

# Dormition of the Mother of God Ukrainian Catholic Church

1091 Coronation Avenue, Kelowna, BC V1Y 7A8 Tel.: 250-860-7295

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

Email: [dormitionkelowna@gmail.com](mailto:dormitionkelowna@gmail.com)

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)

**9<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY after PENTECOST - August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2020 A.D.**

**“You ask us not to be afraid. Yet our faith is weak, and we are fearful. But You, Lord, will not leave us at the mercy of the storm.” – prays Pope Francis I**

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



**Christian Greetings: Glory to Jesus Christ! – Glory to Him Forever!  
Slava Isusu Chrystu! – Slava na Viky! Слава Ісусу Христусу! – Слава на Віку!  
Christ is among us! – He is and will be!**



## Prayer During the Coronavirus Outbreak:

Lord, Our God,  
We thank you for the life that is your gift,  
For the providence that sustains us,  
And for your wisdom that directs the course of our days.  
The threat of an infection of coronavirus is upon us today.  
This disease causes fear among us and has claimed lives.  
We humbly beg you, loving Lord,  
Dispel our fear and deliver us from this and other diseases.  
Heal those who are afflicted and stop the spread of the virus.  
Strengthen us in charity to care for one another.  
For You are a God of mercy, kindness, and love, and we glorify You Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and for ever and ever. Amen.

## Молитва у Часі Спалаху Коронавірусу:

Господи, Боже наш,  
Дякуємо Тобі за життя, яке є Твоїм даром,  
За провидіння, яке нас підтримує,  
І за Твою мудрість, яка спрямовує хід наших днів.  
Сьогодні перед нами загроза зараження коронавірусом.  
Ця хвороба викликає страх серед нас і забирає життя.  
Ми смирено просимо Тебе, люблячого Господа,  
Розвій наш страх і позбав нас від цієї та усіх інших хвороб.  
Вилікуй тих, хто страждає, і зупини поширення вірусу.  
Зміцнюй нас у благодаті, щоб ми дбали одні про одних.  
Бо Ти - Бог милосердя, доброти та любові, і ми прославляємо Тебе Отця, Сина і Святого Духа, нині, і повсякчас і на віки вічні. Амінь.

Please contact Fr. Pavlo if you want to have the Divine Liturgies celebrated in your special intentions, such as: In Thanksgiving for Favours Received, the Infirm, General Intentions, Repose of the Deceased, Help of the Holy Spirit, for the Travelers, Students, Workers, etc. If you would like to come to Confession, meet with the parish priest at the church or parish office, receive spiritual care and support via telephon or internet, want him to visit you, your relative or friend at their home, hospital or care home, please, call or email the pastor in advance to arrange time and a day.

## 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 First Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians: (1 Cor. 3:9-17)

Brothers and Sisters, we are God's co-workers, while you are his cultivation, his building. Thanks to the favor God showed me I laid a foundation as a wise master-builder might do, and now someone else is building upon it. Everyone, however, must be careful how he builds. No one can lay a foundation other than the one that has been laid, namely Jesus Christ. If different ones build on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay or straw, the work of each will be made clear. The Day will disclose it. That day will make its appearance with fire, and fire will test the quality of each man's work. If the building a man has raised on this foundation still stands, he will receive his recompense; if a man's building burns, he will suffer loss. He himself will be saved, but only as one fleeing through fire. Are you not aware that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, and you are that temple.

### Gospel: (Mt. 14:22-34)

At that time while dismissing the crowds, Jesus insisted that his disciples get into the boat and precede him to the other side. When he had sent them away, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray, remaining there alone as evening drew on. Meanwhile the boat, already several hundred yards out from shore, was being tossed about in the waves raised by strong headwinds. At about three in the morning, he came walking toward them on the lake. When the disciples saw him walking on the water, they were terrified. “It is a ghost!” they said, and in their fear they began to cry out. Jesus hastened to reassure them: “Get hold of yourselves! It is I. Do not be afraid!” Peter spoke up and said, “Lord, if it is really you, tell me to come to you across the water.” “Come!” he said. So Peter got out of the boat and began to walk on the water, moving toward Jesus. But when he perceived how strong the wind was, becoming frightened, he began to sink and cried out, “Lord, save me!” Jesus at once stretched out his hand and caught him. “How little faith you have!” he exclaimed. “Why did you falter?” Once they had climbed into the boat, the wind died down. Those who were in the boat showed him reverence, declaring, “Beyond doubt you are the Son of God!” After making the crossing they reached the shore at Gennesaret.

At the conclusion of every Divine Liturgy we say an additional prayer

for peace in Ukraine until the end of the war and in the whole World: **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.**



## Літургійні частини Українською мовою:

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

### **Апостол: До Коринтян послання Святого Апостола Павла читання:** (Кор. 3, 9-17)

*Браття і Сестри*, ми бо співробітники Божі, ви – Божа нива, Божа будівля. За благодаттю Божою, даною мені, я, мов мудрий будівничий, поклав основу, а інший на ній буде. Нехай же кожний вважає, як він буде. Іншої бо основи ніхто не може покласти, крім покладеної, якою є Ісус Христос. Коли ж хтось на цій основі буде з золота, срібла, самоцвітів, дерева, сіна, соломки, – кожного діло стане явне; день бо Господній зробить його явним; бо він відкривається в огні, і вогонь випробує діло кожного, яке воно. І коли чиясь діло, що його він збудував, устоїться, той прийме нагороду; а коли чиясь діло згорить, то він зазнає шкоди; однак він сам спасеться, але наче крізь вогонь. Хіба не знаєте, що ви – храм Божий, і що Дух Божий у вас перебуває? Коли хтось зруйнує храм Божий, Бог зруйнує того, бо храм Божий святий, а ним є ви.



### **Євангеліє:** (Мт. 14, 22-34)

У той час Ісус зараз же спонукав учнів увійти до човна й переплисти на той бік раніше від нього, тим часом як він відпускав народ. І коли відпустив народ, пішов на гору помолитися на самоті. Як звечоріло, він був там сам один. Човен уже був посеред моря і його кидали хвилі, бо вітер був супротивний. О четвертій сторожі ночі (Ісус) прийшов до них, ступаючи морем. Учні, побачивши, що він іде морем, жахнулись. "То привид!" – заговорили й закричали з переляку. Та Ісус тієї ж миті мовив до них: "Заспокойтесь, – це я, не страхайтесь!" Аж тут Петро озвався до нього й каже: "Господи, коли це ти, повели мені підійти водою до тебе!" "Підійди!" – сказав Ісус. І вийшов Петро з човна, почав іти по воді і підійшов до Ісуса; але, побачивши, що вітер сильний, злякався, почав потопати й крикнув: "Господи, рятуй мене!" Ісус же притягнув руку, вхопив його і мовив до нього: "Маловіре; чого засумнівався?" І як увійшли до човна, вітер ущух. А тоді ті, що були в човні, вклонилися йому до ніг, кажучи: "Ти істинно – Син Божий!" І перепливши, прибули в землю генезаретську.

**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, every person who knowingly and unknowingly for the other people thoughtfully make donations, care and help our parish community in various ways and projects by keeping and sharing their Christian love, unity by looking after and graciously supporting our Christian, Catholic Church community! May the Almighty God bless and abundantly reward your time, care and generosity!

- Holy Resurrection Parish in Penticton: Sunday (July 26<sup>th</sup>) Divine Liturgy donation was \$ 306.00
- Dormition of The Mother of God Parish in Kelowna: Sunday (July 26<sup>th</sup>) Divine Liturgy donation was \$ 1230.00

**DONATIONS!** Amid Covid-19 outbreak causing these challenging times we continue to rely on your generosity. **Please continue to support our parish financially by e-transfer via [dormitiontransfer2020@gmail.com](mailto:dormitiontransfer2020@gmail.com) or mailing a cheque payable to Dormition of the Mother of God Ukrainian Catholic Church 1091 Coronation Ave., Kelowna, BC V1Y 7A8**

***"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!**

**ЩИРО ВАС ВІТАЄМО!**

**May the Almighty God bless** in good health and salvation for many, happy and blessed years of life to Mr. Ron Bidoka on his birthday (July 22<sup>nd</sup>), Mr. Mykhailo and Mrs. Vlasta Fantych on their wedding anniversary (July 28<sup>th</sup>), Mrs. Irene Meheriuk on her birthday (August 2<sup>nd</sup>), Mr. Ross and Mrs. Shannon Siebert on their wedding anniversary (August 3<sup>rd</sup>), Julia Lalach on her birthday (August 6<sup>th</sup>), and to 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 / Many and Blessed Years of Life!

**NEWS and ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

**LIVE STREAMING of church services from Dormition of the Mother of God**

**Ukrainian Catholic Church in Kelowna, B.C.:** <https://www.facebook.com/dormitionkelowna.parish.5>

**You can also view 24 / 7 many inspiring videos, articles, pictures, etc. are regularly published by the pastor. Please visit our parish Facebook page: *DormitionKelowna Parish*: <https://www.facebook.com/dormitionkelowna.parish.5>**

**⚭ Please also welcome to visit our Cathedral Facebook page for live-stream videos of the liturgical services at Holy Eucharist Cathedral. <https://www.facebook.com/holyeucharistcathedral/>**

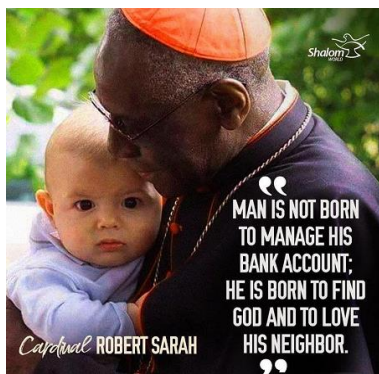
**THANK YOU FOR PRAYING TO GOD AT THE CHURCH, YOUR HOMES AND ON-LINE TODAY!**  
Wishing you and all your dear ones to be blessed by God with health, hope, joy, peace and Christian love!

***Liturgical and Sacramental Services are celebrated by your spiritual father-pastor at the church during this week:***

**SUNDAY, August 2<sup>nd</sup> at 8:15 a.m.** Rosary: (Service in Kelowna, BC)  
at **9:00 a.m.** The Divine Liturgy: *God's blessings for all our parishioners, relatives, and friends.* (in English and Ukrainian)

**Mon., Aug. 3<sup>rd</sup> at 10:00 a.m.**–The Divine Liturgy: *Rest of the souls of all deceased relatives and friends and every person who were killed defending Ukraine.*

**Wedn., Aug. 5<sup>th</sup> - 10:00 a.m.** The Divine Liturgy: *God's blessings for Mr. Edward & Mrs. Marian Kaskiw and Family*  
- 7:00 p.m. Vespers





Thurs., Aug. 6<sup>th</sup>. **TRANSFIGURATION OF ICXP** - 10:00 a.m. The Divine Liturgy: *God's blessings for all our parishioners, relatives, and friends.* (in English and Ukrainian)

**Blessing of fruits, vegetables and berries will be after the Divine Liturgy.**

Fri., Aug. 7<sup>th</sup> - 10:00 a.m. The Divine Liturgy: *God's blessings for Mrs. Helun Hut and Family*

Sat., Aug. 8<sup>th</sup> at **3:40 p.m.** Lectio Divina / Bible Studies: (**Studies and Service in Penticton, BC**)

at **4:00 p.m.** The Divine Liturgy: *God's blessings for all parishioners* (in Eng. & Ukr.)

**Blessing of fruits, vegetables and berries will be after the Divine Liturgy.**

**SUNDAY, August 9<sup>th</sup> at 8:15 a.m.** Rosary: (**Service in Kelowna, BC**)

at **9:00 a.m.** The Divine Liturgy: *God's blessings for all our parishioners, relatives, and friends.* (in English and Ukrainian)

**Blessing of fruits, vegetables and berries will be after the Divine Liturgy.**

**PLEASE REMEMBER TO PRAY FOR:** Most Reverend Bishop-Emeritus Severian Yakymyshyn, Lucy D., Janet F., Volodymyr P., Ivan L., Ray Saranchuk, Cameron V., Rose Ostopowich, Keyton A., Danny M, Jordan M., Kit C., Shirley C., Olga Kuzyk, George 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, John 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, Marilyn Daulat and Family, Shelley Zemliak, Bill and Anne Boitson and all members of our parish family and those who are not able to join actively in our community, your families, relatives, friends and neighbours; governments and armed forces, especially the shut-in or those in the hospitals, traveling, working or studying, nursing and senior homes, seeking God's answer to their prayers or those rejoicing with God's answer; your spiritual fathers, those celebrating birthdays and anniversaries; those called to their eternal reward and for the family they leave behind; widows and widowers, orphans, homeless, those who love us and those who hate us, and all people who have asked us pray for them. Please, also in your kindness keep praying those daily for vocations to the priesthood and religious life. Remember to ask for special blessings to all Christian families and yourselves! **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 or 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 his or her 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:** 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.*

**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:** 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.

**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 єдною 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. Єдною нас у мирі та згоді, щоб ми були Твоєю спільнотою любові. Всели в нас місійного духа, щоб ми стали тим світлом евангельського 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.



✚ On behalf of our church family, assurance of our prayers and deepest sympathy are to Mr. Edward Kaskiw and his Family, relatives and friends! Mr. Edward Kaskiw's sister Mrs. Rose Onofrey fell asleep in the Lord in Manitoba on March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020 A.D. **May our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ place our sister in Christ Mrs. Rose Onofrey's soul in the place where all the saints abide, and may her memory be everlasting with the Lord and our prayers! – Vichnaya Pamyat'!**

✚ **YOUR PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY AND RESPECT OF OTHERS:** 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. In consideration of other Christians, please do not leave any items 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 safe and clean. Thank you very much for your understanding, help and care!

✚ **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.** Email: [Donoharmclinic@gmail.com](mailto:Donoharmclinic@gmail.com) or phone: 250-212-4899

✚ **Express Depot Recycling:** We have this set up for parishioners to use. They enter the church's phone number and place the sticker on the bag. All monies will then be able to be transferred (after \$10 ) or check ( after \$50). It can help with donations for those unable to attend and financially support the church. <https://www.return-it.ca/express/>

✚ **Devotional Services to Blessed Vasyi Velychkovsky:** Every Wednesday at 7:00 pm, Live-Streaming on the YouTube Shrine Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Og0D2DhlpU> Website: Bishop Velychkovsky National Martyr's Shrine: <https://bvmartyrshrine.com/>

✚ **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 HELP IS ALWAYS NEEDED:** to help out with weekly cleaning in the church, cutting the grass and maintaining the lawn, 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! **Every parishioner is personally responsible before God for our spiritual home-parish church!** **NOTE: If you wish to place your message or announcement into our weekly parish bulletin, please sent it by email to the office at [dormitionkelowna@gmail.com](mailto:dormitionkelowna@gmail.com) by no later than 3:00 p.m. on Thursday.**

✚ **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, positive and generous!**

✚ **2 volunteers are needed** each time before and right after Divine Liturgies on Sundays to welcome parishioners and follow all required COVID 19 safety rules and regulations, fill up Parish Sign-In List/ Questionnaire and clean by sanitizing the church after each service.

✚ **Please, continue to support financially** our parishes in Kelowna, BC and Penticton, BC. Amid Covid-19 outbreak causing these challenging times we continue to rely on your generosity. **Please continue to support our parish financially by e-transfer via [dormitiontransfer2020@gmail.com](mailto:dormitiontransfer2020@gmail.com) or mailing a cheque payable to Dormition of the Mother of God Ukrainian Catholic Church** 1091 Coronation Ave., Kelowna, BC V1Y 7A8 Thank you for your support and care at this uneasy time for all of us.

✚ **Traditional and Very Delicious Ukrainian Food is available for sale at our parish:** Perogies – \$ 7.00 per dozen. If you need more information or to place your order, please contact Mrs. Alice Pelechaty at 250-763-4870 or Mrs. Olena Fedorov at 778-821-0759.

✚ **Camp Saint Volodymyr 2020 Update:** As more information on COVID-19 has emerged, the Camp Committee has made the difficult decision to cancel 2020 camp for the safety of our children and staff. Please stay tuned for upcoming summer programs for children and youth this summer.



## Stewardship Prayer

O God, the Father of every gift, all that we are and have comes from your hand.

In Jesus Christ, your Son, you have given us the greatest of all gifts.

Fill our hearts with his love, so that we may be parish communities of faithful, caring people.

Grant us the grace to be good stewards who, in the name and spirit of Jesus, share our gifts of time, talent and treasure for the building up of your Kingdom in our Diocese and throughout the world.

May we see Our Pilgrimage of Faith Appeal as our way to live gratefully and give generously for your honor and glory.

Through Christ our Lord. Amen







**Rachel's Corner:** "Without that load on my back, without that great weight on me, I know that the love of God has touched my soul and my heart. I feel lighter and my thoughts don't punish me and my hope is to one day meet my children and to know they will be there waiting beside Jesus." - Testimonial

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## Pressure on Francis increases over human rights in China

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*The Chinese national flag flies in front of a Catholic church in Huangtugang, China, in this 2018 photo. (Credit: Thomas Peter/Reuters via CNS.)*

ROME – As Chinese central authorities tighten their grip on Hong Kong and as the world continues to hear news of the alleged repression of the country's Uighur Muslim population, Pope Francis is the target of increasing international pressure over his hesitancy to speak out.

This silence from one of the world's most visible champions of the oppressed was the topic of a new article in *Foreign Policy* magazine penned by Benedict Rogers – the East Asia Team Leader at Christian Solidarity Worldwide and the founder of Hong Kong Watch – who says in the piece that he is a Catholic convert

sympathetic to Francis, but who said he is confused about "how badly wrong" he believes the pope has handled China.

In the article, Rogers cites statements made by public figures such as Marie van der Zyl, president of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, who earlier this month wrote a letter to the Chinese ambassador in London comparing the situation of Uighur Muslims in China to the Holocaust.

Van der Zyl in her letter pointed to what she said are similarities between what is reportedly happening to the Uighurs and what happened in Nazi Germany: "People being forcibly loaded on to trains; beards of religious men being trimmed; women being sterilized; and the grim specter of concentration camps."

Maajid Nawaz, a prominent British Muslim counterextremism activist, has gone on a hunger strike and promoting a parliamentary debate about imposing sanctions on China for its treatment of the Uighurs.

In a statement issued last week, Myanmar Cardinal Charles Bo of Yangon said that, "In China, Uighur Muslims are facing what amounts to some of the contemporary world's worst mass atrocities and I urge the international community to investigate."

In his piece, Rogers noted that so far, no major Muslim authority has come out in condemnation of the Uighur situation, nor has Archbishop Justin Welby of Canterbury, the head of the Anglican Communion. However, of all these, Rogers said "it is Francis's silence that shocks" the most, as he is normally outspoken on behalf of the oppressed.

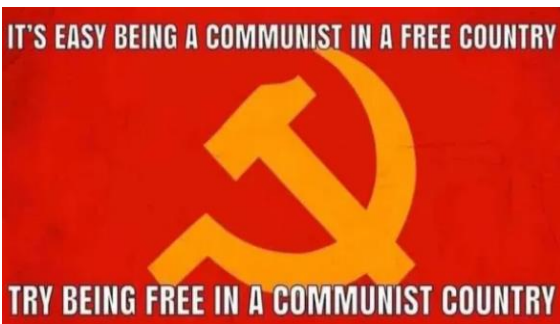
In the past, Francis has made several appeals on behalf of Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar. When he visited the country in December 2017, he pointedly avoided using the term "Rohingya" to avoid provoking his hosts. As soon as he arrived in Bangladesh for the next leg of his journey, however, he used the name when he met a group of Rohingya refugees.

He also didn't shy away from angering Turkey by using the word "genocide" during a Mass in 2015 commemorating the 100th anniversary of a mass killing of Armenians by Turks in the early 20th century – an act which prompted Turkey to recall its ambassador for several months.

Pope Francis has repeatedly advocated for an end to conflicts in Syria, Yemen, Ukraine and Nigeria, and recently said he was "deeply pained" by Turkey's decision to revert Istanbul's famed Hagia Sophia museum into a mosque.

Yet in all his appeals, China has been conspicuous by its absence, despite increased attention over the Uighurs, the imposition of the new security law in Hong Kong, and ongoing harassment of Catholic clergy.

China has also come under fire in recent months for its record on human trafficking, particularly the trafficking of brides from neighboring countries and even as far as Africa.



In its 2020 Trafficking in Persons report, the U.S. State Department placed China on Tier 3, alongside South Sudan, North Korea, Syria, Afghanistan, Eritrea, Nicaragua, Venezuela and Russia, among others.

According to a recent report from Human Rights Watch titled, "Give Us a Baby and We'll Let You Go: Trafficking of Kachin 'Brides' from Myanmar to China," at least 226 women were trafficked from Myanmar to China in 2017, and that the Myanmar Department of Social Welfare assists some 100-200 trafficked women who return from China each year.

Earlier this year the Cambodian Interior Ministry reported that at least 112 women from the nation had been trafficked as brides to China in 2019. Women's rights activist Reggie Littlejohn, who founded the Women's Rights Without Frontiers organization called the statistics on sexual slavery in China "heartbreaking."

"Because of the fatal combination of son preference with a coercive low birth limit, baby girls have been selectively aborted, abandoned, and medically neglected," she said, adding that, "The resulting collapse in the marriage market is perhaps the reason the Chinese government turns a blind eye to sex trafficking – and in some instances, even facilitates it." She also condemned China's actions against Uighur Muslims in China's Xinjiang province, saying the atrocities committed against them include "forced labor, forced abortion and involuntary sterilization."

In his article, Rogers suggested that Pope Francis's silence on China over all of these issues is the result of the 2018 agreement between the Vatican and Beijing on the appointment of bishops, the renewal of which is currently being negotiated.

Rogers echoes the critique of many of Francis's critics, saying by making the deal, China has "bought" the pope's silence, as he is unlikely to make any public statements in condemnation while negotiations are underway.

Many experts have argued that little has changed as a result of the agreement, that no imprisoned clergy have been released, but that in fact several have been either detained or arrested in the past two years.

In his article, Rogers argues that now is the time for Christian leaders such as Welby and Francis to "wake up" and review their positions up until this point.

"They need to signal clearly that they believe in the teachings of their faith – of human dignity, freedom, and justice – which matter more than any shady deals with brutal regimes. They need to abandon naivety. They need to say they won't compromise when it comes to human life and dignity," he said.

Pointing to Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a Protestant pastor who stood up to Adolf Hitler, Rogers insisted that Bonhoeffer got it right when he said that "Silence in the face of evil is itself evil ... Not to speak is to speak. Not to act is to act."

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