

**2018 PASTORAL LETTER OF THE UKRAINIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS OF CANADA  
ON THE OCCASION OF THE FEAST OF THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD**

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

Christ is Risen!                      Indeed He is Risen!

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

*Though You went down to the grave, O immortal Lord, You destroyed the power of Hades and rose victorious, Christ our God. You who said "Rejoice" to the myrrh-bearing women; give peace to Your apostles and offer resurrection to the fallen. (Easter Sunday Kondak)*

Every human person longs for eternal life. Everything about how we live our daily lives points to how each of us was created for so much more than what we might encounter in our routine, and at times not-so routine, lives. After receiving so much, we still have an infinite desire for our infinite God. *My soul is consumed with longing for your ordinances at all times. (Ps. 119:20)* When we pause to reflect on this yearning in our hearts, we find this common, natural mystery uniting all of humanity. Indeed, salvation is both personal and communal – for each of us and for all of us.

At the same time, there are also forces that do not unite all of humanity. We witness both subtle and bold acts of greed, coercion and selfish hearts harbouring unspeakable thoughts that lead to horrible results all around us. The danger to human dignity with assisted suicide laws in Canada or the war that continues in Ukraine are but two examples. Division and destruction lead us to ask, “How can people give into such temptation and have such little regard for human dignity?”

Jesus Christ gives meaning to all things. As missionary disciples, we are challenged to share this meaningfulness with others as individuals, as families and as parishes. By recognizing our own sinfulness and God’s forgiveness, we must say there is more to life than just the earthly existence of suffering when people wish to kill themselves owing to depression or chronic illness. We must show them hope. We are called to be signs of human dignity as we accompany others in their struggles to be better people, to be more like Christ, offering compassion and mercy in our common pursuit of the Truth, the person Jesus. The confusion of morals and values in society is a turbulent sea when we consider gender identity issues, suicide versus palliative care and letting one die, or being forced to agree to abortion if you apply for federal assistance for summer employment. What is needed is a harbour of trust, humility, patience and love that should be found in our vibrant parishes. Care for the body and soul of every person according to gospel values is what we must offer others. This is the fruit of internalizing the scripture, of partaking in the sacraments of the church, the fruit of common prayer, the fruit of service and charitable works.

Thus, meaningfulness in Christ is what gives purpose to life. He is present to us in all we experience. He is with us! We are invited to encounter Christ and then be a sign of hope to others so that together we proclaim, “*Christ is risen from the dead, trampling death by death, and to those in the tombs giving life!*” May Christ who dwells in our hearts, in our families and in our vibrant parishes, give life to all. On this Feast of the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ, we pray that God’s love fills your heart and, through you, the hearts of all.

Christ is Risen!                      Indeed He is Risen!

Sincerely Yours in Christ,

+ 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