

**Dormition of The Mother of God
Ukrainian Catholic Church**



**Успення Пресвятої Богородиці
Українська Католицька Церква**

1091 Coronation Avenue, Kelowna, BC V1Y 7A8 Tel.: 250-860-7295 Email: dormitionkelowna@gmail.com
Parish web-site: <http://kelowna.nweparchy.ca/> Pastor: Rev. Fr. Pavlo Myts / о. Павло Миць
Facebook page: *DormitionKelowna Parish*: <https://www.facebook.com/dormitionkelowna.parish.5>
Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of New Westminster: www.nweparchy.ca



**31st SUNDAY after PENTECOST – January 23rd, 2022 A.D.
31^{ша} НЕДІЛЯ після ЗІСЛАННЯ СВЯТОГО ДУХА**

“Many people think that peace is the absence of war. But peace is more than that. Peace is also the good relations between people, when we don't lie to one another, don't look for profit, don't wish evil. We should bear peace every day, every day we should establish contacts between people, seek good communication!”

– teaches His Beatitude Patriarch Lubomyr Cardinal Husar

Christian Greetings (40 days of Christmas Season is from Dec. 25th to Feb. 2nd):

*Christ Is Born! – Let us glorify Him!
Chrystos Rozhdaet'sia! – Slavimo Yoho!
Христос Рождається! – Славімо Його!
Christ Is among us! – He Is and Will Be!*

**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

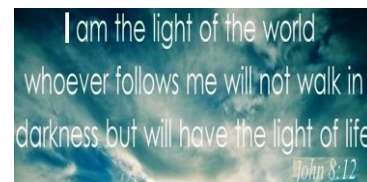
**THANK YOU FOR JOINING US BY PRAYING TO
THE ALMIGHTY GOD AT THE CHURCH AND ON-LINE!**

Wishing you and all your dear ones to be guided by the Holy Spirit, blessed with joy, peace, good health, unity, and Christian love today and always!

Always remember to keep Jesus Christ in Christmas! He is the only true reason for the season!

Daily Liturgical and Sacramental Services celebrated during this week:

- Sunday, January 23rd at **8:15 a.m.** Rosary: (**Services in Kelowna, BC**)
at **9:00 a.m.** The Divine Liturgy: *God's blessings for all our parishioners, family members, all relatives and friends* (in English.)
at **11:00 a.m.** The Divine Liturgy: *God's blessings for all our parishioners, family members, all relatives and friends* (in Ukrainian)
- Mon., Jan. 24th at **9:30 a.m.** The Divine Liturgy: *Intentions of Pulkauninkas and Budininkas families*
- Wed., Jan. 26th at **9:30 a.m.** The Divine Liturgy: *Intentions of Pulkauninkas and Budininkas families*
- Thurs., Jan. 27th at **9:30 a.m.** The Divine Liturgy: *Intentions of Pulkauninkas and Budininkas families*
- Fri., Jan. 28th at **9:30 a.m.** The Divine Liturgy: *Intentions of Pulkauninkas and Budininkas families*
- Saturday, January 29th at **3:40 p. m.** Lectio Divina / Bible Studies: (**Bible Studies and Church Services in Penticton, BC**)
at **4:00 p.m.** The Divine Liturgy: *God's blessings for all our parishioners, relatives and friends.*
- Sunday, January 30th at **8:15 a.m.** Rosary: (**Services in Kelowna, BC**)
at **9:00 a.m.** The Divine Liturgy: *God's blessings for all our parishioners, family members, all relatives and friends* (in English.)
at **11:00 a.m.** The Divine Liturgy: *God's blessings for all our parishioners, family members, all relatives and friends* (in Ukrainian)



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. In case of emergency phone (250) 299-7249. If you would like to come to Confession, meet with the parish priest individually at the church or parish office, receive spiritual care and support via telephone or internet, want him to bless your home with Jordan Water blessings visiting you, your relatives or friends at their home, hospital or care homes, please, call or email the pastor in advance to arrange time and a day.

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 Timothy:** (1 Timothy 1:15-17)

Timothy, my son, the saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners - of whom I am the foremost. But for that very reason I received mercy, so that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display the utmost patience, making me an example to those who would come to believe in him for eternal life. To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.



Gospel: (Luke 18:35-43)

At that time, as Jesus approached Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging. When he heard a crowd going by, he asked what was happening. They told him, "Jesus of Nazareth is passing by." Then he shouted, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" Those who were in front sternly ordered him to be quiet; but he shouted even more loudly, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" Jesus stood still and ordered the man to be brought to him; and when he came near, he asked him, "What do you want me to do for you?" He said, "Lord, let me see again." Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has saved you." Immediately he regained his sight and followed him, glorifying God; and all the people, when they saw it, praised God.

At the conclusion of every Divine Liturgy, we say an additional prayer for peace in Ukraine until the end of the war and for peace in the 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 2, текст з книги "Божественна Літургія Святого Івана Золотоустого"; ст. 90-92

Апостол: До Тимотея перше послання Святого Апостола Павла читання: (1 Тм. 1,15-17)

Сину Тимотею, вірне це слово й повного довір'я гідне, що Христос Ісус прийшов у світ, щоб спасти грішних, з яких я – перший. Але я був на те помилуваний, щоб Ісус Христос на мені першим показав усю свою довготерпеливість, на приклад тим, що мають увірувати в нього на вічне життя. Цареві ж віків, нетлінному, невидимому, єдиному Богу честь і слава на віки вічні! Амінь.



Євангеліє: (Лк. 18,35-43)

У той час, як Ісус наближався до Єрихону, один сліпий сидів край дороги й просив милостині. Почувши, що народ іде мимо, він спитався, що б воно могло бути. Йому сказали, що це Ісус Назарянин проходить. І він почав голосно кричати: "Ісусе, Сину Давидів, змилуйся надо мною!" Ті, що йшли попереду, сварилися на нього, щоб замовчав, та він кричав ще дужче: "Сину Давидів, змилуйся надо мною!" Ісус зупинився і звелів привести його до себе. І коли той наблизився до нього, спитав: "Що хочеш, щоб я зробив тобі?" "Господи", – сказав той, – "щоб я прозрів!" Ісус сказав до нього: "Прозри! Віра твоя спасла тебе." І вмить прозрів той і пішов за Ісусом, славлячи Бога. І весь народ, побачивши те, віддав хвалу Богові.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH! ЩИРО ВАМ ДЯКУЄМО!

Gratitudes to all our parishioners, guests, visitors and all Christian people of the good will who by their kindness share time, talents and treasures, help to clean inside and outside our church building, and every person who knowingly or unknowingly for the other people thoughtfully make donations, caroling and taking down Christmas decorations, cleaning up inside and outside the church, volunteered by helping our parish community in various ways and projects inside and as Christian missionaries reaching out outside our parish by keeping and sharing their Christian love, respect and unity in Christ by looking after and graciously supporting our Christian, Catholic Church communities!

DONATIONS! Amid Covid-19 outbreak causing these difficult and challenging times we continue to rely on your generosity! **Please continue to support our parish financially by e-transfer (it is a direct deposit, no security question is needed) via 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 us all.

"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 in many, happy and blessed years of life to all our parishioners and Christian family members who celebrate Christmas/Nativity in the Flesh of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ season (until Feb. 2nd), Mr. Edward Kaskiw on his birthday (Jan. 24th), Daniella Tomashevskaya on her birthday (Jan. 28th), Danylo Werbowy on his birthday (Jan. 29th), and all our parishioners who celebrate their birthdays, heavenly patron's name-days, wedding anniversaries, and any other special anniversaries this week Mnohaya i Blahaya Lita / Many Blessed Years of Life!

EVERYONE WHO HAVE JOINED US IN CHRISTMAS DIVINE LITURGY AT THE CHURCH AND ON-LINE DUE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC. THANK YOU FOR PRAYING AND CELEBRATING AS CHRISTIANS:

Wishing you and all your dear ones to be guided by the Holy Spirit, blessed with joy, peace and Christian love daily!

NEWS and ANNOUNCEMENTS:

SUNDAY CATECHISM SCHOOL: "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, tradition, singing and religious practices and customs of the Ukrainian Catholic Church. "We will start catechism classes this Sunday, September 19 for ages 4 to 12. Older children are very welcome to volunteer their help with the younger children and their efforts will be recognized and rewarded.

Each class will start after Communion during the English Liturgy and end just before the beginning of the Ukrainian Liturgy. We will be following protocols similar to those used in our elementary schools. Individual snacks and learning materials will be provided. We are looking forward to meeting our parish children and providing a safe, fun, and interesting experience in learning about our Catholic faith. If you have any questions or concerns, please email Marilyn Daulat at marilyn_daulat@hotmail.com or call at 250-801-7538. Z Bohom! Marilyn Daulat" If you have any questions, please, do not hesitate to contact our parish catechism teacher Mrs. Marilyn Daulat or pastor Rev. Fr. Pavlo Myts.

LIVE STREAMING of church services from Dormition of the Mother of God Ukrainian Catholic Church in Kelowna, B.C.: Please join our Christian prayerful community at <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: *DormitinionKelowna 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/>

Your spiritual father-pastor is praying privately for all of you daily! Please pray for one another and especially for those who are ill, suffering or being affected by disasters, following Covid-19 Pandemic safety plan, participate via facebook streamings and other on-line church services, stay healthy and safe! Let us be responsible to ensure that we all stay safe and healthy.

https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/covid-19-provincial-support/restrictions?utm_campaign=20201118_GCPE_AM_COVID_1_NOTIFICATION_BCGOV_BCGOV_EN_BC_NOTIFICATION#social-gatherings

For your attention the [new requirements by the Provincial Health Officer](#) from January 18th, 2022 A.D.

PLEASE REMEMBER TO PRAY FOR: Lucy D., Janet F., Volodymyr P., Ivan L., Ray Saranchuk, Cameron V., Rose Ostopowich, Keyton A., Shelley M., Kathleen S., Chelsea M., Carmella M., Bernard M., Darrin M., Kit C., Shirley C., Olga Kuzyk, George Dashkewytch, Kay Ilnitiski, Kalyna Kociuba, William Shuya, Maria Pylypchuk, Bronie Huska, Peter Huska, Roma Nowakowski, Barbara and Vincent Pasternak, Dr. Nadia Popil, the Hillman Family, Joseph Stetch, Rosa Maria Santos, Anita N., Ron and Verna Shoemaker, Jonas and Anne, Alyssa and Adam, Mark and Asia, Karen Feniuk, Volodymyr Melnyk, Shelley Zemliak, Ron Horon, Adeline Sorochuk, relatives of The Burachok Family, Aretta Manion and The Family, Daniella-Daryna Tomashevaska and The Family, Rev. Fr. Pavlo Myts and The Family, and all members of our Christian parochial 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, use & hurt 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: 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.

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! ***Please always remember that we come together to the church to glorify Lord Our God and spiritually grow as a Christian community and church as house of prayer helps us during our temporal life journey.***

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 APPRECIATED:** 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 send it by email to the office at dormitionkelowna@gmail.com by no later than 3:00 p.m. on Thursday.*

JOIN OUR CHURCH 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.

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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.



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 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.



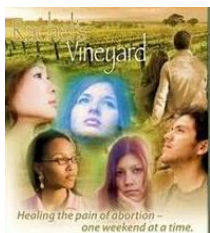
МОЛИТА ЖИВОЇ ПАРАФІЇ: Господи Ісусе Христе, Пастирю Добрий, як колись Ти пригорнув заблуканих овечок, щоб вони пізнали Твій голос і були Твоїм стадом, так і сьогодні глянь ласкаво з небесних висот на нашу парафію та зішли на неї Твого Святого Духа, щоб вона була місцем пізнання радості Доброї Новини. Скріплюй нас Твою присутністю та єднай нас кожноразно в молитві. Даруй нам духа служіння ближньому, щоб у нашій парафії кожний міг зустріти Тебе, милостивого Бога. Благослови наш духовний провід Твою 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 Твоюю 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.



Traditional and Very Delicious Ukrainian Food is available for sale at our parish: Kovbasa / Garlic Sausage - \$ 10.00 per ring, Cabbage Rolls – \$ 8.00 per dozen; Perogies – \$ 8.00 per dozen; Apple, Rubar, Strawberry Pies - \$ 10.00 each. 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.



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



Rachel's Corner: *"Be intentional with that pain you are feeling and realize there is no time limit as you deal with deep hurts. Some wounds when left to themselves will only get infected and get worse with time. It is good to acknowledge and make space for that grief in your life, instead of just ignoring it and pretending it is not there."* - Debra Fileta, LPC

Have you allowed yourself to grieve your loss due to an abortion decision? Has the shame and regret been weighing you down? Join us on a Rachel's Vineyard™ Retreat and find freedom and peace in acknowledging your pain and allowing the healing to begin. Come on a Rachel's Vineyard Retreat, and get to know the others who have walked in similar steps and who understand what that feels like inside.

info@rachelvineyardkelowna.com www.rachelvineyardkelowna.com f Rachel's Vineyard Kelowna: 250-762-2273



Theophany/Jordan Home Blessing and Pastoral Annual Visitations sign up list, to arrange with Pastor Rev. Fr. Pavlo Myts the actual date and time, is available at the entrance to the church in the vestibule and at the parish hall.

Why Do We Bless Homes?

The blessing of homes constitutes an invocative blessing, meaning that by his prayer and by the sprinkling of Holy Water the priest invokes God's blessings and protection upon the home and those living in it. We bless homes for many reasons:

- to reveal the home as what God had created it to be, a way to Heaven
- to rid the home of every evil † to show that the family is a small Church unit in Christ
- to consecrate the home and all activity in it to God † to fill the home and all who live in it with the fullness of God

Traditionally, the priest personally visits all his parishioners each year to pray with them in the place where they live, and to bless their surroundings with the newly sanctified water of Theophany. By sanctifying our homes we extend the grace of God to our individual dwellings.

Lord
Bless our home
as we come and go.

Bless our home
as our children grow.

Bless our families
as they gather in;

Bless our home
with love and friends.

Just as our souls, so also our homes become tainted by the sins of those living in them and consequently lose God's protective power. We cleanse our souls of sins at least once a year and the church is blessed with the newly blessed water every year, so should our homes be sanctified with Holy Water to invoke God's blessings and protection on it and its inhabitants. As we renew the insurance on our home every year, so we should renew our insurance of God's protection and His blessing which is of greater importance and more effective.

What should we do during a home blessing? As we welcome our priest during the holy season of Theophany to bless our home, let us be mindful that he is bringing to us the "blessing of the Jordan," and that unless God protects and blesses our home, we "labour in vain." (Ps. 127:1)

Each family is considered a small church and the family table is the home altar. When the priest comes, have as many family members there as possible. If you do not have an icon corner, ensure that you set up a place for prayer either at the kitchen or dining table. On the table include an icon and a lit candle. You may also include anything that you may want to have blessed (i.e. icon, cross, personal item, etc.) Make sure that the lights are on in every room. The priest will begin the blessing at the icon corner or table. If you have children, they may lead the priest, while holding a candle, to each room in the house. This is also a wonderful time for you and your priest to visit and to get to know each other better.

Pray for peace and justice in Ukraine

A Pillar interview: Archbishop Borys Gudziak



Ruins of Donetsk International Airport, December 2014, Donetsk, Ukraine. Credit: Pravda DPR/CC BY SA 3.0

Archbishop Borys Gudziak is the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Archeparch of Philadelphia — leader of the 50,000 Ukrainian Catholics in the United States.

The Ukrainian Catholic Church is an Eastern Catholic Church — part of the communion of the Catholic Church, with a distinct liturgical, spiritual, and cultural tradition. Most of the 4.1 million members of the Ukrainian Catholic Church live in Ukraine, where Archbishop Gudziak spent two decades in priestly ministry.

As Russian troops amass on the Ukrainian border, and the prospect of open warfare becomes more likely, Archbishop Gudziak talked with *The Pillar* about what's really happening in Ukraine, and why.

This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

Archbishop, can you tell us what is happening between Russia and Ukraine? We know that Russia has more than 100,000 troops amassed along the border, that Russia annexed Crimea in 2014 and invaded eastern Ukraine, that there was a presumably Russian cyberattack on Ukraine's government last week.

What exactly is happening, and why?

Why did Russia annex part of Ukraine and invade another part? And why is it threatening invasion now?

It's a question of life or death for maybe tens of thousands of people. And it's very important to know what stands behind what is happening.

The history is long, and there's kind of a remote and proximate explanation to all of it. And there's great deal of misinformation and misunderstanding about all this.

But there is one fundamental reason why this is happening.

It's not the question of a Black Sea Navy port for Russia.

It's not the question of defending Russian language speakers in Ukraine — because Russian language speakers comprise a majority of the army that is defending Ukraine. And Russian language speakers, including volunteers are being killed by the Russian rockets and snipers. And a majority of the 14,000 people who have been killed in the eight years of this war are Russian speakers. So it's not that Russian speakers are being defended.

It's not about defending the Russian Orthodox Church, because many of those people who were killed were baptized in the Russian Orthodox Church.

The Russians are killing Russian speakers, they're killing members of the Russian Orthodox Church, and the reason is because Ukraine is a nascent and, in many ways, a vibrant democracy.

Ukraine has had tumultuous elections, but it has had democratic elections, certifiably democratic elections, and it has had six presidents elected in 30 years. Power changes from one party to another, from one leader to another. Very different parties, very different leaders.

Ukraine has a free press — the printed press, radio, internet, television — they're free. And they express all possible vectors of public opinion.

Ukraine has freedom of religion, and no church is favored by the state. No church, legally, is limited in its activity, as is the case in Russia.

And having these kinds of policies at the border of an authoritarian state, a state which is moving in the direction of totalitarianism — this is a great threat to the Russian status quo.

Now [Russian President Vladimir] Putin has repeated that the [greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the 20th century was the collapse of the Soviet Union](#), and he wants to reconstitute it.

Soviet Union means empire. It means the land expands for nine time zones. The Soviet Union also stands for totalitarianism, and for the merciless murder of millions, tens of millions of people.

And that history is now being revisited. So the achievements of Stalin are being stressed, and the repressive institutions of which President Putin is a proud scion are being again glorified and given maximum power in society.

So the corruption and the authoritarianism, which is drifting towards totalitarianism, the post-truth disinformation in propaganda, all of that is threatened by vibrant democracy — by a public discussion that searches for the facts and arguments that lead to objective reality. It's threatened by a society where people are free.

When Ukraine had the Orange Revolution, and in 2013 and 2014, when there was the Revolution of Dignity, Putin endured his greatest failures.

Right now, he wants to be sure that democracy doesn't spread to Belarus, where thousands of people were beaten and remain incarcerated. And probably thousands of people were killed in recent weeks in the protests in Kazakhstan — the reports say hundreds, but probably that means that many, many more were killed.

There is, deeply ingrained in the human heart, a God-given sense of dignity and freedom. And that dignity and freedom is a threat to authoritarian rulers and corrupt rulers.

A country that is struggling, on a pilgrimage from the fear of totalitarianism to freedom and dignity, is something that, [for Putin] cannot happen, and cannot be allowed to flavor, stimulate, or catalyze social processes in Russia itself. And so it needs to be quashed outside of Russia so it doesn't get into the country.

Putin has sometimes argued that the Ukrainian and Russian people are culturally, ethnically, and linguistically tied, and so there is a certain cultural desire for political unity between the two countries, which is misunderstood by the West. Is that accurate?

Well, it's as unified as the French, Italians, and Spanish are, sure. Those are three members of the Romance language group, just as Ukrainian, Russian, and Polish are all Slavic languages. So yes, there are cultural and linguistic affinities and relations.

But that is besides the point when a society, a culture, a country, says “We want to be free. We don't want to be under Russia. We don't want to be under a regime that historically has destroyed our churches, rendered them illegal, forbidden our language, trampled our culture, and negated our political and national freedom.”



And Ukrainians in 1991 voted — 91% of the population — voted for independence. Also Ukraine in 1991 at the time of independence had the third biggest nuclear arsenal in the world. More than China, England, and France combined. And in 1994, pursuing peace Ukraine became the first country in human history to unilaterally disarm its nuclear arsenal, under the condition that its territorial integrity would be guaranteed by the West and by Russia. Russia agreed to that, and now we see what has happened.

So what is happening is shaking the foundations of the system of international law. It's shaking the identity of Europe. And it's causing untold human suffering.

Soldiers of the Russian Airborne Forces' 56th Guards Assault Brigade were formed in March 201 into a new regiment assigned to Crimea. Credit: Russian Armed Forces. CC BY SA 4.0

There is ongoing disinformation about Ukraine today. Arguments about the supposed illiberalism of Ukraine, or the danger Russians or Russian speakers face in Ukraine, they're canards.

Really, there is unity in Ukraine. There's toleration. Ukraine today has a Jewish president, and in the summer and fall of 2019, both the president and the prime minister were Jewish — the only country besides Israel where the head of state and head of government were Jewish was Ukraine. Ukraine has Russian schools, the Russian Orthodox Church has thousands of parishes there. By comparison, there are hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian Greek Catholics in Russia, and they do not have a single legally registered parish. Ukrainians in Russia, who number between four and six million, do not have a single Ukrainian language school.

At a time in human history where responsible world powers are revisiting their policies of colonialism and repenting for the sins committed by empires — when they're trying to heal the wounds caused by enslavement — that the Russian Orthodox Church walks arm in arm with an aggressive military assault on a democratic country and society is really astounding.

It was under Patriarch Kirill that the “Russian-world,” the *Ruskiy-mir* ideological construct was generated, which says basically that everywhere where the Russian Empire was present, and with it the presence of the Russian Orthodox Church, is the canonical territory of the Russian Orthodox Church. And other confessions should steer clear.

What is the humanitarian situation right now in Ukraine? What has happened as a result of this long conflict with Russia?

There are 1.5 million internally displaced refugees in the Ukraine right now. Nobody recognizes that reality — refugees from the Russian speaking east going to the center and to the Ukrainian speaking west.

I travel to Ukraine often. I was there four times in the last year, and I lived there for 20 years.

I am astounded at the resilience of this people. Approximately 15 million residents of Ukrainian territory were killed in the 20th century. There was one genocidal wave after another. Between 1932 and 1945, Ukraine was the most dangerous piece of land in the world — you were most likely to be killed if you were in Ukraine in those years. But in the soul and psyche of this people, there's a will to survive, to live.

Many people have been forced to leave the country — millions of people have left Ukraine over the last 20 years. The population has dropped from 50 to 40 million. That's a 20% drop in population.

And when the war broke out, when the Russians annexed Crimea and invaded eastern Ukraine, it had a devastating impact on the Ukrainian economy. Ukrainian currency lost two-thirds of its buying power. Industries were disrupted — agriculture, coal, energy, all disrupted.

The direct casualties of war number in the tens of thousands. But you have hundreds of thousands of people who live in post-traumatic shock.

We know in the United States what it's like to have one terrorist attack, or a moment of gunfire, a tragic shooting in some circumstance. That has been going on day in and day out on the eastern border of Ukraine for eight years. And it is somebody's son or daughter, wife, husband, or parents that are being killed, basically on a daily basis.

I know one bishop who has conducted 100 funerals of Ukrainian soldiers. And if you think of the days of grief, of counseling. He's spent years immersed in the funerals of young men and women. And the entire society is shaken, and in some ways deeply wounded — but by now, also numbed, because it just is there. Some observers who come to Ukraine are surprised that the whole country isn't panicked. But the people are hardened.

What is the mandate of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church in this situation? What is your mandate?

Well, it's basically a ministry of solidarity — listening to people, touching the wounds of people, trying to feed the hungry, giving clothes and housing to those who have lost their homes. And we try to give hope.

Hope has concrete sacraments and sacramentals, concrete signs. Hope is the cup of water, the evangelical cup of water. But it is also eschatological hope. It's a spiritual hope.



It's a sense of awareness that our Lord is there. Our Lord, who is born into Bethlehem, who then is besieged by a murderer, and our Lord who becomes a refugee. Our Lord, who is homeless, our Lord who ultimately is rejected, who is subjected to misinformation, propaganda, lies, and in the end, crucified.

Archbishop Borys Gudziak. Credit: Ukrainian Greek Catholic Archeparchy of Philadelphia.

Our hope is one that we want to share through charity; it's a hope in the Kingdom of God.

Archbishop, in the United States, as you know, there are Catholic intellectuals who have become increasingly critical of secular liberal democracy as a form of government.

When you talk about Ukraine as a 'free country,' you seem to be using that term in a way that draws from the ideas of philosophical political liberalism — talking about a free press, freedom of religion and so on, in contrast to a more restrictive form of government.

It seems like your experience with Ukraine may have led you to think about the kind of philosophical-political debates that some are beginning in the West.

Well, you know, it's easy to think through some of these issues when the alternative to liberalism is a gun barrel pointed at your head. It's easy to look towards Europe when you're invaded by a ruler who has nostalgia for Stalinist grandeur.

Some things become clearer, you know, when you're in a do-or-die situation. And much of the world is in this kind of situation.

Now that doesn't — I'm a Catholic bishop, and I find that there are profound cultural problems in Western democracies. But this interview is not about Western democracies. It's about a society that is under threat of a huge escalation of war.

I find it flabbergasting to see conservative Catholics look to Putin or to Russia as a bastion of traditional values. Russia has the highest abortion rate in the world. Russia has an astronomical alcoholism rate. The suicides are among the highest, and so is the degree of corruption.

Corruption of political lies and evil is in the fabric of society, at all levels.

How this kind of regime that crushes human dignity, that poisons dissidents, or has them shot in the capital of the country — How this can be a source of interest and hope or inspiration for people with traditional Christian values is completely beyond me.

Archbishop, as an American yourself, what do you think the United States government ought to understand, or to do, for that matter, about the situation for Ukraine?

The United States government, along with the governments of other countries, needs to realize that if there's an invasion, there will be two, three, or even four million refugees flooding into the European Union, which will make the influx from Syria look like a prelude.

If Ukraine falls into Russia, then Russia becomes, again, a superpower.

Ukraine is 40 million people, who are highly educated. Ukraine produces the biggest airplane in the world, it's the third biggest outsourcing country for computer programming. It has some of the most fertile land in the world, and all of this will become part and parcel of an imperial agenda that has a very clear precedent.



Putin says that the demise of the Soviet Union was the greatest catastrophe of the 20th century. He wants to rebuild that, and what the Cold War cost the U.S. and other democracies is what it will cost again if Ukraine falls.

Ukraine is fighting the free world's fight for democracy today.

Ukrainian military equipment in March 2015. Credit: OCSE/wikimedia. CC BY SA 2.0

I think most Ukrainians have little illusion that there will be foreign troops that will arrive to keep Ukraine free. But I think it is incumbent upon democratic countries to do everything in their power to make sure that Ukraine does remain free.

I'm not a strategist. I'm not a politician. And even more so, I am not, you know, a military person. But I would like to bring the story of a long suffering people, a culture that is non-aggressive, socially inclusive and tolerant, committed to its heritage, with

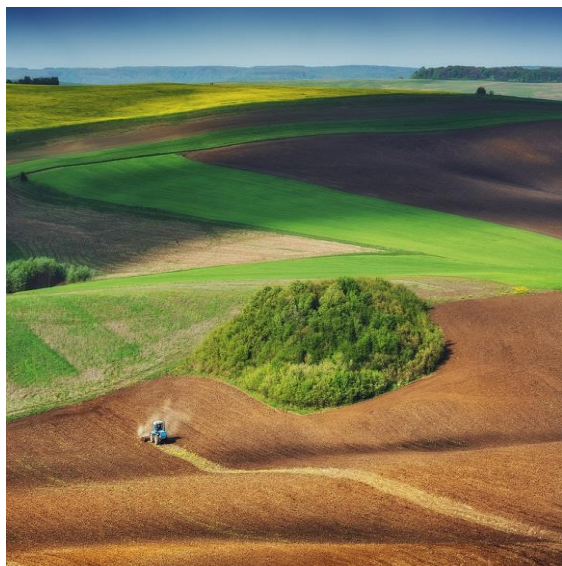
vibrant Church life. A culture that wants to preserve the God-given human dignity that all of us are endowed with.

There has been over the last year a lot of fractious disagreement among the U.S. bishops, as you know. As you look at the needs of the Church in Ukraine, and then the intramural debates among the U.S. bishops, you see obviously two very different ecclesiastical realities. How do you navigate between those two worlds?

Well, you know, there are many important issues [in the Church] and they can't be swept under the rug.

For myself, I find some of the most heart wrenching struggles are the struggles of the poor — of families, of children growing up in broken homes, of people living their lives with no clear direction, and no clear goals.

And I find that in trying to pray, and reflect on the example of Our Lord, that Jesus tried to be with the people that were before him. And as an intellectual and a historian I've expressed myself, and continue to do so, on many issues. I don't consider myself an expert on all, but I also understand that my hope and my peace and my joy is when I can live with charity and speak with charity to those to whom I am sent.



Maybe it's a state in life now. My vocation in the Church has bounced me around from one country and one continent to another, and I find that many people in the Church — many priests, religious, and many faithful Catholics, what they want the most from a priest and a bishop is a good pastor. A healer. It's not always the words that are the instruments of healing, but it's some kind of presence and solidarity, and just respect.

I am very much trying to understand how the Lord is calling us to minister.

I have food to eat. I have a roof over my head. I have no want for daily survival. And I think I'm called to do whatever I can to help those who are in need.

How can Catholics in the United States help the people in Ukraine?

There are three things that people can do.

First, please pray for peace and justice in Ukraine.

Agricultural land in Ivano-Frankivsk Oblast, Ukraine. Credit: Vian/wikimedia. CC BY SA 4.0

Second, be informed. The goal of propagandists is not to convince you of their position, but to sow doubt that truth is intelligible. And that's what the propagandists from Russia are trying to get global populations to experience is to think that it's complicated in Ukraine you won't know what to make of it. And that totally demotivates and paralyzes — stops people from responding.

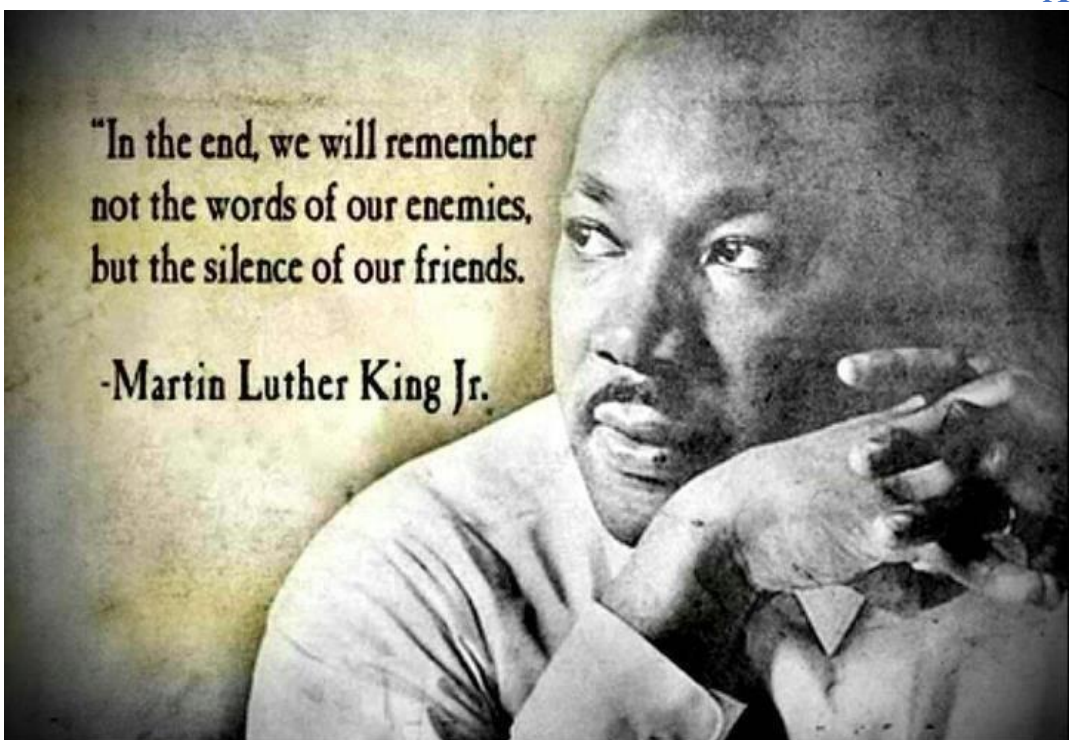
And the third is to address the humanitarian needs.

One thing that I would suggest is the American bishops' conference [fund for the help of the church in Eastern Europe](#) — a collection that is done throughout the country, which is very well-organized and very efficient. [In the Archeparchy of Philadelphia, we've been collecting funds to help people in Ukraine](#), and this encourages us to create a special fund for this situation.

We are never wrong when we help a person in need. And that's what the Lord encouraged us to do. And Americans have done that and American Catholics have done that very generously. And for that, on behalf of Ukrainians, I want to thank American Catholics, and good-willed Americans in general.

Internet source:

<https://www.pillaratholic.com/p/pray-for-peace-and-justice-in-ukraine>



"In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends."

-Martin Luther King Jr.

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