

Announcing the 2015 Women's Day of Prayer *Faith and the Family*

The Ukrainian Catholic Archeparchy of Philadelphia, in partnership with the Sisters of the Order of St. Basil the Great, the Sisters Servants of Mary Immaculate, and the Missionary Sisters of the Mother of God, will sponsor Faith and the Family. This year, the Day will be offered on a regional basis at two separate locations and will begin with Divine Liturgy at 11:00 a.m. Lunch, a formal program and a closing ritual will follow; and the Day will conclude at 4:00 p.m. The Holy Mystery of Reconciliation (Holy Confession) will be available shortly before Divine Liturgy and throughout the Day.



Metropolitan Stefan Soroka and clergy open 1st Women's Day held in Philadelphia, PA with Akathist.

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Highlights inside this issue:

A Special Moleben Prayer and Healing Service before a Relic of Blessed Bishop-Martyr Mykola Charnetsky, CSsR will be held Sunday, March 15 at 4:00 pm in the Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral in Philadelphia - pg. 6

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Announcing the 2015 Women's Day of Prayer

Faith and the Family

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The 2015 Women's Day of Prayer has been developed by the members of the Philadelphia Archeparchy's Committee for the Enrichment of Women whose Mission is to offer women of all ages an occasion to grow spiritually and deepen their faith; to expand their social consciousness and their understanding of the social issues and problems facing today's women and families; and to nurture their personal development through various opportunities for enrichment.



Pictures from 1st Women's Day held in Philadelphia.

The design and content of this year's Women's Day of Prayer also reflect the comments and suggestions offered by women of the Archeparchy who replied to a survey conducted last year by the Committee. Consequently, this year's Women's Day of Prayer will be held as follows on two consecutive Sundays during the Great Fast:

**SUNDAY, MARCH 1, 2015, at St. Nicholas Ukrainian Catholic Church,
217 President Street, Passaic, New Jersey 07055**

**SUNDAY, MARCH 8, 2015, at Presentation of Our Lord Ukrainian Catholic Church,
1564 Allentown Road, Lansdale, Pennsylvania 19446.**

Our presenter is Sr. Natalya Stoczany, a member of the Sisters Servants of Mary Immaculate. Sister Natalya is an educator who has worked with youth and adults and currently is editor of "The Sower," the Stamford Eparchy's newspaper. The theme and program elements for the 2015 Women's Day of Prayer have been structured in conjunction with the Vibrant Parish initiatives of the Ukrainian Catholic Church and to complement this year's World Meeting of Families to be held in Philadelphia September 22-27, 2015. The theme of the 2015 World Meeting of Families is "Love Is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive," emphasizing the impact of the love and life of families on our society.

We cordially invite you to participate in Faith and the Family to reflect upon and delight in the joy which is the gift of faith. An offering of \$10 is suggested to help defray the cost of lunch.

For more information, please contact Maria Panczak, at 215-379-3998 ext.17. Please plan to attend ... and to bring a friend!



**Sr. Natalya Stoczany,
SSMI**



Faith and the Family

Sponsored by:

*The Ukrainian
Catholic
Archeparchy of
Philadelphia*

*The Sisters of
the Order of
Saint Basil the
Great*

*The Sisters
Servants of
Mary
Immaculate*

*The Missionary
Sisters of the
Mother of God*

SUNDAY, MARCH 1, 2015

at

**St. Nicholas Ukrainian Catholic
Church**

**217 President Street,
Passaic, New Jersey 07055**

SUNDAY, MARCH 8, 2015

at

**Presentation of Our Lord
Ukrainian Catholic Church**

**1564 Allentown Road,
Lansdale, Pennsylvania 19446**



Come gather with women of the Archeparchy to pray, reflect and grow spiritually while being inspired to contribute actively to the spiritual development of your family members and fellow parishioners. The Holy Mystery of Reconciliation (Holy Confession) will be available shortly before Divine Liturgy and throughout the Day.

***Our day begins at 11:00 a.m. with Divine Liturgy celebrated by
His Grace, Metropolitan Stefan Soroka.***

REGISTRATION

I will attend Women's Day on **MARCH 1** in Passaic, NJ **MARCH 8** in Lansdale, PA

**Suggested
Donation:**

**\$10 to Cover
the Cost of
Lunch**

Name

Address

City

State

Zip

Email

Phone

Parish

MAIL REGISTRATION TO:

Sister Dorothy Ann Busowski, OSBM
710 Fox Chase Road
Fox Chase Manor, Pennsylvania 19046

Sunday of Meatfare - February 8, 2015



The Lord said: "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.' "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' "The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.' "Then he will say to those

on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.' "They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?' "He will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.' "Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life." (Mt. 25, 31-46)

The Sunday of the Last Judgment is the third Sunday of a three-week period prior to the commencement of Great Lent. During this time, the services of the Church have begun to include hymns from the Triodion, a liturgical book that contains the services from the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee, the tenth before Pascha (Easter), through Great and Holy Saturday. On this day, focus is placed on the future judgment of all persons who will stand before the throne of God when Christ returns in His glory.

The commemoration for this Sunday is taken from the parable of our Lord Jesus Christ concerning his Second Coming and the Last Judgment of all, both the living and the dead. In Matthew 25:31-46, Christ speaks about what will happen at this specific point in time when He will "come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him" (v. 31). At His coming, "He will sit on the throne of His glory," and all of the nations will be gathered before Him. He will separate them "as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats" (v. 32). The sheep will be placed on His right hand, and the goats on the left. To the sheep, He will say "Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (vv. 33-34). This kingdom is offered to the sheep because of their compassion and service to those in need. Jesus says, "...for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me." The sheep, who are the righteous chosen for the kingdom, will ask how this could be so. They will ask Jesus when was He hungry or thirsty, a stranger, naked, and in prison. He will answer them by saying, "Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to the least of these My brethren, you did it to me" (vv. 35-40).

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Sunday of Meatfare

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Christ the King, seated on His throne of judgment, will then turn to the goats on His left and say, “Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels” (v. 41). He will condemn them because they did not feed Him when He was hungry, give Him drink when He was thirsty, take Him in when He was a stranger, clothe Him when He was naked, visit Him when He was sick or in prison. The goats will ask the Lord, “When did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?” Then He will answer them saying, “Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me” (vv. 42-45).

Jesus concludes His words on the Last Judgment by stating that those on the left “will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life” (v. 46).

On the past two Sundays of this pre-Lenten period, the focus was placed on God’s patience and limitless compassion, of His readiness to accept every sinner who returns to Him. On this third Sunday, we are powerfully reminded of a complementary truth: no one is so patient and so merciful as God, but even He does not forgive those who do not repent. The God of love is also a God of righteousness, and when Christ comes again in glory, He will come as our Judge. Such is the message of Lent to each of us: turn back while there is still time, repent before the End comes.

This Sunday sets before us the eschatological dimension of Lent: the Great Fast is a preparation for the Second Coming of the Savior, for the eternal Passover in the Age to Come, a theme that is also the focus of the first three days of Holy Week. But the judgment is not only in the future. Here and now, each day and each hour, in hardening our hearts toward others and in failing to respond to the opportunities we are given of helping them, we are already passing judgment on ourselves.

Another theme of this Sunday is that of love. When Christ comes to judge us, what will be the criterion of His judgment? The parable of the Last Judgment answers: love—not a mere humanitarian concern for abstract justice and the anonymous “poor,” but concrete and personal love for the human person—the specific persons that we encounter each day in our lives.

Christian love is the “possible impossibility” to see Christ in another person, whoever he or she is, and whom God, in His eternal and mysterious plan, has decided to introduce into my life, be it only for a few moments, not as an occasion for a “good deed” or an exercise in philanthropy, but as the beginning of an eternal companionship in God Himself.

The parable of the Last Judgment is about Christian love. Not all of us are called to work for “humanity,” yet each one of us has received the gift and the grace of Christ’s love. We know that all persons ultimately need this personal love—the recognition in them of their unique soul in which the beauty of the whole creation is reflected in a unique way. We also know that people are in prison and are sick and thirsty and hungry because that personal love has been denied them. And, finally, we know that however narrow and limited the framework of our personal existence, each one of us has been made responsible for a tiny part of the Kingdom of God, made responsible by that very gift of Christ’s love. Thus, on whether or not we have accepted this responsibility, on whether we have loved or refused to love, shall we be judged.

A Special Moleben Prayer and Healing Service before a Relic of Blessed Bishop-Martyr Mykola Charnetsky, CSsR will be held Sunday, March 15 at 4:00 pm in the Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral in Philadelphia

Philadelphia, Pa.-- On Sunday, March 15 at 4 p.m. a special moleben prayer and healing service before a relic of Blessed Bishop Martyr Mykola Charnetsky, C.Ss.R., will be led by Metropolitan-Archbishop Stefan Soroka at the golden domed Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, 830 North Franklin Street, Philadelphia, Pa. Metropolitan Soroka will also bless a newly commissioned icon of Blessed Bishop Charnetsky, which will be available with the relic for prayer and veneration.



During the service the faithful will be anointed with the holy oil of healing. Blessed Bishop-Martyr Charnetsky, known as “the healer of souls” was beatified by St. John Paul II on June 27, 2001 in Lviv, Ukraine. Many personal testimonies are recorded of miraculous healings through his intercession. All the faithful are invited and encouraged to attend these services and to bring their intentions for healing through the intercession of Blessed Bishop Mykola.

Blessed Mykola, born on September 14, 1884 in the village of Semakivtsi, Ivano-Frankivsk, Ukraine, was ordained to the priesthood in 1909, and earning a doctorate in dogmatic theology from Rome, he was appointed spiritual director and professor at the seminary in Ivano-Frankivsk.

In 1919, he entered the novitiate of the Redemptorist Fathers in Lviv and in 1926 was appointed apostolic visitor for Ukrainian Catholics in Volyn, Polissia, Kholm and Pidliahsia. He zealously worked for the union of the Holy Church.

On February 2, 1931, he was ordained to the episcopacy by Bishop Hryhorii Khomyshyn.



Blessed Bishop-Martyr Mykola Charnetsky, C.Ss.R.

He was arrested by the NKVD, the secret police of Josef Stalin on April 11, 1945 and sentenced to six years of hard labor in Siberia.

According to official records, he underwent 600 hour of interrogation and torture and spent time in 30 different prisons and camps.

Terminally ill, in 1956, he was permitted to return to western Ukraine, where he secretly continued to fulfill his episcopal obligations in underground church of the catacombs.

In the midst of the cruelty and oppression which he suffered in imprisonment and in exile, he was distinguished for his evangelical patience, gentleness and limitless goodness and holiness. During his lifetime he was considered by the faithful, a holy man. As a consequence of his sufferings, he died a martyr for the faith on April 2, 1959 in Lviv, and is known as “the healer of souls’ by the faithful.

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

“They shall be my people and I will be their God, for they will return to me with all their heart” (Jer. 24:7).

On Monday, February 16th, we begin the holy season of the Great Fast. Once again, our Church invites us to embark upon this annual journey – a period of grace when we identify more closely with our Lord Jesus Christ in his suffering, death, and resurrection.

During this time, we are encouraged to be faithful to our traditional Lenten practices. Prayer, fasting, and almsgiving are practical means for our spiritual move in the direction of our Savior. But we do not stop with just these. Micah the Prophet sets for us a good checklist: “Act justly, love tenderly and walk humbly with your God” (Micah 6:8). Without this right relationship with God and with others – no amount of fasting and prayer will help us to draw closer to the Lord.

The Great Fast makes sense when it is seen precisely as preparation for the celebration of the Paschal Mystery – the redemptive death and resurrection of Jesus – which spells out the Gospel (Good News) in terms of our being reconciled and made one with God, and consequently our being at peace with self, with God, and with others.

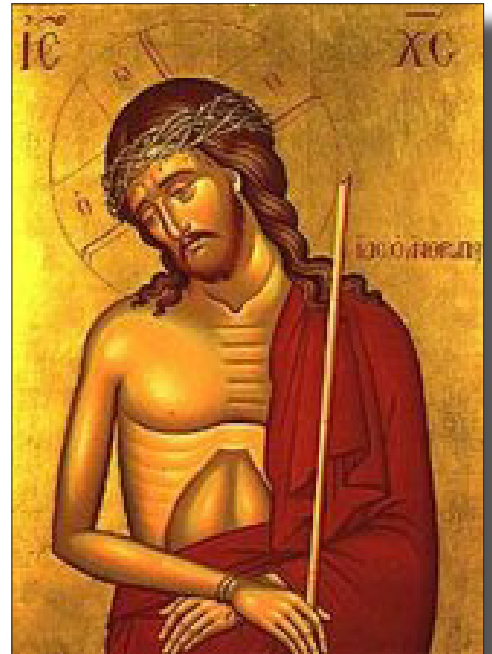
That reconciliatory peace our Lord proclaimed to his followers on the day of his resurrection: “Peace be with you . . . Receive the Holy Spirit; for those whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven; for those whose sins you retain, they are retained” (Jn. 20:21, 22-23).

To believe the Gospel is to believe that Jesus’ forgiveness is to be experienced in the Mystery of Reconciliation (Penance). That’s Good News! That’s the Gospel! Therefore, the Mystery of Reconciliation serves to couple the call to repent by acknowledging sin in our lives and the call to believe the Gospel by seeking and accepting God’s loving forgiveness.

God does not want us to get discouraged or overwhelmed by our sins. When St. Paul the Apostle looked into his own life, he exclaimed “I do not understand what I do; for I do not do what I would like to do, but instead I do what I hate” (Rom. 7:15).

How typical! Don’t we all experience this? We have such good intentions and poor performance. We start well, but somewhere along the line our will power runs out. We slide down the slippery slope and often end up pretty much where we started. We could get discouraged. To help us when we are tempted to give up, St. Paul continues:

“I know that no good lives in me, that is, in my human nature. For even though the desire to do good is in me, I am not able to do it. I don’t do the good I want to do; instead, I do the evil that I do not want to do . . . What a miserable man I am! Who will rescue me?” (Rom. 7:18-19, 24).



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GREAT FAST 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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And St. Paul gives the answer: "Thanks be to God, our Lord Jesus Christ!" (Rom. 7:25).

God does not abandon us to our sins. Throughout the entire Holy Bible, from the Law and the Prophets of the Old Testament to the sending of his Beloved Son in the New Testament, we get a picture of a loving, heavenly Father seeking and calling his children to come home. With warnings, invitations, promises, and the offering of his Only-Begotten Son, has the call of God gone throughout the world. He has spoken to us in words and gracious deeds and by the Holy Spirit in our own consciences. All the promises that God has made to us have been confirmed and fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

The call of the Great Fast is a call to return home, so vividly seen in the story of the prodigal son. It is a call to fear the Lord, to love him, to serve him, to glorify him, to rejoice in him. So much has been done for us, especially that great sacrifice of Christ upon the Cross for the sake of our salvation, of bringing us home. God has endless blessings to bestow upon us if we open our hearts to him. And this is the time to do it!

Beloved sisters and brothers in Christ, please be assured of our daily prayers for all of you. Let us remember also at this time our sisters and brothers in Ukraine as they undergo tremendous hardships in their continued struggle for peace, dignity, unity, and territorial integrity. May our good Lord look favorably upon them and fulfill all their requests.

"The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with all of you!" (2 Thess. 3:18).

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

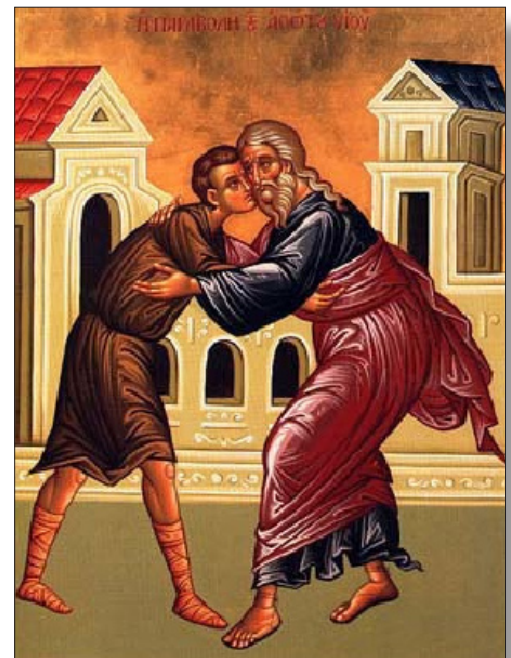
+Richard Seminack
Eparch of St. Nicholas in Chicago

+Paul Chomnycky, OSBM
Eparch of Stamford

+ Bohdan Danylo
Eparch of St. Josaphat in Parma

+John Bura (author)
Auxiliary Bishop of Philadelphia

Great Fast, 2015



Prodigal Son



METROPOLITAN ARCHEPARCHY OF PHILADELPHIA

Ukrainian Catholic
827 North Franklin Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19123-2097
Phone (215) 627-0143 Fax (215) 627-0377
ukrmet@ukrcap.org

No. 88/2015 O

This Number Should be Prefixed to Your Reply

Office of the Metropolitan

APPEAL OF UKRAINIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS IN THE UNITED STATES FOR MEDITATION AND FASTING FOR UKRAINE

The bishops of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church in Ukraine with Patriarch Sviatoslav Shevchuk have asked their faithful to fast and to pray daily for various intentions, among them, for the President and elected officials of Ukraine, for the conversion of the aggressors, for the Ukrainian army, for those who protect citizens, for the souls of the deceased, and for unity and independence of Ukraine. Let us join them in holy prayer and fasting!

We, the Ukrainian Catholic Bishops of the United States call upon all of our clergy, religious and faithful to pray daily the special prayer for Ukraine provided with this appeal, and to devote precious time for quiet meditation and prayer for the intentions already cited by the bishops of Ukraine. Fast by pausing from our daily activities for an extended amount of time to reflect and pray for the people of Ukraine, and for the specific intentions given above. Meditate on the horrific sufferings of the people of Ukraine, as you pray to God for peace and unity. Pray to the Mother of God for her intercession with her Son, Jesus Christ and for her maternal protection of the people of Ukraine. Pause to identify with the suffering as you pray for peace. Sacrifice valued time and thought in prayer for our brothers and sisters who suffer!

In addition, we ask that all of our clergy and faithful, following every Divine Liturgy and liturgical service say the *Prayer for Peace for Ukraine*. Let us be steadfast and continue to offer these prayers, fasting and meditation until peace and unity are achieved in Ukraine. We thank you for your anticipated faithful and prayerful participation! God bless you!

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

+Richard Seminack
Eparch of St. Nicholas in Chicago

+Paul Chomnycky, OSBM
Eparch of Stamford

+ Bohdan Danylo
Eparch of St. Josaphat in Parma

+John Bura
Auxiliary Bishop of Philadelphia

February, 2015

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.

Spiritual Regulations for the Great Fast

Although our Church traditionally prescribed abstention from meat and dairy products in days gone by for the entire duration of the Great Fast, the following are the minimal Lenten regulations today:

Abstinence from meat and all dairy products on the First Day of the Great Fast and on Good Friday.

Abstinence from meat only on all Fridays of the Great Fast as well as Holy Saturday. It is also traditional to abstain from meat on Wednesdays during the Great Fast.

Reception of the Holy Mysteries of Reconciliation and Holy Eucharist during the period from the onset of Great Fast to the Wednesday before Ascension Thursday.

The Fasting and Abstinence regulations are not binding on persons 60 or older, the very poor, sick, nursing or pregnant women, children below the age of 14, and those who engage in physically very hard labor. However, all are urged, if able to do so, to observe the fasting and abstinence regulations.

All the faithful are urged to attend the Lenten services such as the Presanctified Liturgy and the Commemoration of the Deceased (Sorokousty).

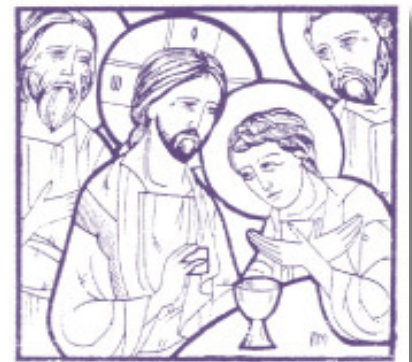
Such good deeds as almsgiving, visitation of the sick, Bible reading and praying for vocations to the priesthood and religious life are most earnestly recommended to all the Faithful.



Great Fast Liturgical Guidelines

The weekdays of the Great Fast are aliturgical meaning no Divine Liturgy, even for funerals, should be celebrated except for the Feast of the Annunciation. On Wednesdays and Fridays of the Great Fast, the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts is to be celebrated. Typika may be used the other days. For funerals, the liturgical text used by the New Jersey Protoperbyterate or St. Michael Church in Frackville may be utilized. The Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great is to be celebrated for Sunday Liturgies during this time.

During Holy Week, the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts is to be celebrated Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. There is no Divine Liturgy celebrated on Good Friday and Holy Saturday. On Holy Thursday evening, Vespers with Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great should be celebrated. On Holy Saturday evening, Vespers with the Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great is to be celebrated.



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Students Visit the Cathedral and Museum



Students from Episcopal Academy High School visited the Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception and the Treasury of Faith Museum on January 13, 2015. Mrs. Anna Makuch (volunteer for the Treasury of Faith Museum) talked to the students about Ukrainian traditions and customs. The tour of the Museum was conducted by the Missionary Sisters of Mother of God and Father Walter Pasicznyk gave a tour of the Cathedral.

SISTER BOHDONNA CELEBRATES 99TH BIRTHDAY

Sister Bohdonna Podney OSBM, celebrated her 99th birthday Friday, January 9, 2015, surrounded by the members of her religious community at the Motherhouse of the Sisters of the Order of St. Basil the Great, Fox Chase Manor, PA.

A member of the Order for close to eighty-three years, Sister Bohdonna has served her community in leadership roles and in a variety of assignments in the fields of education and pastoral ministry, endearing herself to many in the United States and Canada.

“What have I learned as I reach ninety-nine years? (Among many things...) I know the comfort and love of Our Blessed Mother and am aware of the care and guidance of my Guardian Angel.”



All present came forward to offer individual good wishes while singing “MNOHAYA LITA!” and hoped to gather again next year for Sister’s 100th.

Many Happy Years! Mnohaya Lita!

Candle Blessing at the Cathedral

Rev. Ivan Demkiv and Rev. Joseph Szupa blessed candles at the Cathedral on the feast of the Encounter (Presentation) of Our Lord in the Temple on February 2, 2015. Watch a video on our YouTube Channel.
<https://www.youtube.com/user/thewayukrainian>



PROVINCIAL CHAPTER TO BE HELD JUNE 2015

The Sisters of the Order of Saint Basil the Great, Jesus Lover of Humanity Province, are in the process of preparing for their Provincial Chapter which will take place June 21-25, 2015, at their Motherhouse in Fox Chase Manor, PA.



**Photo of the Sisters at Holy Trinity Chapel
in Fox Chase Manor, PA**

The Chapter (a series of meetings) will cover matters of concern to the Province and will be highlighted by the election of five Sisters to a five-year term on the Provincial Council, the Sisters' governing body. Presently serving in this capacity are: Sister Dorothy Ann Busowski, Provincial Superior, Sister Joann Sosler, Assistant Provincial Superior, and Sister Maria Rozmarynowycz, Sister Ann Laszok and Sister Clement Bartholomew, Councilors. By virtue of their office, these councilors act as delegates to the Chapter with voting privileges along with other Sister delegates elected by the community: Sister Mary Cecilia Jurasinski, Sister Miriam Claire Kowal, Sister Monica Lesnick, Sister Theodosia Lukiw, Sister Susanne Matwijiw, Sister Dolores Orzel and Sister Rita Stremba. Sister Marina Bochnewich and Sister Judith Piszak will serve as alternate delegates.

Responsible for the planning and efficient carrying out of the Chapter's agenda are Steering Committee members Sister Carla Hernandez, Sister Clement Bartholomew and Sister Ann Laszok.

The upcoming Provincial Chapter takes on an added significance during this Year of Consecrated Life as the Sisters look back on their service to the Ukrainian Catholic Church. They invite all clergy, religious and faithful to whom much of their good work has been dedicated to join them in prayer as they reflect on the past, contemplate the present and focus on the future.

We pray together:

THE PRAYER FOR GUIDANCE FOR OUR PROVINCIAL CHAPTER

Steer the ship of our lives, Lord.
Renew in us the gift of discernment
so that we can see the right direction in which we should go.

Show us the course we should take for our future
and give us the courage to choose it.

Even when the sea of our life is rough with uncertainties
and the waves are high with challenges,
our hope is in You, O Lord.

For this we give You glory and praise,
together with Your Father and Your All Holy Good and Life-creating Spirit
now and ever and forever. Amen. (Adapted...St. Basil the Great)

The Jewel in Sloatsburg

by: Myra Voloshin



The Jewel in Sloatsburg aptly describes the beautiful site, a former estate, of Sister Servants of Mary Immaculate in the United States. The provincial headquarters of the Sisters, the Villa Maria Retreat Center, and St. Joseph's Adult Care Home are located there in peaceful and scenic surroundings. It was purchased by the Sisters in 1941 from the wife of William Pierson Hamilton.

Most of us know Sloatsburg as the place of the Annual Pilgrimage in August. This was my recollection of Sloatsburg. However, I had first met the sisters in grade school in Philadelphia where they taught at the Immaculate Conception School. More recently, my interest in Sloatsburg was very personal as we looked to find a home, a retirement facility, for my aging mother. We were concerned that she was not able to live alone but, as is typical, Mom did not want a companion or caregiver to live with her. We tried Assisted Living but that did not work and Mom wanted to leave. We revisited Sloatsburg.

I knew that several of my friends had mothers or fathers living in Sloatsburg and they were well satisfied with the care and attention their parents received. They emphasized the peace of mind they enjoyed with the knowledge that their loved ones were safe and happy.

We visited the St. Joseph's Adult Care Home with my mother. We received a warm welcome and a tour. We recognized some old friends and enjoyed visiting with them. After discussions with Mom, she agreed to "try a summer vacation" at Sloatsburg. Once she moved in, she joined a group of ladies that formed a congenial group, discussing and arguing various topics. She enjoyed sitting outside with them. She enjoyed the daily activities and was especially good at bowling. When summer passed, Mom stayed on for the fall. It has now been three years.

At first, we called the Sisters frequently inquiring how Mom was doing. We talked to Mom on the telephone every couple of days. Then the phone calls

decreased. Now, we visit every two weeks or so. Mom is happy although she uses a walker and is not as active as before. The Sisters, staff, and friends are still there for her.

How important these relationships with the Sisters and staff are can be illustrated by an event that happened last fall. My mother was admitted to the hospital and was there for almost a week. She needed help eating and walking. When she went back to St. Joseph's, she gave everyone a big smile, walked to her favorite chair, and sat down. We knew that Mom was happy to be at home.

There are 30 residents at this facility who enjoy a warm home atmosphere, lots of activities, home-cooked meals, and lovely gardens. St. Joseph is the only Ukrainian facility of this kind that benefits senior citizens. There is usually a waiting list indicating

the demand for such services and care. There is a need to expand the facility and to meet the increased expectations of a new generation. The Sisters are planning to meet these needs with a modernization and expansion program. A new addition to St. Joseph will include: first floor bedrooms with private baths, spacious dining room, doctor's office, expanded kitchen, and an enclosed sitting garden.

I wish the Sisters success in their expansion endeavor and may God continue to bless their ministries with the elderly.

I want to encourage everyone to participate in the campaign to raise funds for this most worthy cause by making donations as well as to consider St. Joseph's Adult Care Home for their loved ones or themselves.

(Article from Sower, May 25, 2014)



The Sisters of the Order
of Saint Basil the Great
Celebrate the Year of
Consecrated Life



OPEN HOUSE

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2015

710 FOX CHASE ROAD, FOX CHASE MANOR, PA

1:00 – 5:00 PM

We would like to share with you the joy of our vocation

Schedule for the day

1:00 – 1:30 PM	Tour the monastery
1:30 – 2:30 PM	DVD "Women of Spirit" Questions and answer session
2:30 – 3:45 PM	Refreshments
4:00 PM	Vespers

Opportunity to tour Manor College, Saint Basil Academy and the Basilian Spirituality Center
Sponsored ministries of the Sisters

Please call 215.379.3998 to reserve a place



In celebration of the **Year of Consecrated Life**,
declared by Pope Francis,
the Sisters Servants of Mary Immaculate
cordially invite you to join us for an **Open House**
at our Motherhouse in Sloatsburg, NY

on February 8, 2015

from 11:00 – 4:00 pm

The Afternoon Includes:

11:00 am: Sunday Divine Liturgy at St. Mary's Villa – celebrated by
the Most Rev. Paul Chomnycky, OSBM
Lunch will be served

1:00 – 2:15 pm: Tour of Motherhouse

2:15 – 2:45 pm: Sharing Vocation Stories

2:45 – 3:15 pm: A DVD about the life of Blessed Josaphata Hordashevska,
foundress, of the Sisters Servants

3:30 pm: Tour of St. Joseph's Adult Care Home

4:00 pm: Closing

If you would like to celebrate this day with us, please call 845-753-2840 or
e-mail: srkath25@gmail.com by February 2, 2015. You may come for some or all of
the events, but please contact us so that we can plan accordingly for the number of
people for Liturgy and Lunch.

Meatless Meal for LENT

"BAKED HADDOCK"
FISH DINNER

Sponsored by Ss. Cyril & Methodius Ukrainian Catholic Church, Olyphant, Pa.

FRIDAY MARCH 27, 2015

5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

At the **REGAL ROOM** (Ballroom/side entrance)

216 Lackawanna Avenue

Olyphant, Pa.

Sit Down or Take Out!!

(pre-sold) **\$13.00 per ticket/dinner**

Baked haddock, potato, vegetable, cole slaw, roll and dessert

Call **570-383-9487** for Reservations

***Deadline for pre-sold Tickets is Monday, March 23, 2015**

***LIMITED amount of Dinners will be available a the Door \$15.00**

**REJOICE AND BE EXCEEDINGLY GLAD
FOR GREAT IS YOUR REWARD
IN HEAVEN**

**2015 Eparchy of Saint Josaphat
Lock-in Retreat**

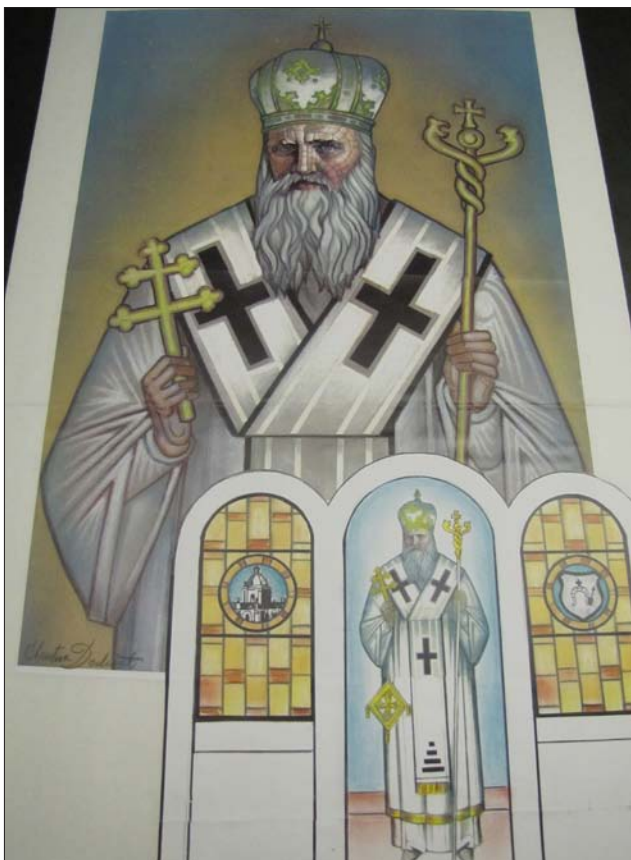
- For Teenagers and Young Adults
- Saturday 3/07 to Sunday 3/08 (1:30pm to 12:00noon)
- Saint Anne's, 3055 S Raccoon Rd, Austintown, OH
- Optional service project to be performed Saturday morning at the Youngstown Pregnancy Help Center
- \$25.00 (meals & T-shirt included) + optional donation of 1 pack of baby diapers
- Contact Father Deacon Myron Spak @ 412-303-9086 & mjspark@verizon.net
- RSVP by 2/21/2015

NEW MOSAICS OF VENERABLE METROPOLITAN ANDREY SHEPTYTSKY AND BLESSED JOSAPHATA HORDASHEVSKA, SSMI FOR CATHEDRAL

Two full sized mosaics of Venerable Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky and Blessed Josaphata Hordashevka, SSMI will be installed in our Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Philadelphia in Spring, 2015. The mosaics will include a reliquary for relics of both Metropolitan Sheptytsky and Blessed Josaphata for veneration by all.

Our Holy Father, Pope Francis, is to visit Philadelphia in September, 2015. He has been invited to include a visit to our Cathedral during his short two day visit. In hopeful anticipation of such a visit, we have commissioned these mosaics for the Holy Father to bless. Please pray for this!

The mosaics have been prepared by our world renowned iconographer who has written most of the Cathedral's iconography, Christine Dochwat. The mosaics are being fabricated in Italy by the same firm which has done previous art work in our Cathedral. The cost for each will be approximately \$ 35,000, which is very reasonable for such a significant project. Financial donations are invited from individuals and parishes for this project. Perhaps someone or a group may wish to fund one or both mosaics in memory of a loved one or for a special intention. Please remember the power of the intercession of the saints for our needs! Thank you for your anticipated assistance. Please send donations to Archbishop's Chancery, 827 N Franklin Street, Philadelphia, PA 19123. God bless you!



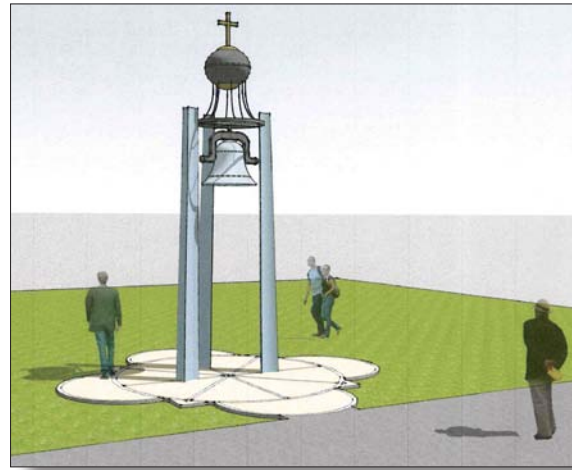
NEW BELL TOWER FOR CATHEDRAL

The original Cathedral bell named "Stefan" in testimony to our first Ukrainian Catholic Bishop for all Eastern Catholics in USA, the Most Rev. Stephen Soter Ortynsky, OSBM, needs to be relocated from its present location.

A new bell tower of our Cathedral is planned to accommodate the bell, to be located to the right of our Cathedral.

We welcome your financial donation for this memorial to the founding bishop, clergy, religious and faithful. It is an expression of our heartfelt appreciation for their planting the seeds of faith and the roots of our Ukrainian Catholic Church in the USA.

Please help us to meet the costs by sending a donation to the Ukrainian Catholic Archeparchy of Philadelphia, 827 N Franklin Street, Philadelphia, PA 19123. Your help is needed and appreciated. God bless you richly as you share in celebrating gratitude for our founders.



Maintenance Technician Philadelphia, PA

Ascension Manor Apartments is seeking qualified candidates for a Full Time Maintenance Technician. Candidates must be able to complete electrical, plumbing and carpentry repairs, assist in all aspects of refurbishing vacant units and assist with custodial work. Prior completion of college courses or equivalent trade-related courses and the ability to speak multiple languages is a plus. Fax resume to (215)922-3735.

EOE



Ascension Manor

BASILIAN SISTERS SEEK VOLUNTEERS FOR HUMANITARIAN MISSION IN UKRAINE

As part of their extended ministry during this Year of Consecrated Life, the Sisters of St. Basil the Great of the Jesus Lover of Humanity Province are resuming their mission to serve the needy in Ukraine. This year's Basilian Volunteer Program is tentatively scheduled from May 31 to June 13, 2015, and will be limited to humanitarian efforts in Western Ukraine. Last year's mission was cancelled due to the turmoil and unrest in Eastern Ukraine.

The Basilian Sisters invite the Faithful to join them as they bring their ministry of evangelization, support and comfort to the poor and needy. In addition to distributing needed supplies, Sister Ann Laszok, OSBM, Sister Joann Sosler, OSBM, and their accompanying volunteers will collaborate with the Basilian Sisters of Most Holy Trinity Province in Ukraine to sponsor a week-long "English Language" and Catechetical Camp for the orphans and other local children in the Korchyn area. Also included will be visits to several orphanages and psychiatric institutions.

For an application and additional information concerning the Come and Serve with the Sisters in Ukraine Program, please contact: Sister Ann Lasok, OSBM, 412-260-1607, srannl@aol.com

Early application is advised to ensure acceptance.

Monetary donations to this worthy cause may be made on line at www.stbasils.com or mailed to: Sister Dorothy Ann Busowski, OSBM, Provincial Superior, 710 Fox Chase Road, Jenkintown, PA 19111-4118



Catholic Schools Save Taxpayers \$2.28 Billion

27JAN2015

Most of us manage family budgets with far fewer zeroes than the Pennsylvania state budget, which measures its expenses in the billions. State Education spending alone subsidizes \$12 billion in public school expenses annually. That is a 12 plus nine zeroes! And Pennsylvanians pay many billions more annually in local taxes to support public schools.

We can try to visualize these numbers by looking at a spreadsheet. Revenues are tallied on one side and expenses listed on the other. We can count the zeroes with our own eyes. Government budgets are a matter of public record, and public school subsidies make up 40 percent of the entire state budget. You can see for yourself what your school district spends to educate the children in your community on a newly launched website, Pennsylvania School Performance Profile. The average cost per public school pupil is \$14,924.08 per year.

What the spreadsheets don't show, however, are tax dollars saved when expenses are forgone. The database does not account for the students who are educated outside of the public schools, like the over 150,000 students who attend Pennsylvania's Catholic schools. Given the average per pupil price tag, our Catholic schools saved the taxpayers more than \$2.28 billion this year alone. Billions more in taxes were saved by the students in other nonpublic schools or those home-schooled.

Catholic schools play a vital role in our communities. The 500 Catholic schools in Pennsylvania have graduated millions of intelligent, successful and community-minded citizens. Catholic high schools boast nearly 100% graduation rates, with over 90% of those graduates going on to college or university. Our schools also employ over 10,000 teachers and staff, providing important jobs in the Commonwealth.

Catholic schools are providing an essential service that helps to create new generations of productive and engaged citizens, often for a fraction of the cost of educating the same student in a public school. If every nonpublic school student returned to public school, the costs would be unbearable.

Education is a matter of common good. Catholic teaching affirms that all people "have an inalienable right to an education ... True education aims at the formation of the human person in the pursuit of his ultimate end and of the good of the societies of which, as man, he is a member, and in whose obligations, as an adult, he will share." (Gravissimum Educationis, No. 1)

Morally, parents are the primary and principal educators of their children. For most families, to fulfill their primary duty of imparting education they need help from the community, be it from the Church, the state, or resources used at home.

As Pennsylvania debates how to maintain and support an educational system for its youngest citizens, we should consider all the valid and appropriate choices that each family makes about school. Instead of seeing zeroes at the end of big numbers, we should visualize the smiling faces of boys and girls eager to learn.

FEBRUARY 2015 column of the Pennsylvania Catholic Conference – the public affairs agency of Pennsylvania's Catholic bishops and the Catholic dioceses of Pennsylvania. Stay up-to-date with Catholic news and issues at www.pacatholic.org, www.facebook.com/pacatholic, and www.twitter.com/pacatholic.

His Beatitude Sviatoslav expresses his condolences to the relatives and close ones of those killed in Mariupol

25 January 2015

The Father and the Head of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church His Beatitude Sviatoslav expressed His condolences to the relatives of people who died today at the hands of Russian fighters. He expressed solidarity with all and every victim and their families.

The Head of the UGCC assured in His constant prayer for the dead, the wounded and those who suffered at the hands of the aggressor.



His Beatitude Sviatoslav called for international community to help Ukraine to establish peace in our land, and volunteers, international charities to provide all necessary assistance to the victims as soon as possible.

A priest of the UGCC in Mariupol Father Rostyslav Sprynyuk by phone said that the whole UGCC parish of Transfiguration of Christ and volunteers who are always there, are helping victims both in hospitals and at the tragedy scene.

The priest asks the faithful and all the people of good will to pray for peace in the Ukrainian land.

UGCC Department of Information

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

Pope Francis prays for victims in Mariupol

25 January 2015

"I am following, with real concern, the escalation of the military conflict in eastern Ukraine, which continues to result in numerous victims among the civilian population. I assure everyone who is suffering of my prayers, and strongly appeal for the renewal of attempts to dialogue and to lay-aside all forms of aggression," said the Pope on January 25 during the meeting with pilgrims on the St. Peter's Square in the Vatican.

30 people, including two children, have been killed in shelling in the southeastern Ukrainian city of Mariupol on Saturday. Another 102 people were injured, at least 75 of whom needed hospital treatment, and many suffered shrapnel injuries, Mariupol City Council said.



Monitors with the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe said they conducted a crater analysis which showed the use of Grad and Uragan rockets that likely originated from areas controlled by the pro-Russian rebel group Donetsk People's Republic (DPR), CNN reports.

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

Bishops of the Synod of UGCC pray for peace in Ukraine before the Not Made with Hands Image of Jesus Christ



31 January 2015

On 30 January, 2015, His Beatitude Sviatoslav, the Head and the Father of the UGCC together with the Bishops of the Synod coserved the Evening Service in St. George's Cathedral, after which opened to public veneration the Not Made with Hands Image of Jesus Christ

At the beginning of the Worship the Primate of the Church said that the Ukrainians today have a unique opportunity - to "see God's face". According to Him, the Not Made with Hands Image of Jesus Christ - a unique relic of the times of earthly life of the Savior: "Jesus Christ took this cloth personally into His hand and pressed to His face. So that is why it is called miraculous and not made with hands. With this cloth He healed the Ephesian king from leprosy".

"We are so looking these days for God's face! And see that God does not just turn to us His face. He lets us to kiss Him"- He added.

According to the Head of the UGCC, this event is incomprehensible Divine Providence. After all, "in this historical moment, shining on us, the face of God reveals Himself to us". "The great sign of God's blessing and support is the fact that today, for the first time in a hundred years, from the Holy See, from St Peter's Basilica, the Image of Christ came to us. Thanks today to our God-Father for His love to our people and the Savior - Jesus Christ, who today with the Holy Spirit makes His face open to us"- added the Preacher.

At the end the Head of the Church on behalf of the UGCC thanked the Holy Father Francis for his blessing that this relic arrived into Ukraine: "This is another gesture of papal support, solidarity and blessing for our nation. However, this is a great sign of hope. Therefore come near to this icon and let us pray".

He also called on all those who come to worship the image, "to become guardian angels who day and night pray for Ukrainian army". "Let us pray for those affected and left without home, for the wounded and those in captivity, who die of hunger and cold, because they are not given today this kindness that today we have in this temple. I urge all our church to relentless prayer for Ukraine!"- concluded the Head and the Father of the Church.

We have to add that the Not Made with Hands Image of Jesus Christ will be dwelt in St. George's Cathedral for two weeks (January 30 - February 15).

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



Photo: Embassy of Ukraine to the Holy See Facebook page

Pope Francis to religious: obedience key to joy, creativity

February 3, 2015

(Vatican Radio) Pope Francis said Mass in St Peter's Basilica on Monday afternoon, to mark the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord and the World Day for Consecrated Life.

The blessing of the candles preceded the Mass – the candles that are sign and symbol of that Light, which is Christ, Himself – and then the liturgy began with a candle-light procession into the basilica, as the choir intoned the antiphon: Christ, light unto the Nations, and glory God's people, Israel.



Mass for Consecrated Life - AP

The focus of the Holy Father's homily was the virtue of obedience, keystone of the religious life. "In persevering along the path of obedience," said Pope Francis, "personal and communal wisdom matures, and thus it also becomes possible to adapt rules to the times – for true *aggiornamento* is the fruit of wisdom forged in docility and obedience."

Pope Francis concluded his homily with an exhortation, directed especially to all those in consecrated life: "Let us bring others to Jesus, but let us also allow ourselves to be led by him. This is what we should be: guides who themselves are guided."

<http://en.radiovaticana.va>

Pope Francis opens Year for Consecrated Life: homily

Homily of His Holiness Pope Francis

Feast of the Presentation of the Lord

2 February 2015

Before our eyes we can picture Mother Mary as she walks, carrying the Baby Jesus in her arms. She brings him to the Temple; she presents him to the people; she brings him to meet his people.

The arms of Mother Mary are like the "ladder" on which the Son of God comes down to us, the ladder of God's condescension. This is what we heard in the first reading, from the Letter to the Hebrews: Christ became "like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest" (Heb 2:17). This is the twofold path taken by Jesus: he

descended, he became like us, in order then to ascend with us to the Father, making us like himself.

In our heart we can contemplate this double movement by imagining the Gospel scene of Mary who enters the Temple holding the Child in her arms. The Mother walks, yet it is the Child who goes before her. She carries him, yet he

is leading her along the path of the God who comes to us so that we might go to him.

Jesus walked the same path as we do, and showed us a new way, the "new and living way" (cf. Heb 10:20) which is himself. For us too, as consecrated men and women, he opened a path.

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Pope Francis opens Year for Consecrated Life: homily

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Fully five times the Gospel speaks to us of Mary and Joseph's obedience to the "law of the Lord" (cf. Lk 2:22-24,27,39). Jesus came not to do his own will, but the will of the Father. This way, he tells us, was his "food" (cf. Jn 4:34). In the same way, all those who follow Jesus must set out on the path of obedience, imitating as it were the Lord's "condescension" by humbling themselves and making their own the will of the Father, even to self-emptying and abasement (cf. Phil 2:7-8). For a religious person, to progress is to lower oneself in service. A path like that of Jesus, who "did not count equality with God something to be grasped.": to lower oneself, making oneself a servant, in order to serve.

This path, then, takes the form of the rule, marked by the charism of the founder. For all of us, the essential rule remains the Gospel, this abasement of Christ, yet the Holy Spirit, in his infinite creativity, also gives it expression in the various rules of the consecrated life, though all of these are born of that sequela Christi,

from this path of self-abasement in service.

Through this "law" consecrated persons are able to attain wisdom, which is not an abstract attitude, but a work and a gift of the Holy Spirit, the sign and proof of which is joy. Yes, the mirth of the religious is a consequence of this journey of abasement with Jesus: and when we are sad, it would do us well to ask how we are living this kenotic dimension.

In the account of Jesus' Presentation, wisdom is represented by two elderly persons, Simeon and Anna: persons docile to the Holy Spirit (He is named 4 times), led by him, inspired by him. The Lord granted them wisdom as the fruit of a long journey along the path of obedience to his law, an obedience which likewise humbles and abases – even as it also guards and guarantees hope – and now they are creative, for they are filled with the Holy Spirit. They even enact a kind of liturgy around the Child as he comes to the Temple. Simeon praises the Lord and Anna "proclaims" salvation (cf. Lk 2:28-

32,38). As with Mary, the elderly man holds the Child, but in fact it is the Child who guides the elderly man. The liturgy of First Vespers of today's feast puts this clearly and concisely: "senex puerum portabat, puer autem senem regebat". Mary, the young mother, and Simeon, the kindly old man, hold the Child in their arms, yet it is the Child himself who guides both of them.

It is curious: here it is not young people who are creative: the young, like Mary and Joseph, follow the law of the Lord, the path of obedience. And the Lord turns obedience into wisdom by the working of his Holy Spirit. At times God can grant the gift of wisdom to a young person, but always as the fruit of obedience and docility to the Spirit. This obedience and docility is not something theoretical; it too is subject to the economy of the incarnation of the Word: docility and obedience to a founder, docility and obedience to a specific rule, docility and obedience to one's superior, docility and obedience to the Church. It is always docility and obedience in the concrete.

In persevering along along the path of obedience, personal and communal wisdom matures, and thus it also becomes possible to adapt rules to the times. For true "aggiornamento" is the fruit of wisdom forged in docility and obedience.

The strengthening and renewal of consecrated life are the result of great love for the rule, and also the ability to look to and heed the elders of one's congregation. In this way, the "deposit", the charism of each religious family, is preserved by obedience and by wisdom, working together. And, along this journey, we are preserved from living our consecration lightly and in a disincarnate manner, as though it were a Gnosis, which would reduce itself to a "caricature" of the religious life, in which is realized a sequela – a following – that is without sacrifice, a prayer that is without encounter, a fraternal life that is without communion, an obedience without trust, a charity without transcendence.

Today we too, like Mary

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Pope Francis opens Year for Consecrated Life: homily

(continued from previous page)

and Simeon, want to take Jesus into our arms, to bring him to his people. Surely we will be able to do so if we enter into the mystery in which Jesus himself is our guide. Let

us bring others to Jesus, but let us also allow ourselves to be led by him. This is what we should be: guides who themselves are guided.

May the Lord, through the intercession of Mary our Mother, Saint Joseph and Saints Simeon and Anna, grant to all of us what we sought in

today's opening prayer: to "be presented [to him] fully renewed in spirit". Amen.

<http://en.radiovaticana.va>

His Beatitude Sviatoslav: "Continued prayer changes the one who prays"

Sunday, 01 February 2015

Father and Head of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, His Beatitude Sviatoslav urged people to be persistent in praying to God. This he stated today during the Pontifical Liturgy in the monastery of the Community of Sisters of Mercy of St. Vikentiy UGCC in Lviv.

"We have to be persistent in our prayer. Almighty God calls us to this. Consistent prayer does not change God to whom we pray. Consistent prayer changes the one who prays," said His Beatitude.



The preacher noted that in today's Gospel we hear the parable about the unjust judge who was neither afraid of God nor considered people. "I think that if we look on those judges who are judges in our land, then we will see the same. They are neither afraid of God nor have any regard for people. They do not consider human injustice, but seek their own goals," noted the Prelate.

However, mainly, he continued, through this parable Christ wants to let us discover the truth of who is our God, how the Heavenly Father treats all of us. "Christ tells us that God is not similar to the unjust judge. Because the unfair judge finally heard that which the poor widow asked him, only so that she would not again come to him. In other words, he wanted to get rid of her. Christ says: our Heavenly Father is different. He listens and hears our prayers. There is no breadth, no prayer which God would not hear. Almighty God is our guardian. In this today assures us Christ," emphasized His Beatitude Sviatoslav.

UGCC Department of Information

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

MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS FOR LENT 2015

“Make your hearts firm”
(James 5:8)

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Lent is a time of renewal for the whole Church, for each communities and every believer. Above all it is a “time of grace” (2 Cor6:2). God does not ask of us anything that he himself has not first given us. “We love because he first has loved us” (1 Jn4:19). He is not aloof from us. Each one of us has a place in his heart. He knows us by name, he cares for us and he seeks us out whenever we turn away from him. He is interested in each of us; his love does not allow him to be indifferent to what happens to us. Usually, when we are healthy and comfortable, we forget about others (something God the Father never does): we are unconcerned with their problems, their sufferings and the injustices they endure ... Our heart grows cold. As long as I am relatively healthy and comfortable, I don’t think about those less well off. Today, this selfish attitude of indifference has taken on global proportions, to the extent that we can speak of a globalization of indifference. It is a

FEBRUARY 8, 2015

problem which we, as Christians, need to confront.

When the people of God are converted to his love, they find answers to the questions that history continually raises. One of the most urgent challenges which I would like to address in this Message is precisely the globalization of indifference. Indifference to our neighbour and to God also represents a real temptation for us Christians. Each year during Lent we need to hear once more the voice of the prophets who cry out and trouble our conscience. God is not indifferent to our world; he so loves it that he gave his Son for our salvation. In the Incarnation, in the earthly life, death, and resurrection of the Son of God, the gate between God and man, between heaven and earth, opens once for all. The Church is like the hand holding open this gate, thanks to her proclamation of God’s word, her celebration of the sacraments and her witness of the faith which works through love (cf. Gal5:6). But the world tends to withdraw into itself and shut that door through which God comes into the world

and the world comes to him. Hence the hand, which is the Church, must never be surprised if it is rejected, crushed and wounded. God’s people, then, need this interior renewal, lest we become indifferent and withdraw into ourselves. To further this renewal, I would like to propose for our reflection three biblical texts.

1. “If one member suffers, all suffer together” (1 Cor 12:26)– The Church

The love of God breaks through that fatal withdrawal into ourselves which is indifference. The Church offers us this love of God by her teaching and especially by her witness. But we can only bear witness to what we ourselves have experienced. Christians are those who let God clothe them with goodness and mercy, with Christ, so as to become, like Christ, servants of God and others. This is clearly seen in the liturgy of Holy Thursday, with its rite of the washing of feet. Peter did not want Jesus to wash his feet, but he came to realize that Jesus does not wish to be just an example of how we should wash one another’s feet. Only those who have first allowed

Jesus to wash their own feet can then offer this service to others. Only they have “a part” with him (Jn13:8) and thus can serve others. Lent is a favourable time for letting Christ serve us so that we in turn may become more like him. This happens whenever we hear the word of God and receive the sacraments, especially the Eucharist. There we become what we receive: the Body of Christ. In this body there is no room for the indifference which so often seems to possess our hearts. For whoever is of Christ, belongs to one body, and in him we cannot be indifferent to one another. “If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it; if one part is honoured, all the parts share its joy” (1 Cor12:26). The Church is the *communio sanctorum* not only because of her saints, but also because she is a communion in holy things: the love of God revealed to us in Christ and all his gifts. Among these gifts there is also the response of those who let themselves be touched by this love. In this communion of saints, in this sharing in holy things, no one possesses

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THE WAY

MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS FOR LENT 2015

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anything alone, but shares everything with others. And since we are united in God, we can do something for those who are far distant, those whom we could never reach on our own, because with them and for them, we ask God that all of us may be open to his plan of salvation.

2. "Where is your brother?" (Gen 4:9) – Parishes and Communities

All that we have been saying about the universal Church must now be applied to the life of our parishes and communities. Do these ecclesial structures enable us to experience being part of one body? A body which receives and shares what God wishes to give? A body which acknowledges and cares for its weakest, poorest and most insignificant members? Or do we take refuge in a universal love that would embrace the whole world, while failing to see the Lazarus sitting before our closed doors (Lk 16:19-31)? In order to receive what God gives us and to make it bear abundant fruit, we need to press beyond the boundaries of the visible Church in two

ways. In the first place, by uniting ourselves in prayer with the Church in heaven. The prayers of the Church on earth establish a communion of mutual service and goodness which reaches up into the sight of God. Together with the saints who have found their fulfilment in God, we form part of that communion in which indifference is conquered by love. The Church in heaven is not triumphant because she has turned her back on the sufferings of the world and rejoices in splendid isolation. Rather, the saints already joyfully contemplate the fact that, through Jesus death and resurrection, they have triumphed once and for all over indifference, hardness of heart and hatred. Until this victory of love penetrates the whole world, the saints continue to accompany us on our pilgrim way. Saint Therese of Lisieux, a Doctor of the Church, expressed her conviction that the joy in heaven for the victory of crucified love remains incomplete as long as there is still a single man or woman on earth who suffers and cries out in pain: "I trust fully that I shall not remain idle in heaven; my desire is to continue to

work for the Church and for souls" (Letter 254, July 14, 1897). We share in the merits and joy of the saints, even as they share in our struggles and our longing for peace and reconciliation. Their joy in the victory of the Risen Christ gives us strength as we strive to overcome our indifference and hardness of heart.

In the second place, every Christian community is called to go out of itself and to be engaged in the life of the greater society of which it is a part, especially with the poor and those who are far away. The Church is missionary by her very nature; she is not self-enclosed but sent out to every nation and people. Her mission is to bear patient witness to the One who desires to draw all creation and every man and woman to the Father. Her mission is to bring to all a love which cannot remain silent. The Church follows Jesus Christ along the paths that lead to every man and woman, to the very ends of the earth (cf. Acts 1:8). In each of our neighbours, then, we must see a brother or sister for whom Christ died and rose again. What we ourselves have received,

we have received for them as well. Similarly, all that our brothers and sisters possess is a gift for the Church and for all humanity.

Dear brothers and sisters, how greatly I desire that all those places where the Church is present, especially our parishes and our communities, may become islands of mercy in the midst of the sea of indifference!

3. "Make your hearts firm!" (James 5:8) – Individual Christians

As individuals too, we are tempted by indifference. Flooded with news reports and troubling images of human suffering, we often feel our complete inability to help. What can we do to avoid being caught up in this spiral of distress and powerlessness? First, we can pray in communion with the Church on earth and in heaven. Let us not underestimate the power of so many voices united in prayer! The 24 Hours for the Lord initiative, which I hope will be observed on 13-14 March throughout the Church, also at the diocesan level, is meant to be a sign of this need

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MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS FOR LENT 2015

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for prayer. Second, we can help by acts of charity, reaching out to both those near and far through the Church's many charitable organizations. Lent is a favourable time for showing this concern for others by small yet concrete signs of our belonging to the one human family. Third, the suffering of others is a call to conversion, since their need reminds me of the uncertainty of my own life and my dependence on God and my brothers and sisters. If we humbly implore God's grace and accept our own limitations, we will trust

in the infinite possibilities which God's love holds out to us. We will also be able to resist the diabolical temptation of thinking that by our own efforts we can save the world and ourselves.

As a way of overcoming indifference and our pretensions to self-sufficiency, I would invite everyone to live this Lent as an opportunity for engaging in what Benedict XVI called a formation of the heart (cf. *Deus Caritas Est*, 31). A merciful heart does not mean a weak heart. Anyone who wishes to be merciful

must have a strong and steadfast heart, closed to the tempter but open to God. A heart which lets itself be pierced by the Spirit so as to bring love along the roads that lead to our brothers and sisters. And, ultimately, a poor heart, one which realizes its own poverty and gives itself freely for others. During this Lent, then, brothers and sisters, let us all ask the Lord: "Fac cor nostrum secundum cor tuum": Make our hearts like yours (Litany of the Sacred Heart of Jesus). In this way we will receive a heart which is firm and merciful, attentive and

generous, a heart which is not closed, indifferent or prey to the globalization of indifference. It is my prayerful hope that this Lent will prove spiritually fruitful for each believer and every ecclesial community. I ask all of you to pray for me. May the Lord bless you and Our Lady keep you.

From the Vatican, 4 October 2014 Feast of Saint Francis of Assisi

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