

# Basilian Spirituality Center

NEWSLETTER: FALL 2019



## UPCOMING EVENTS

### **Sports and Spirituality**

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 2019**

6:30 - 8:30 PM

### **Jesus' Birth in History**

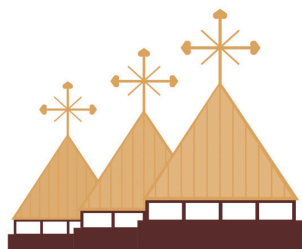
**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2019**

6:30 - 8:30 PM

### **Estate Planning Seminar**

**TUESDAY, APRIL 2, 2020**

6:00 - 9:00 PM



**BASILIAN  
SPIRITUALITY  
CENTER**

## DIRECTOR'S UPDATES

After a quiet summer it is hard to believe we are nearly finished with the Fall 2019 Program Schedule. I am thrilled to report we have gained new audiences and spread the Basilian spirit in novel ways. On September 17, at the Abington Library, I spoke about the **Sisters' history and legacy** to an audience of about thirty. The presentation began with Macrina and Basil in the 4th century and concluded with the 21st Century Basileiad, which consists of the Academy, Manor, and the Spirituality Center. I was able to draw from the trove of old photographs held at Fox Chase thanks to our archivist, Hylena Michak, and the event was very well received.

Two days later, on September 19, Fr. Ivan Kaszczak gave a **historical reflection on Ukrainian Catholicism** in the United States. Questions and discussion were terrific. Perhaps most memorable was Fr. Ivan's statement that the Church is called to be faithful even at the cost of survival.



Next, on September 28, I gave a lecture on **beer in the history of Catholicism**. While the topic may sound surprising, there is much to learn by using beer and brewing as entry points into the history of our faith. Many are aware of the connections between medieval monasticism and brewing but few realize the scope of the Church's involvement in the industry much less its continued endurance. Did you know that today there are active monastic breweries in more than a dozen countries? How about that beer is associated with the miraculous in some lives of the saints? Of course, such an event would be incomplete without sampling the real thing. Attendees tried some of the finest beers brewed by monks today and a few with other Catholic connections.

We welcomed Sister Jocelyn Edathil, MD, PhD of the Sisters of the Imitation of Christ and Sister Laura Downing, STL of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary on October 19 for **"Young Nuns in Their Own Words."** The Sisters' faith and love were evident in the stories they shared about their vocation journeys and current work.

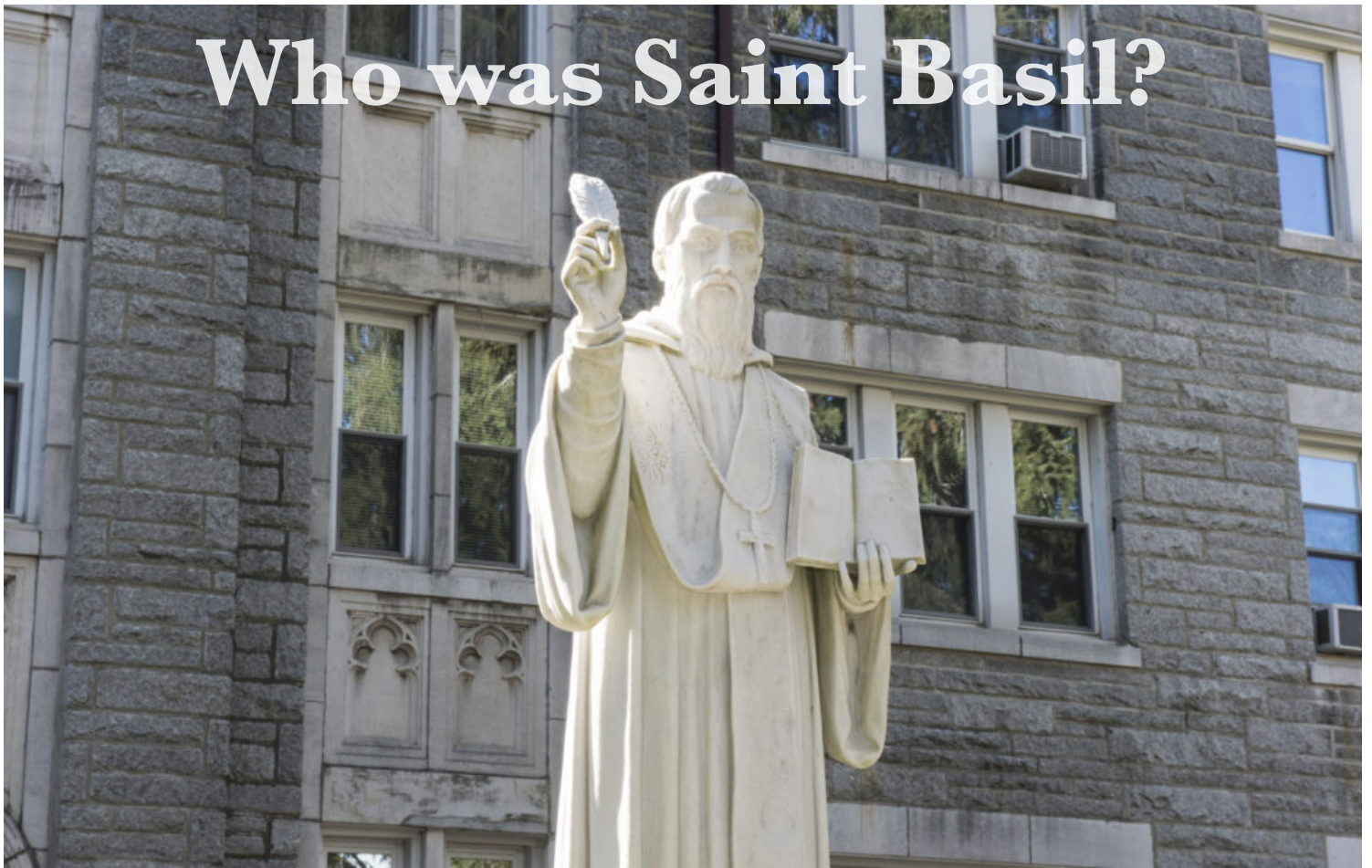
**"Catholicism and the Supernatural"** on October 29 was a hit. Much of our focus was on the fact that God created all things visible and invisible as well as on His desire for us to regain the paradise lost by Original Sin, especially through the 7 Sacraments.

Just two programs remain for Fall 2019.

On November 23, we will have **"Sports and Spirituality."** Did you know Saint Paul mentions boxing and running? Or that John Paul II was a lifelong athlete who loved skiing and the outdoors? Few realize the mutual applicability between sports and spirituality, much less the physical challenges embraced by the saints. This program will discuss how athletics can help cultivate spiritual life as well as what prayer brings to competition with the self and others.

Finally, to conclude the season, on December 10 the program will be **"Jesus' Birth in History."** This will be a presentation on the historical details of Matthew and Luke's Infancy Narratives. Questions to be discussed include: What do we really know about Jesus' birth? Is it reasonable to believe he was really born in a manger? What are the evangelists telling us with their long genealogies? Our discussion will be a great way to celebrate Advent.

# Who was Saint Basil?



Saint Basil (also known as Basil of Caesarea and Basil the Great) was born about 328 in Asia Minor, close to the Black Sea along the northern coast of modern-day Turkey. He was the second oldest of nine children, following his sister, Macrina, born about 327. Together these sibling-saints helped define monasticism in the Byzantine East just as Benedict did for the Latin West. In fact, Macrina and Basil predate Benedict by about two centuries, and Benedict explicitly mentions Basil's rule in his own.

Macrina and Basil drew tremendous inspiration from their paternal grandmother, Macrina the Elder, who was persecuted for her Christian faith by Roman authorities. Their parents, Basil the Elder and Emmelia, must have been exceptional for they raised four saints and three bishops! Gregory of Nyssa and Peter of Sebaste were also canonized while Basil, Gregory, and Peter were consecrated bishops. Basil the Elder was a teacher and after he died, Emmelia and Macrina converted the family's assets into a monastic settlement. Most remarkably, they began treating their servants as equals—an action so radical it is difficult to appreciate today.

Gregory of Nyssa preserves a family story that sheds light on the dynamic between Macrina and Basil. Basil was educated abroad, including at Athens, and became an impeccable orator. After returning home from study, his eloquence led to such arrogance that Macrina decided to set him straight. She was so successful at bringing Basil to humility that Gregory interprets the episode as formative in his embrace of asceticism and virtue. It is also thanks to Gregory that we have a beautiful picture of Macrina's sanctity and leadership. He depicts his eldest sister as a saint to whom miracles were attributed even while she still lived. Moreover, she was a capable and venerated leader of the women's monastery she and her mother founded.

Macrina, Basil, and their family are notable for having profound and lasting effects on the faith. Even today we have them to thank for doctrinal purity regarding the Holy Trinity, monastic foundations around the world, and of course the Sisters of the Order of Saint Basil the Great who came to the United States in 1911.

May God bless the Church with more families like this!

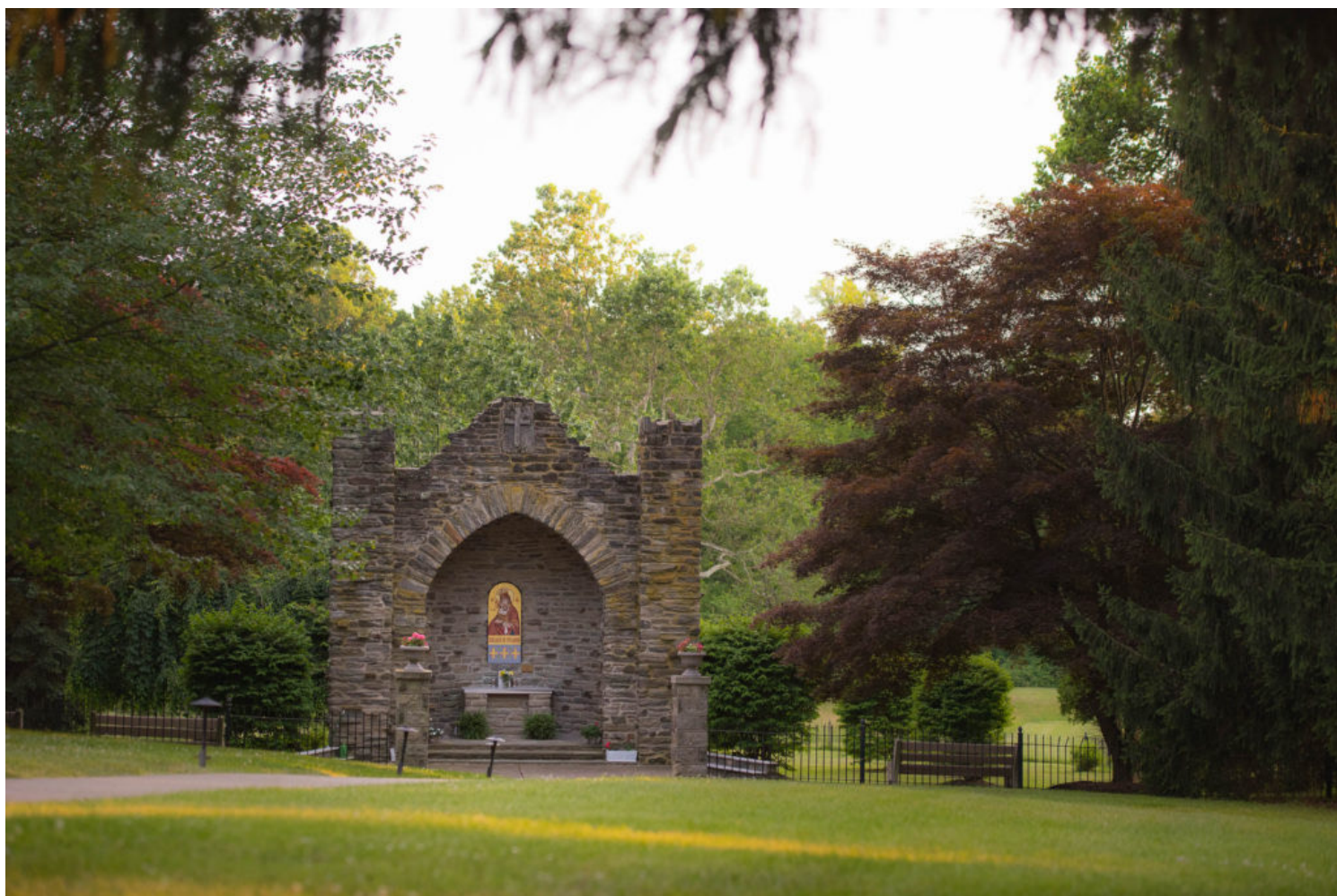
## A BRIEF REFLECTION

One of my favorite features of the Motherhouse grounds is our grotto dedicated to Our Lady of Pachayiv. When the stone structure was initially built around the time of the Depression it housed a statue of Our Lady of Lourdes. Then during construction of Holy Trinity Chapel and the Spirituality Center (1998-2000) the statue was moved to a new shrine adjacent to the Yellow House and the present icon was installed.

I love the grotto for numerous reasons but especially for the effect of walking down the path towards the altar and icon. From the driveway the structure seems smaller than it actually is because the ground slopes away from the chapel. Upon approach, however, the stone seems to embrace the viewer, drawing him into the mutual gaze between Theotokos and Holy Child—an effect

aided by its curved shape. Moreover, to light a candle one must ascend the few steps leading to the altar; from this position the viewer is covered overhead by the stone dome. All of this is to say the grotto welcomes those who approach it through architectural effect and facilitates a prayerful experience by focusing the viewers' gaze to the eyes of Mary and Jesus.

Members of the public with no formal connection to the Sisters will walk, bike, and drive to the grotto to pray before the icon. My heart is always warmed when I happen upon these moments—whether in the morning, afternoon, or near dusk—and my faith is always strengthened. The devil does everything possible to undermine hope for the Church. Yet here on the grounds of the Basilian Sisters, the silent, humble prayers of the faithful prove there is still tremendous faith and devotion right in our midst.



## ABOUT THE BASILIAN SPIRITUALITY CENTER

The Sisters of the Order of Saint Basil the Great founded the Basilian Spirituality Center in 2000 as the first of its kind in the United States. It is a Ukrainian Catholic apostolate with the mission to bring about the praying, healing, and life-giving presence of Jesus Christ.

The Center's mission is fulfilled primarily in two ways. The first is through programs for the public focusing on faith, history, sacred art, and spirituality. The second includes retreats for parishes, schools, religious orders, and other groups. Event space is also available for rent to outside groups



## Gift Shop in the Basilian Spirituality Center



- Icons
- Books
- Pysanky (decorated eggs)
- Prints
- Rosaries, medals, and other religious goods



# FALL 2019 PROGRAM SCHEDULE

- **History and Legacy of the Basilian Sisters in Fox Chase**

**TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17 | 7:00 - 8:30 PM @ Abington Library**

Hidden in plain sight next to Manor College and across from Saint Basil Academy stands the Motherhouse of the Basilian Sisters, an international order of consecrated women belonging to an ancient monastic tradition. For more than a century they have educated and served immigrants and others in need. How did they get there? Sisters will be in attendance to field questions after the talk, and we will also discuss the Byzantine icons that form a significant part of their spirituality.

- **Historical Reflection on Ukrainian Catholicism by Fr. Ivan Kaszczak**

**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 19 | 6:00 - 8:00 PM**

The Ukrainian Catholic Church may be found all over the world and is especially well-represented in the Philadelphia area. Fr. Ivan Kaszczak is a priest, historian, and author who will offer a reflection on the Church's history based in his scholarly research.

- **Beer in the History of Catholicism (Includes Beer Samples)**

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 28 | 7:00 - 9:00PM**

From medieval Europe through today, monks and nuns have produced some of the finest beer, wine, and spirits. Learn about this tradition and sample remarkable beers with Catholic origins.

- **Young Nuns in Their Own Words**

**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 19 | 6:30 - 8:30 PM**

Do women still enter convents? Why? What are their lives like? Meet and speak with three young women who have embraced vocations as religious sisters. Theirs are stories of faith, hope, charity, and humor.

- **Catholicism and the Supernatural**

**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 29 | 6:30 - 8:30 PM**

In 1973 *The Exorcist* shocked and terrified audiences, inspiring countless other films in the years since. What is the underlying Catholic doctrine and theology in this classic?

- **Sports and Spirituality**

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 23 | 6:30 - 8:30 PM**

Did you know Saint Paul mentions boxing and running? How about that John Paul II was a lifelong athlete who loved skiing and the outdoors? Few realize the mutual applicability between sports and spirituality much less the physical challenges embraced by the saints. This program will discuss how athletics can help cultivate spiritual life as well as what prayer brings to competition with the self and others.

- **Jesus' Birth in History**

**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 10 | 6:30 - 8:30 PM**

What do Matthew and Luke tell us about the historical details surrounding Jesus' birth?

## MISSION

The Center's mission is to bring about Christ's praying, healing, and life-giving presence to all through programmatic offerings for the public.

## LOCATION

710 Fox Chase Road  
Jenkintown, PA 19046  
[www.StBasils.com](http://www.StBasils.com)



# ESTATE PLANNING SEMINAR



## SCHEDULE

- 6:00 - 7:00 Reception
- 7:00 - 8:30 Seminar
- 8:30 - 9:00 Coffee + Dessert

**THURSDAY, APRIL 2, 2020**

Basilian Spirituality Center

6:00 - 9:00 PM

## ESSENTIALS OF ESTATE PLANNING

- Wills
- Trusts
- Powers of Attorney
- Advance Health Directives
- Funeral Costs
- Retirement Accounts
- Life Insurance
- Guardianships
- Tax Considerations
- Charitable Giving

**Is your family prepared?**

**Ensure your loved ones are cared for.**

The Basilian Spirituality Center of the Sisters of the Order of Saint Basil the Great - Jesus, Lover of Humanity Province.

Questions or comments? Get in touch!  
BasilCenter@StBasils.com

Find us on 

## SUPPORT THE SISTERS BY LEAVING A LEGACY

The Sisters of the Order of Saint Basil the Great invite you to join your legacy with theirs by becoming a member of the **Mother Helena Langevych, OSBM Society**. Membership is reserved for generous souls who remember the Sisters in their will or estate plan. Your bequest ensures your lasting participation in the Sisters' work.



Suggested wording for a bequest is as follows:

“I give and bequeath to the Sisters of the Order of Saint Basil the Great - Jesus, Lover of Humanity Province, located in Fox Chase Manor, PA, \_\_\_% of the residue of my estate [or the sum of \$\_\_\_].”

We ask that you please inform us if you have remembered the Sisters in this special way so that you can be formally enrolled in the Mother Helena Langevych Society and **enjoy the benefits of membership**.

If you would like more information or have any questions please contact our Development Director, John F. Kurey, Esq., MBA. He may be reached at (215) 379-3998, Extension 34 or [developmentdirector@stbasils.com](mailto:developmentdirector@stbasils.com).

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