

Sacred Heart Parish Ituna

Serving the parishes of St. Michael's Goodeve and St. George's Melville

December 24, 2020



Isaiah 9:6:

For a child has been born for us,
a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders;
and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

My dear parishioners of Ituna and district parishes:

2020 has been a very difficult year for most of the earth's population because of the Covid-19 pandemic. We have been forced to sacrifice many of the daily tasks we have been used to doing, we have been asked to sacrifice our visits with family and friends, we have been asked to sacrifice many of the common activities we have been doing daily for years and years. Yet these sacrifices we are making for one another on this earth have a common goal: to help protect one another from this unpredictable Covid-19 virus that has caused a lot of death and suffering in the world. Even though we don't think of the positive aspects of the sacrifices we have to make during this time, these positives are very real and, in the long run, the sacrifices we are making right now will be beneficial for our greater society.

As we prepare for the Feast of the Nativity of Christ in 2020, that is Christmas, we also remember the many sacrifices that the Jewish people had to make as they awaited the coming of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. The Prophet Isaiah lived some 700 years before Christ was born on this earth, and during Isaiah's time there was much suffering and misery among the Jewish people. They, too, were waiting for the Messiah to come and bring them out of their suffering, to give them peace and joy and happiness. Therefore, Isaiah was given prophetic visions from God to show the Jewish people that the Messiah was indeed going to come into the world, that Jesus Christ would indeed alleviate the misery the people felt. The same is true for us today. The Covid-19 virus is not going to be with us forever, soon there will be vaccines to help us overcome our fear of this virus. Every year, as we celebrate the Nativity of Christ, as we celebrate Christmas, we are reminded that God has fulfilled His promise to the Jewish people, as He has fulfilled His promise to us: that Jesus, the Son of God, was made incarnate (to be made flesh) of the Holy Spirit, and of the Virgin Mary, born into this world to deliver us from evil and save our souls.

So even though this may be a very different Christmas season than we are used to having, we still know God is with us through our struggles and obstacles that the Covid-19 virus has presented in this world.

Let us pray for the health of all those in the world who are suffering from the Covid-19 virus, let us pray for those who have been isolated and feel alone because of the lack of people able to visit them at this time. Let us never forget that God loves all of us very much and that Christmas is a time to rejoice and be glad that God has not rejected us but instead has come into this world to give us eternal happiness.

Christ is Born! Let us Glorify Him! Христос Рождается Славите його

Father Basil, Angela, and Samuel Malowany

PASTORAL LETTER
FROM THE UKRAINIAN CATHOLIC
BISHOPS OF CANADA ON THE OCCASION
OF THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD 2020-2021

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

Christ is Born! Let Us Glorify Him!

Dearly Beloved in Christ:

“Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.” Lk 1:28

With what mixed emotions did the Mother of God experience the Annunciation when the Archangel Gabriel greeted Her? On one hand, She experienced fear and confusion about what was taking place in Her life: physically bearing Jesus in her womb while not yet married; and spiritually - being filled with the Holy Spirit and overwhelmed with peace and joy! Nine months later, at the birth of Her Son Jesus, She continued to treasure and ponder all these words in Her heart. And now, as we celebrate the birth of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ we might ask ourselves what we are pondering in our hearts? For the past nine months, how have we been pondering the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives and the presence of Jesus, indeed, the Trinity dwelling in us?

Understandably, it was painful for Mary, when some ridiculed Her as a maiden with child. Meanwhile, others rejoiced with Her, such as her cousin Elizabeth. How important it must have been for Mary to have faith in God's presence so that she was able to face all storms in life with a deep conviction of His love. Similarly, be mindful of how important it is for all of us today to be certain of God's presence for He walks with us through the tragedies in life and is ever ready to celebrate times of joy with us. Either way, He accompanies us doing the will of the Father.

We must pray for the same assurance the Mother of God had at that time. Let us draw strength from Her example of faith and trust in God. She gave birth to Jesus and raised Him, sharing His Sacred Heart with others through Her Heart. We strive to do the same, and pray for those in our families who long for a deep confidence in knowing they are loved and not alone during these difficult times. The challenges we face as individuals, as families and communities are numerous, and we need to be reminded that God is with us in our challenges. Jesus is the true vine, and “every branch that bears fruit, he prunes to make it bear more fruit” (Jn15:2 NRSV).

Therefore, while growing weary of COVID and all the adjustments to life we are making, let us remain connected to our parish family. Let us celebrate our faith by knowing the presence of God in Holy Scripture. You are part of the vine. Remain in God through the Eucharist either physically or through spiritual communion. Prepare to celebrate Reconciliation sacramentally as we forgive one another on a daily basis. Then, renewed in Christ, let us follow Him as Missionary Disciples to minister to those

who feel isolated and alone: in Canada, Ukraine or wherever our loved ones struggle. Celebrate the birth of Christ by being Christ for others! God has given us the grace to make sure others don't feel alone despite physical distancing and much more difficult circumstances. Jesus fulfills Scripture through us when we realize more deeply that He dwells within us, helping others believe, sing and proclaim, *"God is With Us, Understand This All You Nations! And Be Humbled, For God Is With Us!"*

May our celebration of this profound truth this Christmas be a time to encounter Jesus Christ in our spouse, in our family members and in our parish because we are an essential part of this profound truth. May we be aware of the presence of Jesus, Mary and Joseph that give us the gift of the Holy Family which is present in our personal and parish families. And may this awareness bear fruit in our lives throughout the new year, 2021, and beyond.

God is with us!
Christ is Born!
Sincerely in Christ,

- +Lawrence Huculak, OSBM Metropolitan Archbishop of Winnipeg
- +Michael Wiwchar, CSsR Eparch Emeritus of Saskatoon
- +Severian Yakymyshyn, OSBM Eparch Emeritus of New Westminster
- +Stephen Chmilar, Eparch Emeritus of Toronto and Eastern Canada
- +David Motiuk, Eparchial Bishop of Edmonton, Administrator of the Eparchy of New Westminster
- +Bryan Bayda, CSsR, Eparchial Bishop of Saskatoon, Administrator of the Eparchy of Toronto & Eastern Canada



**2020 CHRISTMAS VIDEO GREETING
FROM HIS EXCELLENCY BISHOP BRYAN BAYDA,
CSsR**



Message in English:

<https://vimeo.com/490932375>

As we celebrate the Nativity of Our Lord, may the deep joy and peace of His birth be celebrated in your homes this Christmas. May the Blessing of Emmanuel fill your heart and the hearts of those in your family with joy and gladness and strengthen you to witness for Christ in the New Year.



Eparchial Chancery Staff: Bishop Bryan Bayda CSsr, Very Rev. Janko Kolosnjaii, Rev. Ivan Nahachewsky, Cornelia Kyba, Joan Matlock, Adrian Olenick, Chris Pidwerbeski, Deborah Larmour, Marcia Coulic-Salahub, Dr. Lesya Sabada, Brenda Pasloski, Victoriia Marko, Nestor Halaitso, Morris Smysnuik, Iris Owchar, Sr. Marijka Kondewicz, Sr. Bonnie Kormarnicki, Sr. Georgia Shchavil

On this holy night, may your heart be illuminated with love, joy, and peace.
Merry Christmas to all!



The Parish Councils of Sacred Heart,
St. Michael's, and St. George's



May you have the gift of faith, the blessing of hope, and the peace of his love at Christmas and always.

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For unto you is born this day in the city of David a saviour, which is Christ the Lord.
Luke 2:11

The Knights of
Columbus
Father Boels
Council

-KR



May the blessing of knowing Christ enrich your life

Sacred Heart
Ukrainian Catholic
Women's League





UKRAINIAN GREEK CATHOLIC CHURCH
SVIATOSLAV SHEVCHUK
MAJOR ARCHBISHOP OF KYIV-HALYCH

**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!

It is hard to believe how our life has changed from the final carol of last year to the first “*Boh Predvichnyj*” (God Pre-eternal) of this year’s Christmas Eve. Throughout 2020 we were, it would seem, transported into a different world – a world of fear and uncertainty before the unknown. Yet, in spite of the restrictions, challenges, and human losses we endured due to the coronavirus pandemic, together, as Church, in our families, parishes, communities, and countries, we did not cease to proclaim the good news of hope, love, and joy. And so, this year on the occasion of Christ’s Nativity, we are called in a special way to bear witness before others to the “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” (Lk 2:10-11).

The mystery of Christmas is found in the joy of the coming of the Son of God into a world, full of affliction, pain, and suffering. He leaves heavenly glory in order to enter into the human frailty of all times, cultures, and people. Christ-God becomes not just a human being, but a poor human being, a person who suffers from the beginning of His earthly life. The Pre-eternal God enters into human history and experiences human hunger and cold, pain and sickness, adversity, and the indifference of society.

A homeless newborn God – what a strange contradiction, what wonder is this divine poverty! The Almighty God becomes poor in order to enrich us. The King of the Universe is placed “in a poor stable-cave, in a manger on hay” (from the carol, *Vozveselimsya vsi razom nyini*), in order to set a path for us to the heavenly abode. Gazing at this mystery St. Gregory the Theologian says: “The One who enriches became poor; for he took on the poverty of my flesh, in order that I may be enriched in His divinity” (*Oratio* 45, 9). The Lord has come, the One who with His wounds heals our wounds, our weakness, our affliction. And He remains from generation to generation our Emmanuel, which means “God is with us,” in our needs, pains, and sufferings. The presence of the incarnate God in human history and in our life is our constant and endless joy, both on Nativity Day, and all the days of our life.

In everyday life we sometimes use a word without thinking about its origin or meaning. Language evolves spontaneously and abruptly – we forget where the word came from and fail to grasp its depth. This is the case of the Ukrainian word *ubohyj*, which is used to describe a poor person. However, when we examine how this word is constructed, we understand that *u-Bohuj* (in God) is a person through whom the Lord comes to us, a person who is “in God,” that is, under the special care of the Almighty.

Christ teaches us that the materially poor and the poor in spirit, the humble, are happy, are blessed, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven (see Lk 6:20). Only God is the last hope, support, and salvation for the poor. Their fate is always in God’s hands. And the Lord is especially sensitive to how we treat His poor, that is, the needy, downtrodden, homeless, hungry, lonely, widows, and orphans. Those who disregard the poor scorn their Creator. To wrong such persons is to commit a sin that calls to heaven for vengeance!

This year, in fact, the Synod of Bishops of our Church focused its attention on the face of poverty today. I encourage you to heed the Synodal pastoral letter, entitled “Only one thing will remain yours – that which you have given to the poor!” and examine it in the light of the star of Bethlehem, contemplating the face of the newborn Savior. The Divine Child is present in every destitute person who knocks on the door of our heart, as Joseph knocked on the doors of the inns in Bethlehem.

Then, the wise men from the East hurried to the town of David, in order to bring gifts to the King of the ages, who was born as a little child in a stable-cave – gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Today, the infant Jesus is present in the sick, the frail, the homeless, and the neglected, who wait for someone to help them, to bring them gifts – the gold of a compassionate word, the incense of brotherhood, and the myrrh of immediate assistance, necessary for life. Those who stretch out their hand to the poor become rich with God and become partakers in the eternal goodness of the Creator Himself.

We are celebrating Christmas in the midst of a worldwide situation of human anguish, brought on by the coronavirus pandemic. We have not yet fully grasped or understood all the consequences and faces of this global misfortune. We do not know what changes await us in the sphere of economic, social-community, and church life... But we have already understood that the virus is not interested, neither in our place of residence, nor in our wealth or social status. All of us are equally in danger of infection, and a new threat of poverty hangs over all corners of the globe. All of us in the same way need the kind of help and strength that goes beyond human abilities and power. For this reason, Christ’s Nativity is for us a ray of hope and joy in the midst of today’s dark fear and confusion, and each one of us must be open to God’s grace, which pours out on us without ceasing, even in the worst of times.

To celebrate Christmas in a time of pandemic is to enlighten those who dwell in darkness, as the prophet Isaiah foretold: “The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined” (Isaiah 9:2). If we are permitted to gather – with proper distancing, of course – may our eyes shine with a joy that is visible to all. Let us wear masks, when necessary, but let them not silence our traditional carols. Let us celebrate as we are able. Let us acclaim the birth of the Savior, however possible, so that even in this pandemic we might bear witness to the most important truth

of human history – that we are not alone or abandoned, because “God is with us!”

Today let us bring to Bethlehem as our gift for the newborn Savior our own poverty and the wounds of humanity today, and let us ask Him for the richness of Divine wisdom in order to overcome this disease, for the fullness of divine strength in order to deal with its effects on society, on the life and health of every person. Above all, let us ask for the richness of His love, which alone can restore this distressed world of ours, and grant it hope, security, and joy. Solidarity with and closeness to those in need, participation in their pain and anxiety, rather than escape from the suffering that hangs over us all today – this will grant us the possibility to be merry and truly celebrate Christmas this year. Therefore, let us hurry to the creche where our Savior rests in a manger, and together with the shepherds and wise men let us sing:

The pre-eternal God has been born!
Today he came from the heavens,
To save all his people,
And has comforted all!

Dear Brother and Sisters! In spite of our poverty and frailty, today we are rich in the joy and love of our newborn Savior. With Christ’s Nativity, I sincerely greet you all: from Kyiv to London, from Buenos Aires to Melbourne, from Winnipeg to Zelenyj Klyn – those who are celebrating today in their family circle and those who are keeping distance from their loved ones to protect them from danger, those who are able to attend church services for the Feast, and those who at home join in community prayer through social media. I especially greet all medical workers who, in spite of real danger to themselves and their families, tirelessly and with great sacrifice give of their time and talents for the health of others. I embrace those who suffer physical and spiritual wounds. I send a word of comfort to those who this year lost family members and friends, and for whom it is particularly painful to approach the festive table this Christmas eve. I unite myself in prayer with those who fearlessly stand on the front-lines and defend our country and people, risking their lives not only before the threat of the insidious sniper’s bullet, but also before the microscopic virus-enemy that has come upon us and inflicts on us added suffering and distress. May the all-merciful Lord, who in His infinite love has visited our poverty, fill the heart of each and every one of us, Dear Brothers and Sisters, with His peace, His grace and hope!

From the bottom of my heart, I wish all of you the authentic joy of the children of God, a tasty kutia, a cheerful celebration of Christ’s Nativity, 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 all-praiseworthy Apostle Andrew the First-called
the 13th of December (30th of November) in the 2020th Year of our Lord



Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

Христос Рождається! Славимо Його!