

Fifth Youth Festival Viter Na-Dii: “Time of Possibilities”

Submitted by

Lesia Lazurko, Regina Youth Coordinator

Viktoriiia Marko, Eparchial Youth Minister

Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Saskatoon

On September 13, 2020, the Youth Festival “Viter Na-Dii” took place, which this year achieved an incredible feat: it united the youth of our Ukrainian Catholic Church all over the world!

~ 11 hours of live broadcast;

~ 381 festival locations around the world attended by 3,917 people;

~ 10,000 views on YouTube;

~ 80,825 views on Facebook.

Canadian youth participated in this festival for the first time. A National Youth Organizing Committee was established, which worked actively and diligently to ensure that this important event took place at the national level. The program began with the blessing by His Excellency, Bishop Bryan Bayda, CSsR, on the ZOOM platform and the presentation of the festival by the youth of Saskatoon. All online participants joined in viewing the address of His Beatitude Sviatoslav Shevchuk. From all over the world young people asked questions of His Beatitude, and received thorough and invaluable spiritual advice. The youth of Saskatoon were then included in “Zhyve Television” – “Живе Телебачення”, which broadcast the entire festival in all locations of the world, and our young people brought greetings on behalf of all Ukrainian youth in Canada.

It is worth noting that these young people gathered in person at St. George's Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral in Saskatoon to celebrate this day; to be spiritually enriched, and to feel oneness with our global Church. After the greeting, all participants had the opportunity to take part in the Divine Liturgy, and then return to the national celebration in the ZOOM platform. The Canadian National Viter Na-Dii program included a meeting with the Bishops of Canada (Bishop David Motiuk and Bishop Bryan Bayda, CSsR), and other speakers (Deborah Larmour and Hudson Byblow), to whom young people could ask various questions. In separate online locations, three speakers: Father André Lalach, Father Warren Dungen and Dr. Will Turk, conducted very interesting and informative sessions. Afterwards there was a music venue, where young participants were able to show their wonderful singing talents. Sisters Kateryna and Natalia Tokarski from Saskatoon, Yurii Konevych and Anna Babka Konevych from Montreal, and Bishop Bryan Bayda, CSsR, who performed his own songs, shared these talents with all the participants. The national level of the program ended with a blessing and a final prayer.

For the Saskatoon youth gathered at St. George's Cathedral, the celebration program continued. They took part in various games, shared their experiences and impressions. The program ended with a movie night and pizza.

Here are the impressions of some participants of the festival at the location of Saskatoon:

Sofiya Fayfruk: This Viter Na-Dii event was truly, led by the Holy Spirit! Being a host helped me to understand how beautiful and important it is to have people all over the world unite all together to praise God. This day touched many hearts, including mine!

Ethan Grebeniuk: This day was a very unique and new experience, and I have never participated in anything like it before. It took me aback & perplexed me by how well it turned out! It really lends perspective to the scale and size of the Ukrainian Catholic community and helped unite it globally, and it did so admirably!

Anna Marko: One day spent with these amazing people gave me energy and inspiration for the entire year ahead. These many hours spent at Viter Na-dii let me find answers to many questions and gave me feelings of belonging, joy and peace. It is incredible to think how connected we all are, not just the Ukrainian youth in Saskatoon, but the youth in Canada and in the entire world. This was the event that gave me a strong spiritual push and once again proved that anything is possible with God's help.

In addition to the Saskatoon location, several youth and young adults gathered at St. Athanasius Parish in Regina, Saskatchewan to participate in the Viter Na-dii Festival. Similar to the gathering in Saskatoon, they participated in leading the rosary prior to the Divine Liturgy, with intentions for all the youth gathered to attend the Viter Na-dii Festival, and in the Divine Liturgy. Father Vasyl Tymishak's homily spoke directly to the youth. He focused on the message of His Beatitude Sviatoslav to the youth that morning and tying everything to the Gospel reading of the Sunday before the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. Both Viter Na-Dii and the Gospel focused on encounter with Jesus. Father Vasyl said, "Our Ukrainian Catholic Church in Ukraine and throughout the world is seeking to listen to our youth most attentively in order to accompany the youth on their journey to maturity, so that through the process on discernment they discover and plan for life and realize it with joy. Opening up for the encounter with God and with human beings." May we remember this message of encountering Jesus in our journey.

Afterwards we had lunch and enjoyed playing Cranium: Bible Edition prior to re-joining everyone virtually to participate in the rest of the National Viter Na-dii Festival. There was much laughter shared amongst us all. Our group was fortunate to hear Father Lalach speak about Prayer and the "What, When and Where" of prayer. This session was enlightening and very interactive allowing us to take the information we received and implement it into our daily routine.

This event had finally brought us together in person after not gathering since February 2020, prior to COVID-19 Pandemic. It was truly a wonderful day dedicated to the youth in the Ukrainian Catholic Church; reminding us of the importance of allowing the youth to find themselves within the church and listening to what they have to say, as they know how we can reach this generation!

GRATITUDE

We would like to sincerely thank our Saskatoon Youth, who became the main organizers at our location level, as well as Bishop Bryan Bayda, CSsR, and Father Ivan Nahachewsky, for their presence, prayers and constant support; as well as our speakers and singers, for their talents and openness. We truly thank Lorne Diakow for the technical aspect for the festival, and the Ukrainian Catholic Women's League of St. George's Cathedral, in particular Marlene Bodnar, for organizing a dinner for our participants, and to the Parish Council of St. George's Cathedral, who received us so hospitably! Many thanks to the leaders and organizers of the festival at the international level, namely the Patriarchal Youth Commission and the National Youth Organizing Committee of Canada, who made it possible for everyone to get enriched, unite and create a Common Youth Space of our Church!

From the Regina location of St. Athanasius Ukrainian Catholic Church, we wish to thank Father Vasyl Tymishak and Father Vladimir Simunovic for their support in promoting this event, encouraging the youth to gather and for their presence. Thank you to St. Athanasius Parish for accommodating us with a change in Divine Liturgy time so the youth and young adults could attend and allowing us to gather in a space where we can grow spiritually. Lastly, thank you to our National Organizing Committee and the Viter Na-Dii Festival Committee in Ukraine for organizing a spiritual and enriching event allowing us to gather as a Ukrainian Catholic family, not only locally, but also globally.