

**2021 EASTER 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,

*This is the day that the Lord has made;
let us rejoice and be glad in it (Psalm 118:24)*

The Easter event is filled with much dramatic activity! The women go to the tomb where Jesus' body was placed. We are told that there was a great earthquake. An angel appears to the women telling them not to be afraid. Jesus is not there. Jesus has been raised. The angel then tells the women, "Go quickly and tell his disciples, He has been raised from the dead, and indeed He is going ahead of you in Galilee. There you will see him" (Mt 28:7). The women began to run from the tomb. They suddenly meet the Risen Christ who tells them not to be afraid. Jesus tells them to "go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me" (Mt 28:10). That same message to go and tell others of what you have seen and heard, that Jesus, the Messiah, our Saviour, has risen from the dead is repeated again and again in our Easter Sunday Divine Liturgy.

When the eleven disciples went to Galilee, the Risen Christ greets them and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Mt 28:16-20).

This great commandment is directed not only at the disciples. It is directed to all of us, to the followers of Jesus Christ. All of us share in the duty and privilege to announce the Gospel. All of us share

in the mission to preach the Good News to all people. Our nature as Church, as the people of God is always missionary. We are all called to evangelize and to give witness to Christ's presence in the world through action and love. This is why the Gospel message is read in so many languages during the Easter Divine Liturgy.

Let us begin by telling our family members of God's love. Many of our family members experience God's presence through the light of a dimly lit candle. Sometimes this happens through one's own choice. At other times, it can happen through circumstances beyond one's control. Yet, even with a dimly lit candle, there is always hope. Jesus Christ is the Light of the world. Christ can fan the light of that dimly lit candle into a light that burns brightly and is inextinguishable.

With confidence and courage, let each of us share our faith with others. Our faith is a precious gift that has been given to us by Jesus Christ to be shared. It should not be kept to ourselves but shared with others, beginning with our family members whom we love. Together, we are on a mission. May we find hope and courage to go out and preach the Good News. Take as an inspiring example the creativity of many who have provided online sharing of worship and prayer as we responded to the challenges of this pandemic. While the light from gathering in our parishes was dimmed, the light of sharing our faith was illuminated through the internet.

Remember, dear brothers and sisters in Christ, that we do not walk alone in this mission. Jesus Christ promises, "I am with you always until the end of the age" (Mt 28:20). May your hearts be aflame with passion to know the Risen Christ. May you be inspired to share your faith in Jesus Christ with others. May your hearts be filled with overflowing joy on realizing the presence of the Risen Christ within you. May you know the peace of the Risen Christ. May your Easter celebrations be filled with much joy, inner peace, and heartfelt love shared with your family and with all whom you love and meet in the exciting journey of life.

God's choicest blessings be upon you, because Christ is Risen!

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Sincerely Yours in Christ,

+ Lawrence Huculak, OSBM, Metropolitan Archbishop of Winnipeg
+ David Motiuk, Eparchial Bishop of Edmonton; Apostolic Administrator of New Westminster
+ Bryan Bayda, CSsR, Eparchial Bishop of Saskatoon; Apostolic Administrator of Toronto
+ Michael Wiwchar, CSsR, Bishop Emeritus of Saskatoon
+ Severian Yakymyshyn, OSBM, Bishop Emeritus of New Westminster
+ Stephen Chmilar, Bishop Emeritus of Toronto