



Sunday before Christmas
Sunday of the Holy Fathers

Eve of the Nativity of Christ

The Holy Venerable-Martyr Eugenia –

Eugenia was born in Rome and was the daughter of the Eparch of all Egypt. Because of her faith, she suffered for Christ on December 25th, 262, in Rome and was buried in the catacombs of the Latin Way. * ***Nativity Fast*** *

***Sunday, December 24th, 2017 ***

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Liturgical Services this Week

Saturday, Dec. 23 * 3:00 p.m. Confessions**

**** 3:30 p.m. Rosary (Eng.) *** 4:00 p.m.**

Div. Lit.: God's blessings for all parishioners.
(Eng./Ukr.)

Sunday, December 24th - Christmas Eve

3:00 p.m. - Great Compline with Lytia

4:00 p.m. - Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great

Monday, December 25th - Nativity of Our Lord

10:00 a.m. - Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great

Tues Dec. 26th - Synaxis of the Blessed Virgin Mary

10:00 a.m. - Divine Liturgy

Wednesday, December 27th - First Martyr Stephen

10:00 a.m. - Divine Liturgy

Sunday, Dec. 31 * 9:30 a.m. Rosary (Eng.) *** 10:00 a.m.**

Div. Lit.: God's blessings for all parishioners. (Eng./Ukr.)

4:00 p.m. Vespers



Troparion, Tone 4: When the disciples of the Lord learned from the angel * the glorious news of the resurrection* and cast off the ancestral condemnation,* they proudly told the apostles:* “Death has been plundered!* Christ our God is risen,* granting to the world great mercy.”

Troparion, Tone 2: Great are the achievements of faith! * In the fountain of flames, the three holy youths rejoiced as by the water of rest, * and the prophet Daniel was revealed shepherding lions like sheep.* Through their intercession, O Christ God,* save our souls.

+Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and for ever and ever. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 6: Armed by the Being that defies description* You defied the man-made idol, O thrice blessed youth. * In the midst of the unbearable flames you stood and cried out to God: * “In Your mercy, O gracious One, hasten and come to our aid,”* for You can do whatever You will.

Prokeimenon, Tone 4 - Blessed are You, Lord God of our fathers, * and praised and glorified is Your Name forever.

verse: For You are righteous in everything that You have done to us.



Epistle: Epistle: A reading of St. Paul's letter to the Hebrews (11:9-10,17-23,32-40):

Brothers and Sisters, by faith Abraham stayed for a time in the land he had been promised, as in a foreign land, living in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were

heirs with him of the same promise. For he looked forward to the city that has foundations, whose architect and builder is God. By faith Abraham, when put to the test, offered up Isaac. He who had received the promises was ready to offer up his only son, of whom he had been told, “It is through Isaac that descendants shall be named for you.” He considered the fact that God is able even to raise someone from the dead—and figuratively speaking, he did receive him back. By faith Isaac invoked blessings for the future on Jacob and Esau. By faith Jacob, when dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, “bowing in worship over the top of his staff.” By faith Joseph, at the end of his life, made mention of the exodus of the Israelites and gave instructions about his burial. By faith Moses was hidden by his parents for three months after his birth, because they saw that the child was beautiful; and they were not afraid of the king’s edict. And what more should I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets— who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, won strength out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. Women received their dead by resurrection. Others were tortured, refusing to accept release, in order to obtain a better resurrection. Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned to death, they were sawn in two, they were killed by the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, persecuted, tormented— of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground. Yet all these, though they were commended for their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had provided something better so that they would not, apart from us, be made perfect.

Alleluia, Tone 4 - O God, we have heard with our ears, and our fathers have told us the work You did in their days.

verse: You saved us from our oppressors and put to shame those who hate us.

Gospel: Matthew 1:1-25

An account of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Aram, and Aram the father of Aminadab, and Aminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of King David. And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah, and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asaph, and Asaph the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah, and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amos, and Amos the father of Josiah, and Josiah the father of Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon. And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Salathiel, and Salathiel the father of Zerubbabel, and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, and Abiud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor, and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud, and Eliud the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called the Messiah. So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations;

and from David to the deportation to Babylon, fourteen generations; and from the deportation to Babylon to the Messiah, fourteen generations. Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” All this took place to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: “Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,” which means, “God is with us.” When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

Communion Hymn - Praise the Lord from the heavens;* praise Him in the highest (Psalm 148:1).

Rejoice in the Lord, O you just;* praise befits the righteous (Psalm 32:1).* Alleluia, alleluia,* alleluia.



**** ANNOUNCEMENTS ****

“The Protoevangelium.

Immediately after their fall, God announces to Adam and Eve his promise of salvation. Inasmuch as the human race was deceived by the tempter by trusting in him, God sets

enmity, a struggle between them, to safeguard humanity from total subordination to evil: "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers" (Gen. 3:15). In this struggle, God promises humanity the ultimate victory: "He [i.e., the offspring of the woman] will strike your [i.e., the serpent's] head (Gen. 3:15). In the contest between good and evil, in the end, good shall overcome, as personified by the offspring of the woman. The assurance of this victory emerges not from human efforts, but from the very Word of God, given in the promise. The first proclamation of the Good News about the salvation of the human race is what the Church calls the Protoevangelium." Catechism of the Ukrainian Catholic Church - "Christ Our Pascha" #160



Sunday before the Nativity of Christ -

This past Sunday the Church commemorated all the righteous of the Old Testament who awaited the coming of Christ. Today's Feast of the Holy Ancestors although similar, remembers all those in the Old Testament who were related to Christ by blood and those who spoke of his birth as a man.

One of the important purposes of Matthew's genealogy: to identify Jesus as the true Messiah, the One Who, as predicted in the Old Testament would be born of a virgin and would be the fulfillment of the promise made to Abraham and David by God. It gives us the history of the true Christmas, the human side of the story of how this Christ Child came to us.

Since the Jews did not trace genealogies in the mother's line, the Scriptures do not give us the lineage of Christ according to the flesh, which was through his mother Mary; but instead list the forebears of Joseph the Betrothed, who served according to the Law as husband of Mary and father of Jesus. According to the Fathers, the blessed Virgin was the daughter of Joachim, son of Bar-Panther, son of Panther, son of Levi, son of Nathan, son of King David. Thus as prophesied, the Messiah was of the house and lineage of David.

A warm welcome - to all parishioners, your families, visitors and guests. Thank you for joining us in this Divine Liturgy. Have a blessed week!



Please Pray for health of ... Maria R., John H., Maria Z., Clay B., Mike B., Ann W., Lawrence S., Fr. Jeffery S., Lawrence & Ping B., all the sick brothers and sisters in our families and our parish community.

Please let Fr. Andrzej know if you would like to add names to the prayer list and also notify him about any sick and/or hospitalized parishioners and family members.

Sunday, Dec. 24 – Christmas Eve – is a day of strict fasting from meat and dairy products (applies to those without various dispensations). Everyone is invited to take part in a spiritual preparation for Christ's Nativity according to their abilities.

Thank you to all our Volunteers –
Дякуємо – Many thanks to everyone for work done in preparation for the celebration of Christ's Nativity, for your support of our parish community and all other work done at the church property this past week. God bless you all!



Food Bank Collection – Thank you everyone for your great support. We had two deliveries of food to the Kamloops Food Bank during this year's Nativity Fast.

Eparchial Clergy Skype Conference Call – will take place on Thursday, January 4th, 2018.

The Theophany Eve Supper and Caroling

(Shchedryi Vecheer) – will take place on Friday, Jan. 5th, 2018 after the service at 5:00 p.m.

Monthly Parish Council Meeting – will take place on **Tuesday, January 16th, 2018** at 7:00 p.m. at the parish hall.

Next Monthly Fundraiser Breakfast – will take place on Sunday, January 21st, 2018.

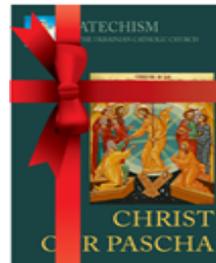
“Christmas Candle” - “Різдвяна свічка” – Since 2012 our Eparchy has been collecting funds to help underprivileged and orphaned children in Ukraine through our Christmas Candle appeal. As in previous years candles are available for a minimum donation of \$5 per candle. For more information, please contact Fr. Andrzej



Ukrainian Catholic Church interactive map: as the Christmas season is approaching some of you will be travelling and visiting your friends and families not only in Canada. So we want to ensure that you can find a Ukrainian Catholic parish in different parts of the world. Please check out this interactive map of our parishes throughout the world where you can find a parish near you: <http://map.ugcc.ua>

CHRISTMAS GIFT - CATECHISM

Christ—Our Pascha. If you haven't decided on your Christmas presents yet, we have a solution for you. Only for \$25 you can buy the perfect Christmas gift for your friends and relatives. It will help them to better understand you and your faith, and why you belong to the Ukrainian Catholic Church. It will reveal to them the hidden pearls of our Kyivan-Christian traditions.



The Compassionate Community Care (CCC) helpline, 1-855-675-8749 is a national service for people who are seeking advice, help & support regarding euthanasia & assisted suicide prevention, &/or end-of-life treatment issues or concerns.



Special Petitions for Divine Liturgy:

* We also pray for the people of Ukraine, that with the help of the Holy Spirit, they may obtain social peace, political harmony and economic stability: Lord, hear us and have mercy.

* We also pray to be blessed with generous hearts to contribute to our Bishop's initiatives and programmes, such as: the support of parishes, the education of parishioners, and the formation of seminarians, Lord hear us and have mercy.

The Most Holy Trinity Parish Stewardship: Sunday, Dec. 17 - \$716.00 ***** *May God bless and reward you for your generosity & support.*



Christmas/Theophany Schedule:

Sunday, December 31st – Sunday after Christmas

10:00 a.m. - Divine Liturgy

4:00 p.m. Vespers

Monday, January 1st - The Circumcision of our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ; Saint Basil the Great, Archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia; New Year's Day

10:00 a.m. - Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great

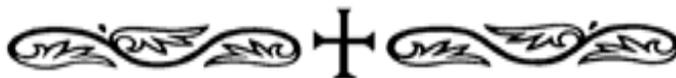
Friday, January 5th - THEOPHANY EVE / НАВЕЧІР'Я БОГОЯВЛЕННЯ

10:00 a.m. – The Royal Hours

5:00 p.m. - Great Compline with Lytia; Great Sanctification of Water followed by the Theophany/Epiphany Eve Supper and Caroling (Shchedryi Vecheer)

Saturday, January 6th - FEAST OF THE THEOPHANY / БОГОЯВЛЕННЯ (ЙОРДАН)

10:00 a.m. - Divine Liturgy



Pastoral Ministry and Sacraments:

Reconciliation: on Sundays and Holy Days: before Divine Liturgies and other days, by appointment.

Holy Communion: for the sick, by appointment, any time.

Baptisms: by appointment.

Marriages: six months' notice should be given to the parish priest, and he should be contacted before any other arrangements are made.

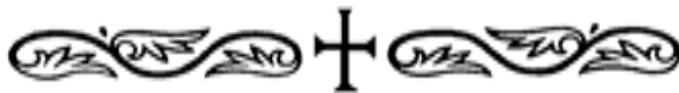
Funerals and Memorials: by appointment.

Anointing of the Sick (Holy Unction): Those anticipating surgery, hospitalization or treatments and who would like to receive anointing or to meet with parish priest, please call or email Fr. Andrzej in advance to arrange a time and a day.

Basic Guidelines for Reception of Holy Communion:

1. You are a member of the Catholic Church (Orthodox faithful are welcome to receive Holy Communion); 2) You have participated in the Sacrament of Confession at least during the Easter or Christmas seasons this past year if not more frequently; 3) You attend Divine Services regularly; 4) Your lifestyle is consistent with the teaching of the Catholic Church; 5) You have kept the Liturgical fast – no food at least one hour prior to the Divine Liturgy (water and medicine does not break the fast). 6) You have been in church from the beginning of the service, or at least heard the Gospel. 7) To the best of your ability, you are in the state of Grace.

If for any of these or other reasons you cannot receive Holy Communion, you are very welcome to come for a blessing. Please indicate to the priest that you would like to receive his blessing.



Prot. N. 17/455 ENG

**CHRISTMAS PASTORAL LETTER
OF HIS BEATITUDE SVIATOSLAV**

**Most Reverend Archbishops and Metropolitans, God-loving
Bishops,
Very Reverend Clergy, Venerable Monastics, Dearly Beloved
Brothers and Sisters, in Ukraine and throughout the world**

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich. 2 Cor. 8:9

Christ is born! Glorify Him!

Beloved in Christ!

Today once again we share the unspeakable joy of the Holy Nativity, which fills the heart of each believer. The Son of God became one of us, having taken as His mother a Virgin from Nazareth. The Son of the Pre-eternal and Almighty God, the Creator of all that is visible and invisible, was born in a poor stable cave and personally experienced all human misery. This is not merely some historical event from long ago, this is our reality as well. In this event that took place in Bethlehem more than two thousand years ago we recognize God's infinite love for the human race, for all time: "For God so loved the world, that he gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life" (Jn 3:16).

Gazing upon the newborn Saviour, lying in a simple stable cave, on hay in a manger, we sense how Divine wisdom exceeds human wisdom. In the light of the Christmas star, human power, glory, and wealth seem empty, fleeting, and insignificant. Christ,

the Son of God, became poor and helpless for us. He abandoned heavenly glory in order to be born among humans—deprived, having no place to lay His head, as we sing in our traditional carol: “not in a royal palace, but among cattle....” For us He becomes poor, having been rich, so that we might become rich in his poverty (see 2 Cor 8:9). Taking human misery and frailty upon Himself, the Son of God raises us poor humans to our Lord’s grandeur. Indeed, the poor shepherds of Bethlehem and its surroundings are the first to receive this good news of salvation, proclaimed to us today by the Angel of the Lord: “‘And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.’ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, ‘Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased!’” (Lk 2:12-14). Christmas, it would seem, brings about an exchange of gifts: God descends from heaven to earth, so that mankind might ascend into heaven; the Son of God becomes poor, so that we might all be enriched.

Today we live in a world where, in the words of the Holy Father, Pope Francis, the pursuit of material enrichment frequently grows into a “new idolatry of money,” and “the economy lays bare... a lack of real concern for human beings; man being reduced to one of his needs alone: consumption” (*Evangelii gaudium*, 55). And yet, the angel of the Nativity directs his message to the poor and calls upon them, and us as well, to praise God, in Whom we find hidden the true and eternal wealth of humankind. In being united with Christ, “in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Col 2:3). Christians appear before the world “as poor, yet making many rich, as having nothing, yet possessing everything” (2 Cor 6:10)! And thus, in the Nativity, this wealth—a life with God and in

God—comes to us and becomes a source of our joy and hope, which we exchange with one another..

In the midst of the misery and challenges of the present day, we should recognize that there are many forms of poverty—spiritual, cultural, educational, civilizational, and only then—material. The poverty of the present world is frequently not material, but spiritual. Thus, in a certain sense, today’s “new rich” in Ukraine may, in fact, be spiritually and culturally poorer than beggars. On the other hand, this spiritual poverty, that is, this distance of the powerful of this world from God, frequently creates social injustice, disastrous abuse of authority, corruption and misuse of resources, given for the common good.

In this situation it is not enough for the rich to share a portion of the crumbs from their table as a form of help for the poor. What is needed is a change of the human heart, an opening which will allow Divine light and grace to enter. For the one who claims to be a saviour of the poor, but does not have God in his or her heart—such a person carries empty ideologies which only exploit human suffering for political gain, but in reality, are unable to end it. In such circumstances the poor become poorer while the rich continue to prosper. Only those who have become rich in God can transform their own lives and contribute to the creation of a just society, having the human being at its centre rather than profit, the common good rather than egotistical interests of particular groups or clans.

In His Nativity Christ makes us all rich, fills us and raises us out of all forms of poverty, for Christ is born in Bethlehem in order to make every person His brother, His sister—a child of God and sharer of eternal divine blessings. That is why Christmas is the feast of solidarity for all humankind, even for those who cannot bear the gifts of gold of this world, for it enriches all with

“a gift more precious than myrrh: the faith of the heart and sincere love,” as we sing in our Ukrainian carol.

Beloved in Christ! In order that we may worthily celebrate Christmas, with those who suffer from all forms of poverty let us share of the riches that are ours—our spiritual gifts above all, and then material gifts. May our ancient carol-koliada, which greets the king in a poor stable cave, be a Divine covenant for us, to approach the poor and share with them the riches of our holy faith. Let us lean down before Christ, present in our impoverished brothers and sisters, allowing them to experience the closeness of God, Who embraces all with His endless mercy and unconditional love. Let us greet with carols our soldiers, wherever they may be—in their homes, having fulfilled their sacred duty to defend their country, in their military units, at the front. Let us visit those who were wounded in battle, let us receive into our hearts the pain of the poor and the needy, for in doing so we will receive Christ with the Most Holy Family, enriching our own homes, our families, and the society we live in with endless divine treasures, “where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal” (Mt 6:20). This is what the Holy Church encourages us to do in singing: “Let us meet Him with pure hearts and with good works. Let us prepare ourselves now through the Holy Spirit to greet Him who is coming to His own people as He himself had willed. He is being born in Bethlehem, so that through His compassion He might bring back all of those who were exiled from life in Paradise” (Sunday before the Nativity, Stikhera from Vespers).

Dear Brothers and Sisters, with a sincere heart I wish each of you, from the youngest to the oldest, from the richest in Divine gifts to the poorest, in Ukraine and abroad—the true joy of children of God, tasty kutia, a Christmas full of cheer, and a happy, peaceful, and blessed New Year!

Christ is born! Glorify Him!

† SVIATOSLAV

Given in Kyiv

*at the Patriarchal Cathedral of the Resurrection of Christ,
on the day of the Venerable Martyr Stephen the Younger and the
Holy Martyr Irenarchus,
the 11th of December (28th of November) in the 2017th Year of
our Lord*



**PASTORAL LETTER
OF THE UKRAINIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS OF CANADA
ON THE OCCASION OF THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD
2017**

To the Very Reverend Clergy, Monastics and Religious Sisters,
Seminarians and Laity of the Ukrainian Catholic Church in
Canada

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have
seen his glory,
glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.
(John 1:14)

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

For Canadians it has been an extraordinary year of celebrations as we commemorated the 150th anniversary of Canadian Confederation. Throughout this great nation communities large

and small found their own special way to celebrate. On Canada Day throughout the land there were parades, picnics, family and neighbourhood barbecues, and, of course, fireworks, bringing the day to a glorious close. In each of our families, no doubt, we also celebrated other events: a birthday, an anniversary, a wedding, or a graduation. Celebrations have great meaning as long as we understand what is being celebrated and why we celebrate it. And even if we don't completely understand a particular celebration, as is frequently the case in a multicultural and diverse country such as ours, we can at least tell a joyful celebration from a sorrowful one.

What does Christmas mean to us? Why do we celebrate it? How do we mark the feast? Our consumer society certainly gives us enough notice of the "holiday season" through endless commercials and advertising! We are urged to go to Christmas parties, to make our holiday plans well in advance, to purchase gifts, and to decorate our homes. On various radio and television talk shows we are told to not wait till the last moment to purchase Christmas presents, to make holiday plans early in order to avoid stress. We may even know people who begin their Christmas gift shopping for the next year almost as soon as Christmas is over, already thinking of the people to whom they will want to give a gift, and thus purchasing presents throughout the entire year. We probably also know people who wait till the very last minute to make plans and purchase gifts, only to find that their lives have become topsy-turvy. Then the Christmas celebrations come and go so quickly that all that seemingly remains is an inner emptiness, the so called post-Christmas doldrums, or the after-Christmas party blues. Is that the meaning of Christmas, a season of frenetic commercial activity? Shouldn't we at least question the motives of those who kick off each "holiday season" with a "Black Friday?"

In the Gospel of Luke, the Angel of the Lord announces:

“Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” (2: 10-12)

Then the narrative continues:

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!” (2:13-14)

So, we are celebrating an event infinitely more important than Canadian Confederation, a family member’s birthday or wedding anniversary. We are celebrating the kind of Good News that comes only once in human history: the birth of a Saviour, a Messiah. Christmas commemorates an event that continues to impact the lives of all men and women of faith: the co-Eternal Son of God became one of us, so that we might share in his Divinity.

Are we ready to celebrate the event, not materially, but spiritually? Did we take advantage of the Philip’s Fast (Pylypivka-Advent) to spend extra time in prayer? Did we limit our food intake and make personal sacrifices? Did we especially think of the needy, both near and far, and engage in works of charity? Did we take advantage of the Holy Mystery (Sacrament) of Reconciliation so that we might be able to sing “God is with us—Emmanuel!” with a pure and open heart? If we have, we truly understand and can appreciate the real reason for the season. If we have not, it is never too late to receive the new-born Saviour in the stillness of a joyful heart, for his message of good news is offered to all men and women of good will. Let us ask for the grace needed to understand the incredible significance of the event. Let us pray, that we might have the courage to proclaim

the truth about Christmas, boldly and with faith.

Our rich liturgical poetry for the Feast proclaims:

Today heaven and earth unite, for Christ is born. Today God came to earth in the flesh, and the human race was lifted up to the heavens. Today, for the sake of all, He is seen in the flesh, the One Who by nature is invisible. Let us glorify Him, singing: Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace which Your coming has bestowed on us. O Saviour, glory to You!

May each and every one of you be blessed with a Christmas full of joyful and profound celebration.

- + Lawrence Huculak OSBM, Metropolitan Archbishop of Winnipeg
- + Michael Wiwchar CSSR, Bishop Emeritus of Saskatoon
- + Severian Yakymyshyn OSBM, Bishop Emeritus of New Westminster
- + David Motiuk, Eparchial Bishop of Edmonton
- + Stephen Chmilar, Eparchial Bishop of Toronto
- + Ken Nowakowski, Eparchial Bishop of New Westminster
- + Bryan Bayda CSSR, Eparchial Bishop of Saskatoon



**ПАСТИРСЬКЕ ПОСЛАННЯ
УКРАЇНСЬКИХ КАТОЛИЦЬКИХ ЄПИСКОПІВ У
КАНАДІ
З НАГОДИ ПРАЗНИКА РІЗДВА ГОСПОДНЬОГО 2017**

Всечесним Отцям, преподобним Ченцям і Черницям,
Семінаристам та Мирянам
Української Католицької Церкви в Канаді.

І Слово стало тілом, і оселилося між нами, і ми славу його
бачили –
славу Єдинородного від Отця, благодаттю та істиною
сповненого.
(Івана 1:14)

Христос рождається! Славимо Його!

Дорогі Браття і Сестри,

Цей рік був особливим для канадців, бо ми відзначали 150-річчя Канадської Конфедерації. По всій країні, великі і малі громади, кожна по своєму святкували цю подію. На День Канади усюди відбувалися паради, пікніки, сімейні та товариські вечірки, і, звичайно, феєрверки, як триумфальне завершення дня. У кожній родині, без сумніву, ми відзначали й інші події, уродини, річниці, весілля чи випускні. Святкування мають велике значення, якщо ми розуміємо, що і чому святкується. Навіть, якщо ми іноді не до кінця розуміємо те чи інше свято, як часто буває в такій багатокультурній та різноманітній країні як наша, ми щонайменше можемо відрізнити радісне свято від сумного.

Отже, що для нас означає Різдво? Чому ми його святкуємо? Як ми відзначаємо це свято? Наше споживацьке суспільство задовго наперед нагадує нам про наближення “святкового сезону” безкінечними рекламами. Нас спонукають йти на Різдвяні вечірки, заздалегідь планувати як провести цей період, купувати подарунки і прикрашати наші домівки. У чисельних теле- і радіопередачах нам кажуть не відкладати до останнього покупку різдвяних подарунків і планувати свята заздалегідь, щоб уникнути стресу. Ми навіть можемо знати таких людей, котрі починають купувати подарунки на наступне Різдво, як тільки закінчуються цьогорічні свята, маючи на думці тих, кому вони хочуть щось подарувати, і таким чином купують подарунки впродовж цілого року.

Мабуть, ми знаємо і таких людей, котрі чекають до останньої хвилини, щоб запланувати свята і придбати подарунки, лише щоб усвідомити, що в їхнє життя прийшло багато хаосу. Тоді Різдвяні святкування приходять і відходять так швидко, що здається, залишається лише внутрішня порожнеча, так звана післяріздвяна депресія або післясвяткове пригнічення. Чи це є значення Різдва - сезон гарячкової комерційної діяльності? Чи не слід нам хоча б поцікавитися, яка мотивація в тих, що запускають “святковий сезон” розпродажами “чорної п’ятниці”.

В Євангелії від Луки, Ангел Господній проголошує:

“Не бійтесь, бо я звіщаю вам велику радість, що буде радістю всього народу: Сьогодні народився вам у місті Давидовім Спаситель, він же Христос Господь. І ось вам знак: Ви знайдете дитя сповите, що лежатиме в яслах.” (Лука 2:10-12)

Тоді розповідь продовжується:

“І вмить пристала до ангела велика сила небесного війська, що хвалила Бога й промовляла: “Слава на висотах Богу й на землі мир людям його вподобання.” (Лука 2:13-14)

Отож, ми святкуємо подію, що безкінечно важливіша ніж Канадська Конфедерація, уродини члена сім’ї чи річниця подружжя. Ми святкуємо ту Добру Новину, яка приходить лише один раз в історії людства: народження Спасителя, Месії. Різдво вшановує подію, яка продовжує перетворювати життя всіх людей віри: Співвічний Син Божий став одним з нас, щоб ми могли бути учасниками його Божества.

Чи ми готові святкувати цю подію, не матеріально, а духовно? Чи ми скористалися Пилипівкою (Передріздвяним

постом) для того, щоб провести більше часу на молитві? Чи ми обмежували себе в їжі і робили особисті жертви? Чи ми, зокрема, думали про потребуєчих, близьких і далеких, і чинили діла милосердя? Чи ми скористалися Св. Тайною Примирення, щоб могли заспівати “З нами Бог, Емануїл!” чистим і відкритим серцем? Якщо ми це все зробили, тоді ми справді розуміємо і цінуємо справжню причину цієї святкової пори. Якщо ж ні, то ніколи не є пізно прийняти новонародженого Спасителя в тишині радісного серця, бо його добра новина призначена для всіх людей доброї волі. Просімо ласки, необхідної для зрозуміння неймовірної важливості цієї події. Молімося, щоб мати відвагу проголошувати правду про Різдво, сміливо і з вірою.

Наша багата літургійна поезія Свята голосить:

Небо і земля нині з'єдналися, коли Христос народився; нині Бог прийшов на землю, людина ж на небо вийшла; нині, задля чоловіколюб'я, з природи невидимий, став видимий тілом. Тому і ми прославляємо, кличучи: Слава Богові на висотах, і на землі мир, що його дарував нам твій прихід. Спасе наш, - слава тобі!

Нехай кожен із вас буде благословенний Різдвом, що сповнене радістю та глибоким святкуванням.

- + Лаврентій Гуцуляк, ЧСВВ, Митрополит Вінніпезький
- + Михаїл Вівчар, ЧНІ, Єпископ-емерит Саскатунський
- + Северин Якимишин, ЧСВВ, Єпископ-емерит Нью-Вестмінстерський
- + Давид Мотюк, Єпарх Едмонтонський
- + Стефан Хміляр, Єпарх Торонтонський
- + Кен Новаківський, Єпарх Нью-Вестмінстерський
- + Браєн Байда, ЧНІ, Єпарх Саскатунський