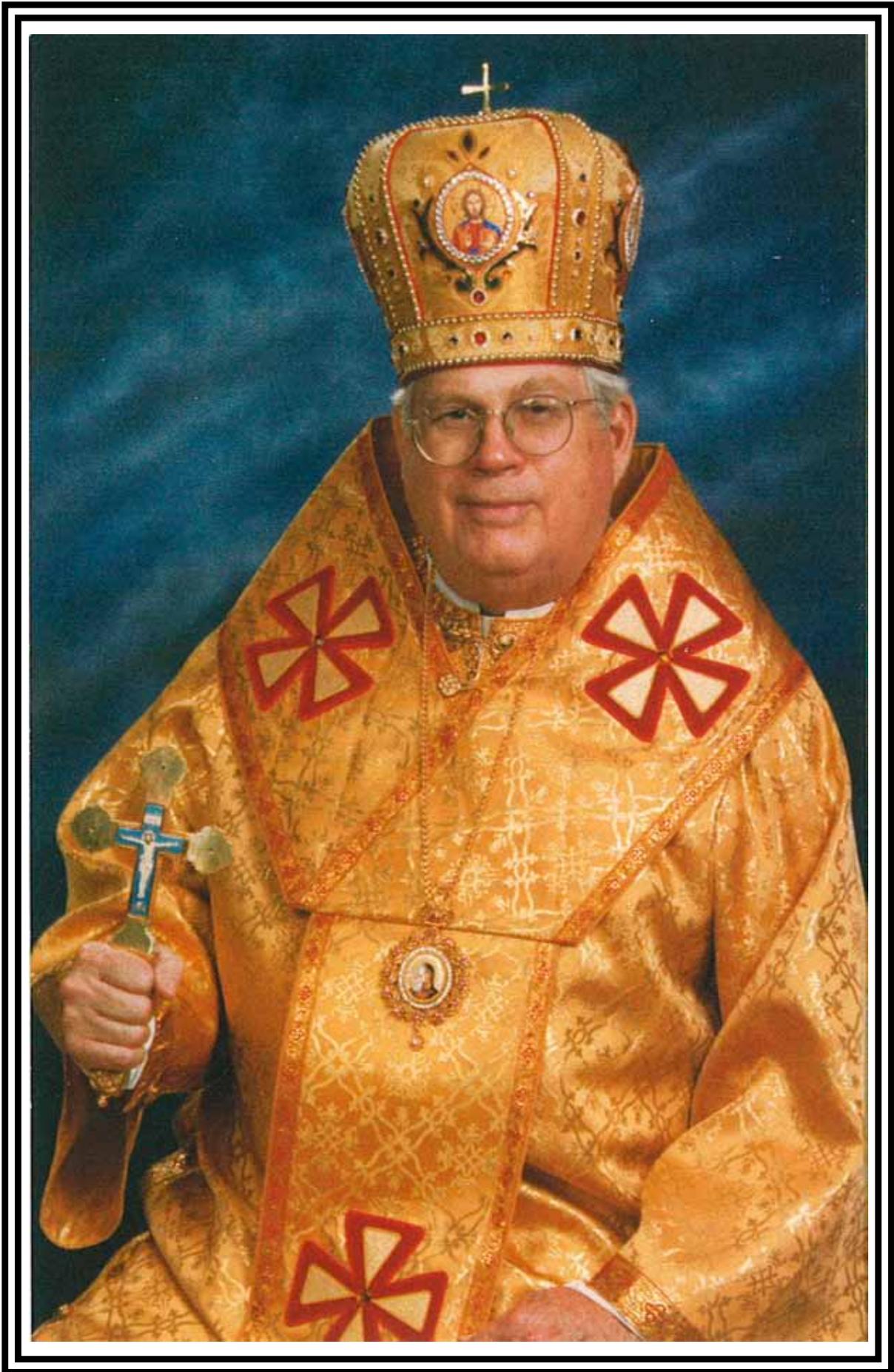
Saturday, 24 December 2016 -- Vigil of Christmas. Saturday before Christmas

6:00 am	Matins and Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom	1) Galatians 3:8-12; 2) Luke 13:18-29
5:30 pm	Great Vespers of Christmas	1) Genesis 1:1-13; 2) Numbers 24:2-3,5-9,17-18; 3) Micah 4:6-7,5:2-4; 4) Isaiah 11:1-10; 5) Baruch 3:35-4:4; 6) Daniel 2:31-36,44-45; 7) Isaiah 9:6-7; 8) Isaiah 7:10-16;8:1-4,9-10; 9) Galatians 3:15-22; 10) Matthew 13:31-36
10:00 pm	Great Compline and Solemn Matins	1) Matthew 1:18-25

Sunday, 25 December 2016 -- Christmas Day

10:00 am	Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great	1) Galatians 4:4-7; 2) Matthew 2:1-12
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Christ is Born! Glorify Him!



Eternal Memory

On August 16, 2016, the Second Day of the Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos, our God-loving Bishop, His Grace Richard Stephen Seminack, fell asleep in the Lord after a long illness. Lack of flights out of our area, a slow recovery from surgery, and the press of summer business prevented us from making the journey to Chicago to attend his funeral at St. Nicholas Cathedral. Additional funeral rites were celebrated at the Metropolitan cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Philadelphia prior to interment in his family's plot. His Eminence, Stefan Soroka, Metropolitan Archbishop of Philadelphia, presided as principal concelebrant of the obsequies in both venues.

The future bishop was born on March 3, 1942, in Philadelphia. The first of the seven children of Raymond and Anna Cwiek Seminack, both sets of his grandparents had immigrated to the United States from Ukraine in the early part of the twentieth century. He was educated in Catholic elementary and secondary schools in Philadelphia prior to entering the seminary at age seventeen.

Having received a BA degree in philosophy from St. Basil's College Seminary in Stamford, Connecticut, in 1963, he continued priestly formation at St. Josaphat Ukrainian Catholic Seminary in Washington, D. C., and pursued further theological studies at Catholic University of America. He was ordained to the priesthood for the Archeparchy of Philadelphia in the spring of 1967. After a brief time in the parish, he was sent to study at the Pontifical Institute for Oriental Studies in Rome, where he received a baccalaureate degree in canon law in 1969.

Returning to the Archeparchy, he served the faithful in various parishes in and around Philadelphia, and also as a chaplain for the Sisters of St. Basil the Great, in campus ministry, and as a chaplain in the U. S. Navy. He was pastoring a parish in Miami when the Archeparchy was divided in 1983, and, with the parish, he was assigned to the newly created Eparchy of St. Josaphat, seated in Parma, Ohio. In 1984, he

was appointed pastor of Holy Trinity Ukrainian Catholic Church in Carnegie, Pennsylvania, a post he held until 2003, when St. John Paul II appointed him fourth bishop of the Eparchy of St. Nicholas in Chicago.

During his nearly twenty years as pastor at Holy Trinity, the future bishop had also served his eparchy in numerous administrative capacities. At various times he was a diocesan consultant, director of religious education, a member of the executive board of the priests' pension program, chairman of the priests' personnel board, and chairman of the presbyteral council. He also held staff positions in the chancery in the offices of pastoral ministry and of examiners for junior clergy.

His pastoral and administrative experience demonstrated competence and would seem a good foundation for ecclesiastical advancement. But there were difficulties. He had been at Holy Trinity for nearly twenty years and had developed many friends there; his life was intimately bound up with his parishioners and the life of the parish. He also maintained a close relationship with his family, and service in Chicago would put him farther away. Moreover, there was a health issue – he had recently undergone bypass surgery. When the phone call came, the Nuncio wanted an immediate answer. Without hesitation, Fr. Seminack accepted. He confided later to friends: *When the Pope calls, you answer, "Yes!"*

The Eparchy of St. Nicholas was a big charge. Comprising all of the United States west of the western boundaries of Ohio, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Mississippi, it was at once the largest eparchy in the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church – in area – and the smallest – in population. The greatest concentration of its ten thousand or so faithful was in the Detroit and Chicago metropolitan areas; the rest were scattered across two thirds of the country in forty-six parishes and missions. Product of past and current immigrations from Ukraine – as well as non-Ukrainian American converts – the faithful were diverse in background and outlook. Some parishes re-

mained on the old Julian calendar, while most had opted for the modern Gregorian, and there were often linguistic divisions within the parishes, themselves.

Bishop Richard sought to be a center of unity, not only administratively, but, above all, pastorally and spiritually. He criss-crossed the eparchy visiting parishes for special celebrations, anniversary milestones, and patronal feasts; he blessed buildings and marriages, performed baptisms, and presided at clergy funerals; and he would sometimes come simply as a visible sign of support to a struggling pastor or parish. He also drew distant clergy and faithful to Chicago for eparchal celebrations and special events, notably the fiftieth anniversary of the eparchy and the one hundredth anniversary of the Cathedral Church of St. Nicholas.

We journeyed to Chicago for several of these celebrations, as well as for a number of Church-wide gatherings, such as a meeting of all the clergy of the metropolia and a convention of the various Eastern Catholic Churches. Particularly significant for the spiritual life of the monastery was our visit to the Cathedral in the summer of 2006 for

the ordination, at Bishop Richard's hands, of one of our monks to the diaconate. Bishop Richard also visited the Skete for the consecration of our monastic church in August of 2003 and for our twenty-fifth anniversary celebration five years later. He had planned to be present for our

thirtieth anniversary celebration and to bless our recently installed carillon, but was prevented by a major heart attack.

As his health worsened in his later years, and his mobility problems became more severe, he increasingly relied on assistants to carry on the work of the eparchy. But he was always available by phone, even when confined to a hospital bed, to offer advice or consolation. He remained a bishop to the end, traveling with great suffering to Ukraine for the annual Synod of Bishops of the world wide Church. With all his diminishing strength, he persevered as father to his people and faithful steward of the Church he had loved

from his youth and had served as a priest for forty-nine years and as a bishop for thirteen.

*In blessed repose, grant eternal rest, O Lord,
to the soul of your departed servant and priest,
the bishop, Richard Stephen,
and render eternal his memory.*



At the Jampot



Jampot closed its doors for the 2016 season on October 15. Weather had not been particularly good during the fall. September had proved rainy, and the color was not as vibrant as in recent years. It was also delayed, reaching peak in our area during the second week of October. Though still damp, the weather had remained mild, and Jampot continued busy until the very end. The Saturdays of October proved the three busiest of the entire season.

In general, we kept up with demand. People who had placed advance orders for baked goods received the requests on time for the most part, and, although not every kind of cookie and muffin was on the counter at all times, there was usually enough variety to satisfy walk-in customers. We kept up with small fruitcakes better than we have ever done, and there were few days without slices. Confections, also remained in good supply, and there were usually several varieties of freshly roasted coffee on the shelf. All this was due, in part, to the augmented work space and equipment provided by the new addition, and to some additional employees, as well.

But all was not as rosy as it should have been. With autumn's usual heavy buying, the jam shelf got devastated. We had been producing jam and jelly practically every day since we opened at the end of April. The inventory built up during

the quiet months of May and June provided a cushion to carry us through the busy months of summer. But signs of trouble began appearing by the end of August. Production was not keeping pace with sales, and we were running short of some of our most popular items. Wild strawberry disappeared

for a while, as did wild raspberry, and on many days we were selling thimbleberry jam still warm, only a few hours out of the kettle. Concentration on the major items left little or no time for the rest. By the final day, we had less than a third of our usual varieties on the shelf.

This problem has been with us for some time – every year we produce more jam than the year before, and every year we fall short of what is needed to carry us to the end of the season. Without a major change in our manner of production, we expect the problem will continue. Traffic in our area has continued to increase; most local businesses saw a very busy season this year and last. We are grateful for the Lord's bounty, we pray He will soon provide for a more efficient reaping.

We currently make jam and jelly in a corner of our kitchen. One antique gas range, a small commercial dishwasher, and a pot sink are dedicated exclusively to its production. It shares table space and other equipment with the bakery, and occupies two full-time jam makers. Batches are small, typically producing less than thirty jars of product, and stirred by hand. Jars are hand filled and labeled. An additional jam maker might marginally increase production, but filling and labelling machines would do much more – to say nothing of the improvement a larger jam kettle

would make possible. At the moment, there is no room for any of this. We wait for the time when it will be possible to undertake Phase II of the proposed expansion and provide a proper jam kitchen to supply Jampot's needs.

We have known the location and footprint of the new building for more than two years; the Township Board and Planning Commission approved them as part of the Special Use Permit issued in the summer of 2014. We also have a good idea of its external appearance and how it will articulate with existing and proposed structures. We hope to spend time during the winter on the interior layout of the building and determining its equipment needs. We can then begin estimating the cost of the expansion. Experience tells us, however that it will not be inexpensive.

To build and equip the addition completed in the spring of 2015 cost about \$600,000.00. The next expansion will be of comparable size, and its mechanical systems and equipment needs equally sophisticated – if not more so. It is reasonable to expect that it will cost at least as much, probably more. Securing the necessary funding will be a top financial priority during the coming year. Toward that end we have initiated a special fundraising project for next spring.

Over the years, many people have – perhaps half in jest – expressed a desire to work at the Jampot; the position most sought-after always seems to be “taste tester”. We are auctioning off just such an opportunity! The six highest bidders in our online auction will experience the day of Monday, May 15, 2017, working hands-on with the monks at the Jampot.

The day begins with breakfast, prepared and served in the Jampot break room, followed by work in several areas of production – bakery, jam, confections, etc. Time after lunch will allow for



tasting and sampling of various products and for reflection on the day's experience. Afterwards, participants – and spouses or guests – are invited to share Vespers and dinner with the monks at the monastery. Overnight accommodations for two at the Eagle River Inn – on Lake Superior, three miles distant from the Jampot – will be provided for Sunday and Monday nights.

Bids opened at \$1,000.00 on October 1, 2016, at <https://www.biddingforgood/jampot>; winners will be notified shortly after bidding closes on March 31, 2017. This will allow time for the winners to arrange their schedules to accommodate the experience. We look forward to the event, and we hope it will help speed the next phase of Jampot expansion. Meanwhile, the familiar struggle to keep up continues.

We took our usual break at the end of the season. This year we made a brief pilgrimage through Wisconsin to the shrines of Our lady of Guadalupe in LaCrosse and of Our Lady of Good Help in Champion. The trip was physically and spiritually restorative; we returned ready to catch up.

Now, some four weeks later, inventory has been rebuilt, the early orders have been shipped, and we stand ready to fulfill your personal or gift-giving needs with the offerings on the following pages.