



1948-2018 - celebrating its 70 years
Dormition of the Mother of God
Ukrainian Catholic Church



Українська Католицька Церква Успення Пресвятої Богородиці

1091 Coronation Avenue, Kelowna, BC V1Y 7A8

Tel.: 250-860-7295 Email: dormitionkelowna@gmail.com

Parish web-site: <http://kelowna.nweparchy.ca/>

Pastor: Rev. Fr. Pavlo Myts / о. Павло Миць

Facebook page: **DormitionKelowna Parish:** <https://www.facebook.com/dormitionkelowna.parish.5>

Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of New Westminster: www.nweparchy.ca



28th Sunday after Pentecost – December 2nd, 2018 A.D.

“The Lord Jesus wants to give us in the Eucharist His Paschal love so we can love God and our neighbor as He loved us, giving up His own life.” - teaches Pope Francis

THE VIBRANT PARISH - A PLACE TO ENCOUNTER THE LIVING CHRIST: Through the Word, the Holy Mysteries & Prayer, Serving One's Neighbour, Leadership, Fostering & Serving Unity and Missionary Spirit – Pastoral Letter of His Beatitude Sviatoslav Shevchuk



“All the challenging circumstances of our life on earth – these are for us an invitation to active love, which is an expression of living faith!” - Pastoral Letter of His Beatitude Sviatoslav Shevchuk

“The Vibrant Parish”

“Всі ці прикрі явища нашого земного життя – це для нас запрошення до чинної любові, яка є виявом живої віри.”

- Пастирський Лист Блаженнішого Святослава Шевчука “Жива Парафія”

Christian Greetings: Glory to Jesus Christ! – Glory to Him Forever!

Slava Isusu Chrystu! – Slava na Viky!

Слава Ісусу Христу! – Слава на Віку!

Christ is among us! – He is and will be!



Liturgical and Sacramental celebrations during week:

Tue., Dec. 4th – 9:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy: **God's blessings for nephew John Paul and brother-in-law Richard** (requested by Mrs. Marilyn Daulat).

Wed., Dec. 5th – 9:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy: **In memory of repose souls of Lakomski, Sidlar, Hrycyshyn Families** (requested by Mrs. Jean Lakomski).

– 6:30 pm – 7:00 pm: Sacrament of Confession

– 7:00 p.m. Vespers

Thurs., Dec. 6th (**Saint Nicholas the Wonderworker**) – 9:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy: **God's blessings for all parishioners**

Fri., Dec. 7th – 9:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy: **for people and peace in Ukraine** (requested by Mrs. Ann Wyshynsky).

Saturday, Dec. 8th – 3:40 p.m. Lectio Divina / Bible Studies: (**Studies and Service in Penticton, BC**)

– 4:00 p.m. The Divine Liturgy: **God's blessings for all parishioners**

Sunday, Dec. 9th – 8:15 a.m. Rosary: (*in English language*)

– 9:00 a.m. The Divine Liturgy: **God's blessings for all parishioners.** (*in English and Ukrainian languages*)

Pastoral and Sacramental Ministry: **Baptisms:** by appointment. **Funerals and Memorials:** by appointment.

Marriages: six months' notice should be given to the parish priest, and he should be contacted before any other arrangements are made. **Holy Unction** (Anointing of the Sick): Those anticipating surgery, hospitalization or treatments and who would like to receive anointing (by appointment, any time) **Reconciliation:** on Sundays and Holy Days: before Liturgies and other days, by appointment. **Holy Communion:** for the sick, by appointment, any time * **Please, contact Fr. Pavlo if you want to have the Divine Liturgies celebrated in your special (such as: In thanksgiving for favours received, the Infirm, General Intentions, the Deceased, Help of the Holy Spirit, for the Travelers, etc.) intentions.**

Liturgical Propers in English language:

Tone 3, text from book "*The Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom*"; pages 93-95

Epistle: A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Colossians: (Col. 1:12-18)

Brothers and Sisters, giving thanks to the Father for having made you worthy to share the lot of the same saints in light. He rescued us from the power of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of His Beloved Son. Through him we have redemption, the forgiveness of our sins.

He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creatures. In him everything in heaven and on earth was created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominations, principalities or powers; all were created through him, and for him. He is before all else that is. In him everything continues in being. It is he who is head of the body, the church; he who is the beginning, the first-born of the dead, so that primacy may be his in everything.

Gospel: (Luke 14:16-24)

Jesus told this parable: "A man was giving a large dinner and he invited many. At dinner time he sent his servant to say to those invited, 'Come along, everything is ready now.' But they began to excuse themselves, one and all. The first one said to the servant, 'I have bought some land and must go out and inspect it. Please excuse me.' Another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen and I am going out to test them. Please excuse me.' A third said, "I am newly married and so I cannot come."

The servant returning reported all this to his master. The master of the house grew angry at the account. He said to his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor and the crippled, the blind and the lame.'

The servant reported, after some time, 'Your orders have been carried out, my lord, and there is still room.' The master then said to the servant, "Go out into the highways and along the hedgerows and force them to come in. I want my house to be full, but I tell you that not one of those invited shall taste a morsel of my dinner'."

Our Eparch, Bishop Ken is requesting that at the conclusion of every Divine Liturgy we say an additional prayer for Peace in Ukraine until the end of the war. **For peace in Ukraine, let us pray: Our Father ... Hail Mary ... Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and for ever and ever. Amen.**



VIBRANT PARISH PRAYER: O Lord Jesus Christ, our Good Shepherd, as you once gathered lost sheep that they might hear Your voice and be your flock, so also today graciously look down from heaven upon our parish community, and send down on it your Holy Spirit, that it might be a place to receive the joy of Your Good News. Strengthen us with your presence, and always gather us together in prayer. Grant us the spirit of serving others, so that in our parish all might encounter You, the merciful God. Bless our spiritual leaders with Your wisdom, and inspire us to generously give of our time, talents and treasure for the building up of Your Kingdom. Unite us in peace and harmony, as befits Your community of love. Instill in us a missionary spirit, and let our parish community shine with the light of the Gospel, with prayer and good works, inviting all to share in the divine life, so that Your Name, O Saviour, may be praised, together with Your eternal Father, and Your most-holy, good and life-giving Spirit. Amen.

❖ **Basic Guidelines for Reception of Holy Communion:** 1) You are a member of the Catholic Church (faithful of the Orthodox churches are very 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.*



Літургійні частини Українською мовою:

Глас 3, текст з книги "*Божественна Літургія Святого Івана Золотоустого*"; ст. 92-94

Апостол: До Клосян послання Святого Апостола Павла читання: (Кол. 1, 12-18)

Браття і Сестри, дякуйте Богові й Отцеві, Який зробив вас гідними мати участь у спадкоємстві святих у світі, Який вирвав нас із влади тьми і переніс у царство Свого улюбленого Сина, в якому маємо відкуплення і прощення гріхів. Він образ невидимого Бога, первородний усього створіння, бо в Ньому все було створено, що на небі і що на землі, видиме і невидиме: чи то престоли, чи господьства, чи начала, чи власті, все було Ним і для Нього створене. Він раніш усього, і все існує в Ньому. Він також голова тіла, тобто Церкви. Він початок, первородний з мертвих, щоб у всьому мав першенство.

Євангеліє: (Лк. 14, 16-24)

Сказав Господь притчу оцю: “Один чоловік справив вечерю велику й запросив багатьох. Під час вечері послав він слугу свого сказати запрошеним: *Ідіть, усе готове. Тоді всі вони однаково почали відмовлятися. Перший йому сказав: Поле купив я, мушу піти на нього подивитись; вибач мені, прошу тебе. Другий сказав: П'ять пар волів купив я і йду їх спробувати; прошу тебе, вибач мені. А інший мовив: Я одружився і тому не можу прийти. Повернувся слуга й розповів це панові своєму. Розгнівався тоді господар та й каже до слуги свого: *Іди щоскоріш на майдани й вулиці міста й приведи сюди вбогих, калік, сліпих, кульгавих. Пане, – озвався слуга, – сталося, як ти велів, і місця є ще. Сказав пан до слуги: *Піди на шляхи та огорожі й наполягай увійти, щоб дім мій наповнився. Кажу бо вам: Ніхто з отих запрошених не покуштує моєї вечері.*”**



Молитва Живої Парафії: Господи Ісусе Христе, Пастирю Добрий, як колись Ти пригорнув заблуканих овечок, щоб вони пізнали Твій голос і були Твоїм стадом, так і сьогодні глянь ласкаво з небесних висот на нашу парафію та зішли на неї Твого Святого Духа, щоб вона була місцем пізнання радості Доброї Новини. Скріплюй нас Твоєю присутністю та єднай нас кожночасно в молитві. Даруй нам духа служіння ближньому, щоб у нашій парафії кожний міг зустріти Тебе, милостивого Бога. Благослови наш духовний провід Твоєю мудрістю і дай, щоб ніхто з нас не шкодував ні часу, ні талантів, ні матеріальних дібр для розбудови Твого царства. Єднай нас у мирі та злагоді, щоб ми були Твоєю спільнотою любові. Всели в нас місійного духа, щоб ми стали тим світилом євангельського слова, молитви і добрих діл, що кличе кожного до участі в Божественному житті, щоб славилосся, Спасе, Твоє Ім'я з безначальним Твоїм Отцем та пресвятим, благим і животворящим Твоїм Духом нині, і повсякчас, і на віки віків. Амінь.



>>>> THANK YOU VERY MUCH! ЩИРО ВАМ ДЯКУЄМО! <<<<<

Gratitudes to all our parishioners, guests, visitors and all people of the good will who by their kindness share time, volunteer and organize coffee and socials, make donations, organized and attended our parish annual Grey Cup Party past Sunday, Mr. Peter and Mrs. Diane Bihun for donating a portable Bluetooth speaker for our parish youth ministry, knowingly and unknowingly for the other people thoughtfully care and help our parish community, parishioners welcoming our guests and visitors, volunteered sharing time and care helping at the pierogies making work bees, cleaning and organizing, and with other parish projects and programs, looking after and graciously supporting our Christian, Catholic Church community! May the Almighty God bless and abundantly reward your time, care and generosity! **“Remember, O Lord, those who bear fruit doing good works in Your holy churches and remembering the poor. Send down Your mercy upon all of us!”**

(A Prayer from the Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom)

Every parishioner is personally responsible before God for our spiritual home-parish-church!

CONGRATULATIONS!!!

May the Almighty God bless in good health and salvation in many, happy and blessed years of life to Mrs. Marilyn Daulat her birthday (Dec. 1st), Dob. Krystyna Werbowy her birthday (Dec. 3rd), Dr. Nadia Popil her birthday (Dec. 6th), Mrs. Shely Zemlak on her birthday (Dec. 9th), and to all those who celebrate their birthdays, heavenly patron's /saint's name-days, wedding anniversaries and any other special anniversaries this week – Mnohaya i Blahaya Lita!



NEWS and ANNOUNCEMENTS:

WELCOME TO OUR PARISHIONERS, GUESTS AND VISITORS WHO HAVE JOINED US IN THIS DIVINE LITURGY. THANK YOU FOR PRAYING WITH US AT THE CHUCH TODAY! WISHING YOU A BLESSED, RESTFUL WEEKEND AND FRUITFUL, HEALTHY AND SAFE WEEK! EVERYONE IS VERY WELCOME TO COME AND PARTICIPATE IN OUR PARISH COFFE AND FELLOWSHIP AT THE CHURCH HALL TODAY FOLLOWING THE DIVINE LITURGY TODAY!

- ❖ **Church decoration to celebrate Christmas:** Every person, who is willing to help to decorate our parish for Christmas and New Year's celebrations, please, come to the church at 3 pm on Friday, Dec. 7th, 2018 A.D.
- ❖ **CHRISTMAS PERFORMANCE.** All adults, English and Ukrainian speaking parishioners wishing to participate at our parish Christmas theatrical performance please contact Mrs. Olena Fedorov or Dob. Marichka Myts.
- ❖ **Please, share to Kelowna Food Bank.** A special box is located at the entrance to the church.
- ❖ **7days Candle offering:** Please, continue to offer your prayers by lighting candles in your intentions at the church. 7 days candle (blue and red colours) offering is \$ 10 cads.

❖ **TAX RECEIPT:** To ensure that you receive a tax receipt for your church donations, please, make sure you name or registered with our parish envelope number is written at a special church donation envelope.

❖ **JOIN OUR CHOIR:** Do you enjoy singing? Please consider joining our Dormition Parish Choir and remember that we are looking for new members! Contact Mrs. Lesia Achtymichuk for more information and details.

❖ **PLEASE, REMEMBER TO PRAY FOR:** yourselves, Most Reverend Bishop-Emeritus Severian Yakymyshyn, Lucy D., Janet F., Alex R., Volodymyr P., Ivan L., Ray Saranchuk, Cameron V., Rose Ostopowich, Keyton A., Ric B., Rocio A., Kit C., Shirley C., Peter Dranchuk, Sandra Sh., Patricia U., Olga Kuzyk, Anthony and Victoria Huziak, George and Mary Dashkewytch, Olga Romanyshyn, Myron Stec, Kay Ilnitski, Kalyna Kociuba, William Shuya, Bronie Huska, Peter Huska, Stanley and Roma Nowakowski (Bishop Ken's parents), Barbara and Vincent

Pasternak, Dorothy Scott, Lorraine Turcotte, Dr. Nadia Popil, the Hillman Family, Ann Boitson, Sandra Shynkaryk, all members of our parish and those who are not able to join actively in our community, your families, relatives, friends; governments and armed forces, especially the shut-in or those in the hospitals, traveling, working or studying, nursing and senior homes, those seeking God's answer to their prayers or those rejoicing with God's answer; those celebrating birthdays and anniversaries; those called to their eternal reward and for the family they leave behind; widows and widowers, orphans, homeless and all people who have asked us pray for them. Please, also in your kindness keep praying daily for vocations to the priesthood and religious life. Remember to ask for special blessings to all Christian families! **REMINDER** for families of individuals, who are admitted to hospital - If you or a family member is admitted to hospital and you wish to have a priest visit, please be sure to have someone call our parish rectory office to make this request. Your pastor may have no other way of knowing that you are in hospital, as privacy legislation. **SPIRIT OF CHRISTIAN AWARENESS: Dear parishioners, if our**

TODAY'S GOSPEL REFLECTION:

In today's Gospel reading, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ tells a parable-story about a banquet which a wealthy and a well-known respectful man had prepared for all he invited. However, many of those invited declined the invitation by placing some other things and events at the first place as something much more important. They were all too busy with their own lives, problems, concerns, dreams and plans to take time to come to the feast which has been prepared specially for them.

Jesus Christ probes the reasons why people make excuses to God's great invitation. When we make a parallel and put all these excuses into our present world and human lives, we will see it clearly because it touches our lives and people we know personally.

1) Do we allow our work and worries totally absorb our lives and to keep us from the God's invitation to come and personally participate at the Divine Liturgy/Mass celebration at the church at least once a week on Sunday?

2) Why material goods and possessions become human greedy desires and idols, feed human selfishness by replacing God's love, care and eternal command and salvation in our daily lives?

3) Why so many hours are easily spent in front of TV, using internet, phone, playing sports, gambling and shopping which in reality very often steal our precious time away from prayer, reading the Bible and worshipping God?

4) Are our homes, time with families and friends are placed as our priorities at the very centre and first place instead of God and His Divine Will shown us in His 10 Comandments long before we were born? God never really wants a person's home and relationships to be useful and have essential, eternal meaning today and always. We truly worship and serve God much better when we invite Him into our work and homes, sports and rest, sad and joyful moments of our lives asking priestly prayers and spiritually pastoral blessings!

The second part of the parable focuses on those who had no claim on the king and who would never have considered getting such an invitation. The poor, addicted, blind, and lame represent the outcasts of any society - those who can make no claim on the King. However, the Almighty if Omnipresent God invites each and every one of us to His Divine Liturgy/Mass banquet that we may share in His joy, love and blessings by testifying and proclaiming His holy name to all people.

The Six Precepts of the Church:

1. To worship God with the Church every Sunday, and on all holy days of obligation, participating in the Divine Liturgy and abstaining from hard work.

2. To fast and practice abstinence on the days appointed by the Church.

3. At least once a year, to confess one's sins in the Holy Mystery of Repentance (Confession), and to receive Holy Communion during the Paschal season.

4. Not to hold weddings or dances during prohibited times.

5. To shun immoral publications and internet sites; and to not distribute them, including electronic media.

6. To help the Church in her material needs according to one's ability.

- teaches the Catechism of the Ukrainian Catholic Church – "Christ Our Pascha"

brother / sister in Christ, who usually sits next to you, is not in the Church today, please phone him / her and ask how he / she is doing. Let him / her know that our parish community misses him / her very much!

- ❖ 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.

- ❖ **'KEEP CHRIST IN CHRISTMAS'** - as part of our parish fundraiser these special magnets are available for purchase at a donation of \$ 5.00. By placing on our cars, a magnet KEEP CHRIST IN CHRISTMAS, prepared by the Knights of Columbus, we evangelize silently and verbally through this wonderful symbol. In addition, by purchasing this magnet we also support our parish, since all money collected in our parish for these magnets are donated by the Knights of Columbus to our parish.



- ❖ **BOX FOR USED CHURCH BULLETINS** – since our Sunday bulletins contain Sacred Scripture readings & icons, they need to be disposed of properly/respectfully after use. Please do not throw them into the garbage but recycle them after shredding if possible. In order to assist with this request, we have provided a special box for used bulletins at the church entrance.

- ❖ **Christmas Food Sale** – will take place on **Saturday, Dec. 8th from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.** For more information, pies and baking donations please contact Mrs. Alice Pelechaty at 250-763-4870. Your time, care and generosity are very important in support our parish fundraising projects and programs! Thank you very much!

- ❖ **Penticton's parish dinner** will be after the Divine Liturgy on December 8th at the white spot restaurant. For anyone who wishes to participate, there will be a \$20.00 gift exchange. Please advise Mrs. Veronica Chernetsky if you will be attending.

- ❖ **A SPECIAL REQUEST:** After each Divine Liturgy and every church service, please, keep silence in the House of the Lord as some of the faithful are still praying at the church. As well, please, do not forget close all Liturgy and/or hymnbooks and return them to their proper place. Also, please do not leave any church bulletins or any other material in the pews. Let each of us do our part to be true stewards of our parish church by helping to keep the church building clean and neat. Thank you very much!



- ❖ **BE A STEWARD:** Have you ever wondered what more can you do to help our parish-church? Here are some suggestions: Steward of property security; Steward of grounds cleaning; Steward of cleaning church; Steward of church linen; Steward of outreach; Steward of caring; Steward of prayer; Steward of service. Quite often, our homebound or senior members, once active in their younger years, want to find purpose in their senior

years. It's not only about doing but about "BEING" present to others! **Please, feel very welcome to participate in our church choir singing, reading of the Epistles and others inspiring Bible texts, holding the candles during the Gospels readings, processions, welcoming, parish cleaning, projects, etc.** VOLUNTEERS NEEDED: to help out with weekly cleaning in the church and organizing of coffee social after the Divine Liturgy on Sundays, work-bees, etc. If you can help out, please, let us know. Please, Contact Mr. Neil Lalach or Fr. Pavlo for more information. You will be amazed how "BEING" can make a difference at our spiritual, parish life!



Also, please do not leave any church bulletins or any other material in the pews. Let each of us do our part to be true stewards of our parish church by helping to keep the church building clean and neat. Thank you for your Christian understanding and cooperation very much!

- ❖ **Annual Celebration of Saint Nicholas Day** will take place at our parish after the Divine Liturgy today, on **Sunday, Dec. 9th 2018 A.D.**

- ❖ **A SPECIAL REQUEST:** After each Divine Liturgy and every church service, please, keep silence in the House of the Lord as some of the faithful are continue praying at the church. As well, please, do not forget close all Liturgy and/or hymnbooks and return them to their proper place.

- ❖ **PILGRIMAGE TO FRANCE AND UKRAINE:** Sept. 4th - 22nd, 2019, an unforgettable experience with Sr. Angelica SSMI, brother & sister pilgrims. For details and price call Mrs. Myrna Arychuk at **604 - 617 - 7200**

- ❖ **Volunteers for Sunday coffee socials and clean-ups are needed** – please continue putting your name on the calendar posted in the church hall. If you can help out, please, let us know. Your help is truly appreciated!

❖ **FAITHFUL GIVING** ... Please, remember that we never take a day off or a vacation from God, or from our obligation to attend Divine Liturgy on Sundays and Holy Days. **When traveling, working, participating in different sport's tournaments, activities or studying, please, make sure you check out the service schedule for the area churches at our eparchial website: www.nweparchy.ca and attend the Divine Liturgy.** Remember as well, that while parishioners may be away and on vacation, the parish-church is not. Expenses continue as they do throughout the year. Please, remain consistent in your gifts to parish. Your weekly Sunday offering is important to our financial well-being. If you are away, we appreciate it when you forward your "make-up" donations. The financial stability of the parish counts on regular Sunday contributions. Please, continue to be supportive and generous! "Remember, O Lord, those who bear fruit doing good works in Your holy churches and remembering the poor. Send down Your mercy upon all of us!" (*Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom*)

❖ **Glasses Prescription Box for Ukraine** is placed and located at the left side by the entrance to the parish hall. Please, feel free to participate in and support this important project.

❖ **Rachel's Corner:** "He found them in a wilderness, a wasteland of howling desert. He shielded them, cared for them, guarded them as the apple of his eye." - *Deuteronomy 32:10*

Would you like to be found in your desert where you have felt so alone since your abortion decision? He yearns to shield you, care for you and remind you of His mercy. Join us on the next Rachel's Vineyard™ Retreat and let Him walk you out of that desert. Come on a Rachel's Vineyard Retreat and leave the darkness and burden behind as you discover the great light and joy of living in His peace.

Healing after Abortion Ministry 250-762-2273 info@rachelsvineyardkelowna.com or information and registration visit: www.rachelsvineyardkelowna.com, Facebook: **Rachel's Vineyard Kelowna Rachel's Vineyard Retreat:**

❖ **Since 2012 our Eparchy has been collecting funds to help underprivileged and orphaned children in Ukraine**



through our Christmas Candle appeal. Since 2012 our Eparchy has been collecting funds to help underprivileged and orphaned children in Ukraine through our Christmas Candle appeal. Our fundraising program is part of a larger global appeal sponsored by Caritas Ukraine. We have had great momentum over the last few years raising over \$20,000 with support from our BC Parishes as well as Parishes in other Provinces and parts of the United States.

The appeal is once again taking place for the month of December and we encourage everyone to remember these children during the Christmas season with a voluntary donation. Please place your donation in an envelope marked Christmas Candle and include it with the Sunday collection at any Ukrainian Catholic Church in BC. Donations over \$20 are eligible to receive a tax receipt if requested and cheques can be made out to your Parish with Christmas Candle Project in the Memo.

We thank you for your past support and generosity and ask that you continue supporting this appeal as part of your Christmas tradition. Caritas is an organization that is supported and approved by His Beatitude Sviatoslav Shevchuk and His Excellency Bishop Ken Nowakowski. 100% of the proceeds go to Caritas Ukraine. For more information, please contact the coordinators Dana Koren Lupynis or Natalia Lupynis at nweparchy.christmascandle@gmail.com and follow us on Facebook at *Caritas "Christmas Candle/Різдвяна свічка" Campaign, sponsored by NWEparchy.*

Why do we fast before Christmas?

The time of preparation before Christmas is intended to be a time of purposeful asceticism, almsgiving, and learning to say yes to God while saying no to our own desires.

But Christmas, and especially in present day America, has become a time of great anxiety and materialism, despite the fact that most every song one hears, most every retail ad one reads, and most every film that is produced—with "Christmas" as a theme—will try to convince us that it's a time for warmth, joy, spending time with family, and even taking a break from the regular hustle of everyday life. *If only* this were the case.

On the contrary, Christmas — a period of time that seems to grow longer and more arduous by the year — is preceded by ominous social media status updates that lament: "I can't believe it's already November ... Christmas is just around the corner," or "My children won't stop bothering me about [insert the latest gadget here] ... I can't wait until Christmas is over," and so on. Many will also complain: "Wow. I am not ready for Christmas. Where has the time gone?" This grief and anxiety should not be. No, we have certainly missed the purpose of this feast — and the time of preparation and fasting that precedes it — if all we can do is approach it with stress and sorrow.

As I mentioned above, the time before Nativity — Advent (or "Coming") in the West, and the Fast of St. Philip the Apostle (due to its beginning on the eve of this Saint's feast) or simply "the Nativity fast" in the Orthodox Church — is intended to be utilized for one's Spiritual benefit (and indeed, for the life of the world), not for remorse or regret.

The Nativity fast dates to the year 1166 A.D. and a synod at Constantinople, where our fathers inaugurated a forty-day period of fasting and preparation before the annual celebration of Christ's Incarnation. This period of forty days is analogous to the forty days that Moses fasted before receiving the commandments from God.



Of this connection, Saint Symeon of Thessaloniki (ca. A.D. 1381–1429) writes: *The Nativity Forty-day Fast represents the fast undertaken by Moses, who — having fasted for forty days and forty nights — received the Commandments of God, written on stone tablets. And we, fasting for forty days, will reflect upon and receive from the Virgin the living Word — not written upon stone, but born, incarnate — and we will commune of His Divine Body.*

If nothing else, then, the time of prayer and fasting before Nativity reminds us that we, as Orthodox Christians, are given the immense and unthinkable blessing, privilege, and honor of receiving the very Body and Blood of our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ. But as we say yes to Christ in the holy mysteries, we must also learn to say no to ourselves, making a point to both follow Christ and serve those in need. It is no coincidence that Christ, in one of the Gospel readings during Nativity exhorts: “Whoever does not bear his cross” as well as “forsake all that he has cannot be my disciple” (Lk. 14:27, 33). While the faithful prepare to receive Christ anew in his Incarnation, we must also be prepared to relinquish whatever it is we possess that keeps us from the glory of his everlasting kingdom.

But even as the faithful are called to a period of spiritual quietude and even asceticism during this fasting period, we should not engage in asceticism and bear this cross as an end unto itself. Rather, we learn to say no to ourselves so

that we can say yes to God. And in saying yes to the poor and the needy, we are saying yes to Christ, so that we might share in the vision of Cornelius, hearing: “Your prayers and alms have ascended as a memorial before God” (Acts 10:4). An effective remedy for the anxieties and desires of this time of year is found in a concern for our fellow man. Rather than being so caught up in the materialism and “me too” nature of contemporary celebrations, orthodox Christians should play a pivotal role in showing a wholly better and more noble way forward.

Incidentally, the other Gospel readings throughout the Nativity fast remind us not only why we are participating, but also how we can make the most out of it. For example, we should not lay up treasure for ourselves, while neglecting God (Luke 12:16–21), but should rather be “rich” towards God — and by consequence, towards those who are in need. We should not make excuses when it comes to serving or helping those in distress (Luke 13:10–17). And, of course, we should be willing to “sell all that [we] have and distribute to the poor” (Luke 18:22).

It's in these virtues, and in a genuine concern for others, that we can be released from the empty cares of this world, especially as they are emphasized during the holiday season. If we give to the poor, we are giving to God. If we say no to our own desires, we can fulfill the needs of those who are looking for someone — *anyone* — that is willing to say yes on their behalf.

As families, we can help our children give or donate to a family, friend, or even a complete stranger in need, rather than providing them with more and more stuff. As individuals, we can honor the fast, spend more time in prayer, and make a conscious effort to love our neighbors as ourselves, dedicating this season to be a time for true, spiritual growth. We can practice the religion of St. James that is “pure and undefiled” before God: “... to visit orphans and widows in their afflictions, and to keep oneself unstained by the world” (James 1:27). Instead of overeating for the next month, spending countless hours at parties and other premature celebrations, we can fast from our regular intake of food so that we have more time and resources to give to those who are truly in need—not to mention more focus and attention for prayer and spiritual growth.

Rather than approaching this Nativity season with anxiety and distress, dedicate yourself to the *true* spirit of the season and the greater purpose that lies within: the salvation and healing of the world through the Incarnation of Jesus Christ.

by Vincent Gabriel, source: <http://blogs.ancientfaith.com/onbehalfofall/why-we-fast-before-christmas/>

The calendar does not save us. Jesus saves us! – teaches Bishop Venedikt (Aleksiychuk)

The calendar does not save us. Jesus saves us. People need to get to know Christ and the calendar here performs not the main, but secondary function.

In an interview with the UGCC Department of Information, Bishop Venedikt (Aleksiychuk), the Ruling Bishop of the Chicago Diocese of the UGCC, answered the question about the peculiarity of his large (15 Ukrainian territories) eparchy, where there are parishes living in the Julian, Gregorian and even New Julian calendar. Accordingly, some people celebrate

Christmas on December 25, others - on January 7. And there are also parishes where some parishioners live by one, and the other part is by another calendar.

According to Bishop Venedikt, the problem of the UGCC is that we do not speak about this issue. "The UGCC has a unique experience of different calendars abroad and it is much easier for us to take this experience into consideration than, for example, for our Orthodox brothers," said the bishop.

In this context, we asked the bishop's opinion about the argument that, if someone wants to celebrate Christmas on January 7, he will be celebrating with Putin, and if December 25, then with the whole world.

"I think this is not a good argument. It is not Christian, but politicized enough. And we can not use politicized approaches in the Church. There is a danger to try to solve church matters in the political plane, but then the decisions will not be ecclesiastic, but political," said Bishop Venedikt.

At the same time, he expressed his belief that the issue of the calendar can be solved, but this problem needs to be discussed at all levels: at the level of laity, priests and bishops.

Department of Information of the UGCC:

http://news.ugcc.ua/en/news/the_calendar_does_not_save_us_jesus_saves_us_bishop_venedikt_aleksiychuk_84627.html?fbclid=IwAR36HqglhQC1184lsoewC3a8cv_6K_8aXhidnhoREuCYN4bEVRfEeK6mCH4

❖ **Bequests and Wills:** Leaving a bequest is a process of giving a donation through your will. It is simply a distribution from your estate to a charitable organization through your last will and testament. It can be as small or as large a donation as you wish. It is important that you talk to your lawyer about the process.

In your kindness please remember Resurrection of Jesus Christ Ukrainian Catholic Parish in Penticton, BC and Dormition of the Mother of God Ukrainian Catholic Church in Kelowna, BC in your bequests and wills. If anyone wishes to make such a bequest in their will, the following clause may be included or added to a will: "I give, devise, and bequeath to Dormition of the Mother of God Ukrainian Catholic Church at 1091 Coronation Avenue, Kelowna, BC V1Y 7A8 or to Resurrection of Jesus Christ Ukrainian Catholic Parish in Penticton, BC, the sum of \$_____ (or ____% of my estate), to be used for the benefit of the church/parish and it's needs and pastoral ministry."

If you wish your business to be advertised at our church bulletin, please, let us know by contacting the parish office.