

# Ukrainian Catholic Church of the Dormition of the Mother of God

1091 Coronation Ave., Kelowna, BC V1Y 7A8

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

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

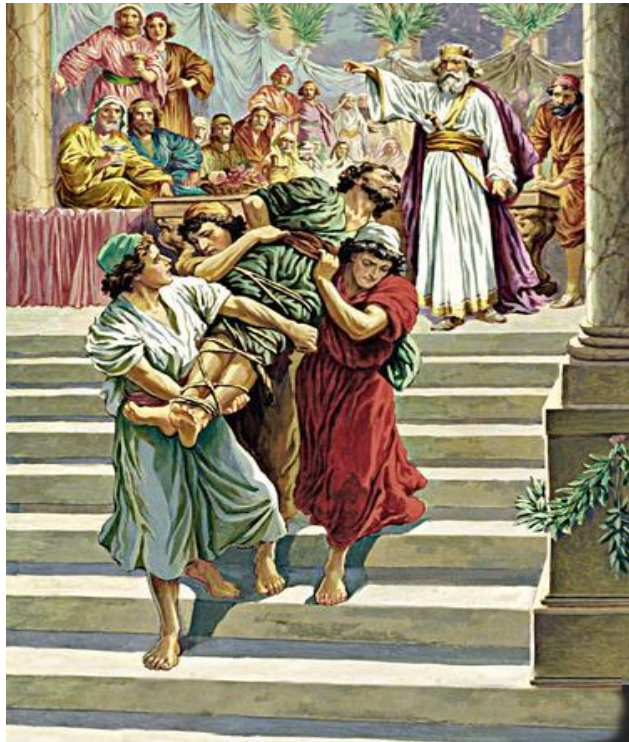
Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of New Westminster: [www.nweparchy.ca](http://www.nweparchy.ca)

Українська Католицька Церква

Успення Пресвятої Богородиці

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



## 11<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

- August 25<sup>th</sup>, 2019 A.D.

**“I can see, thanks to the light of the Sun; but if I close my eyes, I cannot see: this is no fault of the Sun, it is my own fault, because by closing my eyes, I prevent the sunlight from reaching me.”** – teaches Saint Thomas Aquinas

**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:

Tue., Aug. 27<sup>th</sup> - 9:30 a.m. The Divine Liturgy: *for repose of the soul of Mr. Mykhailo Bohush* (5<sup>th</sup> year remembrance service requested by Mrs. Mariya Matsychko and Family)

Wedn., Aug. 28<sup>th</sup> - 9:30 a.m. The Divine Liturgy: *God's blessings for God's blessings in good health for Mrs. Veronica Chernesky* (requested by Ukrainian Catholic Women's League from Penticton, BC)

Thurs., August 29<sup>th</sup> - 9:30 a.m. The Divine Liturgy: *God's blessings to Mrs. Halia Senkus on her 70<sup>th</sup> birthday* (requested by Mrs. Ann Wyshynsky)

Fri., August 30<sup>th</sup> - 9:30 a.m. The Divine Liturgy: *repose of the soul of Mr. Eugene Wyshynsky* (requested by Mrs. Ann Wyshynsky)

Saturday, August 31<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*

– 8:00 p.m. Vespers: (**Service in Kelowna, BC**)

Sunday, September 1<sup>st</sup> – 8:15 a.m. Rosary:

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

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

### Liturgical Propers in English language:

**Tone 2**, text from book *“The Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom”*; pages 91 - 93

**Epistle: A reading from the First Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians: (1 Cor. 9:2-12)**

*Brethren*, Although I may not be an apostle for others, I certainly am one for you. You are the very seal of my apostolate in the Lord.

My defense against those who criticize me is this: Do we not have the right to eat and drink? Do we not have the right to marry a believing woman like the rest of the apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas (Se-fas)? Is it only myself and Barnabas who are forced to work for a living? What soldier in the field pays for his rations? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its yield? What shepherd does not nourish himself with the milk of his flock? You may think the reasons I am giving are merely human ones, but does not the law itself speak of this things? It is written in the law of Moses, ‘You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out grain.’ Is God concerned here for oxen, or does He not rather say this for our sakes? You can be sure it was written for us, for the plowman should plow in hope and the harvester expect a share in the grain. If we have sown for you in the spirit, is it too much to expect a material harvest from you? If others have this right over you, is not our right even greater? But we have not used it right. On the contrary, we put up with all sorts of hardships so as not to place any obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ.

**Gospel: (Mt 18:23-35)**

*The Lord told this parable:* The reign of God may be said to be like a king who decided to settle accounts with his officials. When he began his auditing, one was brought in who owed him a huge amount. As he had no way of paying it, his master ordered him to be



sold, among with his wife, his children and all his property, in payment of the debt. At that the official prostrated himself in homage and said, "My lord, be patient with me and I will pay you back in full." Moved with pity, the master let the official go and wrote off the debt. But when that same official went out he met a fellow servant who owed him a mere fraction of what he himself owed: He seized him and throttled him. "Pay back what you owe," he demanded. His fellow servant dropped to his knees and began to plead with him, "Just give me time and I will pay you back in full." But he would hear none of it. Instead, he had him put in jail until he paid back what he owed. When his fellow servants saw what had happened they were badly shaken, and went to their master to report the whole incident. His master sent for him and said, "You worthless wretch! I canceled your entire debt when you pleaded with me. Should you not have dealt mercifully with your fellow servant, as I dealt with you?" Then in anger the master handed him over to the torturers until he paid back all that he owed. My heavenly Father will treat you in exactly the same way unless each of you forgives your brother and sister from your heart."

**Літургійні частини Українською мовою:**

**Глас 2**, текст з книги "*Божественна Літургія Святого Івана Золотоустого*"; **стт. 90 - 92**

**Апостол: До Коринтян послання Святого Апостола Павла читання: (1 Кор. 9, 2-12):**



*Браття і Сестри*, коли іншим я не апостол, то бодай вам, бо ви, у Господі, є достовірним доказом мого апостольства. Ось моя оборона перед тими, що мене судять. Хіба ми не маємо права їсти й пити? Хіба ми не маємо права водити (з собою) сестру-жінку, як інші апостоли, брати Господні, і Кифа? Чи може один я і Варнава не маємо права не працювати? Хто колись власним коштом ходив у похід? Хто садить виноградник, і не їсть із нього плоду? Хто пасе стадо, і не живиться молоком від стада? Хіба я говорю тільки як людина? Хіба й закон не каже цього? Таж у законі Мойсея написано: «Не зав'язуй рота воліві, як молотить.» Чи Бог турбується про волів? Чи, може, ради нас говорить? Бо ж ради нас написано, що, хто оре, мусить орати в надії, і хто молотить, молотить теж у надії, що матиме щось із того. Коли ж ми сіяли у вас духовне, то чи велика річ, коли пождем ваше тілесне? І коли інші мають це право над вами, чому радше не ми? Однак, ми не користуємося цим правом, а весь час терпимо, щоб не робити ніякої перешкоди Євангелії Христовій.

**Євангеліє: (Мт. 18, 23-35)**

Сказав Господь притчу оцю: "Царство Небесне схоже на царя, що хотів звести рахунки з слугами своїми. Коли він розпочав зводити рахунки, приведено йому одного, що винен був десять тисяч талантів. А що не мав той чим віддати, то пан і звелів його продати, а й жінку, дітей і все, що він мав, і віддати. Тоді слуга, впавши йому в ноги, поклонився лицем до землі й каже: Потерпи мені, пане, все тобі поверну. І змилосердився пан над тим слугою, відпустив його й подарував йому борг той. Вийшовши той слуга, здивав одного з своїх співслуг, який винен був йому сто динаріїв, схопив його й заходився душити його, кажучи: Віддай, що винен. Тож співслуга його впав йому в ноги й почав його просити: Потерпи мені, я тобі зверну. Та той не хотів, а пішов і кинув його в темницю, аж поки не поверне борг. Якже побачили товариші його, що сталося, засмутились вельми, пішли до свого пана й розповіли йому про все сподіяне. Тоді його пан покликав його і сказав до нього: Слуго лукавий! Я простив тобі весь борг той, бо ти мене благав. Чи не слід було й тобі змилосердитись над твоїм товаришем, як я був змилосердився над тобою? І розгнівавшись його пан, передав його катам, аж поки йому не поверне всього боргу. Отак і мій Отець Небесний буде чинити вам, якщо кожний з вас не прощатиме братові своєму з серця свого."

***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.***

**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, talents and treasures, volunteered at parish projects, organized and attended our parish annual birthday-praznyk celebration past Sunday, volunteered, donated and attended our eparchial camp of Saint Volodymyr, organized coffee-socials, make donations, everyone who knowingly and unknowingly for the other people thoughtfully care and help our parish community, parishioners welcoming our guests and visitors, prayerfully participate at the church services, actively participate at different 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)

**CONGRATULATIONS!!!**

**May the Almighty God bless** in good health and salvation in many, happy and blessed years of life to Tasha Hilman on her birthday (Aug. 25<sup>th</sup>), Mr. Kevin and Mrs. Carol-Ann Hilman on their wedding anniversary (Aug. 25<sup>th</sup>), Carolina Posthumus on her birthday (Aug. 26<sup>th</sup>), Mark Fantych on his birthday (Aug. 26<sup>th</sup>), Mr. George Dashkewtych on his birthday, Cheryl Shynkaryk on her birthday (Aug. 28<sup>th</sup>), Anastasia Tomashevskya on her birthday (Aug. 31<sup>th</sup>), and to all who celebrate their birthdays, heavenly patron's name-days and all our parishioners and family members 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:**

**A WARM WELCOME TO OUR PARISHIONERS, GUESTS AND VISITORS WHO HAVE JOINED US IN THIS DIVINE LITURGY. THANK YOU FOR PRAYERFUL PRESENCE AND FULLFILLING GOD'S COMANDMENT AT THE CHUCH TODAY! EVERYONE IS VERY WELCOME TO COME AND ATTEND CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP AT THE CHURCH HALL TODAY!**

**Wishing you to be guided by the Holy Spirit, blessed with joy, peace and Christian love always!**

**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., Deanna M, Danny M, Jordan M., Kit C.,



Shirley C., Peter Dranchuk, Olga Kuzyk, Anthony and Victoria Huziak, George and Mary Dashkewytch, Olga Romanyshyn, Myron Stec, Kay Ilnitski, Kalyna Kociuba, William Shuya, Maria Pylypchuk, Bronie Huska, Peter Huska, Stanley and Roma Nowakowski (Bishop Ken's parents), Barbara and Vincent Pasternak, Lorraine Turcotte, Dr. Nadia Popil, the Hillman Family, Mary Davies, John and Ann Bulych, Joseph Stetch, Rosa Maria Santos, Anita N., Ron and Verna Shoemaker, Jonas and Anne, Alyssa and Adam, Mark and Asia, Karen Feniuk, Volodymyr Melnyk and all members of our parish family 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 or her know that our parish community misses this brother or sister at the church very much and prays for them daily!



*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.*

❖ **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.*

#### Pastoral and Sacramental Ministry:

**Baptisms:** by appointment. **Marriages:** six months' notice should be given to the parish priest, and he should be contacted before any other arrangements are made. **Reconciliation:** on Sundays and Holy Days: before Liturgies and other days, by appointment. **Holy Communion:** for the sick, by appointment, any time, **Holy Unction** (Anointing of the Sick): Those anticipating surgery, hospitalization or treatments and who would like to receive anointing (by appointment, any time) **Funerals and Memorials:** by appointment. \* 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. *If you need to meet with the parish priest, please, call or email in advance to arrange time and a day.*

❖ **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 Mrs. Yvonne Crawford or Fr. Pavlo for more information. You will be amazed how "BEING" can make a difference at our spiritual, parish life!

❖ **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](http://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)*

**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.

**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 дїбр 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 світлом євангельського слова, молитви і добрих дїл, що кличе кожного до участі в Божественному житті, щоб славилось, Спасе, Твоє Ім'я з безначальним Твоїм Отцем та пресвятим, благим і животворящим Твоїм Духом нині, і повсякчас, і на віки віків. Амінь.

❖ **On behalf of our Christian, church family**, assurance of our prayers and deepest sympathy are to Mr. Andriy Tomashevskyy and his Family and all their relatives! **May our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ place Mr. Myroslav Tomashevskyy'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'!**

❖ **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! **Every parishioner is personally responsible before God for our spiritual home/parish church!**

❖ **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!

❖ **If you wish to help or have any questions, suggestions, ideas about our parish community life, please, contact our parish executive council chairperson Mrs. Yvonne Crawford.**

❖ **Rachel's Corner:** *"No matter how dark it gets, when you light a candle, the darkness can never overpower the light of Christ. We need to be a people of hope and recognize that God's love in that light overpowers our darkness."*

- teaches Rev. Fr. Larry Richards



Is it hard to imagine what it would be like to escape the darkness you have known since your abortion decision? Would you be willing to invite God in, so He can show you the way with His light? Join us on a Rachel's Vineyard™ Retreat. Join us on a Rachel's Vineyard Retreat and let the healing begin. Life can be so much better. Give yourself the chance. Join us on a Rachel's Vineyard™ Retreat and come alive again as you are warmed by the rays of His healing mercy. [www.RachelsVineyardKelowna.com](http://www.RachelsVineyardKelowna.com)

[info@rachelsvineyardkelowna.com](mailto:info@rachelsvineyardkelowna.com) 250-762-2273 Like us on Facebook: Rachel's Vineyard Kelowna



**Until Ukraine has the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, the mystical body of the risen Christ, it will not die**

Wednesday, 21 August 2019 A.D.

**Today, we may face even more difficult trials. But rest assured, as long as Ukraine has the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, the body of the Transfigured and Risen Christ, it will not die.**

This was stated by the Father and Head of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, His Beatitude Sviatoslav, during a sermon to the faithful in Old Sambir (Lviv region) during the Hierarchical Liturgy on the occasion of celebrating the UGCC's coming out from the underground.

"Our hardships only make our voice in the world louder, and the testimony of our faith becomes clearer. Enemies come and go, and the Church of Christ, the resurrected transformed body of the Savior, remains forever. It will be so if today we hear the voice of the Father: 'This is my beloved Son. Listen to Him!'"

Today, the Church of Christ celebrates one of the greatest feasts of the



liturgical year - the Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord.

... To celebrate today the Transfiguration of the Lord means to be filled with the power of the risen Christ in our daily lives. That power shows us the ability not to run away from difficulties, but to overcome them.

According to the spiritual leader of the Ukrainians, the faithful came together in Old Sambir to thank the Lord God for the gift of freedom of the Church, for the gift of the 30th anniversary of the complete escape from the underground, the legalization of the UGCC in her native land.

His Beatitude Sviatoslav drew a parallel of a handful of people of our Church with a biblical stone, which the prophet Daniel saw break away from the mountain of the Blessed Virgin Mary and strike at the feet of that giant communist regime, which, it turned out, stood on clay feet.

"Today we want to thank the Lord God for keeping a handful of the faithful among our people: bishops, priests, monks, nuns, our good peasants, workers, intellectuals who were not afraid to go to the Lord's mountain in times of communist darkness," said the preacher.

He recalled that this transformation began when underground Greek Catholics ceased to fear in 1987. In August 1987, for the first time, under the guidance of Bishop Pavlo Vasylyk, our priests and faithful declared that they were going out of the underground. Our Church appeared in 1988 when we celebrated the 1000th anniversary of the Baptism of Rus'-Ukraine. But in all its beauty, the face of our Church shone in 1989, when the communist regime recognized the victory of our Church.

"I hope you remember that glorious photo of spring 1989, when our underground bishops, priests march on Red Square. Later, historians will call this march on Arbat 'a parade of the victory of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church over Communism.' Was this not a wonderful power of transformation?!" asked the preacher.

The Head of the UGCC especially thanked all those who carried on their shoulders the suffering body of the persecuted underground Church. And then, as the apostles at Tabor, they witnessed its glory and resurrection.

The UGCC Department for Information:

[http://news.ugcc.ua/en/news/until\\_ukraine\\_has\\_the\\_ukrainian\\_greek\\_catholic\\_church\\_the\\_mystical\\_body\\_of\\_the\\_risen\\_christ\\_it\\_will\\_not\\_die\\_87050.html?fbclid=IwAR31AajHwvT\\_aEnLLX\\_Hsyu16N4RslevBt28iVrW3avu118CHschGPQ09xM](http://news.ugcc.ua/en/news/until_ukraine_has_the_ukrainian_greek_catholic_church_the_mystical_body_of_the_risen_christ_it_will_not_die_87050.html?fbclid=IwAR31AajHwvT_aEnLLX_Hsyu16N4RslevBt28iVrW3avu118CHschGPQ09xM)



## May the bell of liberty continue to ring, from country to country, from heart to heart, — Borys Gudziak

Saturday, 24 August 2019 A.D.

***Created in God's image and likeness we, human beings, are meant to be free. Free as persons and communities, free as peoples and nations.***

Freedom is God's will. Freedom is God's gift. It always was and remains today a struggle to receive and safeguard this gift. Sometimes the struggle is titanic and tragic, because many abuse freedom and authority to dominate and violate others—in families, in communities, even in Churches. In modern times the greatest human devastation was wrought by those who violated the freedom and dignity of entire peoples and nations, negating their faith, cultures, languages, political self-determination, their very existence. Purges, ethnic cleansing, and even genocide were used cynically and without pity to strip away the gift of freedom, to subjugate, to affect total control. In the twentieth century, Ukraine was a global epicenter of violence and tyranny experienced by different nationalities, ethnic groups and religious

communities—Ukrainians, Jews, Crimean Tatars, Roma, Poles . . .

Twenty-eight years ago, after centuries of foreign rule, Ukraine achieved national independence. Any Ukrainian old enough to remember recalls the jubilation of August 1991. Do you remember where you were? I, at the time of the putsch and the declaration of independence, was in Cambridge, Massachusetts, completing chapter two of my dissertation. It was a long, hot summer. I vividly remember how in Moscow the monument to Felix Dzerzhinsky was removed by crane. The founder of the murderous Soviet secret police was hanging by the neck. We, in turn, hung on every bit of news: the joyful telephone calls, the pictures of the giant Ukrainian flag carried into the Verkhovna Rada, the Ukrainian parliament. In elation I went jogging—flying! —along the Charles River. After so many years and sacrifices . . . . FREEDOM!

My people are free at last! Our Church is free. Our language will have full civil rights. Ukrainian culture will flourish. The genocidal history is finally in the past!

Well, yes and no, for today there is a war in Ukraine . . . a war for freedom.

And yet the freedom is real. Not ideal, not perfect, not yet complete. The quality of social and economic justice leaves much to be desired. A quiet despotism, in fact, pervades the courts. Corruption captivates, as do personal and communal faults and flaws. Many citizens are slaves to alcohol, victims of domestic violence or child abuse. Even more suffer from poverty, poor medical care, depression, and war-generated post-traumatic shock. The country's character and society need reform. Conversion is necessary to safeguard the poor, the marginalized and handicapped, the old and unborn—from the Carpathians to the Donbas, from Chornobyl to Yalta. There is no longer a genocide, but millions have emigrated—not by free choice, but out of dire necessity.

Still, no reasonable person can deny that progress in liberty is real. Paradoxically, Ukrainians—though dying today for their freedom—enjoy it as never before. They are free as never before to be themselves. They are at liberty to travel, to leave and to come back. To speak and write in their own language without fear of repression or shame. Never before were there so many Ukrainian books published, never before was Ukrainian cultural expression so varied and vital: literature and art, music and film, the global Ukrainian internet presence. The emancipation of conscience and confession is unprecedented. The Orthodox have gained

autocephaly; Greek Catholics, yesterday banned and driven underground, today can inspire the capital and every oblast. On the global scene, only in Ukraine, apart from Israel, are the heads of both state and government (the president and prime-minister)—Jews. Muslim Crimean Tatars find refuge in Kyiv and Lviv from the occupation regime tormenting their homeland. Freedom-loving Russian democrats migrate from Russia to Ukraine to exercise and propagate those liberties denied them at home.

The liberties are not only those of identity, culture, and spirit. Never before were there so many professional and economic opportunities for Ukrainian women and men. Never were there so many Ukrainian universities, such prospects for advancement. Never did Ukrainians possess so many commodities, so many cars, enjoy so much living space in housing. Never before could they communicate and create with such abandon. Never before could Ukrainians choose their representatives and leaders in government with less constraint. Unthinkable at the time of independence, today the country is among the leaders in global computer technology. The global presence and influence of Ukrainians is on the rise. The country and the world have never been so Ukrainian.

In gratitude we salute those who were and are willing to die for our freedom and dignity. We salute those who are determined to live free and to inspire others to appreciate and own their sense of liberty.

Facing the paradoxes of the contemporary condition the question before all Ukrainians on Independence Day is: "What should we do?" In the first place we should stay focused: each of us should try to do the right thing—everywhere and at all times. We are called to teach freedom by exemplifying responsibility. Inspired by the best we are to raise up those who are low, those who debase their own dignity, who skirt responsibility and take for granted the gift of freedom earned at a great price. This is not only a Ukrainian challenge. The challenge to work together for change is felt in the cradle of modern democracy, in the United States, and in the rest of the world.

Today we celebrate independence from evil and oppression, from those who kill body and soul, extinguish our history and colonize our future. But our celebration is not only against or in contrast to something. Independence is a positive choice. It is not simple separation or dissension. We cannot be free of dependence on each other. We cannot free ourselves from truth, from principles, from values. Emancipation from God was the essential ideological dogma behind every genocide of the twentieth century. In fact, we should hold fast to the truth no matter the price. Ukraine demonstrates that independence comes at great cost. We are grateful to those who contributed to it. We realize that in the end, the responsibility for the future belongs not only to the heroes but to all of us.

Today, many Ukrainians on the front lines, in destitute villages and anonymous cities live in depression, fear and anxiety. There are many causes for this: war, occupation, torture by the enemy, poverty and corruption among our own, urban alienation, fragmentation of the family, distrust in interpersonal relations. Everyone can find an excuse to lose hope, to abandon the pilgrimage from fear to dignity. But for all of us Independence Day is rather a call to action, to respond to the challenges. One cannot be free by surrendering, giving up, doing nothing. Freedom entails love and service and responsibility.

Back then, in 1991, from the banks of the Charles River, I ran, I flew to Ukraine. What a privilege it was to participate in the construction of a new society, the birth of a new nation. What a joy it was to partake in the positive transformations over the last 28 years. How proud I am that seven graduates of the Ukrainian Catholic University in a few days will become members of the new Ukrainian parliament. How I pray that they and their new colleagues do the right thing.

Having returned to the US, I pray with Americans and Ukrainians that we see that God's grace is the foundation and fabric of our freedom. I celebrate in Philadelphia, the cradle of modern democracy, the pulpit of American independence, the first US capital. Here I will be with my fellow Ukrainians in spirit, deed, and joy. May the bell of liberty continue to ring from country to country, from heart to heart.

May the gratitude for the gift of freedom fortify our faith and courage. May the witnesses of those who give and live their life for freedom be our example. Let us embrace each other like brothers and sisters sharing the peace and joy that true freedom brings. Go for a run, go for a swim, raise a toast of recognition for the gift of life and liberty. Будьмо!

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