



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

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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](http://www.nweparchy.ca)



**25<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost** – November 11<sup>th</sup>, 2018 A.D.

**Let us always remember all who gave their lives in the defense of our freedom, peace and human dignity in Canada and Ukraine!**



Remembrance Day  
November 11

**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:**

Monday., Nov. 12<sup>th</sup> (**Saint Josaphat**) – 9:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy: God's blessings for all persecuted Christians

Tue., Nov. 13<sup>th</sup> – 9:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy: for repose of the soul of Lorne Derbowka (*requested by Mrs. Beverly Strom*)  
 – 6:30 p.m. Moleben to Our Saviour

Wed., Nov. 14<sup>th</sup> – 9:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy: for repose of the soul of Chelsea (*requested by Mrs. Beverly Strom*)

Thurs., Nov. 15<sup>th</sup> (Begging of Saint Philip Fast/Advent) – 9:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy:

– 7:00 p.m. Evening Prayers of Panakhyda and Parastas: for repose of the soul of Gabriel Hillman

Fri., Nov. 16<sup>th</sup> – 11:00 a.m. Funeral Day Divine Liturgy: for repose of the soul of Gabriel Hillman

Saturday, Nov. 17<sup>th</sup> – 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, Nov. 18<sup>th</sup>, – 8:30 a.m. Rosary: (*in English language*)

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

– 11:00 a.m. The Divine Liturgy: God's blessings for all parishioners. (*in Ukrainian language*)

**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 8**, text from book "*The Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom*"; pages 105 - 107

**Epistle:** A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Ephesians: (Eph. 4: 1-6)

Brethren, I plead with you, then, as a prisoner for the Lord, to live a life worthy of the calling you have received, with perfect humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another lovingly. Make every effort to preserve the unity which has the Spirit as its origin and peace as its binding force. There is but one body and one Spirit, just as there is but one hope given all of you by your call. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all, and works through all, and is in all.

**Gospel:** (Luke 10: 25-37)



At that time a lawyer stood up to pose Jesus, this problem: "Teacher, what must I do to inherit everlasting life?" Jesus answered him: "What is written in the law? How do you read it?" He replied: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." Jesus said, "You have answered correctly. Do this and you shall live."

But because he wished to justify himself, he said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" Jesus replied: "There was a man going down from Jerusalem to Jericho who fell prey to robbers. They stripped him, beat him, and then went off leaving him half-dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road; he saw him but continued on. Likewise, there was a Levite who came the same way; he saw him and went on. But a Samaritan who was journeying along came on him and was moved to pity at the sight. He approached him and dressed his wounds, pouring in oil and wine. He then hoisted him on his own beast and brought him to an inn, where he cared for him. The next day he took out two silver pieces and gave them to the innkeeper with the request: 'Look after him, and if there is any further expense, I will repay you on my way back.'

"Which of these three, in your opinion, was neighbor to the man who fell in with the robbers?" The answer came, "The one who treated him with compassion." Jesus said to him, "Then go and do the same."

**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:** 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 8, текст з книги "Божественна Літургія Святого Івана Золотоустого"; стт. 104-106

**Апостол:** *До Ефесян послання Святого Апостола Павла читання: (Еф. 4, 1-6)*

Браття і Сестри, благаю вас я, Господній в'язень, поводитися достойно покликання, яким вас візвано, в повноті покорі й лагідності, з довготерпеливістю, терплячи один одного в любові, стараючися зберігати єдність духа зв'язком миру. Одне бо тіло, один дух, і в одній надії вашого покликання, яким ви були візвані. Один Господь, одна віра, одне хрещення. Один Бог і Отець усіх, що над усіма й через усіх і в усіх.



**Євангеліє:** (Лк. 10, 25-37)

У той час приступив до Ісуса один законовчитель, щоб його випробувати, та й каже: "Учителю, що мені робити, щоб вічне життя досягнути?" А Ісус мовив до нього: "В законі що написано? Як там читаєш?" Озвався той і каже: "Люби Господа, Бога твого, всім серцем твоїм, усією твоєю душею і всією силою твоєю і всією думкою твоєю; а ближнього твого, як себе самого." "Ти добре відповів", сказав (Ісус), "роби це й будеш жити." Та той, бажаючи себе самого виправдати, каже до Ісуса: "А хто мій ближній?" Мовив тоді Ісус, кажучи: "Один чоловік спускався з Єрусалиму до Єрихону й потрапив розбійникам, що його обдерли й побили тяжко та й пішли геть, зоставивши півмертвого. Випадком ішов якийсь священик тією дорогою; побачив він його й, збочивши, пройшов мимо. Так само й левіт прийшов на те місце, глянув на нього й пройшов мимо. Але один самарянин, що був у дорозі, зненацька надійшов (на нього) й, побачивши його, змилосердився. Він приступив до нього, перев'язав йому рани, полив їх оливою і вином; потім посадив його на власну скотину, привів до заїзду й доглянув за ним. На другий день він виїняв два динари, дав їх господареві й мовив: Доглядай за ним, і те, що витратиш на нього більше, я заплачу тобі, коли повернуся. Хто з оцих трьох, на твою думку, був ближнім тому, що потрапив розбійникам у руки?" Він відповів: "Той, хто вчинив над ним милосердя." Тоді Ісус сказав до нього: "Йди і ти роби так само."



**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 славилася, 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, knowingly and unknowingly for the other people thoughtfully care and help our parish community, Mrs. Lydia Pfof and her family for donating musical keyboard instrument toward our parish youth ministry programs, parishioners welcoming our guests and visitors, volunteered sharing time and care helping at the pyrohy making work bees, coffee-socials, 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!!!

❖ Blessings and Congratulations to Mrs. Mariya Matsychko, who graduated as a professional hair stylist from MC College in Kelowna, BC on Saturday, November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2018 A.D. May Our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ lead and bless you, dear sister in Christ, your wonderful Christian family, friends and clients for many years!

❖ May the Almighty God bless in good health and salvation in many, happy and blessed years of life to Mrs. Alix Washchyn on her birthday (Nov. 4<sup>th</sup>), Mr. Myron Stec on his birthday (Nov. 11<sup>th</sup>), Mr. Neil and Mrs. Karen Lalach on their wedding anniversary (Nov. 12<sup>th</sup>), Mrs. Anne Boitson on her birthday (Nov. 13<sup>th</sup>), Mariana Fedorov on her birthday (Nov. 15<sup>th</sup>), 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 CHURCH TODAY! WISHING YOU A BLESSED, RESTFUL WEEKEND AND FRUITFUL, HEALTHY AND SAFE WEEK! EVERYONE IS VERY

WELCOME TO COME AND PARTICIPATE IN OUR PARISH COFFEE AND FELLOWSHIP AT THE CHURCH HALL TODAY FOLLOWING THE DIVINE LITURGY TODAY!

### TODAY'S GOSPEL REFLECTION:

*There is a wisdom existing in Christian tradition regarding how to live the Gospel today. This wisdom reminds us that the purely literal reading of the Bible may not be enough for us to know how to live. Today's Gospel lesson of the Good Samaritan tells us how to go and imitate the Good Samaritan – be loving and respectful to those we meet in our daily life, even if they are strangers, opponents or enemies.*

❖ 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.

*“Let us not hurry past so pitiable a sight without taking pity. Even if others do so, you must not. Do not say to yourself: ‘I am no priest or monk... This is a work for the priests; this is work for the monks.’ The Samaritan did not say: ‘Where are the priests now? Where are the Pharisees now? Where are the teachers of the Jews?’... Therefore, when you see someone in need of treatment for some ailment of the body or soul, do not say to yourself: ‘Why did so-and-so or so-and-so not take care of him?’ You free him from his sickness; do not demand an accounting from others for their negligence. Tell me this. If you find a gold coin lying on the ground, do you say to yourself: ‘Why didn’t so-and-so pick it up?’ Do you not rush to snatch it up before somebody else does? Think the same way about your fallen brothers; consider that tending his wounds is like finding a treasure. If you pour the word of instruction on his wounds like oil, if you bind them up with your mildness, and cure them with your patience, your wounded brother has made you a richer man than any treasure could. Jeremiah said: ‘He who has brought forth the precious from the vile will be as my mouth.’ What could we compare to that? No fasting, no sleeping on the ground, no watching and praying all night, nor anything else can do as much for you as saving your brother can accomplish.”*

*– Saint John Chrysostom*

### ❖ CATECHISM ANNOUNCEMENT:

*"And they were bringing to Him also the infants, in order that He may be touching them; but after the disciples saw it, they rebuked them. But Jesus called them to Himself and said, Let alone the little children to come to Me, and cease hindering them; for of such is the kingdom of God."* (Matthew 19:14) We are happy to welcome all children to our Dormition of the Mother of God parish catechism program. We want your children to learn more about their orthodox faith in the Catholic Church, sacred scripture, feast days, icons, singing and religious practices and customs of the Ukrainian Catholic Church. If you have any questions, please, do not hesitate to contact Mrs. Marilyn Daulat or Rev. Fr. Pavlo Myts.

❖ **REMEMBER TO PRAY FOR:** yourselves, Most Reverend Bishop-Emeritus Severian Yakymyshyn, Rev. Fr. Edward Ewanko., 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, 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 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!**

❖ On behalf of our parish family, I would like to express the deepest sympathy to Mrs. Ollie Proch, her family, relatives and friends! **May our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ place Mr. Michael Proch's soul in the place where all of the saints abide and may his memory be everlasting with the Lord and our prayers – Vichnaya Pamyat'/ Eternal Memory!**

❖ On behalf of our parish family, I would like to express the deepest sympathy to Mr. Kevin and Mrs. Carol-Ann Hillman, their family, relatives and friends! **May our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ place their son Gabriel Hillman's soul in the place where all of the saints abide and may his memory be everlasting with the Lord and our prayers – Vichnaya Pamyat'/ Eternal Memory!**

❖ **If you need a Bible, please, call or email your pastor.**

❖ **CHRISTMAS PERFORMANCE.** All adults, English and Ukrainian speaking parishioners wishing to participate at our parish Christmas theatrical performance please contact Mrs. Olena Federov or Dob. Marichka Myts. **TV and Bluetooth Speaker are needed for our Church Youth Ministry Programs. If parishioners, your relatives or friends can donate those new or even used but working electronic items, it will be truly appreciated!**

❖ **Saint Josaphat Ukrainian Catholic Church praznyk/feast day in Vernon, BC.** Please mark your calendars for Sunday, **November 11<sup>th</sup> 2018** to celebrate Saint Josaphat's Praznyk. **Divine Liturgy at 11:30 AM** followed by banquet. Tickets: \$20.00 - adults; \$10.00 - children 6-12 years of age; children 5 years & under - free.

❖ **Parish Executive Council meeting** will take place at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2018 A.D.

❖ **Please, share to Kelowna Food Bank.** A special box is located at the entrance to the church.

❖ **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.



❖ **2018 Grey Cup Game annual social gathering-party** – will take place on Sunday, Nov. 25<sup>th</sup>. As in previous years, we are organizing this parish social event and pot-luck dinner. There will be a sign-up list to let us know what kind of dish you are bringing. We will be gathering around 3:00 p.m.

❖ **Volunteers help is needed to make perogies starting at 8 a.m. on Saturday of Nov. 17<sup>th</sup>, 2018.** It is a good time to help our parish fundraisers and socialize together. More helpers come – easier and faster the work is done! Please, come to help!



❖ **Christmas Food Sale** – will take place on **Saturday, Dec. 8<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.** For more information, please contact Mrs. Alice Pelechaty at 250-763-4870.

❖ **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!

❖ **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.



❖ **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!



**UKRAINIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH  
STS. PETER AND PAUL  
1935 Barlee Rd.  
KELOWNA, B.C.**

**CORDIALLY INVITES YOU TO THE**

**100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE  
UKRAINIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OF CANADA**

**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2018**

**9:30 a.m. Greeting of His Grace Bishop Ilarion,  
Bishop of the Western Eparchy**

**10:00 a.m. Hierarchical Divine Liturgy  
Followed by**

**UNVEILING OF THE CENTENNIAL EMBLEM  
COMMEMORATING THE 100 YEARS OF THE  
UKRAINIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OF CANADA**

**12:00 Commemorative Banquet  
Ukrainian Orthodox Hall**

**1:00 p.m. Greetings followed by a short program**

**RSVP requested by November 12, 2018**

**E-mail: [Ukrainianorthodoxchurch@outlook.com](mailto:Ukrainianorthodoxchurch@outlook.com) or  
Phone: Rosalyne Monita (250) 869-0607**

❖ **PILGRIMAGE TO FRANCE AND UKRAINE:** Sept. 4 - 22, 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!

❖ **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:** *"Spiritually, I found reconciliation and profound healing. Emotionally, I felt freedom, peace, faith and I had my dignity restored. I have peace, that I have never felt before."* - Testimonial from Retreat

Join others on a Rachel retreat and receive God's merciful blessings that you thought were impossible to receive and most definitely meant for others and not for yourself. Come and let God surprise you. He is calling you. Will you respond? **Healing after Abortion Ministry 250-762-2273** [info@rachelvineyardkelowna.com](mailto:info@rachelvineyardkelowna.com) or information and registration visit:

[www.rachelvineyardkelowna.com](http://www.rachelvineyardkelowna.com), Facebook: **Rachel's Vineyard Kelowna Rachel's Vineyard Retreat: Please contact us at [info@rachelvineyardkelowna.com](mailto:info@rachelvineyardkelowna.com), 250-762-2273. Strict confidence is assured.**

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### **Pope, Assyrian patriarch jointly call for end of violence in Middle East**

ROME - In a Friday meeting between Pope Francis and Mar Gewargis III, Catholicos-Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East, the two leaders joined their voices in solidarity with persecuted Christians in seeking a political solution to bring peace to the Middle East, thus stopping the exodus of Christians from the region.

In a brief speech, Francis said the two churches share in "the great suffering resulting from the tragic situation endured by so many of our brothers and sisters in the Middle East, who are victims of violence and frequently forced to leave the lands in which they have always lived."

"They tread the *via crucis* in the footsteps of Christ and, though belonging to different communities, they are forging fraternal relationships among one another and thus becoming, for us, witnesses of unity," he said.

Pointing to the current meeting with the joint committee for theological dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East currently happening at the Vatican, the pope said the ongoing dialogue the committee fosters "shows that practical and disciplinary differences are not always an obstacle to unity, and that certain differences in theological expression can be considered complementary rather than conflicting."

He closed praying that the work of the committee, which is beginning a third phase dedicated to the study of ecclesiology, would help them to advance on the journey toward unity, particularly toward a shared Eucharist.

Some steps toward a shared Eucharist between the Catholic and Assyrian churches have already been taken. In 2001, the Vatican made a landmark decision approving inter-communion between the two churches in certain circumstances.

At the time, the decision was hailed by the late scholar Jesuit Father Robert Taft as "the most remarkable Catholic magisterial document since Vatican II," in part because it represented official Catholic approval for a longstanding Eucharistic consecration rite that doesn't involve the 'institution narrative' of the synoptic Gospels, which Catholic tradition always has regarded as essential.

Friday's meeting between Francis and Gewargis marks the second time the two have had a formal meeting at the Vatican, though they were both present for an ecumenical prayer encounter held in Bari in July.

After a brief private conversation that lasted less than 15 minutes, the two exchanged gifts and speeches before heading to the Vatican's Redemptoris Mater chapel, where they prayed together in English, Italian and Aramaic for unity and for Christians who are suffering and persecuted, particularly in the Middle East.

Francis gave Gewargis a bronze sculpture of an olive branch, while on his part, Gewargis gave the pope a stone with a cut-out of a cross typical in the Assyrian Church, and a place to put a tealight candle for prayer.

In his speech, Gewargis, who is in Rome for the joint committee meeting, said his presence at the Vatican is a sign of the shared dedication between the Catholic and Assyrian churches to promoting religious freedom throughout the world "as one of the most essential of human rights which perpetually sustains the dignity of the human person."

Lamenting the many Christians who have been persecuted and killed in recent years, he said the long decades of war, violence, religious hostility and sectarianism "has had immeasurable and, sadly, irreversible effects on the ancient Christian communities of the East."

Not only have millions of Christians fled the Middle East in recent years due to violent extremism and political instability, an entire generation of children have grown up believing that war and conflict are the norm.

These children, Gewargis said, "no longer have the experience of peace and justice in their lives. Rather, they have grown up with the understanding that war and religious violence is not only a normal part of daily human life, but indeed a dictate of religion. In addition, countless others among women, men and the elderly have been scarred and violated in their own way."

In the Middle East, the most vulnerable continue to endure suffering and exploitation, he said, but cautioned that the greatest fault in the crisis “is that the human heart and soul have been damaged and altered beyond repair,” with goodness and hospitality now replaced with suffering and intolerance.

He asked for the prayer and intercession of the martyrs to help obtain peace and justice in the region.

In their eight-point joint statement, the two said the longstanding dialogue between their churches is proof “that a diversity of customs and disciplines is in no way an obstacle to unity, and that certain differences in theological expressions are often complementary rather than conflicting.”

However, they acknowledged that while they are still walking toward unity, they already share the suffering of Christians persecuted in the Middle East, particularly in Iraq and Syria.

“For decades now, the Middle East has been an epicenter of violence where entire populations endure grievous trials every day. Hundreds of thousands of innocent men, women and children suffer immensely from violent conflicts that nothing can justify,” they said, noting the violence has led to a mass exodus of Christians from the Middle East.

“Without distinction of rite or confession, they suffer for professing the name of Christ,” they said, and voiced gratitude to the Christians who endure suffering and persecution, thanking them for their faith and witness to Christ.

Just as Christ shed his blood out of love, bringing reconciliation and unity, the blood of modern martyrs, “members of various Churches but united by their shared suffering, is the seed of Christian unity,” they said.

Francis and Gewargis expressed their joint desire to support these people and to help alleviate their pain, however, they also stressed the importance of the Christian presence in the Middle East, saying it “is not possible to imagine the Middle East without Christians,” on both religious and historic grounds.

The leaders said Christians will only be able to stay in the region if peace is achieved and urged the international community to implement a political solution to the many conflicts lacerating the area, protecting the rights and duties of all citizens.

“The primacy of law, including respect for religious freedom and equality before the law, based on the principle of ‘citizenship,’ regardless of ethnic origin or religion, is a fundamental principle for the establishment and preservation of a stable and productive coexistence among the peoples and communities of the Middle East,” they said.

“Christians do not want to be considered a ‘protected minority’ or a tolerated group, but full citizens whose rights are guaranteed and defended, together with those of all other citizens.”

The leaders closed their statement saying interreligious dialogue, rooted in charity, truth and openness, “is also the best antidote to extremism, which is a threat to the followers of every religion.”

*Reported by Elise Harris: <https://cruxnow.com/vatican/2018/11/09/pope-assyrian-patriarch-jointly-call-for-end-of-violence-in-middle-east/>*



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