

## Statement of Metropolitan Stefan Soroka on the Violence in Ukraine

Throughout the world, people are watching in horror at the surreal scenes of violence and brutality on the streets of Kyiv and other cities throughout Ukraine. The images of confrontation and killing, of widespread fires and billowing smoke against a darkened night sky, and the winter air punctuated by the staccato sounds of gunfire and explosive devices are seared in many of our hearts and minds.

During these troubled times, may we all be inspired with the words of the Psalmist: *“May the Lord give strength to His people; may the Lord bless His people with peace.”* (Psalm 29:11).

As people of faith, it is times as these, when we raise our voices in prayer to Almighty God. *“May the Lord strengthen His people with courage and fortitude as they endure the suffering and mourn the loss of their loved ones. May He strengthen His people in Ukraine and guide them to a peaceful resolution of this conflict and open their minds to dialogue and reconciliation. May they end the divisive violence and restore tranquility to their nation.”*



As followers of Jesus Christ, all of us should reflect on the emphasis of Our Lord on peace in His teaching and in His actions. Our Lord taught us on the Mount, *“Blessed are the Peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God.”* Before the Last Supper, He told His disciples, *“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you.”* (Jn 14:27). And after His resurrection, He greeted His disciples with the words: *“Peace be with You.”* (Jn 20:19).

When we gather in prayer as a parish family, we begin the Divine Liturgy with the words *“In peace let* **(continued on next page)**

### Highlights inside this issue:

**Major-Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk visits Washington, DC - Pg. 3**

**Great Lent Pastoral of the Ukrainian Catholic Hierarchy of the U.S.A. - Pg. 7**

**Responses to the Survey on Pastoral Challenges of the Family - Pg. 17**

# Statement of Metropolitan Stefan Soroka on the Violence in Ukraine

(continued from previous page)

us pray to the Lord" and continue with prayerful petitions for peace. And several times during the Divine Liturgy the celebrant blesses the faithful with the words of Our Lord, "*Peace be with all.*" And as we leave our churches we hear the words, "Let us go forth in peace."

During these troubling and disturbing times, as many are thinking about family and friends in Ukraine or others are filled with anxiety about the events in their ancestral homeland, we implore our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to grant us His peace. May His peace enable us to *be not afraid*. (Jn 6:20)

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ, as we raise our voices in fervent prayer, may the Most Holy Mother of God extend Her protective mantle over the people of Ukraine. And may the Lord bless Ukraine and the whole world with His peace.

+Stefan Soroka  
Archbishop of Philadelphia for Ukrainians  
Metropolitan of Ukrainian Catholics in the United States

February 20, 2014

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## Liturgy petitions

O good and loving Master, look down with compassion, heal, comfort and protect Your servants who are wounded and suffering in Ukraine, and receive the souls of all those who have lost their lives from the violence, let us pray to the Lord.

We also pray that the Holy Spirit may open the hearts and minds of all in Ukraine to wisdom, grace and prayer so that sincere dialogue may lead to peace and reconciliation, let us pray to the Lord.

## A Prayer for Peace in Ukraine

Heavenly Father, Your Son taught us "Blessed are the Peacemakers for they shall be called Children of God." At this hour, we fervently pray that Your Holy Spirit may inspire men and women in Ukraine to become Peacemakers. May they seek reconciliation and dialogue and end the violent confrontation and killing. May they restore tranquility to their nation and restore human rights, democratic principles and religious liberty to their troubled land. God, our Father, we beseech you to comfort the suffering, heal the wounded and accept the souls of the departed into Your Heavenly Kingdom. And may the Most Holy Mother of God, extend her Blessed Mantle of Protection over Ukraine. And may each of us always live our lives as instruments of Your Peace. Amen.

## The Head of the UGCC: "At the prayer breakfast we had a unique opportunity to tell the truth about what is happening in Ukraine"



**Major-Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk at Ukrainian Catholic National Shrine of the Holy Family, Washington, DC, on February 9, 2014.**

Thursday, 13 February 2014

"I can tell you honestly that we were listened differently. Some of congressmen and other representatives of the U.S. government, perhaps, hearing about Ukraine, thought: thank God that in America we do not have such problems as in Ukraine, it is good that we are better than they are ... But I purposed to  
**FEBRUARY 23, 2014**

destroy the "pharisaic feeling of superiority", because what is happening in Ukraine, sooner or later will affect not only Europe, but also each resident of the U.S. If Ukraine will not remain a free and independent state, the whole world may be on the verge of a new Cold War."

It was said by the Father and the Head of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, His

Beatitude Sviatoslav Shevchuk during a sermon at the Ukrainian Catholic National Shrine of the Holy Family in Washington, DC where he served a Pontifical Divine Liturgy on 9 February.

As we reported, on February 9 the official visit of the Head of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church in the USA was finished. The visit, the main purpose of which

was to participate in the 62nd National prayer breakfast, started on February 4.

His Beatitude Sviatoslav said that the breakfast was a good opportunity to meet many different people, as more than 135 representatives from different countries came. "We had a unique opportunity in a difficult period of our homeland

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# The Head of the UGCC: “At the prayer breakfast we had a unique opportunity to tell the truth about what is happening in Ukraine”

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history to tell the truth about what is happening in Ukraine”, - said the head of the UGCC.

In his view, the events in Ukraine today take off the mask of many people, shed false images that someone had formed as among Ukrainian political, social and ecclesiastical environment and all over the world.

“So today we pray to the Lord God to help all of us know the truth about ourselves and about our country and beg for mercy for our country and for all of us” – wished His Beatitude in conclusion.

He thanked the faithful for the opportunity to pray with them and in prayers bring Ukraine, the Ukrainian people, the Ukrainian state, which is going through a difficult time in its history to the throne of the Lord God.

“In today’s Gospel reading we hear the story of Christ about two people who came to the temple: the Pharisee who showed his superiority among others, and

the Publican, that felt unworthy to be in the temple and prayed only one prayer: “God, be merciful to me, a sinner” And Christ set this publican as an example to all Christians”- said the faithful Preacher.

The Head of the UGCC explained that these two individuals show two ways how a person thinks he can get closer to God. “Someone thinks he can deserve the intimacy with the Lord himself and, perhaps, with his perfect work can get to the top of God’s holiness. And in fact it is not so. The only way to God is the way of humility before God. Pacification before God does not neglect our dignity. Pacification is a person’s ability to know the truth about him. It is a way to get God’s mercy, “- said His Beatitude in his homily to the faithful of the UGCC in Washington.

UGCC Department of Information

Adapted from the article on <http://news.ugcc.org.ua>



**Rev. Wasyl Kharuk, Major-Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk, Rev. Robert Hitchens, and Rev. Mark Morozowich.**



**Ukrainian Catholic National Shrine of the Holy Family in Washington, DC.**

## Major-Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk visits St. Josaphat Seminary

### Washington, DC

- Patriarch Sviatoslav celebrated the Divine Liturgy with the priests and seminarians of St. Josaphat Seminary, Washington, DC, on February 10, 2014. St. Josaphat Seminary is the major seminary of the Ukrainian Catholic Church in the United States of America. Seminarians participate in priestly formation at the seminary and study theology at the Catholic University of America. The seminary is operated and maintained by the Archeparchy of Philadelphia and supported by the generosity of the faithful priests and people of the Archeparchy of Philadelphia.



**Pictured are: (back row) Fr. Volodymyr Baran, pastor of Manassas and Richmond Virginia parishes, Fr. Robert Hitchens-rector, Patriarch Sviatoslav, Fr. Wasyl Kharuk-spiritual director, and Fr. Mark Morozowich, Dean of the School of Theology at Catholic University. (front row) Subdeacon Joseph Matlak (Parma Eparchy), Frank Avant (Chicago Eparchy), and Deacon Walter Pasicznyk (Philadelphia Archeparchy).**

## Meetings in Washington, DC

### Washington, DC

- Patriarch Shevchuk met with representatives of the US State Department including Assistant Secretary of State Eric Rubin, Assistant Secretary of State Tom Melina, and Special Envoy Ira Froman on Friday, February 7, 2014. He asked the officials to help foster peaceful dialogue with the government and the people.



# Meetings in Washington, DC

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**Washington, DC** - On February 6, 2014, Patriarch Sviatoslav met with Senator Christopher Murphy (D-Connecticut) who serves on the Foreign Relations Committee. He suggested to Senator Murphy that the USA could help Ukraine by acting as a mediator between the government and the people so that there can be constructive dialogue without violence.



**Washington, DC** - Patriarch Sviatoslav Shevchuk was greeted by Representative Chris Smith (R-New Jersey) who serves on the House Committee on Foreign Affairs - Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations Chairman, on February 6, 2014. He informed Representative Smith of the great concern about human rights violations happening in Ukraine with at least 60 people having disappeared without a trace and some 1000 people being imprisoned and denied visits by chaplains.



**Washington, DC** - Patriarch Sviatoslav met with Representative Marcy Kaptur (D-Ohio) who serves on the House Appropriations Committee and Defense Subcommittee on Thursday February 6, 2014. The Patriarch shared with her about the growing economic issues in Ukraine, especially as they impact the elderly who for months do not receive pension checks; teachers, doctors, nurses, and others employed by the government not receiving a pay check regularly. He related how this problem then results in middleclass businesses not being able to sell any goods or services thus compounding the economic hardships being experienced by ordinary people in Ukraine.



**Washington, DC** - Patriarch Sviatoslav had a private audience with Vice President Joseph Biden after the National Prayer Breakfast on February 6, 2014. His Beatitude told Vice President Biden that the people involved with the protests are peacefully manifesting that there is no trust at this time between the ordinary people of Ukraine and its government.



*(Articles submitted by Rev. Robert Hitchens)*

# **GREAT LENT PASTORAL OF THE UKRAINIAN CATHOLIC HIERARCHY OF THE U.S.A. TO OUR CLERGY, HIEROMONKS AND BROTHERS, RELIGIOUS SISTERS, SEMINARIANS AND BELOVED FAITHFUL**

*“Open to me the doors of repentance, O Giver of life. As we worship in your temple this morning, teach us how to purify the temples of our bodies, and in your compassion, purify me by the goodness of your mercies.”*

*- from the Matins for the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee*

In teaching the faithful about the cycle of feasts and commemorations contained in the liturgical year of the Byzantine church, the church Fathers often used the symbol of a door, as we see in the above citation from the service of matins. Indeed, as a pilgrim community journeying towards the heavenly Jerusalem, we can say that we have only just recently passed through the door symbolizing the culmination of the celebrations surrounding the birth and baptism of Our Lord. And having closed it behind us, we have travelled only a few steps along the journey, and have come upon another door along our path: the door that crosses the threshold into the time of Great Lent. Great Lent is a blessed time of cleansing, renewal and conversion that encompasses the totality of our being: physical, psychological and above all, spiritual – all in preparation for the great commemoration of the death, burial and Resurrection of Our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Every year at this time we ask ourselves the question: How are we to effectively use this time of Lent so that we can be truly transformed, in mind, body and spirit? Thankfully, the Church in her wisdom has shown us the answer through the Gospel lessons contained in the Sundays immediately before the beginning of Great Lent. We find in them, concrete means of preparing for Lent so that we can embark upon these 40 holy days, sure of our victory in the end.

In the Gospel of the Sunday of Zaccheus (Lk. 19:1-10) we learn that a personal and indomitable desire for conversion is necessary if we are to profit from the time of Great Lent. The Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee (Lk. 18:10-14) demonstrates that a humble recognition of our personal sinfulness is also a prerequisite. The Sunday of the Prodigal Son (Lk. 15: 11-32) contains many lessons for us, one of them being that God will cover us with his boundless forgiveness and mercy if we take but one tiny step towards him in repentance. Meatfare Sunday (Mt. 25: 31-46) presents us with a terrifying picture of the Last Judgment and Christ’s admonition that only through acts of corporal mercy towards our brothers and sisters in need, will we escape the sentence of eternal damnation. Finally, when we at last stand on the threshold of Great Lent, the Gospel of Cheesefare Sunday (Mt. 6: 14-21) teaches us that our sincere forgiveness of those who have offended us is the key that ensures God’s mercy and forgiveness for our own transgressions.

During the time of Great Lent we urge you to return often to the Gospel lessons of these preparatory Sundays, to meditate upon them and plumb their depths for the golden nuggets of God’s grace, wisdom and love that are found within them in abundance.

If we do this, then we will discover that, at the end of our Lenten journey, yet another door will be opened for us: a door that leads to the celebration of the indescribable joy of Our Lord’s glorious Resurrection from the dead; a door that leads to a faith in Christ that is stronger, deeper, more courageous and resilient,

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# **GREAT LENT PASTORAL OF THE UKRAINIAN CATHOLIC HIERARCHY OF THE U.S.A. TO OUR CLERGY, HIEROMONKS AND BROTHERS, RELIGIOUS SISTERS, SEMINARIANS AND BELOVED FAITHFUL**

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shining brightly for all to see. Indeed, gathered together in our parish churches on Easter Sunday we can become modern examples of those ancient communities where Saint Paul preached so long ago, communities for which *'God had opened the door of faith'*. (Acts 14:27)

Of course, the gift of faith is not something to be hoarded and hidden from sight. We are called to put it on display for all the world to see, to *'set it on a lampstand, where it gives light to all in the house'*. (Mt. 5:15) To paraphrase the words that were pronounced at our baptism we are to *'take the lighted candle and strive throughout our lifetime to shine brightly with the light of faith and of good deeds...'*

When our entire being is filled with the joy of faith, then our natural desire should be to share this joy and this faith with others. Our Holy Father, Pope Francis has emphasized this noble privilege and responsibility of Christians in his brilliant Apostolic Exhortation *'Evangelii Gaudium' – 'The Joy of the Gospel'* in which he writes that the Good News of our faith is *'a joy ever new, a joy which is shared'*. This is also reflected in the resolution of the Synod of Bishops of our Ukrainian Catholic Church last year, which, under the banner of the program of parish spiritual renewal entitled *'The Vibrant Parish – a Place to Encounter the Living Christ'*, has dedicated 2014 to the development of a Missionary Spirit in our Ukrainian Church.

The very nature and mission of the Church means that we are called to bear witness to Christ and to share the Good News with others. May the journey through Great Lent upon which we are embarking, be a time of true spiritual conversion and renewal for all of us. And may all those who yearn to walk through the door that leads to an encounter with Christ and the Church, be guided through the light of our good example.

+Stefan Soroka  
Metropolitan-Archbishop of Philadelphia

+Richard Seminack  
Eparch of St. Nicholas in Chicago

+Paul Chomnycky, OSBM (author)  
Eparch of Stamford

+John Bura  
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Great Lent, 2014





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**No. 80/2013 O**

*This Number Should be Prefixed to Your Reply*

*Office of the Metropolitan*

My Brother Clergy and Faithful of our Archeparchy,

Praise Be Jesus Christ!

Soon, the Great Fast will begin. I ask the clergy and faithful of our Ukrainian Catholic Church to participate in celebrating **forgiveness** during the Sunday Divine Liturgies on Cheese-Fare Sunday, the night before the Great Fast begins. This Forgiveness Service is part of our spiritual heritage and tradition. While this is normally done during the evening Vespers Service, I ask that the entire Church celebrate it during the Divine Liturgy immediately following the Homily. The pastor is asked to give a reflection of sincere forgiveness in his homily, and then proceed with the prayers for forgiveness in the language of the Divine Liturgy. It is important to invite all of the faithful to participate by offering the prayers in a calm and meaningful manner.

We all stand in need of forgiveness from God and from one another. It is uncomfortable to admit our sinfulness to ourselves and to others. Heartfelt participation in the forgiveness service during the Divine Liturgy allows us to humble ourselves. We face one another with sorrow, admitting our failings with one another, and asking forgiveness. Any delusions of superiority are challenged as we humble ourselves before one another, priest to his faithful, faithful to the priest and to one another. Healing comes not only to the person who says the painful words, "I'm sorry", but also to the one who receives them. Healing comes not only to the one who hears the words, "I forgive you", but also to the one who offers them. We prepare ourselves to enter the Great Fast. I too beg the forgiveness of my brother hierarchs, clergy, religious and faithful for my failings. I forgive and pray for all who have failed or offended me.

I thank the reverend clergy and faithful for your anticipated heartfelt embracing of this forgiveness service within the Divine Liturgy. It is a time when the entire parish family gathers. The entire parish family is encouraged to participate in mutual forgiveness for the benefit of our spiritual growth and well-being.

God bless you!

+Stefan Soroka  
Metropolitan-Archbishop of Philadelphia

*(On Cheesefare Sunday, all the clergy and faithful have been asked to conduct the Forgiveness Service after the homily during the Divine Liturgy. While this service has been traditionally part of Forgiveness Vespers on Sunday evening, by observing this rite of humility and love at the Divine Liturgy, more of the faithful will experience this moving service as the Christian community prepares to begin the journey through the Great Fast. The following article, written by Protopresbyter Alexander Schmemmann, explains the significance of the services of Cheesefare Sunday.)*

## Forgiveness Service on Cheesefare Sunday

In the Orthodox (and Eastern Catholic) Church, the last Sunday before Great Lent – the day on which, at Vespers, Lent is liturgically announced and inaugurated – is called Forgiveness Sunday. On the morning of that Sunday, (also known as Cheesefare Sunday, at the Divine Liturgy, we hear the words of Christ:

“If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses...” (Mark 6:14-15)

Then after Lenten Vespers – after hearing the announcement of Lent in the Great Prokeimen: “Turn not away Thy face from Thy child for I am afflicted! Hear me speedily! Draw near unto my soul and deliver it!”, after making our entrance into Lenten worship, with its special memories, with the prayer of St. Ephraim the Syrian, with its prostrations – we ask forgiveness from

each other, we perform the rite of forgiveness and reconciliation. And as we approach each other with words of reconciliation, the choir intones the Paschal hymns, filling the church with the anticipation of Paschal joy.

What is the meaning of this rite? Why is it that the Church wants us to begin the Lenten season with forgiveness and reconciliation? These questions are in order because for too many people Lent means primarily, and almost exclusively, a change of diet, the compliance with ecclesiastical regulations concerning fasting. They understand fasting as an end in itself, as a “good deed” required by God and carrying in itself its merit and its reward. But, the Church spares no effort in revealing to us that fasting is but a means, one among many, towards a higher goal: the spiritual renewal of man, his return to God, true repentance and, therefore, true

reconciliation. The Church spares no effort in warning us against a hypocritical and pharisaic fasting, against the reduction of religion to mere external obligations. As a Lenten hymn says:

In vain do you rejoice in no eating, O soul!  
For you abstain from food,  
But from passions you are not purified.  
If you persevere in sin, you will perform a useless fast.

Now, forgiveness stands at the very center of Christian faith and of Christian life because Christianity itself is, above all, the religion of forgiveness. God forgives us, and His forgiveness is in Christ, His Son, Whom He sends to us, so that by sharing in His humanity we may share in His love and be truly reconciled with God. Indeed, Christianity has no other content but love. And it is primarily the renewal of that love, a return to it, a growth in it, that we seek

in Great Lent, in fasting and prayer, in the entire spirit and the entire effort of that season. Thus, truly forgiveness is both the beginning of, and the proper condition for the Lenten season.

One may ask, however: Why should I perform this rite when I have no “enemies”? Why should I ask forgiveness from people who have done nothing to me, and whom I hardly know? To ask these questions, is to misunderstand the Church teaching concerning forgiveness. It is true, that open enmity, personal hatred, real animosity may be absent from our life, though if we experience them, it may be easier for us to repent, for these feelings openly contradict Divine commandments. But, the Church reveals to us that there are much subtler ways of offending Divine Love. These are indifference, selfishness, lack of interest in other people, of any real

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# Forgiveness Service on Cheesefare Sunday

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concern for them -- in short, that wall which we usually erect around ourselves, thinking that by being "polite" and "friendly" we fulfill God's commandments. The rite of forgiveness is so important precisely because it makes us realize -- be it only for one minute -- that our entire relationship to other men is wrong, makes us experience that encounter of one child of God with another, of one person created

by God with another, makes us feel that mutual "recognition" which is so terribly lacking in our cold and dehumanized world.

On that unique evening, listening to the joyful Paschal hymns we are called to make a spiritual discovery: to taste of another mode of life and relationship with people, of life whose essence is love. We can discover that always and everywhere Christ, the Divine Love

Himself, stands in the midst of us, transforming our mutual alienation into brotherhood. As I advance towards the other, as the other comes to me -- we begin to realize that it is Christ Who brings us together by His love for both of us.

And because we make this discovery -- and because this discovery is that of the Kingdom of God itself: the Kingdom of Peace and Love, of

reconciliation with God and, in Him, with all that exists -- we hear the hymns of that Feast, which once a year, "opens to us the doors of Paradise." We know why we shall fast and pray, what we shall seek during the long Lenten pilgrimage. Forgiveness Sunday: the day on which we acquire the power to make our fasting -- true fasting; our effort -- true effort; our reconciliation with God -- true reconciliation.

## The Forgiveness Service

After the homily, the priest, facing the people says:

Priest: My brothers and sisters, at this time let us try to remember all of our sins which we have committed throughout the course of our life, and with which we have offended God.

All: Lord, we have sinned against You in thought, word and action. We have been wrong and we have done wrong. Forgive us.

Priest: Let us try to remember if we harbor any ill-feelings towards God for anything that happened in our life.

All: Lord, help us to accept your will in our lives, to try to understand your ways,

and not to feel angry with You or blame You for anything that might happen to us or go wrong for us in our lives.

Priest: Let us try to remember all of those people who have offended us, hurt us, angered us; all those people against whom, for whatever reason, we bear grudges, feel hatred, and whom we find hard to forgive.

All: From the bottom of my heart, I truly and sincerely forgive those who hate me, who have offended or hurt me, and against whom I carry a grudge or nourish ill-feelings.

Priest: Let us try to remember all of those

people whom we ourselves have hurt or offended, knowingly or unknowingly, in word or in deed; and all those whom we, for whatever reason, hate and who bear grudges against us.

All: From the bottom of my heart, I truly and sincerely ask forgiveness and pardon of all those whom I hate, whom I have offended and hurt, and who hold a grudge against me because of this.

Priest: My brothers and sisters, if I have sinned against you, hurt you, or offended you in thought, word or action, knowingly or unknowingly, in any possible way, please forgive me, a sinner, and

pray to God for me.

All: May God Himself forgive you and pardon your sins and transgressions, and we also forgive and pardon you. Father, bless us and forgive us our sins and offenses and transgressions, committed voluntarily or perhaps unwittingly, against you.

Priest: May the Lord God, through His grace and loving kindness, forgive you. And I also pardon and forgive you.

And now, let us ask forgiveness of one another by saying: Forgive me my brother/sister. And let the other answer: May God forgive you, and I also forgive you.

## CHEESEFARE SUNDAY - March 2, 2014



*The Lord said: "For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins. "When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (Mt. 6, 14-21)*

The Sunday of Forgiveness, the last of the preparatory Sundays before Great Lent, has two themes: it commemorates Adam's expulsion from Paradise, and it accentuates our need for forgiveness. There are obvious reasons why these two things should be brought to our attention as we stand on the threshold of Great Lent. One of the primary images in the Triodion is that of the return to Paradise. Lent is a time when we weep with Adam and Eve before the closed gate of Eden, repenting with them for the sins that have deprived us of our free communion with God. But Lent is also a time when we are preparing to celebrate the saving event of Christ's death and rising, which has reopened Paradise to us once more (Luke 23:43). So sorrow for our exile in sin is tempered by hope of our re-entry into Paradise.

The second theme, that of forgiveness, is emphasized in the Gospel reading for this Sunday (Matthew 6:14-21) and in the special ceremony of mutual forgiveness at the end of the Vespers on Sunday evening. Before we enter the Lenten fast, we are reminded that there can be no true fast, no genuine repentance, no reconciliation with God, unless we are at the same time reconciled with one another. A fast without mutual love is the fast of demons. We do not travel the road of Lent as isolated individuals but as members of a family. Our asceticism and fasting should not separate us from others, but should link us to them with ever-stronger bonds.

The Sunday of Forgiveness also directs us to see that Great Lent is a journey of liberation from our enslavement to sin. The Gospel lesson sets the conditions for this liberation. The first one is fasting—the refusal to accept the desires and urges of our fallen nature as normal, the effort to free ourselves from the dictatorship of the flesh and matter over the spirit. To be effective, however, our fast must not be hypocritical, a "showing off." We must "appear not unto men to fast but to our Father who is in secret" (vv. 16-18).

The second condition is forgiveness—"If you forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you" (vv. 14-15). The triumph of sin, the main sign of its rule over the world, is division, opposition, separation, hatred. Therefore, the first break through this fortress of sin is forgiveness—the return to unity, solidarity and love. To forgive is to put between me and my "enemy" the radiant forgiveness of God Himself. To forgive is to reject the hopeless "dead-ends" of human relations and to refer them to Christ. Forgiveness is truly a "breakthrough" of the Kingdom into this sinful and fallen world.

## Catholic Schools Week at St. Nicholas Ukrainian Catholic School, Passaic, NJ



Catholic Schools: Communities of Faith, Knowledge and Service. The theme closely parallels the three tasks of Jesus' mission: faith comes from preaching, knowledge comes from teaching and service is how we go about healing.

The students of St. Nicholas Ukrainian Catholic School in Passaic, NJ celebrated the start of Catholic Schools Week – whose theme this year was “Communities of Faith, Knowledge, and Service” – by attending Saturday evening Liturgy in uniform as a school family. Eighth-grader Adrianna Oliver read the Epistle.

The school celebrated Catholic Schools Week by providing a fun or interesting activity every day. Monday was “Pajama Day”, which found everybody feeling very cozy in their cute flannel pj’s and fluffy slippers. In keeping with the theme, the eighth-graders read stories to and did crafts with the younger grades. In the afternoon, grades 5 thru 8 participated in a Team Trivia contest, competing on multi-grade teams to answer 100 questions in a wide variety of fields.

On Tuesday, the students wore red, white, or blue and enjoyed an “American Lunch” of hotdogs and hamburgers in a cafeteria beautifully decorated in patriotic colors. During this day, students designed cards expressing gratitude to US troops in Afghanistan; over the course of the month, students have been bringing in personal care and entertainment items for the troops, and the cards will be included in these “Care packages” once enough supplies have been collected.

Since Wednesday is Gym Day and since this is an Olympic year, everyone came to school wearing one of the colors of the Olympic rings. After a school “Olympic rings” photo, classes participated in their own “Winter Games” – the younger grades took part in “skating” and “sledding” races in the Gym, while the upper grades competed in hockey.

On Thursday, students “brought a friend” – or grandparent, aunt, or loved one - to school for hot chocolate and cookies after lunch, and then proceeded to the auditorium for a very informative and entertaining presentation on “The World of Reptiles” by Bill Boesenberg of “Snakes and Scales,” which included a close-up look at an American alligator, a snapping turtle, and a 6-foot-long Monitor lizard. The highlight of the show was when Bill asked for ten volunteers to help hold a ten-foot-long Burmese python!

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# Catholic Schools Week at St. Nicholas Ukrainian Catholic School, Passaic, NJ

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Friday was “Souper Movie Day”. For the “price” of a can of soup – which is being donated to a food pantry - for Admission, students watched a movie with their class, while the 5th thru 8th graders watched “Facing the Giants”, an inspirational film about the power of faith to transform lives. Since Friday was a half-day, pastor Father Andriy treated the teachers and staff to a special lunch at a local restaurant, expressing his gratitude for their hard work and dedication to the school.

The celebration ended on Saturday evening with Family Bingo Night, organized by our hardworking PTA. Principal Sr. Eliane Ilnitski, SSMI handed out Honors and Perfect Attendance Awards for the end of the second quarter. In addition, Sister proudly commended three eighth-graders for their outstanding achievement on the COOP exam: Geovanni Guerrero, Nataliya Miklosh, and Adrianna Oliver all scored above the 95th percentile nationally in either Math or Language Arts, or both.

All in all, Catholic Schools Week provided a welcome break from routine, wonderful memories, and a meaningful reminder of what makes Catholic schools great!

- Sonia Lechicky

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## Girls’ Marian Sodality Is Reinstated at St Nicholas Ukrainian Catholic School – Passaic, NJ

Right before the Divine Liturgy for Saint Nicholas Ukrainian Catholic School, Passaic, NJ on February 7, 2014, Rev. Andriy Dudkevych blessed 13 girls in grades 4–8 as Junior Sodalists of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God”. Most of these “Junior Sodalists are parishioners of St. Nicholas Ukrainian Catholic Church, with 4 of them as members of St. John the Baptist Ukrainian Catholic Church, Newark, NJ and 2 from local Roman Catholic Parishes. They each received a blessed Marian medal and; a Sodality Sash of Dedication to wear during Divine Liturgy, especially on the Holy Feast Days of Mary.



They promised, to the best of their ability, to give of themselves to Jesus through Mary. They aim to intensify their Baptismal commitment to live the Gospel message of Jesus as devout Catholics: with faith-in-action in their daily lives; to pray for those in need and; to volunteer to help the Church and others. Their guiding question is “WWMD? – What would Mary do?” as the Theotokos, Mother of God, and as the first and best disciple of Jesus?

(continued on next page)

# Girls' Marian Sodality Is Reinstated at St Nicholas Ukrainian Catholic School – Passaic, NJ

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During their time of preparation with monthly meetings at the Convent, under the guidance of Sr. Cecelia Sworin, SSMI and the volunteered assistance of Mrs. Patricia Balzarek, these Junior Sodalists offered intercessory prayer through Mary, helped to decorate St. Nicholas Church for Christmas and undecorated under the leadership of Mrs. Lecia Pelytyshyn, and enjoyed one another during a Christmas Tree Decorating Party at the convent.

Now, they will continue their life journey as Beloved Daughters of God and Mary. Soon, girls in 3rd grade will begin to learn the life of a "Junior Sodalist of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God". Many of these Junior Sodalists are continuing the legacy of their Mothers, who were Sodalists while they were at St. Nicholas Ukrainian Catholic School.

May God grant them many happy, blessed years, for this is one way of promoting a "Vibrant Parish". Дай їм Бог багато щасливих благословенних років!

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## An Invitation to 2014 Basilian Volunteer Program: Ministry to Ukraine's needy

Last year four women from various Eparchies joined in the Sisters of St. Basil the Great (Jesus Lover of Humanity province) Basilian Volunteer Program. These women, accompanied by Sr. Ann Laszok and Sr. Joann Sosler, OSBM, visited, interacted and financially supported various orphanages, foster homes, half way houses, homeless shelters and psychiatric institutions in the Ivana- Frankivsk and Zaporizhzhia areas. This year's Basilian Volunteer Program will take place from June 4 - 19, 2014.



This year Sister Ann Laszok, OSBM and Sister Joann Sosler, OSBM together with the accepted applicants will collaborate with the Basilian Sisters of Trinity Province, Ukraine to sponsor a week long "English Language " and Catechetical Camp for the orphans as well as the local children in the Korchyn area. Visits to several orphanages and psychiatric institutions will also be included in the days following the camp.

Join the Sisters as they continue their ministry of evangelization and bringing support and comfort to the poor and needy. Join the Sisters of St. Basil the Great in their mission of being the praying, healing and life-giving presence of Jesus in troubled Ukraine.

Accepted applicants can expect to have room and board covered by the Sisters of St. Basil the Great Jesus Lover of Humanity Province. Airfare as well as all personal expenses are the responsibility of the applicant.

For an application and additional information for Ministry to Ukraine contact Sr. Ann Laszok OSBM at srannl@aol.com or 412-260-1607. Numbers are limited so please apply early.

## SATURDAY REFLECTIONS

With God there is a time for everything:

- A time to pause.
- A time for the sharing of Scripture.
- A time for meditation and personal reflection.
- A time to encounter the God within.

A Prayer Group is forming on Saturday afternoons from 1:00-3:00PM at the Formation House Chapel at the Sisters of St Basil the Great in Fox Chase. It will be held every other Saturday beginning March 8, 2014.



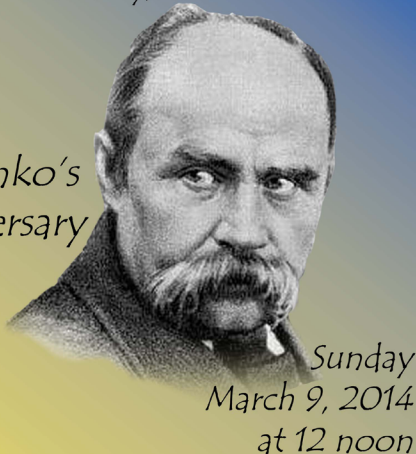
The Saturday Reflections Group will be coordinated by Sr. Judith Pizyk, Sr. Joann Sosler and Fr. Daniel Troyan. The Group will focus on prayer, Scripture, meditation, and personal reflections. All are welcome.

For more information or to register please contact Sr. Judith Pizyk at 215-379-3998 ext 539 or email janinajp3@yahoo.com

The Prayer group will be in English. There is no fee or good will offering required.

### Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish and Choir "Boyan" of Perth Amboy, NJ

Invites all to celebrate Taras Shevchenko's 200th Anniversary



Sunday  
March 9, 2014  
at 12 noon

#### The Program:

10:00 a.m. – Divine Liturgy in Church  
12:00 noon – Concert marking the 200th anniversary of Taras Shevchenko's birth featuring a production of his dramatic play, "Naymychka" (The Servant Girl). Afterwards, the Choir "Boyan" will present a moving concert of songs, poems and recitations. Free admission.

684 Alta Vista Place, Perth Amboy, NJ 08861 – 732-826-0767

### I Believe... in What Exactly?

#### Third Conference on "Christ Our Pascha"

Presenter: **Rev. Alexander M. Laschuk**

We use a lot of words to describe the Trinity: incomprehensible, unlimited, undefined, invisible, inconceivable. But what do they mean, and why bother?

Fr. Alexander will lead an exploration of the Nicene Creed to highlight the centrality of the Trinity to our Christian Faith and to understand who, what, and why is the Church.



**March 15, 2014**

Schedule:

9:30 am – Registration

10 am – "From the Bible to the Creed" - An examination of the sources for the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, especially those found in Scripture.

12 pm – Lunch

1 pm – "From the Trinity to the Church" - An examination of the implications of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, especially as it relates to the Church.

3:20 pm – Q & A

5 pm - Vespers

Rev. Alexander M. Laschuk, of Canada, is presently Acting Director at Saint Paul University, Ottawa ON of the Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky Institute of Eastern Christian Studies. Fr. Alex administers the only Institute of Eastern Christian Studies in North America, and is also the managing editor of **Logos: A Journal of Eastern Christian Studies**. A canon lawyer, he served as Promoter of Justice for the Eparchial Tribunal as well as for the delegated tribunal investigating an alleged miracle within the Archdiocese of Toronto. He has also served as Associate Judicial Vicar for the Archdiocese of Toronto's Marriage Tribunal, the largest first-instance Marriage Tribunal in Canada.

(Workshop is free)  
Please bring your own lunch.  
Coffee, tea and soda will be provided.



For more information, email or call  
Sister Ann Laszok, OSBM

710 Fox Chase Rd - Jenkintown, PA 19046  
[srannl@aol.com](mailto:srannl@aol.com) or 412-260-1607  
[www.stbasils.com](http://www.stbasils.com)



# HEARTFELT GRATITUDE TO THE RESPONDENTS TO THE SURVEY ON PASTORAL CHALLENGES OF THE FAMILY

+Metropolitan Stefan Soroka

I offer my prayerful and heartfelt gratitude to those who so graciously and wisely responded to the survey on the pastoral challenges of the family in the context of evangelization. You will recall that we received the survey from the Vatican as part of its preparation for a world meeting on the family in the context of evangelization. It will take place in Philadelphia in September, 2015. Our Holy Father, Pope Francis, is expected to attend.

Given the short time frame for a response from me, I offered a summary questionnaire in parish bulletins and on our Archieparchial website. The thoughts and opinions of our faithful and clergy were to be part of my response to the request. Almost one hundred faithful and one priest chose to respond to the questionnaire. The responses were inspiring, offering a good reflection of our faithful to the vital areas of pastoral ministry. The individual responses will be held confidentially. I thank all who responded, often with much detail and elaboration on points raised in the survey. Respondents stayed focused on the questions. There is much depth and wisdom shared in the perceptions offered.

The following is my SUMMARY of the responses. The final document I submitted included this summary with additional comments, observations and recommendations. I felt that our clergy, religious and faithful would benefit from reading the summary of responses. It is not to be considered all inclusive of the ideas and perceptions held by our faithful. It is a summary of the responses received from approximately one hundred souls who were able to respond and who chose to share their wisdom and experience for our reflection and learning. It is hoped that the feedback will generate positive directions in our pastoral ministry in this very critical need of Church life. God richly bless all of our respondents in ways only He can!

February, 2014

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## SUMMARY OF RESPONSES TO SURVEY QUESTIONS FOR PREPARATORY DOCUMENT ON PASTORAL CHALLENGES OF THE FAMILY IN THE CONTEXT OF EVANGELIZATION

### **1. Sacred Understanding and Church Teaching on the Family**

**Your perception of the clergy's and faithful's knowledge and understanding of Family as revealed through Sacred Scripture and Church**

### **Teaching. Is it known? Is it practical?**

Generally, the faithful observed that the clergy impress as having a good understanding of the Church's teaching on the family as revealed through Sacred Scripture and Church Teaching. The faithful are seen

as having a marginal understanding of Scripture and Tradition, and tend to live the teaching in a more customary and practical way, very much influenced by societal trends. Many of the faithful observed that little teaching on the family is offered in homilies, and that if it were to be

more commonly known and understood, then the teachings would be regarded as practical and helpful. Basic catechism of the faithful is necessary.

Many observed that our clergy and Church do

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# SUMMARY OF RESPONSES TO SURVEY QUESTIONS

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not provide sufficient teaching opportunities in these areas when compared to that perceived to be offered in many of the Protestant denominations. The scandals around the sexual abuse of children and young people were also reflected on by some of the respondents, questioning the sincerity and ability of the hierarchy and clergy to effectively provide the needed understanding of the Church's teaching on the family. However, an overwhelming reflection by the faithful was the need for clergy to more enthusiastically embrace and provide the needed teachings on the family. Interestingly, parishioners who responded and who have a married priest serving in their parish remarked that their married clergy impress as having a better understanding of the teachings on the family and reflect it more ably in their homilies and in their living out of daily life.

A wider recognition and interpretation of the definition of family were advocated by a considerable number of respondents, among them people who have

already raised their children. One parent families and single people need to feel embraced and included.

## **2. Marriage According to the Natural Law**

**Is the understanding of natural law in the union between a man and a woman commonly accepted by all of us? What may be some pastoral challenges for us?**

Many of the respondents observed that the understanding of marriage according to the natural law is poorly known by the faithful, who then are more susceptible to the influence of societal and political trends. It is commonly perceived as minimally addressed in teachings offered at the parish level. Adamant support for Church Teaching and the necessity of upholding and not compromising Church Teaching on Natural Law were commonly expressed by the respondents to the survey. The need for constant reflection and teaching by clergy on marriage as understood according to natural law

were consistently cited by respondents. There is a thirst for enhanced understanding which is not being adequately addressed given the dramatic changes which have occurred in family life in society. Respondents who are living responsibly as single men and women reflected on the lack of expressed understanding of Church teaching addressed to them.

While almost wholeheartedly supportive of the understanding of marriage being between one man and one woman, there was some understanding conveyed to developing a merciful pastoral approach to families reflecting a lifestyle not in accordance with Church Teaching. No specifics were offered, except emphasizing that one love the sinner and hate the sin. However, most advocated that the Church Teaching ought not to be portrayed as being compromised or lessened in any way.

A number of respondents shared their personal pain and suffering with their personal faith and being in conformity with Church

Teachings and yet having to relate in a loving and compassionate manner with a child in a same-sex relationship and/or union. These persons commonly spoke of being part of a Church which does not judge but is committed to being helpful and pastoral to all.

## **3. The Pastoral Care of the Family in Evangelization**

**Is marriage preparation being offered effectively? What have we learned from our experience in enhancing family spirituality? How do we help couples in crisis?**

Marriage preparation is being offered by the clergy in varied ways. The preparation is generally viewed as being very limited in content and as being insufficient in providing for the proper understanding of the faith and of marriage. Many question the effectiveness of the marriage preparation being offered in light of today's life's challenges. The need for follow-up

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# SUMMARY OF RESPONSES TO SURVEY QUESTIONS

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interventions by clergy and the value of such visits were also suggested by some of the respondents. Importantly, a number of respondents observed the need for spouses to be helped to engender an understanding of themselves as reflecting the image and presence of God.

A number of respondents aptly observed that while clergy provide the necessary and expected preparation for marriage, couples later experiencing crisis or challenges seem reluctant to approach clergy for assistance with problems. The need to be able to offer more pastoral help for couples in distress was cited by many respondents as was the questioning of whether the clergy are suitably prepared to offer the help needed. Sincere availability and concern for people in difficulties are needed, as is the sound pastoral ability to ably respond and assist. The presence and ministry of the married clergy were cited by some respondents as being especially favorable, citing their particular comfort in speaking of family issues and challenges

with young couples. Regardless of celibate or married priest, common to many respondents is the perceived need for a priest to be a good listener to couples, unafraid of sharing the truths of the Gospel and Church Teachings, and sincere and willing to enthusiastically share himself with his faithful in giving good personal witness.

The need for marriage enrichment opportunities was also cited by respondents, offering renewed opportunities to teach the faith. Christian family life can be enhanced spiritually by evangelization.

## **4. Pastoral Care in Certain Different Marital Situations**

**Is living together a reality amidst our faithful? How do we relate and minister to divorced and remarried people? Do some feel marginalized or suffer from not being able to receive the sacraments?**

While respondents generally strongly supported the

understanding of the indissolubility of marriage, many advocated a more pastoral and understanding approach to persons who have suffered the pain of divorce and separation. Pastoral assistance and counselling ought to be offered in a greater manner than is being done. Outreach to these persons needs to be done. Greater teaching and understanding of annulments are also needed to assist people to pursue an annulment when grounds exist. Some clergy discourage this given their own poor understanding of the annulment process.

Cohabitation was seen by respondents as being a reality among any adult faithful. There are varying reasons for the choice of cohabitation. While some choose for reasons of convenience, many are in such situations because of abusive and neglectful relationships which they have experienced in the past. The need for developed pastoral approaches to these persons was cited by respondents, showing compassion, care and concern for their spiritual well-being. The

respondents commonly felt that the Church ought not to compromise its teachings but be more overtly open to these persons in ministering to them, making them still feel welcome in our Churches.

Receiving the Sacraments by persons experiencing strife in their relationships was generally seen as being a source of spiritual assistance for the person when that individual is properly disposed to receiving the Sacraments. The Church ought to develop a more healing approach with the sacraments for persons marginalized because of their personal marital difficulties.

## **5. On Unions of Persons of the Same Sex**

**What is our attitude to societal recognition of civil unions and marriages between persons of the same sex? What pastoral attention ought we to give?**

A number of respondents expressed a need for clergy to have a better

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# SUMMARY OF RESPONSES TO SURVEY QUESTIONS

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developed pastoral ability to be able to converse and provide Church teachings with persons experiencing same sex attraction. While not accepting of same sex unions, the respondents generally felt that these persons should be welcomed and treated fairly and justly, and be loved with compassion and understanding. Distinction was often made that love and acceptance of the person ought to be characteristic of the Church without conveying an acceptance of the union of same sex persons. Interestingly, some of the respondents who expressed abhorrence for any recognition of same sex unions by the Church and/or society, these same individuals gave positive consideration to the merits of such persons receiving the Sacraments to help them in their spiritual journey. Care for each human soul was advocated even if lifestyle choices should not be accepted. Teaching of family values was also advocated for these persons.

## **6. The Education of Children in Irregular Marriages**

### **What do parents in these situations ask? Do they express interest in catechesis? How do we minister to these parents and children?**

This situation already exists and is a challenge within a number of parishes. The availability of catechesis to all children, regardless of irregular or differing marriage or living situations was commonly advocated by almost all of the respondents. One respondent quoted Philo of Alexandria who is to have said, "Be kind, everyone you meet is fighting a terrible battle". Compassion and reaching out to all families, regardless of individual situations, were advocated by most respondents. Clergy, parents and members of the extended family of such children are to have a positive understanding and concern and be welcoming and embracing of these children for catechesis opportunities. Parents generally want the best for their children, even when not necessarily in conformity with their own personal lifestyle choices. These parents are often ignorant of

the entitlements of their children to receive the Sacraments. This ignorance holds them back from the celebration and participation in the Sacraments as opposed to doctrinal difficulties. Good catechesis and encouragement in a positive manner in such situations are desired and needed to ensure the spiritual development of the child in as much a normative manner as may be possible given the circumstances. Some respondents observed the negative impact of the closing of parochial schools as limiting catechesis opportunities for all children.

Catechesis and education of the parental role in catechesis, giving good and sound example, etc. were emphasized by a number of the respondents. The giftedness of children's liturgies and interventions in catechetical classes by clergy were also noted by respondents. The need to challenge the common misperceptions offered by the media was cited.

Compassion and common sense in pastoral approaches

revealing God's love were stressed by the respondents, underlining not being exclusive.

## **7. The Openness of the Married Couple to Life**

### **Are faithful aware of the Teachings of the Church on responsible parenthood? What insight can you offer? Are there moral teachings not accepted or which pose difficulty for a couple? How can we foster a more open attitude to having children?**

Respondents generally felt that the faithful are marginally aware of the Teachings of the Church on responsible parenthood. It is limited and generally not reinforced or enhanced by consistent updating, especially in relation to explanations provided by the general media. There is a perception by some that clergy are reluctant to speak more on such issues given a perceived reaction from the faithful. One observed an attitude among clergy as "don't ask, don't tell". Some

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# SUMMARY OF RESPONSES TO SURVEY QUESTIONS

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respondents expressed a comfort level with this attitude, indicating a reluctance to confront faith issues in this area.

Professional lay persons are able and ready to assist clergy in catechesis on responsible parenthood, but are often not invited in the process of educating and catechizing. There appears to be a general malaise and reluctance to address needed issues on responsible parenthood. Good catechesis is needed, including the development of easily understood and competent materials which can be used in catechetical outreach. Some respondents advocated greater sharing of the joy of God's love revealed in children and families living a good moral life as a means of negating the negative influences of a society which is not pro-life.

The use of contraceptives is an area which is lightly observed in practice by the faithful, including some of our married clergy. A refresher on natural family planning would seem to be needed within the entire Church, along with the Church's

teaching on responsible parenthood which has become tainted with many misconceptions. Education and more open discussion by couples who have successfully lived in conformity with sound moral teachings would foster a more open attitude to having children.

## **8. The Relationship between the Family and the Person**

### **How can the family be a privileged place for a person to encounter Jesus Christ?**

The family can be engendered to be a privileged place for a person to encounter Jesus Christ by ensuring a sound united prayerful environment which nurtures each individual. Family prayer and spirituality are at the core of a healthy spiritual journey. Reminding faithful to regularly read the Sacred Scriptures, to celebrate gratitude with regular common prayer and praise at meals and at rising and at bedtime, and to celebrate liturgies as a family unit are among some of the ways respondents advocated enhancing the

relationship between the family and the person. Many of the respondents observed that the Church needs to provide greater assistance to the family in these areas with teaching, example, encouragement, and materials to assist the family in common prayer. We ought not to presume that parents know their prayers and that they are comfortable with practicing their faith. Many have not been privileged to have the example of parents and grandparents that preceding generations have had. The Domestic Church and its value need to be emphasized. Family activities for youth, couples and seniors should be encouraged to be an integral part of parish life. The Church should be a community. Faithful need to be encouraged to encounter Jesus Christ in one another as we are all made in the image of Christ.

An area observed as needing particular pastoral enhancement is that of bereavement pastoral counselling and support. Many observed that the Church and its representatives are not present to faithful in

after crisis events of life. Bitterness and anger develops because of a perceived lack of needed attention to hurting individuals. The necessity of outreach at such times is seen as critical for many respondents as it is a critical opportunity to encounter Jesus Christ by both receiver and giver of ministry.

## **9. Other Challenges and Proposals**

### **Are there other challenges or proposals which you consider urgent and useful to consider?**

Most respondents advocated a strict interpretation and application of the natural law understanding of marriage within the Church. While conveying some level of tolerance and love for those wanting same sex unions, or struggling with homosexuality, it was felt that Church teaching on marriage ought not to be compromised in any way.

There appears to be a perception by some of failed leadership by

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# SUMMARY OF RESPONSES TO SURVEY QUESTIONS

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the Church in having provided for the needed teaching of the authentic Catholic Faith. Some advocate 'getting back to basics on all levels". Teaching by example and by steadfastness in the face of modernism and humanism in society is advocated by some respondents. Conversely, a minority of respondents advocated becoming a more open and loving Church, including openness to adults who choose to cohabit for varying reasons, and for divorced and separated persons.

Respondents were overwhelmingly positive in openly embracing

the child of same sex and irregular marriage / union situations with the reception of the Holy Sacraments.

A greater role for women in the Church was also advocated by some respondents. Just as women had a significant role in the earthly life of Jesus Christ, they ought to be entrusted with greater responsibilities in the ministries of the Church.

There is a need for the Church to minister to Catholics who are surrounded daily by non-Catholics, supporting them to pro-actively and unapologetically live their

faith in such surroundings. The value and need for dramatically enhanced adult catechesis was repeatedly stressed by respondents.

There was overwhelming support for complete openness to a married clergy with little understanding and advocacy for retaining celibacy amidst clergy. Arguments included the greater suitability of married clergy in living and teaching traditional family values, openness and ability to offer counselling and support, and the loss of credibility due to the poor handling of sexual abuse scandals in the Church.

The need for good screening and formation of clergy was raised particularly in relation to the attitude of a priest and its potential detrimental and/or life-giving influence on the life of faithful and their families. Arrogance was cited in one situation.

The value and need for attention in modesty in dress when participating in liturgies were also raised by some respondents as an outward sign of respect for one self and for other persons created in the image of God.

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## APPEAL FOR AN END TO THE VIOLENCE IN UKRAINE

Vatican City, 19 February 2014 (VIS) – Following today's catechesis, Pope Francis launched an appeal for an end to the violence in Ukraine, in whose capital Kiev there have been clashes between the forces of order and anti-government demonstrators, causing twenty-five deaths last night. "It is with concern that I follow the events in Kiev during these days. I assure the Ukrainian people of my closeness and pray for the victims of the violence, for their families, and for the injured. I urge all parties to cease every form of violence and to pursue harmony and peace throughout the country".



<http://visnews-en.blogspot.com/>

Photo: <http://risu.org.ua>

# **“Freedom and dignity is given to us not by a president but by law. These values are given to us by God...” UGCC Head in Kyiv**

Wednesday, 19 February 2014

On February 16th, the Sunday of the Prodigal Son, UGCC Father and Head His Beatitude Sviatoslav during the sermon at the Divine Liturgy in the UGCC Patriarchal Cathedral of the Resurrection of Christ related that today we are experiencing a special moment of rediscovering the dignity of Ukrainians.

“Many thinkers have labeled this as the “Revolution of Dignity”. But freedom and dignity are not given to us by a certain president or some law. These values are given to us by God. Only when we get close to God, then we feel our own greatness and the greatness of our native land,” stated the Church Head. He underlined that in the

current culture, which is mostly one of consumerism, a person is valued exactly by what one has: “If one has wealth, money and authority, one has dignity. Yet, when one loses all that, then the person becomes nothing – becomes nameless.” Such thinking by the current society is wrong, UGCC Prelate believes. Because, according to his words, the dignity of a person does not depend on what the person has and what place the person holds in society.

“God created man in his image and likeness and gave man the highest dignity among all created beings. A person loses feeling one’s dignity when the person distances oneself from God. One begins to search for one’s dignity when one has reached the abyss of sin. In order to feel oneself as a dignified person and the source of one’s personal “I”, the person has to return to God,” explained His Beatitude Sviatoslav.

The preacher said that this Sunday brings us closer to the beginning of Great Lent and it is exactly on the Sunday of the Prodigal Son that the Church calls all of its children to return to the Heavenly Father, because it is through repentance that one can find “one’s heavenly kinship and dignity in God’s and one’s own eyes,” noted UGCC Head. In the prayers at the Patriarchal Cathedral, the UGCC Prelate was joined by Bishop Joseph (Milian), Assistant Bishop of the Kyiv Archeparchy, clergy of the Archeparchy, and numerous faithful.

UGCC Department of Information  
<http://news.ugcc.org.ua/>



# **“A priest does not have the right to make political speeches or to be a leader of political actions. Yet, he should not abandon his faithful!”**

Friday, 21 February 2014

Dear Hierarchs and Priests! Together with you, I am pained by all the wounds inflicted on our people and I support your priestly zeal and closeness to your flock. Given the dramatic situation in our country, I want to remind all of you of the fundamental norms of serving as a priest.

UGCC Head and Father, His Beatitude Sviatoslav Shevchuk writes about this in his Guidelines on the behavior of the clergy in the present social-political situation in Ukraine. In these Guidelines the Head of the Church specifies nine aspects of an appropriate behavior of a priest in today’s political situation. The point of departure is the postulate that the Church is “a community of the children of God, united by their faith in the Holy Trinity God, and the priest is a servant of this community, the picture of Christ – a Good Shepherd, actively present among his people.

His Beatitude Sviatoslav also emphasizes that every representative of the clergy is the face of the Church and therefore should realize his vocation according to its teachings. The main task of the pastor, as the author underlined in the document, is the proclamation of Christ’s Gospel, the administration of the Holy Sacraments, leadership of people in praying, fasting and serving the needy.

In addition, as His Beatitude Sviatoslav notes, the Church is an active participant of social, not political, processes; therefore, a priest does not have the right to be a leader of political actions or to make political speeches.

“The vocation of the pastor in all issues of the day is not to abandon his faithful and to be with them,” believes UGCC Major Archbishop. At the end, His Beatitude Sviatoslav states that all representatives of the clergy -- especially during these days -- should listen to the church leadership.

UGCC Department of Information  
<http://news.ugcc.org.ua/>

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## **Metropolitan Mieczyslaw Mokrzycki: On Maidan We See a Very Different Ukraine**

17 February 2014

Archbishop Mieczyslaw Mokrzycki, Metropolitan of Lviv of the Roman Catholic Church, believes that the events on Maidan can lead to a change in the political system in Ukraine and in the foreign course of the state. He said this in an interview with the Catholic Media Center.

“I think that the events on the Maidan are a chance for Ukraine if they will change the political system and lead to a more pro-Western policy direction. Thanks to them, there is hope for the healing of the state, for greater justice

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## Metropolitan Mieczyslaw Mokrzycki

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and for simplifying the conditions for foreign travel as well as for facilitating the conditions for foreign investors,” said the metropolitan.

Archbishop Mieczyslaw Mokrzycki said that Roman Catholics of Ukraine support the peaceful protest.

“The Roman Catholic Church in Ukraine, like other churches in Ukraine, expresses its support. Our prayer tent was erected on the Maidan in Kyiv. There Franciscans celebrate daily Holy Mass and lead prayers,” said the hierarch.

He also said that the Roman Catholic Church in Ukraine offers spiritual and moral support to the victims of the security forces.

“The faithful of the Roman Catholic Church are also taking part in the demonstrations on the Maidan. They are accompanied by priests, in order to create an atmosphere of solidarity, peace, and respect. Such an atmosphere of mutual respect and solidarity prevails on the Maidan. There we see a very different Ukraine,” concluded the Metropolitan of Lviv.

<http://risu.org.ua>

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## UGCC Has New Exarchate and Bishop

13 February 2014

On February 13, 2014, the Vatican reported that the pope gave his consent to the canonical election by the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Synod of Bishops of the Exarch of Odesa. The Exarch became Father Mykhailo Bubniy, CSSR, the superior of the Redemptorist monastery in Ivano-Frankivsk and parish priest of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Vatican Radio reports.

Recently the Crimea Exarchate of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (UGCC) was created and Bishop Vasyl Ivasyuk, the Exarch of Odesa and Crimea, was appointed the Eparch Kolomyja and Chernivtsi of the UGCC.



The Crimean Archiepiscopal Exarchate was formed by separating it from the Exarchate of Odesa and Crimea. It covers the territory of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, and is based in Simferopol.

<http://risu.org.ua>

## March 2014 - Березня 2014

### Happy Birthday!

#### З Днем народження!

March 3: Rev. Msgr. James Melnic  
March 6: Rev. Leonid Malkov, C.S.s.R.  
March 7: Rev. Paul Labinsky  
March 7: Deacon Walter Pasicznyk  
March 12: Rev. Volodymyr Baran, C.S.s.R.  
March 13: Rev. Msgr. Peter Waslo  
March 19: Rev. Vasyl Vladyka

**May the Good Lord Continue to Guide  
You and Shower You with His Great  
Blessings.  
Mnohaya Lita!**

**Нехай Добрий Господь  
Тримає Вас у Своїй  
Опіці та Щедро  
Благословить Вас.**



### Congratulations on your Anniversary of Priesthood!

#### Вітаємо з Річницею Священства!

March 5: V. Rev. Archmandrite Joseph Lee  
(44th Anniversary)  
March 14: Rev. Vasyl Vladyka  
(22nd Anniversary)  
March 20: Rev. Mykola Ivanov  
(9th Anniversary)  
March 24: Rev. Deacon Paul Makar  
(27th Anniversary)  
March 30: Very Rev. Archpr. David Clooney  
(50th Anniversary)  
March 31: Rev. John Wysochansky  
(57th Anniversary)

**May God Grant You Many Happy and Blessed  
Years of Service in the Vineyard of Our Lord!**

**Нехай Бог Обдарує Багатьма  
Благословенними Роками Служіння в  
Господньому Винограднику!**

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