



НАША ДОРОГА NASHA DOROHA

PM40007760 ♦ зима/winter 4(83)/2023



WUCWO
A Youth
Perspective

Christmas
Journey

Human
Trafficking





Костянтин Трутовський. «Колядки в Україні», 1864 р.
Kostiantyn Trutovsky. "Carols in Ukraine," 1864.

На небі зірка ясна засяла
І любим світлом сіяє;
Хвиля спасення нам завитала,
Бог в Вифлеємі раждаєсь.
Щоб землю з небом в одно злучити,
Христос родився: Славіте!

В біднім вертепі, в яслах на сіні
Спочив Владика, Цар світа,
Отож до Него спішім всі нині,
Нашого жде Він привіта.
Спішім, любови тхом Го огріти,
Христос родився: Славіте!

Благослови нас, Дитятко Боже,
Дари нас нині любов'ю,
Най ціла сила пекла не зможе
Нас розділити з Тобою.
Благослови нас, ми Твої діти,
Христос родився: Славіте!

Christ is Born!

Христос Раждається!



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Editor's Note

There is the hint of snow in the air. The leaves have fallen, and the sky has greyed and pillowed. All my lovely hours spent outside this past summer and fall are just a memory. And now, as I look out my window, I couldn't be more ready for the winter whirlwind to begin. I apologize to everyone when I say I am a "winter girl." I love relaxing by the fire listening to carols or baking in the kitchen. But I am equally excited to dress up in my winter battle gear and set out ice fishing, maybe I'll even get in a skidoo ride, or strap on some cross-country skis or snowshoes. I'm all in!

For the days that you want to hibernate, don't forget to grab this winter edition of *Nasha Doroha*. It is packed with reading entertainment. Of course, the Christmas season is the main feature. Traditions surrounding

carolling will bring you back to fond days of your childhood, make you reminisce of Christmases past, or draw back your thoughts to loved ones who are perhaps no longer around. Then there are the recipes that will be fun to experiment with during the cold, winter months. Spiritual nourishment is the most important though, to get us ready for the coming of the Lord. It is exciting to plan for Christmas!

However, despite the seasonal changes, we cannot deny the state of our world or of our own country. Which is why ND has a special section on human trafficking: what it is, who is involved, how you can help, and why it should matter to us. Sadly, human trafficking isn't something we see only in movies, or that is happening in *other* countries. It happens here, in our own cities and communities—closer to us than most know about or care to admit. The movie this past summer titled *The Sound of Freedom* drove this point home. Most of us know hardly anything about human trafficking, and in order to begin changing our world we need to become honest with ourselves and take an interest in what is happening in our own country. As well, Ukraine has a heartbreakingly deep history of human trafficking, and it has become amplified with the present war. Therefore, we are obligated to ask ourselves difficult questions. Why must I begin to get involved in bigger things in Canada? What can I do to help?

I leave the rest of ND for you to discover and enjoy—there are so many other worthy gems inside.

*God bless you during this Advent season
and Merry Christmas to all!
Христос Радується!*



НАША ДОРОГА

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Please see page 17 for artist bio.

www.ucwlc.ca



Від Крайової Голови ◇ From the National President

It's been just over a year since the National UCWLC Executive moved from the Eparchy of Edmonton to the Eparchy of Saskatoon. Everyday brought new challenges, but with the support and assistance of the executive, we continue to smooth out the bumps on the road. During this next term we will continue working on the projects started by the previous executive. Our plans for this next term will focus on:

- ◆ completing the UCWLC Reference Manual of Policies & Procedures
- ◆ setting up a new robust National UCWLC website
- ◆ reviewing and revising the UCWLC Constitution
- ◆ performing an ongoing review and update of *Nasha Doroha* Policy & Procedures

At the 2022 Pre-Congress Plenary Conference in Edmonton, a motion was passed to reinstate donations by the Branches to the *Nasha Doroha* Reserve Fund. This move was necessary because production costs are rising, but interest rates were low, therefore we were not realizing enough income from our investments to support the rising costs. Branches are reminded when sending in their Obligatory Funds to send in the

designated amounts for the ND Reserve Fund.

As many of you may know, the National UCWLC will be celebrating its 80th Anniversary on June 13, 2024. This celebration is not only for the members of the National Executive, but



for all members of the UCWLC, whether at the Branch, Eparchial, or National level. We have chosen "Hope and Resilience" as the theme to commemorate this special anniversary year. Further in this issue of *Nasha Doroha*, you will find resources and information from the National Executive in regards to commemorating the 80th Anniversary of the UCWLC in 2024.

In 2004 we had 5,300 members in 113 Branches. Today we have 2,357 members in 73 Branches. What will our

membership be 20 years from now? The answer lies with us, the present members. What are we doing to attract and keep new members?

The Christmas season is upon us. As we prepare to celebrate the joyous Feast of the Nativity of our Lord with our families and friends, let us also take the opportunity to look at those around us who need a little extra help at this time of year and make Christmas a little brighter for them. Remember our long-time members of the UCWLC who may be in nursing homes or home bound and visit them. Remember our Ukrainian brothers and sisters affected by the unjust, unprovoked war and genocide perpetrated by Russia and continue in your efforts to support and assist the victims of the war. Let us continue to offer prayers for peace and a just end to this conflict.

On behalf of the National Executive, I wish all our UCWLC members, Spiritual Advisors, and readers a joyous and blessed Christmas. May God bless you with good health and happiness in the coming year.

Christ is Born! Let us Glorify Him!

Marlene Bodnar,
UCWLC National President

A Celebration of the National UCWLC's 80th Anniversary

Theme: Hope and Resilience

HOPE is the secret to a good life. Hope inspires us, fuels determination, fosters a sense of purpose, and helps us envision a better tomorrow. The source of our hope is Jesus Christ, and the Church is where we go to grow in our understanding of that hope. With hope, we can see clearly how to live and how to serve others.

RESILIENCE: There is an old saying that when life gives you lemons, you make lemonade. This is resilience. Resilience is the remarkable ability to adapt, recover, and thrive in the face of difficult circumstances. Perhaps you are facing personal hardship, or you are reflecting on a world that is filled with war, hate, and anger. It is resilience—or the desire to carry on—that brings us courage and perseverance.

The Significance of Hope and Resilience for the 80th Anniversary:

As the Ukrainian Catholic Women's League celebrates its 80th anniversary, it is important to recognize the journey of strength and perseverance that has brought the organization to this milestone. Throughout its history, the UCWLC has remained steadfast in its four aims:

- ◆ develop and enrich religious life
- ◆ preserve the Ukrainian language and culture
- ◆ strengthen the spiritual dimensions of Ukrainian Catholics
- ◆ initiate and support charitable and social actions

By embracing the theme of Hope and Resilience, the National UCWLC acknowledges the triumphs and tribulations that have shaped our journey. By celebrating hope and resilience, the UCWLC not only honours its rich history, but also sets the stage for a future filled with promise, growth, and renewed purpose.

The theme of hope and resilience will be central to our 80th anniversary celebrations.

80th Anniversary Prayer

God, our Father, we ask for Your blessings on this special anniversary of the Ukrainian Catholic Women's League. We come before You, seeking Your divine grace. We gather with open minds and open hearts, ready to encounter Christ, our Saviour.

As we journey through life, we often become preoccupied, and we lose sight of You. But in Your infinite love and compassion, You never lose sight of us. Help us to recognize Your guiding hand, to feel Your heavenly embrace, and to hear Your gentle voice of encouragement and hope.

We thank You for 80 years of God's blessings upon the UCWLC and pray for strength and perseverance to continue our mission. May we always remain faithful to Your teachings, steadfast in our beliefs, and devoted in our commitment to service.

Together we pray to all the saints, to the Holy Mother of God, and to You, Lord Jesus. Have mercy on us. Amen.



Молитва до 80-річчя

Господи Боже наш, просимо Твоє благословення в цю особливу річницю Ліги Українських Католицьких Жінок. Стоїмо перед Тобою, благаючи божественної ласки. Наші серця відкриті й наш розум готовий відчувати дотик Ісуса, Нашого Спасителя.

Подорожуючи по життєвій дорозі, ми часто заклопотані і ми втрачаємо Тебе з поля зору. Але Ти ніколи не залишаєш нас, завдяки Твоїй безконечній любові і милосердю. Допоможи нам розпізнати Твою керівну руку, відчувати Твої небесні обійми, і почути Твій ніжний голос, який наповняє нас охотою та надією.

Організація ЛУКЖК дякує Тобі за 80 років Божих благословень і ми молимося за силу й витривалість продовжувати нашу місію. Нехай ми завжди будемо вірні Твоїм вченням, непереломні у нашій вірі, і віддані у подальшій службі.

Разом молимося до всіх святих, до Пресвятої Богородиці і до Тебе, Господи Ісусе. Помилуй нас! Амінь.

80th Anniversary feature: Saints who demonstrate hope or resilience

St. Macrina, older sister of St. Basil the Great and St Gregory of Nyssa

Gathering Prayer

God, our Father, we ask for Your blessings on this special anniversary of the Ukrainian Catholic Women's League. We thank You for 80 years of abundant blessings upon the UCWLC and pray for strength and perseverance to continue our mission. May we always remain faithful to Your teachings, steadfast in our commitment to service, and humble in our devotion to You.

As we look to St. Macrina, older sister of St. Basil and St. Gregory, we pray that her example of dedication and commitment to faith inspire us. In this special year, may we focus on hope and resilience, which come from faith in You. Amen.

Scriptural focus: Let us reflect on the passage from Romans 15:13

- Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Reflection:

- In the book of Romans, the Apostle Paul is telling us about faith. He indicates that hope, joy, and peace come from believing in God. Following those words of advice, St. Macrina, who lived during the 4th century, lived a life of hope, joy, and peace.
- Let's go deeper into what we know about Macrina
 - **Spiritual Legacy:** St. Macrina played an important role in the spiritual formation of her younger brothers, St. Basil and St. Gregory of Nyssa, who went on to become influential theologians and Church Fathers. Macrina's deep commitment to a life of prayer and living her faith set a powerful example for her siblings.
 - **Founding faith Communities:** St. Macrina is credited with establishing many monastic communities in Cappadocia, a region in modern-day Turkey. These communities were dedicated to a life of contemplation, prayer, and service.
 - **Role as a teacher:** In her communities, she emphasized the importance of virtuous living, humility, and the pursuit of union with God. Many sought her counsel and guidance, considering her insights to be invaluable for their spiritual growth.
 - St. Macrina died when she was only in her early fifties and the exact location of her tomb is unknown.



Connection to Spiritual theme of Hope and Resilience:

- St. Macrina is an example of hope and resilience. She showed resilience during a time when accepting a woman as a spiritual leader would have been difficult. She showed resilience and that brought hope to others.

Special petition

- We also pray for the courage of all women to take on untraditional roles. May God continue to bless them and the work they do. O Lord, hear us and have mercy.

Suggested Action

- Spend time looking for causes that could support and further women in our parishes and community.

Closing prayer

- With gratitude we look at our accomplishments, with humility we look at our failings, and with hope we look to the road ahead as we are guided by our precious Saviour and the Theotokos.
- Through the prayers of all the saints, and the Holy Theotokos, Lord Jesus have mercy on us. Amen.

Submitted by Deacon Harrold and Marcia Salahub



Celebrating the 80th Anniversary of National UCWLC

By Holly Paluck

In 2024, the national entity of the Ukrainian Catholic Women's League of Canada celebrates its 80th anniversary. From founding, visionary members who established the organization, to those who continue to contribute to the important responsibilities and privileges entrusted to the UCWLC—there is much to celebrate!

Commencing with this issue in preparation for the upcoming year, the 2024 publications of *Nasha Doroha* will feature different eras of the UCWLC's progression eventually leading to where the organization is today and where we might like to be when celebrating our 100th Anniversary in 2044!

While reading these columns, bear in mind the many obstacles

these women overcame, and others like them such as their spiritual advisors. These people shared the value of forming Branches in their Eparchies to not only support the life of the local parish and community, but to connect Ukrainian Catholic women across Canada, and, by extension, hold a national and international presence.

The spirit of *Hope and Resilience* is not only evident in our organization, but is also a testament to the national identity of Ukrainian people within Ukraine and the diaspora. In fact, it is also a testament to every Ukrainian Catholic woman in the UCWLC who has overcome so much throughout the past eight decades, thereby inspiring the embodiment of our theme for this special upcoming

anniversary year. The bond of *Hope and Resilience* connects us to both our ancestors as well as future generations. Understanding our organizational history is an important foundation for all of us to be reminded. May we never forget from where (and Whom) we draw our strength, as well as those women and spiritual advisors who have built up the structures and advancements in UCWLC to help us continue in hope and resilience to address new challenges and opportunities they may bring. Where there is struggle, there is both the challenge and opportunity to grow, both personally and collectively. May God bless each and every member of the UCWLC and our spiritual advisors—past, present and future! Glory to God! Слава Бору!

The due date for
spring content for
Nasha Doroha is
January 2, 2024.

Please email
Lyrisa Sheptak at
lyrissas@hotmail.com
to inform her of any
potential submissions
outside of Sea to Sea.

Historic Milestones of the UCWLC

Did you know...?

In the late 19th century emigrants from Ukraine started coming to Canada, the first being Wasyl Eleniak and Ivan Pylypiw. They arrived in 1891.

Ukrainian immigrants suffered many injustices, but in 1932 when Premier Anderson of Saskatchewan passed a law forbidding the children to speak Ukrainian on school premises they decided to act. Under the leadership of Rev. Fr. Stefan Semczuk and Michael Bilinsky they attended a teacher convention in Regina and decided to organize a lay organization for men, women and youth. After several years the Saskatchewan-based body took on a national character known as the Ukrainian Catholic Brotherhood of Canada. In 1944 the UCBC became an organization for men. The women organized nationally as the Ukrainian Catholic Women's League of Canada under the leadership of Maria Dyma. The young people congregated into the Ukrainian Catholic Youth of Canada.

— Excerpts from document prepared by Saskatchewan Eparchy

The Early Years Organizational Highlights 1944-1964

The National/Provincial meeting of the Ukrainian Catholic Brotherhood, April 1944 in Yorkton, decided that a national women's organization was needed to coordinate the war effort and the work of the many sisterhoods in parishes across the country. Anastasia Cemotiuk, with the help of the Right Rev. Stefan Semczuk, began the task; Anne Yakimishchuk assisted. The three held the first meeting on May 29, 1944, at Blessed Virgin Mary in Winnipeg, together with Mary Dyma, M. Lazechko and representatives from the parishes of Holy Eucharist, Holy Ghost, and Blessed Virgin Mary. Fr. Semczuk spoke about the good that the woman could do, if united. A nominating committee was struck with P. Kuzenko, M. Dyma, M. Lazechko, and M. Tataryn.

In June, a second meeting was held, with five parishes represented. Mary Dyma was chosen as the first President. A few weeks later, at the first meeting of the Executive, the name Ukrainian Catholic Women's League was chosen. In order not to overburden the National Executive with Winnipeg area matters, an Archeparchial Executive was established in 1946 to oversee the work of the Manitoba and Saskatchewan region. Also, Eparchial Executives were set up in Toronto to include Montreal and Eastern Canada, and Edmonton, incorporating British Columbia.

In 1951 the Eparchy of Saskatoon was formed.

From 1953 to 1956 the National Executive was centred in Edmonton, then in Toronto. Early Executives terms varied from two to three years.

The focus of the National Executive for the first decade was to encourage the use of the Ukrainian language and religious upbringing of the family in the home, combined with church-based language and catechism classes, and the preservation of various aspects of the Ukrainian cultural heritage including embroidery and pysanky writing. During the war years, overseas aid and assistance to young women coming to Canada became a priority.

In 1956, the National Congress of Ukrainian Catholics in Winnipeg, MB, approved a revised constitution. It was printed in Edmonton for the first time in both Ukrainian and English languages. The Constitution cover included the UCWLC emblem for the first time along with the name "The Ukrainian Catholic Women's League of Canada".

— Excerpt from History of UCWLC Constitution and Bylaws, compiled by Lena Sloboda (March 2007)

Written by †Shirley Lisowski

National Past President, UCWLC (2001-2005)

Published in the 60th Anniversary Issue of *Nasha Doroha*, Fall-Winter (14-15) 2004, p28



Ukrainian Catholic Women's League of Canada – First National Executive

President Mary Dyma
1st Vice President Anastasia Semotiuk
2nd Vice President Paraskevia Kuzenko
3rd Vice President Antonia Nazar
Secretary Anna Yakimischak
Liaison Secretary Anne Szun
Financial Secretary Luba Wall
Treasurer Maria Lazechko

Auditors

Maria Hawryluk, Eugenia Kaluzniacka, V. Lewicki

National Organizers

Anastasia Semotiuk, Paraskevia Kuzenko

Cultural Educational

Mary Karpetz (Chair), Emilia Kanchier, A. Sumka, Leona Senicki, Stephanie Meusch

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Planning Committee

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Social Development

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War Relief Committee

Nell (Anastasia) Kozoriz, A. Bosak, Mary Szutiak, Anne Jackson, Mrs. Krawchuk, Mrs. Shewchyshyn

Press

Anne Szun, Luba Wall, Anne Krucik

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Hospitality Committee

Anne Hrushka, J. Sopchuk, Evhenia Kurjewicz, Anastasia Rudachek, Anne Zapp, Anna Bielak, M. Kostiuk

Dear Editor,

As the saying goes, it is very important for our bishops “to speak truth to power”—to the Pope—regarding his hurtful words as hundreds of thousands keep dying in Russia’s needless war. Ukraine is in ruins, and the world is desperately seeking ways to stop and punish Russia’s sadism.

The papal position is that of a global moral leader; a position that must not be compromised by limited information or other interests. Bloodshed of an innocent is a mortal sin that cannot be condoned in any way including silence. Bloodshed and ruination on the scale that Russia is perpetrating needs to be halted and punished by international law and our global institutions, supported by moral authorities. Not to do so is most detrimental to them.

It is vital that, in the very near future, the Pope articulates this message on behalf of the Church as did his predecessor St. Pope John Paul to such a gargantuan effect. His position liberated some half-billion people from the USSR’s Soviet yoke. This brought immeasurable gratitude to the Church. It’s time to rise to such greatness again. Ukraine’s martyrdom calls for this; the world desperately needs it.

Shchyro,

Oksana Bashuk Hepburn

Thank you for your heartfelt letter. I know many Ukrainian Canadians, including me, were left reeling after the Pope’s latest visit to Russia to meet with Russian Catholic youth. In this issue, ND has printed an article by Fr. Ireneus Prystajeky, pastor of St. John the Baptist Ukrainian Catholic Shrine in Ottawa, and his response to this situation. I hope it will somewhat comfort you in your concerns.

First Things First

A Christmas Reflection

By Lyrissa Sheptak

*... So God imparts to human hearts
the blessings of His heav’n.*

*No ear may hear His coming,
but in this world of sin,*

where meek souls will receive Him still

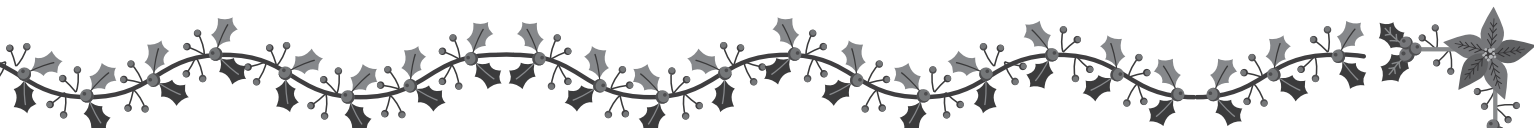
the dear Christ enters in. — Oh Little Town of Bethlehem, V3.

Imagine if you will, that most sacred night. A newborn baby, the Son of the Most High, was given to us freely so we can be saved. Sometimes I focus on the beautiful details of the nativity story so much that I forget to ponder on the Mastermind of it all—God the *Father*. I wonder what it was like for Him to offer His Son knowing how it would all play out... especially the pain and sacrifice His Son would have to endure before the Resurrection. God *knew* all this, and yet in an act of love that only God can manage, *He gave us* His beloved Son.

In doing so, He entrusted Jesus to the two most perfect people... who, it just so happens, were also the most *obedient* people. That is a large part of the story, actually. For as we try to take moments of this nativity story and interject them into our daily lives throughout the Christmas season, we need to first think of God’s Majesty and His perfect Will. Imagine if Mary and Joseph both insisted to God (when considering the pregnancy) that there was no way they were going to tarnish their good names.

There’s something to be said about God’s Will and Plan... even within our own lives. Who am I emulating? Whose (T)ruth am I following, God’s or my own? The slogan “*live my truth*” has become the undoing of our world. The lyrics, “I did it my way” has a different meaning when considering this. We’re fooling ourselves if we are living in such a way that is contrary to living *God’s* Truth.

This Christmas season, when I look at the creche, I will ponder it with this angle in mind. Sometimes, I like to place myself in the story of that Holy Night. What if I was one of the minor characters who was allowed to be part of the nativity story? Take a moment to imagine yourself as a shepherd who heard the angel Gabriel bring glad tidings of joy heralding the birth of the Messiah. Can you even begin to picture what a sky full of angels praising God and celebrating the birth of His Son would have



sounded... or even *looked*... like? I don't even know where to begin explaining the gamut of emotions I'd be experiencing all at once. Shock. Fear? Awe. Confusion, excitement and joy all rolled into one.

What would it have been like to find the stable in Bethlehem? Would I have been giddy? Or curiously careful? When I came across the Holy Family, what would have crossed my mind? Consider St. Joseph. Suddenly responsible for keeping the Creator's own Son and Mary protected and cared for. Perhaps he was tentative at the sudden crowds coming to the stable. I can see him stepping in as protector immediately; not wanting to step on "God's toes" so to speak and hinder His Plan. Yet, he *was* chosen to be this Child's earthly father, and as many new fathers can attest, there are feelings of worry, sudden responsibility, intense love, and deep protection. Perhaps Mary would have given him a supportive glance. Maybe he would have felt that if God had taken him this far, He'd deal with the details. After all, he was getting familiar with God's ways.

Then there is Our Beautiful Mother. What could I possibly say to the young woman who crushed the head of the serpent? What words could I possibly utter to the one who gave her fiat *without hesitation*? As young as she was, and as much as she had been put through in her last nine months (as well as her recent perilous trip and labour in a stable), she knew that the world was forever changed. No, she couldn't read the future and know what God's demand of her would be one day. No one knows those things. But her genuine holiness and unquestionable obedience to God and *His Will*, despite her circumstances, makes me think of where I'd stack up (pretty shabbily, if I must be honest). However, in contemplating her on that Holy Night, I could picture her radiant love and gentleness as she shared the child with each of us onlookers because the Holy Spirit, her Holy Spouse, revealed to her that the Child is for each of us.

Finally, what would I have thought when I mustered the courage to gaze upon the Christ Child? If the Holy Spirit allowed me to truly understand Who was before me, past being awestruck, I can't think of anything else other than my unworthiness, followed swiftly by my intense thankfulness and relief (among a myriad of other things). I wouldn't have known exactly *how* this humble, vulnerable baby was going to one day demonstrate His Kingship. But it's safe to say that I'd be relieved that the Messiah finally arrived to clean up the mess. Like the Magi who, as legend says, had conversions that changed their lives to ones lived for Christ, I can't imagine being unchanged by the Holy experience.

Sometimes I forget how truly *great* God is. I get so wrapped up in the events of the Christmas story that I forget that the birth Jesus is actually *God's* special day too. In gifting us Jesus He deserves great honour and praise. We can do this is by living our lives for *His* glory, and doing *His Will*. Giving God our bare minimum is not enough. We can't just glance back on God like He's a pet that we are keeping tabs on. Nor can we pick and choose what rules of His we agree with, and wear blindfolds for all the things we don't agree with. "***Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters.***" (Luke 11:26) It is a choice to be all-in with Him.

So this Christmas, let's truly pay homage to the reason we have this lovely season placing God on His rightful throne in our lives (and in the world), like He deserves. First things first, we are to glorify God, seeking His Will and not our own. The rest will fall into place.

Blessed be God forever! Blessed be Jesus: "Jehovah Shammah, the Lord who is there. He is Jehovah Rophe, the God that heals all our diseases, He is the Almighty, All-knowing, All-Powerful, resurrected Son of God. He is Heaven's hope and hell's dread. He is the Lord of Glory. He is the Lion of Judah. He is the light of the world."¹

"... that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow... and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the Glory of God the Father." – *Philippians 2:10-11*

¹ Pastor John Hagee, "Every Knee."

The Promise and the Sword

By **Cornelia Mary Bilinsky**

Our beloved Christmas carols tell the wondrous story of the Son of God born on earth to save mankind. The Feast of the Encounter (Presentation) of our Lord in the Temple, which closes the Christmas season, poignantly reminds us that our salvation will come through sacrifice.

The sun beat down on the little gray donkey as he slowly trudged along the dusty road. He stopped suddenly, as if weary of his journey.

“Keep going, my friend,” said Joseph, “we have a way to go yet.”

Mary laughed. “Maybe he thinks this journey is going to be like the last one.”

She looked down at the baby in her arms and smiled lovingly. “But it’s very different, isn’t it, my little one?”

Mary thought back to the last journey she and Joseph had taken together. They had travelled from Nazareth to Bethlehem to register for the census, according to the decree of Caesar Augustus. It had been a difficult and tiring journey, which had taken many days. Mary had been heavy with the child growing in her womb. How grateful she had been for the donkey! What a relief it had been to sit on his back from time to time instead of having to walk the whole way. Even so, riding on the donkey had not been easy either. The swaying and bumping on the rough road had often made her ill and she had longed for rest. When they had finally arrived in Bethlehem, only to learn that the inns were full, Mary had been grateful for the shelter in a lowly cave where animals were kept.

All that was behind them. Despite the hard times, Mary had every reason to be happy. In that little cave surrounded by animals, she had given birth to Jesus, the child promised to her by the angel. Jesus was a beautiful healthy baby, and Mary loved him dearly. All she wanted to do was to settle down in a quiet place and take care of him. Soon, perhaps, very soon, she kept thinking, they would go back home to Nazareth.

But only yesterday, Joseph had disturbed her thoughts.

“Tomorrow he will be forty days old,” he reminded Mary. “We must take him to the temple in Jerusalem. It is the law.”



Cornelia Mary Bilinsky

Indeed, according to the law of the time, every first-born boy should be taken to the temple when he was forty days old. In the temple he would be presented to the priest as an offering to God. The priest would say a prayer, offering the child to the Lord, and then he would give him back to his mother. Then he would place a sacrifice on the altar and burn it.

“Yes, Joseph,” Mary had replied, “we must obey the law. We will go to Jerusalem.”

Fortunately, the temple in Jerusalem was only a half-day’s journey from Bethlehem. And so here they were, on the dusty road to Jerusalem. Mary glanced at the small cage tied to the donkey’s back. In it were two turtledoves. This was their gift to the temple, the gift which would be burned as a sacrifice to the Lord. Every family that brought their first-born boy to the temple was also required to bring a sacrifice. Those who could afford it brought a small lamb. Those who were poor brought two turtledoves.

Mary’s heart broke a little as she thought about this. She loved the little white doves, which cooed and sang Jesus to sleep as they journeyed. But the doves had to give up their lives. They would be burned at the altar and they would die. It was a sad thing, but Mary knew that it had to be done. The sacrifices were needed to make up for the people’s sins and to make things right with God. That was the law.

Finally they reached the temple in Jerusalem. As Mary and Joseph made their way up the temple steps, Mary looked at her baby in wonder. In her heart she knew that Jesus was not just any first-born son. The angel had said so. The words were burned in her memory: “You shall bring forth a son and you shall call his name Jesus and he shall be



great and shall be called the Son of the Most High.”
What did it all mean? Mary wondered.

As Mary and Joseph stood in the temple foyer, waiting for their turn, Mary noticed a very old man with a long white beard. Standing in a corner, with his arms raised and his eyes turned to heaven, he was muttering intense prayers in continuous soft undertones.

“Joseph, look at that man!” Mary whispered.

“That’s Simeon,” a nearby stranger interrupted, “he comes here every day, praying and waiting for the Messiah.”

“We’re all waiting for the Messiah, for God’s chosen One,” said another stranger, “Simeon isn’t the only one.”

“Ah,” replied the other man, “but Simeon is certain that he will not die before he has seen the Messiah. He says God has promised him that.” Both men laughed and moved on to another part of the temple.

Finally it was Mary and Joseph’s turn. They presented Jesus to the priest who took him from Mary. Facing the altar, he chanted a long prayer. Then he gave Jesus back to Mary and turned to Joseph. Joseph handed him the cage with the two white turtle doves.

Just then the elder, Simeon, approached the family. His eyes burned brightly with excitement. “Please let me hold the child,” he asked.

Taking Jesus in his arms, Simeon looked at the baby for one long moment. Then he raised his eyes and cried out, “Now, Lord, you may let me die in peace, for you have kept your promise. My eyes have seen the Saviour, the light that will show you to the Gentiles and the glory of your people, Israel.”

Turning to Mary, Simeon spoke to her gently. “This child will do many great things, but one day a sword of sorrow shall pierce your heart.”

With trembling hands, Mary took Jesus back into her own arms. Quietly she and Joseph left the temple and went back to their donkey. The wonder in Mary’s heart was ever growing. *What did Simeon mean? What lay ahead for her child? What would Jesus become? What would he do?*

She said nothing of this to Joseph, but he seemed to understand her worries.

“Mary,” he said, “I think it is time to go back to Nazareth.”

“Oh, Joseph, that would be wonderful,” Mary cried out with joy, “but it will be a long journey for a little baby!”

“Our job,” said Joseph, “is to look after Jesus. God will do the rest.”

“Yes,” Mary smiled, “we will go with God. We will trust in His plan for Jesus, whatever it may be.”

Note: This story is based on the Gospel of Luke (2:22-39). However we know from Scripture (Matthew 2) that the Holy Family did not return to Nazareth immediately after this encounter in the temple. Warned by an angel, they fled to Egypt to escape Herod’s swords. However, once it was safe, Joseph, Mary, and Jesus left Egypt and made their home in Nazareth, where Jesus spent his childhood.

400th Anniversary of Saint Josaphat's Martyrdom

By Father Gabriel Haber

SAIN'T JOSAPHAT (IVAN) KUNTSEVYCH was born in 1580 to Orthodox Christian parents who resided in the western Ukrainian region of Volyn. Although the church had fallen out of full communion with the Pope, Ivan Kuntsevych began his monastic life by entering the Order of Saint Basil the Great; he chose the name Josaphat, and was later referred to as "Thief of Souls."

As early as the 11th century, due to social, political, and theological disputes, some Eastern (Ukrainian/Slavic) churches began separating from unity with the Holy See. Eventually there developed a bitter hatred between the Orthodox and the Uniates—those wanting to preserve unity with Rome. By the time that Ivan Kuntsevych had entered the monastery, many Slavic Orthodox Christians had become strongly anti-Catholic.

As a young man, Ivan Kuntsevych was trained as a merchant's apprentice and could have chosen to marry; however, he felt drawn to the spiritual depth of traditional Basilian monasticism and, bearing the monastic name of Josaphat, he entered a Ukrainian monastery in 1604.

The young monk took on the ambitious task of striving to re-incorporate the Eastern Orthodox tradition with the authority of the Catholic Church in the era of its "Counter-reformation." Josaphat devoted his life to this endeavour as a young, newly ordained priest, then subsequently as an archbishop, and ultimately a martyr.



He lived and died for the union of the churches.

Josaphat resisted any attempt to compromise the Eastern Catholic churches' own traditions even though he rejected the anti-Western sentiments of his countrymen. He recognized the urgent pastoral needs of the people and responded to these needs by producing works of instruction in catechism and literature pertaining to apologetics. As well, he implemented long-overdue reforms of the clergy and attended to the needs of the poor.

The exemplary life of Josaphat, especially his extraordinary zeal for the care of all souls, served to win the trust of many Orthodox Christians who understood and appreciated the value of the union of churches as reflected by the life and work of the archbishop.

Nevertheless, his mission was essentially one of controversy; some were led to believe lurid stories and malicious gossip defaming his character. In 1620, his opponents went to the lengths of arranging for the consecration of a rival archbishop.

As tensions between supporters and opponents began to escalate, Josaphat lamented the onset of attacks that would lead to his death. "You people of Vitebsk want to put me to death," he protested. "You endeavour to create ambushes for me everywhere I turn, in the streets, on the bridges, on the highways, and in the marketplace. I am here among you as a

shepherd, and surely, you ought to know that I would be happy to give my life for you."

And he finally did so on November 12, 1623. An Orthodox priest who had been trying to force his way into the archbishop's residence continuously shouted insults at him. Josaphat had him removed, but the man then assembled a mob in the town. They proceeded to the residence, surrounded it and then demanded the archbishop's life, threatening his companions and servants. Unable to escape, Josaphat died praying for the very mob who killed him. They threw his body into a river, and it was discovered incorrupted five days later. He was pronounced "Blessed" in 1643, and canonized as a saint in 1867. He is the patron saint of Christian unity and of Ukraine.

Celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the Basilians in North America

The story of Saints Peter and Paul Monastery in Mundare, Alberta

By Bishop Paul Chomnycky

The year 2023 is a significant one in the history of our Ukrainian Catholic Church and the Basilian Order of St. Josaphat because we are celebrating the 400th anniversary of the martyrdom of our great Ukrainian saint and co-founder of the modern Ukrainian Basilian Order—St. Josaphat Kuncevych. In addition, the Basilian Province of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Canada is commemorating the 100th Anniversary of the construction and blessing of the motherhouse of the Basilians in North America: Saints Peter and Paul Monastery in Mundare, AB.

We all enjoy celebrating anniversaries, especially joyful ones, like birthdays and wedding anniversaries. We also commemorate the anniversaries of not so joyful events: the passing of loved ones, or anniversaries of tragedies such as 9/11. Anniversaries, no matter what they commemorate, provide us with the opportunity to come together, to be joyful or sad together, and, most of all, to remember.

Anniversaries make us aware of moments, events, or people who have shaped us. Doing this, we remember who we are, how we got to where we are today, and, most importantly, what points us in the right direction to the future and the road that lies ahead.

That's why it is important to discuss Saints Peter and Paul Monastery. It's probably the oldest building in Mundare today. It's a landmark of the town. We take it for granted. It's always been standing here for as long as we can remember, and we assume it always



will be. Unfortunately, we don't know much about it.

But, it's also a symbol of us—our history as Ukrainian Catholics on the prairies of Alberta. It's a beacon that reveals from where we have come, where we are today, and where, hopefully, we are going. So, why was it built, and in this location?

Saints Peter and Paul Monastery was blessed to open its doors on the Feast of the Dormition of the Mother of God on August 28, 1923—one hundred years ago.

But, this wasn't the beginning of its history. The day of its blessing was the culmination of a long road that began over twenty years earlier. The history of the building of the monastery begins with the arrival of the first Basilians on the North American continent on October 31, 1902. On that day, Fr. Platonid Filas, the superior of the group of missionaries that consisted of three other Basilian monks and four Sisters

Servants of Mary Immaculate, descended the train at Strathcona Station in south Edmonton on October 31, 1902, after a long journey from western Ukraine (Galicia).

On that day 121 years ago, the path that led to the construction of Saints Peter and Paul Monastery commenced. The seed was planted. It sprouted, was nourished, and watered through the hard work, self-sacrifice and dedication of the Basilian Fathers and Sisters Servants who served the Ukrainian people who were thirsting for the Word of God and for the Sacraments, and also through the sacrifices of the faithful themselves who offered what they could to help the priests and Sisters establish their mission.

The missionaries first set up on the shores of Beaverhill Lake, three miles from present-day Mundare on where the modern Yellowhead Highway snakes towards Vegreville, directly across from Saints



Peter and Paul Cemetery. There they built their first rather simple home and first chapel in 1903. The first Saints Peter and Paul Pilgrimage was held the same year.

Fr. Filas did not remain long in Canada. In 1905 he was called back to Ukraine because he was elected as the Superior General of the Basilian Order and served in Ukraine for the rest of his life.

Following him as the superior of the mission was Fr. Naucratus Kryzhanowsky, OSBM, who came to Mundare from Ukraine via Winnipeg. He was a giant of a man, brilliant, and dedicated, an excellent organizer and was, for many years, superior of the Basilian mission in Canada. When the mission grew and evolved and a Basilian Province was created in 1931, he became its first Provincial.

After the first couple of years, the small chapel proved too small to accommodate the growing number of faithful. Fr. Filas had plans to build a larger church right where they were established on Beaverhill Lake, and materials and lumber had already begun to be acquired.

This remained the plan until something happened that radically altered the future of the Beaverhill

Lake mission: the laying of the CNR rail line through the area and the construction of a station three miles northwest of Beaverhill Lake at a place they named Mundare.

Fr. Kryzhanowsky, not without some difficulty, convinced the people that it was best to build the new church in town rather than on the farms and so, on September 8, 1910, the first Divine Liturgy was celebrated in the newly constructed church in Mundare. Prime Minister Wilfred Laurier was invited to dedicate the cornerstone. A month and a half later in October 1910, Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky visited Mundare where he remained for several days, teaching, preaching, and visiting the faithful. He celebrated the Divine Liturgy in the new church on Sunday, October 23, and consecrated the church at that time.

The seed that was planted almost a decade earlier in the Beaverhill Lake mission sprouted and was given a very auspicious start. The life of the Ukrainian Catholic Church in Mundare and surroundings began to grow like wheat under the summer sun.

Then, another event occurred, that again radically altered not

only the life of the Basilian mission and the Ukrainian Catholic community in Mundare, but the life of the entire world. This was the First World War, which afflicted the world from 1914 to 1918.

WWI devastated Ukraine and brought with it social and political turmoil and change. The Austrian Hapsburg Empire disappeared and Galicia found itself annexed to Poland. The Poles turned out to be not as benevolent as the Austrians. An era of persecution and suppression began. Missionaries could no longer easily come to Canada and the activity of the Church was hindered.

Fr. Kryzhanowsky, luckily, was a man of great foresight and it was then that an idea occurred to him: that the mission should not depend exclusively on priests from Ukraine, but rather, it should educate priests from among the local faithful. And to do this they would require their own house of formation where new generations of Basilian missionaries would be formed from among men who were born in Canada and raised in the Canadian milieu.

In all of Alberta and BC there were only four Basilians at that time. Funds were practically nonexistent. But Fr. Kryzhanowsky was a man of vision and faith. And he set to work to realize his dream.

But, many hardships had to be overcome. The flu epidemic of 1918 hit hard. Life ground to a halt—much as we ourselves experienced during the recent COVID pandemic. The priests were constantly visiting their ill faithful and burying them when they died. They had time for little else. Thousands were sickened and hundreds died.

In addition, as if to pour salt on an open wound, 1919 turned out to be the worst year for crops in living memory. Spring came late and

winter arrived early. Livestock starved and people went hungry. Again the missionaries devoted their time to helping their faithful survive the difficult year.

Finally, in 1921 it appeared the run of bad luck had ended. The corner had been turned and fortune seemed to be smiling on them once more.

A second pastoral visit of Metropolitan Sheptytsky to Canada in 1921 seemed almost a sign from heaven. After spending several days living with the Basilians, he wrote the following words in the chronicle before departing:

“I also want to tell you that your work in Mundare and nearby colonies seems especially good... May God help you to complete the difficult task, to build a novitiate for our Order and to give birth to new generations of missionaries, more numerous than you, because for the necessary work, two or three times as many of you are needed. I felt so good in Mundare, I enjoyed peace so much that I regretted not staying here longer... Pray for me... I will never forget you...”

This was the moment Fr. Kryzhanowsky had been waiting for. It provided the impulse that was needed for him to complete the task at hand.

Money was scraped together through the donations of the faithful, and a \$22,000 loan was procured.

Materials were acquired, and a team of faithful were ready to donate their labour towards the project. The great ecclesial architect of the Canadian prairies, the Oblate priest, Fr. Philip Ruh, was hired to design the building. In May of 1922, the construction work began in earnest.

A little more than a year later, the novitiate home was formally blessed on the Feast of the Dormition, May 28, 1923, and the doors were opened to the first four Canadian-born candidates for the priesthood.

In the ensuing century many candidates have passed through the doors of this monastery, a large number of whom, have reached the day of ordination to the priesthood. Many priests have taught here and prayed here with the novices.

This venerable building has lived through ten decades. It has seen a hundred frosty winters and a hundred sizzling summers. The walls have stood through many ground-shaking world events: another world war worse than the first, the Communist oppression of Ukraine and the destruction of our Church in the homeland. And then, the miraculous rebirth of our Church in the 1990s, the arrival of young men—priests and seminarians from Ukraine—to fill the ranks of those who came before. And finally, the major renovation of the monastery was completed a couple of years ago, after many

years of discussion and deliberation. And of course, in the last year and a half, the war in Ukraine and another threat to the independence and sovereignty of our ancestral homeland and Church.

Through it all, this building has stood firm. True, it has changed quite a bit, especially on the inside. There were no indoor lavatories in 1923, neither gas furnaces, convection ovens, washing machines, nor many other modern conveniences.

Certainly, Fr. Kryzhanowsky, were he to walk through the corridors of the monastery today, would hardly recognize it. But it is the same building. A glance at the outside facade confirms that it remains the same, with its roots sunk deep into the place it was planted a century ago.

Today we give thanks to Fr. Kryzhanowsky for his foresight and determination and we thank all the other Basilian priests and brothers, the Sisters Servants of Mary Immaculate who toiled alongside the Basilians, and especially we thank the laity, many of whom were the ancestors of present-day parishioners, who lent their support through the years. We ask that the Lord grant them peaceful and blessed eternal rest in His presence. And may God deign that Saints Peter and Paul Monastery continue to be a beacon and stand where it has stood for another hundred years!



Front cover: “I Get to Carry the Star!”

Artist Bio: After receiving her BFA with a major in Ceramics from Alberta University of the Arts (formerly Alberta College of Art & Design), Erin Haugen has maintained a primarily commission-based practice while balancing her family life and supporting her husband, an Orthodox Priest. Notably, Erin has had two paintings featured for the Shevchenko Foundation Bookmark campaign, and has a number of paintings within the Ukrainian Canadian Congress collection. Erin has participated in numerous group exhibitions, including “Five Waves of

Inspiration” at the Art Gallery of Alberta, and was recently featured in the exhibition “Taking Wing” at the Alberta Council for the Ukrainian Arts Gallery in Edmonton, AB.

Thinking Through the Papal Comments to Russian Catholic Youth

A summary of insights into the affair

By Rev. Ireneus Prystajeky,

pastor of St. John the Baptist Ukrainian Catholic Shrine in Ottawa

A few months ago in August, Pope Francis made some remarks to a gathering of Russian Catholic youth that seemed to support Russian imperialism. Many Ukrainian Catholics were disappointed at this. Please find below information on subsequent developments in this affair. They give insight into the relationship between Pope Francis and Ukraine. Included is:

- my summary of a news article published September 6, 2023, on the official website of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church
- an English translation of remarks posted on September 8 by Bishop Bohdan Dzyurakh, exarch of Germany and Scandinavia for Ukrainian Catholics, on his personal Facebook page

■ Synod of the Ukrainian Catholic Bishops meets with Pope Francis

Concerning the news report published September 6 on the official website of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church

The bishops of the Synod of the Ukrainian Catholic Church met on September 6 with the Pope in a private audience. The bishops mentioned that the Pope's remarks to the Russian Catholic youth caused pain to the Ukrainian people. The Pope responded by mentioning that the cultural heritage of a given people is sometimes manipulated by state power and gets transformed into an ideology which destroys and kills. He did not actually say the word "Russia," but we can be sure that that is whom he was referring to. He went on to admit the pain of the Ukrainian people from his remarks and assured them of his solidarity with them, and that he prays for them and tries to stay close to them. To emphasize his closeness to the Ukrainian people, the Pope showed the bishops an icon of the Mother of God given him many years ago when Patriarch Sviatoslav was a bishop in Argentina, mentioning that he prays in front of it every day. At the end of the meeting, the bishops thanked His Holiness for his efforts on behalf of the Ukrainian people and they asked that he continue them, especially for the release of the two Ukrainian Catholic priests being held prisoner by the Russians.

■ English translation of a message posted by His Excellency Bohdan Dzyurakh, Apostolic Exarch for Ukrainian Catholics of the Byzantine Rite in Germany and Scandinavia, on his personal Facebook page on September 8, 2023

"What assistance has the Vatican provided to Ukraine since the beginning of the war?"

Since the question was public, I am sharing with you, my friends, the answer I gave in a comment under one of my recent posts. I am writing not for the sake of polemics (there are a lot of it everywhere lately), but out of sorrow that emotions can so easily blind the spirit.

So:

The Vatican and Pope Francis personally have been, and continue to be, of great help to Ukraine.

- The liberation of our prisoners is one of the most important and valuable missions (if there were a person close to you among those liberated, this alone would probably be enough for you, I am convinced, not to fall into the trap of groundless and generalized skepticism)
- The protection of our faithful in Crimea; the support of the priests who serve our faithful, and all those in need while under difficult circumstances
- The numerous humanitarian convoys—diplomatic efforts to prevent and now to stop the aggression and restore territorial integrity, and a lasting and just peace
- The Pope's special letter to the Ukrainian people; the numerous envoys of the Pope (cardinals of the Roman Church) to Ukraine as an expression of support and solidarity
- The pro-Ukrainian position and courage in supporting Ukraine of the Ap. Nuncios Gullickson, Gugerotti and Kulbokas; the famous humanitarian action of 2016 (I think you remember that the war did not begin on February 24, 2022) "Pope for Ukraine"—when the world was silent and ignored our suffering, and, thanks to the Pope, all Catholic parishes in Europe were talking about Ukraine and collected donations for those suffering from the war in Ukraine.
- Not to mention the numerous and eloquent signs

of solidarity (kissing the bloody flag from Mariupol, meeting with our soldiers at general audiences, meeting with widows and war victims, meeting with the wives of our ambassadors, meeting with Ukrainian youth in Lisbon...).

- And constant (since February 2022 alone, there have been more than 220!) public references to Ukraine and calls for prayer for peace. And this is only a fraction of what has been done and is being done and what spontaneously comes to mind...

I do not understand (and do not accept) how one can not see and not recognize and not appreciate this. There is either some kind of insurmountable prejudice and inability to see the obvious, or an elementary lack

of human and Christian gratitude.

Of course, not everything is perfect. But is everything okay in our own “homes”?

I am convinced that if everyone in his or her area, and in his or her place, did as much as the Holy Father has done and is doing for Ukraine in the religious sphere, peace in Ukraine would have come long ago.

Additional link:

Pope Sends Almoner to Ukraine to Inaugurate Shelter for Single Mothers, which Francis Himself Helped to Finance - ZENIT - English

<https://zenit.org/2023/09/20/pope-sends-almoner-to-ukraine-to-inaugurate-shelter-for-single-mothers-which-francis-himself-helped-to-finance>

WUCWO: A Youth Perspective

By Isabella Sheptak, UCWLC St. Basil's Branch, Edmonton

The UCWLC is a Canadian organization which is deeply embedded in the local communities in which it has branches. It is an organization which reaches more than just the members of the parish that it serves, aiding the broader communities they call home through various fundraisers and initiatives. However, the UCWLC's involvement does not stop at the edges of the Canadian border, as it is a member of the international WUCWO—the World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations. You might be familiar with WUCWO and its work, or this may be the very first time you have heard about it. I myself, a very junior member of the UCWLC, had never heard about WUCWO until I was given the incredible opportunity to attend its General Assembly in Assisi, Italy, in May of 2023 as the Youth Representative of Canada. Part of the responsibility of being a Youth Representative at WUCWO means bringing back what I learned and experienced to my own member organization. Thus, in this article I will discuss what WUCWO is and does, what my personal experience at the conference was like, and what resolutions WUCWO passed for member organizations to work with.

I would like to begin with a little bit of information about myself. My name is Isabella Sheptak. I am a fourth-year student at the University of Alberta studying anthropology and Catholic theology. I have been a parishioner at St. Basil's Ukrainian Catholic Parish in Edmonton my entire life. I was a member of our Children of Mary, Sodality, and Youth Group, and have now

been a member of the UCWLC for the past two years. I have volunteered as a counsellor during our summer camp for many years, and I cantor for the English liturgy at our parish. Through my membership in the UCWLC and my life-long involvement in my parish community I was selected to be the Youth Representative of Canada at the WUCWO General Assembly. The opportunity to attend, and the funding for the whole trip, were provided entirely by WUCWO and the UCWLC, both of which I owe many, many thanks. I also owe particular thanks to Barbara Hlus, who informed me of the opportunity, and to Marusia Kobrynsky, Marlene Bodnar, and Holly Paluck who attended the WUCWO conference as the UCWLC's representatives and took good care of me in my travels. Not every country was able to have a Youth Representative at the conference, thus I served, in a sense, as the Youth Representative for the English-speaking countries of North America and Europe.

What is WUCWO?

Before discussing the conference itself, it is important to begin with background information about WUCWO. The World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations was founded in 1910, represents nearly 100 Catholic women's organizations worldwide, and is active in more than 50 countries. Its mission is to unite and coordinate Catholic women's organizations around the world and give them a voice on the international platform. This voice is present and impactful outside of exclusively Catholic

circles through WUCWO's consultative status with the United Nations' Economic and Social Council, Human Rights Council, and Food and Agriculture Organization; its participatory status at the Council of Europe; and its status as an official partner of UNESCO. WUCWO aims to promote the presence, participation, and co-responsibility of Catholic women in society and the Church in order to enable them to fulfill their mission of evangelization and to work for human development, particularly in increasing educational opportunities, poverty reduction, and the advancement of human rights beginning with the fundamental right to life, and through its encouragement of ecumenical and interreligious dialogue.

A Focus on St. Francis

The 2023 WUCWO General Assembly began with an audience with our Holy Father Pope Francis in the Vatican where he discussed the vital role of women in the church. The Assembly itself then took place over five days from May 15th to 19th in New Assisi. The theme for the assembly was "WUCWO women, artisans of human fraternity for world peace." Over 67 organizations from different parts of the globe were in attendance, making for a total of 832 participants. The audience with the Pope, the location, and theme all worked together perfectly to create a truly unique, once-in-a-lifetime experience with a special focus on one man and his work—St. Francis of Assisi.

The spirit of St. Francis permeated the entire assembly in a myriad of ways. The conference took place in New Assisi, the (relatively) young town near Assisi, from which St. Francis hailed. During the conference the women took a trip to visit the Basilica of Saint Francis, where we participated in a special *Laudato Si* mass—a mass inspired by Pope Francis' writings, which were inspired by St. Francis of Assisi. I was given the opportunity to participate in this beautiful service by being the reader for the universal prayers of the faithful. This was particularly special to me because St. Francis' prayer of peace has had such a central role in my life over the last few years, and I personally credit it to having made many positive changes in my life. I felt throughout the trip, but especially during that mass, a close connection to St. Francis.

The conference itself took place directly next to the Basilica Santa Maria degli Angeli, where we had daily mass. This Basilica houses the Portiuncula—where Jesus appeared to St. Francis, where he lived, started the Franciscan Order, and eventually died. Directly beside the Basilica grow the thornless rose bushes which St. Francis threw himself into in order to overcome doubt



Isabella Sheptak on the right

and temptation. The Lord transformed those bushes into roses without thorns as a reward for his gesture of love, and to this day the *Rosa Canina Assisiensis* still grows only there. The air around New Assisi often smells of these sweet roses, and there is a peace in that place, wandering around lush gardens filled with statues of St. Francis and St. Claire, which is unlike any other.

Adding to the focus on the life of St. Francis, not only did we get to spend the week in Assisi, but before the Assembly all the women of WUCWO were able to attend an audience with Pope Francis, whose namesake, of course, is St. Francis of Assisi. Pope Francis has placed great emphasis throughout his papacy on the life and writings of St. Francis, something which is particularly evident in his encyclical *Laudato Si*. *Laudato Si* calls all people to recognize that caring for our common home, the earth, is our Christian duty, and in this encyclical Francis laments environmental degradation and global warming and critiques consumerism and irresponsible development—an approach which is very much an extension of St. Francis of Assisi's love of the natural world. It was a powerful, once-in-a-lifetime experience to have been able to be in an audience with the Pope in the Vatican. He spoke to the important role of women in the church, a speech which was made all the more impactful by his very recent decision to give non-bishop participants at synods—including lay women and religious sisters—voting rights for the first time in Church history. The uniqueness of the experience was also heightened by the beautiful private mass we were

able to attend at St. Peter’s Basilica later that day. Additionally, immediately after his audience with WUCWO, Pope Francis met with President Zelenskyy. Thus, on the day we visited, the Vatican was flooded with Vyshyvanky and Ukrainian flags—a truly moving sight.

The Conference

The WUCWO General Assembly featured daily masses, cultural evenings where women from each country performed their national songs and dances, trips into Old Assisi to see the Basilicas of St. Francis and St. Clare (as well as the body of Blessed Carlo Acutis), an exhibition of the activities of the organizations, and an international market which sprung up in the garden outside of the hotel. This was all in addition, of course, to the actual bones of the conference—the many meetings wherein topics like women and youth ministry in a synodal church were discussed, by-laws were amended, new projects put forth, new resolutions created, and a new board elected.

The Youth Representatives had several different jobs throughout the conference. We provided organizational support for much of the conference, helping the women navigate the assembly and working behind the scenes to make sure all of the meetings ran smoothly. Near the end of the Assembly, we each gave a short speech to the assembly about our experience at the conference and a message we would like to communicate from the

youth. Following my short speech—in which I discussed St. Francis’ prayer of peace and the meaning of unity—I was very fortunate to have been approached by the President of WUCWO and asked to give an interview the following day for the Vatican Youth, and then for an Italian Catholic magazine.

I cannot overemphasize how powerful of an experience it was to be living in that hotel-turned-international-village for that one week. While it did come with some challenges (putting 900 women from every corner of the globe into one hotel is no easy task) there was a spirit of unity and strength there unlike any I’ve ever felt before. I was able to walk through a crowd of hundreds of strangers knowing that I could stop to talk to any one of them, that I would be met with kindness and a genuine mutual respect and interest in getting to know the other person, their nation, and their organization’s unique struggles and strengths. Everyone was open and wanting to give of themselves and their organization—to share and grow. At each meal I could sit at a random table with people I’d never seen before and be welcomed as if I was one of their own. WUCWO’s motto—women as artisans of human fraternity—was palpable.

Each woman there had her own unique stories and experiences. However, one in particular stood out to me as a Youth Representative. A woman named Lucia Synrem shared that she is a youth coordinator for a

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parish in north-eastern India. Since she began as the youth leader at the parish, their youth group has grown to 800 kids. This was a number I couldn't believe until she showed me videos of them all dancing together outside or picking up litter in their community. Such a number is unimaginable here for many parishes, let alone a youth group. I think that in times such as these when we in North America and Europe are facing the challenge of simply finding ways to bring the Church to people and increase participation, it is comforting and uplifting to know that there are other places in the world where Catholicism and a spirit of love and rejoicing are flourishing and growing. If it can happen there, there is no reason we cannot hope that something like that might be possible in this place again in a distant future.

Resolutions

My conversations with Mrs. Synrem gave me hope for the future and a motivation to work harder to bring about positive change in the world through the Church. This was a sentiment shared by the women as a whole throughout the conference, especially when forming their resolutions for member organizations to act on for the next four years. The newly elected WUCWO president, Mexican Mónica Santamarina, stated that it is her intention to work so that member organizations have the necessary tools to implement the six resolutions passed by the Assembly. These are the resolutions:

1. To consolidate the growth of the World Women's Observatory, a platform created by WUCWO which seeks to listen and give visibility to the suffering and to the potential of women, especially the most vulnerable, to promote actions in favour of their integral development, their families and their communities. You can learn more about the World Women's Observatory on their Facebook page and on their website: worldwomensobservatory.org.
2. To defend **religious freedom** as a fundamental human right for the promotion of fraternity and peace. Participating organizations should pledge to work for non-discrimination, to denounce violations of religious freedom and to promote interfaith interaction.
3. To respond to the urgent call to action of the encyclical *Laudato Si* by addressing environmental and climate change issues. Activities aimed at recycling, reducing individual pollution and promoting ecological conversation will be promoted. This is tied to the understanding that climate change impacts the world's poorest and most vulnerable worse than it impacts those who have been blessed with greater wealth and security.



4. To aid in the Catholic formation of young people and couples on the path of family love, recognizing motherhood and fatherhood as paths to holiness.
5. To respond to Pope Francis' call to build a future with migrants and refugees by committing to be active instruments of concrete proximity. Special attention will be given to the problem of forced migration and discrimination in the labour market, which affects mainly women. Support tools will be put in place to address these challenges.
6. To promote the formation of women so that they can participate responsibly in the building and decision-making processes of the Church. The aim is to foster women's leadership in the pursuit of the common good through spiritual, intellectual and pastoral formation.

Through this entire experience I developed a more profound understanding of love for my neighbour, a deeper connectivity to all the Christians of the world, and a greater appreciation for organizations. The women at WUCWO had some very big ideas for very big changes, ideas which would seem entirely lofty and unreachable if it was just a few people who had set their minds to it. However, the amount of reach, resources, and support found in organizations where many people come together around a common goal is truly astounding, and does make one feel empowered, as though *anything* is possible. It is possible because we have one another, we have a network of people in our own organizations and in the Universal Catholic Church which we can use to mobilize our ideas, to revitalize and spark change and make the beauty of the Church visible in the world once more. I would like to thank the UCWLC once more for making this experience possible, and I would like to encourage individual branches of the UCWLC to try to incorporate WUCWO's resolutions into their own decisions going forward.

St. Mary's and the Redemptorists in Yorkton

1910–2023: The End of an Era **By Elizabeth Zahayko**

Belgian Latin Rite Redemptorists who worked amongst Ukrainian Rite Catholic faithful, adopted the Ukrainian Rite, and initiated the creation of the Ukrainian Branch Redemptorists. These religious then established a Ukrainian Catholic mission, and became pastors of St. Mary's parish in Yorkton, SK. They invited the Sisters Servants of Mary Immaculate to Yorkton urging the establishment of Sacred Heart Institute to care for orphans, and the founding of a parochial day school for girls. They also helped build St. Joseph's College for the education of boys and inspired them to hold roles of leadership in the church and community.

Archbishop Andrey Sheptytsky, Metropolitan of Galicia, visited Yorkton and district in 1910. Having witnessed the success of the Ukrainian Branch Redemptorists, the Metropolitan invited the Redemptorists to establish themselves in Ukraine. By decree, the Holy See in 1913 granted

permission for the Redemptorists to create seminaries in Ukraine. A proviso stipulated that the seminaries could not be in proximity to existing Polish Latin Rite seminaries. The first such seminary was established at Univ. Also, the same decree officially and legally authorized the building of Ukrainian Rite monasteries within the domains of Latin Rite Dioceses in Canada. The Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer (Redemptorist Fathers) under the leadership of Fr. Achilles Delaere secured the title to 3.03 acres in Yorkton, SK, in 1913 upon which to build a monastery and a church.

Ukrainian born Redemptorists, ordained by Ukrainian Bishops in Ukraine, began arriving in Canada in the early 1920s. Many of them were writers. They published missals and in them introduced the use of the vernacular. These Ukrainian Redemptorists enriched our spirituality and enhanced our cultural identity. They organized the Ukrainian Catholic Brotherhood,



Farewell celebration for the last two Redemptorists serving at St. Mary's Church in Yorkton, June 13, 2023, St. Mary's Cultural Centre. Fr. Yevhen Zadorozhnyi, CSsR, Elizabeth Zahayko, UCWLC and Fr. Leonid Malkov, CSsR

the Ukrainian Catholic Women's League, and the Ukrainian Catholic Youth.

Canadian born, ethnically Ukrainian Redemptorists, ordained by Ukrainian Bishops in Canada, began using the vernacular (Ukrainian and English) in church services, and the parish adopted the Gregorian calendar. They also faced the challenges of a changing social order. After the Second World War, affluence and materialism captivated the attention of many people. As well, improperly implemented Vatican II policies loosened some of the bonds of church tradition. The adoption of the Gregorian calendar, use of the vernacular, and nationalism were divisive topics of debate in many parish communities. The Canadian Redemptorists fostered renewal, focusing their flock back on spirituality. Many of them became church pastors. Some became hierarchs



Redemptorist Fathers at their Jubilee Celebration.

in the Ukrainian Catholic Church. The Canadian Redemptorists initiated the creation of the Parish Council and the establishment of a Catholic School Division.

Fr. Delaere—a capable planner, architect, leader, and missionary—was responsible for the building of the church, the monastery, and the print shop, along with publishing the Ukrainian Catholic monthly, and “The Redeemer’s Voice”. By writing and publishing articles, the Redemptorists profiled Ukrainian ethnic identity in an adopted homeland. He was also responsible for going to high schools to recruit young candidates for the priesthood and religious life; for noviciate training of the new Redemptorists; and establishing the seminar whereby educating these candidates for missionary work. In addition, Fr. Delaere organized the annual Vidpusts (religious pilgrimages), which were started in 1915.

A treasure of St. Mary’s Church is the artistic icon of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin in the dome, painted by the Ukrainian artist, Stephen Meush. It is a masterpiece of Byzantine religious art. Many pilgrims and tourists visit the church each year to admire the masterpiece.

With the decline of religious vocations, and the growing old age of our existing Redemptorist Fathers, it was decided in 2022 to dismantle the monastery in Yorkton which, at one time, housed seminarians. On July 31, 2023, the Redemptorist Fathers left Yorkton and moved on to join their Redemptorist communities in Saskatoon and Winnipeg.

St. Mary’s owes a debt of gratitude to the Redemptorists. Thank you, Reverend Fathers! We pray that you will prevail upon the generation to keep the faith and to proclaim the Good News of Salvation.

The English version of the article below can be found online at <https://www.ucwlc.ca/on-the-general-chapter-of-the-sisters-servants-of-mary-immaculate-ssmi>.

Про Генеральну Капітулу Сестер Служebниць Непорочної Діви Марії (ССНДМ), Рим, 2023 р.

С. Ореста Сворака, СНДМ



Newly elected General Administration: Sr. Bonifatija Djakiv, First Councillor and General Vicarress; Sr. Sofija Lebedowicz, Superior General, Sr. Rosalia Paraschuk, Fourth Councillor, and Sr. Petra Sicakova, Second Councillor. Inset: Sr. Theresa Matwe, Third Councillor.

У цього липня у Папській українській колегії святого священномученика Йосафата в Римі була розпочата чергова XV Капітула Згромадження ССНДМ на тему: “Христос — наше Життя”, яка тривала до 16 числа поточного місяця. Учасницями Капітули були 29 Сестер-делегаток із 7 Провінцій Згромадження, що мають свої Провінційні осідки в Україні, Канаді, Бразилії, Сербії, Словаччині, Польщі та в США.

Блаженніший Святослав привітав усіх делегаток, що на Капітулі представляли 14 країн, де активно служать сестри, а також подякував учасницям за жертвовну працю для Божої слави та плідного розвитку Церкви. Відкриття Генеральної Капітули розпочалося Архирейською Божественною Літургією, яку очолив апостольський екзарх в Італії — владика Діонісій Ляхович у співслужінні

з ректором колегії отцем Луїсом Касяном, ЧСВВ, та духівником колегії отцем Діонісієм Заведюком, ЧСВВ. Після Служби Божої Генеральна Настоятелька, сестра Софія Лебедович, офіційно відкрила Капітулу, а делегатки-учасниці склали присягу на Євангелії. Також було проголошено, що у межах капітульних засідань Сестри хочуть торкнутися до ран українського народу і спільно шукати ліки для їх зцілення найперше у Христа — лікаря душ і тіл. Сестри старатимуться відпрацювати пріоритети на наступне шестиріччя, щоб краще послужити стражденому народові та Церкві. Разом будуть молитися, щоб розпізнавати знаки часу та спільно шукати Божої волі.

Капітула також була розпочата духовною відновою під проводом модератки (ведучої) сестри Александри Гуф із Згромадження Сестер місіонерок Святого Духа.

Кожен новий день Капітули починався з ранішніх молитов, Святої Літургії, обміном віри через слово Боже, тобто роздумами над уривком з Євангелії, відповідями на запитання та пристосуванням до духовного життя. Сесійні заняття починалися із зачитування привітань від духовенства, від різних Провінцій Сестер Службениць і також від Сестер чужих Чинів та Згромаджень, що молилися за успішний перебіг нашої Капітули. На початок засідань зачитувався протокол подій з попереднього дня і починалися звіти за період з 2017-2023 рр: найперше — звіти роботи Генеральної Управи, а потім кожна Провінційна Настоятелька відчитувалася за працю та життя, апостолята Сестер у своїй Провінції. Цікаво було слухати звіти всіх Провінцій, особливо відносно харизми Сестер — це праця в садочках, навчання в школах, катехизація, робота з молоддю, праця в парафіях і догляд за хворими в будинках для літніх людей. Сестри, неначе бжілки, невтомно трудилися, допомагаючи біженцям, збираючи кошти для армії і посилаючи гуманітарну допомогу для солдатів під час війни в Україні. Протягом всього часу проходження Генеральної Капітули була можливість слухати різні



Delegates of the Chapter, in front of the Pontifical College of St. Josaphat. Standing on the far left can be seen Sister Laura Prokop, delegate, and Sister Christina Syrotynsky, Provincial Superior of Canada. Standing on the far right is Sister Oresta Svorak, delegate. To the right (as we see it) of the priest is Sister Sofija Lebedowicz, Superior General, and immediately next to her is Sister Theresa Slota, past-Superior General. Sister Janice Soluk, General Councillor and also Canadian, is hidden behind the other priest on our visual left.

проповіді священників, настанови Сестри Александри Гуф, цікаві науки Префекта Дикастерії богопосвяченого життя — Жуана Брас де Авіза та владики Діонісія Ляховича — апостольського екзарха для українців в Італії.

На Капітулі Сестри змушені були розглянути духовне життя у трьох вимірах:

- благословення, які зсилає Бог на кожну особу;
- труднощі, що вимагають плекання різних чеснот;
- пропозиції на майбутнє життя під впливом Святого Духа.

Після тривалого обговорення і дискусій у провінційних групах та на загальному рівні, були прийняті та накреслені плани і напрямки духовного оживлення сестер, а саме: особистої формації та розпізнавання знаків часу; плекання здорових, християнських стосунків у взаємовідносинах (спільнотний рівень); поглиблення свідомості ведення місії у душі харизми Згромадження (рівень апостоляту). Також Капітулою були прийняті доручення Генеральній

Настоятельці та її Раді, доручення Провінційним Настоятелькам та їх Радам на наступні 6 років Правління Головної Управи.

Отже, Генеральна Капітула прийшла до висновку, що місія Сестер впливає з глибокої єдності з Христом, яка відображається в особистому свідченні віри: "Чим більше богопосвячена особа є подібною до Христа, тим більше Христос буде присутній у світі заради спасіння людей" ("Богопосвячене життя", 72). На завершення відбулося голосування та вибір членів нової Генеральної Ради, якими стали:

- Сестра Софія Лебедович – Генеральна Настоятелька Згромадження ССНДМ – Польща;
- С. Боніфатія Дяків – 1 дорадниця і Генеральна заступниця – Україна;
- С. Петра Сичакова – 2 дорадниця – Словаччина;
- С. Тереса Матвій – 3 дорадниця – Канада;
- С. Розалія Парашук – 4 дорадниця – Бразилія.



Discussion group of the Canadian representatives: Sr. Oresta Svorak, Sr. Laura Prokop, Sr. Janice Soluk, Sr. Christina Syrotynsky and Sr. Theresa Slota.

A Journey Through Christmas

— with Zirky and Koliada

By Sylvia Baran, Saskatoon Eparchy

На небі зірка ясна засяла, і любим світлом сіяє...

In the great heavens, a star is shining; with loving brightness it radiates...

Such a beautiful image! A dark winter sky is illuminated by a bright *zirka* (star) guiding the journey to glorify the newborn baby Jesus. “*Na nebi zirka*” is one of many *koliady* (Christmas carols) proclaiming the birth by means of a bright star.

What is a star? NASA defines a star as “a huge ball of very hot, glowing gas that gives off both heat and light.” The sun, visible only during the day, is the nearest star to the Earth. It is during the darkness of night that we gaze upon the other billions and trillions of stars. It is in the dark night when stars twinkle. That is the time when we dream and even wish upon a star.

In Ukrainian culture, stars are much more than balls of gas! They are an integral part of beliefs and practices. Every nativity scene has a *zirka* on the stable. They decorate our *yalynka* (Christmas tree.) Stars and other heavenly lights are prominently depicted in our churches, Christian icons and art. They represent heaven and are often used to tell God’s story. In the Nativity Icon the wondrous star comes from heaven, bringing light to the dark cave of Jesus’ birth.

At the time of the birth of Jesus, there was a light so bright in the eastern sky that it brought together three Magi from different parts of the continent who were drawn to a celestial wonder as such that they had never seen before. Together, these wise men, Gaspar, Melchior, and Balthasar followed the path of light that led them to the humble manger where they discovered the miraculous birth of the Son of God—the Christ Child who would one day save the world.

There are questions as to whether the guiding light seen by the Magi was actually a star. Perhaps it was a comet, a meteor, or a particular alignment of celestial bodies. When did the light really appear? The most popular story remains that it was the Star of Bethlehem that brought the divine heaven and earth together, enlightening the whole world with the announcement of Christ’s birth. Who knows? We don’t know for sure. But, we believe! We believe that this is the bright *zirka* that we anxiously watch for on *Sviat Vechir* (Holy Eve), as celebrated by Byzantine Rite Christians. This is the



The star in the Nativity icon points to the Christ child who has descended from heaven to earth.
Written through the hand of A. Mycyk.

time when we join with the angels in announcing the glorious birth through song and celebration!

Koliada is the name of the cycle of festive pre-Christian rituals celebrating the winter solstice and the new year with cultural symbolism and tradition. That period eventually transformed to the Christian *Rizdvo* (Christmas), and the word *koliada* became better known as carols of the season. The origin of the word “*koliada*” isn’t known exactly. It can be associated with the Roman word “*calendae*” referring to the calendar cycle, the “*kolo*” (circle) or, it may even be a reference to the Slavic pagan god of winter. Ukrainian culture is thousands of years old. Therefore, there should be no doubt that there

would be a connection to pre-Christian rituals and customs. There is no denying where Ukrainian people descended from but, that doesn't make us "pagan."

Koliada and its diminutive, *koliadka*, incorporate fall harvest to springtime rituals. During times of Kyivan-Rus—from the time of the hunter-gatherer—*koliadky* honoured the sun and ancestors. Many referred to the significance of the *zirka*, specifically its light, telling stories about life... about creation of the earth, about animals, plants, even spiders!

The *koliadka* "Oy yak to bulo pochatku svita?" (What was it like at the beginning of the world?) tells the story of what it was like before there was heaven and earth. In this story there was only the sea and one spiderweb shared by three friends: the bright sun, the bright moon, and the light rain. They worked together to fill the world with life. The sun provided warmth, the moon educated the mountains and the valleys, and the rain brought joy to the fields of wheat.

With the coming of Christianity to Ukraine in 988, the telling of biblical stories, religious meaning and Liturgical practices became more common in songs. Eventually, pre-Christian and Christian themes blended happily together, often with the same song containing both religious and secular themes.

One of the oldest Ukrainian *koliadka* is "Ne Plach, Rakhyle" (Do not weep, Rachel). Rachel, of the Old Testament, cries for her children who were taken captive and killed by orders from King Herod. She could not be comforted because her children were no more. Sadly, a tragedy still happening in Ukraine today.

**Не плач, Рахиле! Глянь, діти цілі.
Не умирають, а оживають, а оживають...**

When the first wave of Ukrainian immigration to Canada began in the late 19th century, people brought with them the rituals and songs that were part of their ethnic identity and familial history. Even while establishing a new way of life in a new land, they still considered the place they came from as "home" and wanted to keep some of their past alive, remaining loyal to those left behind. This also helped alleviate some homesickness by providing comforting moments of nostalgia.

My grandparents were children when they travelled to the Canadian prairies during that first wave. Traditions passed on to their own families came only from their early memories. Those same traditions were instilled on generations that followed.

I recall as a child that, regardless of the weather conditions, my family made the trip to the "farm" homestead on January 6th to share *Sviata Vecherya* (Holy

Supper.) It was mandatory that both sets of grandparents were visited on the same night. The winter house was filled with wonderful aromas; hay covered the floor of the main room as well as being stuffed between tablecloths—enough to make the glasses teeter! At some point, Dido would slip out to the barn where he would give the animals a Christmas blessing.



On the cover of *Nasha Dorooha*, 1971 January-March. Symbolic painting by T. Baran.

Різдво твоє, Христе Боже наш, засвітило світові світло розуміння в ньому бо ті, що звіздам служили, від звізди навчалися поклонятися тобі, Сонце Правди, і пізнавати тебе — схід з висоти. Господи — слава тобі.

Your birth, O Christ our God, has shed upon the world the light of knowledge; for through it, those who worshipped the stars have learned from a star to worship You, the Sun of Justice, and to recognize You as the Orient from on high. Glory be to You, O Lord!

In excitement we waited for the bright *zirka* to appear in the east. Baba gave a solemn blessing, and we sang "Boh Predvichnyi" (God Eternal), the most significant *koliada* of the season. It was only then that we could begin the holy meal of specially prepared dishes. Even if taking only the smallest bite of the least favourite! At the time, I didn't truly understand why all that ritual was so significant. I just knew that it was special.

Nowadays, on the radio, English language Christmas carols ring in attractions of a commercial season

and can be heard weeks and weeks prior to the celebration of the birth of Jesus. For Ukrainians, the season of *koliada* begins on *Sviat Vechir* joyfully announcing the birth of the Son of God. On this eve, humans and all of nature are believed to unite in joy for the creation of the world.

Liturgical services throughout the Christmas season lead the faithful to be part of a journey of celebration. For 40 days, from the first services of the Great Complies to *Stritennia* (the presentation of Jesus at the Temple) there are *koliadky* about light, about stars, about Heaven and Earth.

The *Rizdvo* season and singing of *koliadky* extends into the new year with house-to-house visiting, carrying on with the centuries-old tradition of bringing greetings and good wishes. There is renewed hope



Sister Petronella Dybka, SSMI, made this Nativity Star for each child in her Sadochok class circa 2006

for a warm and bountiful springtime, welcoming longer days of sun, abundant crops and birth of farm animals. Special holiday visits are filled with fun, friendship, dressing up, dancing, and much singing.

Koliadnyky (carollers) are guided on their house-to-house journey by a large *zirka*. These colourful hand-made stars vary in design and number of rays protruding from the centre where an image of the nativity, illuminated by a candle, is usually displayed. Bells, pom-poms, ribbons and tassels are attached to the tips

of the rays. The bigger and brighter, the better!

Many visiting *koliadnyky* perform a skit, or a mini folk opera, telling the nativity story as well as providing merriment with household members. The best groups arrive dressed in appropriate costume and are



Create Your Own Nativity Star



Go to the website is www.UkrHEC.org (Ukrainian History & Education Center) to check out their December 22, 2020, virtual program titled “Ukrainian Christmas Paper Crafts.” The Nativity Star was one of the crafts featured.

Natalia Honcharenko, Director of UHEC wrote this to Joyce Sirski-Howell, when she asked for permission of use.

“Feel free to use the Christmas paper star in your publication. It’s an ideal, easy craft for children and has so many possibilities. It can be reinforced with straws or popsicle sticks or put on a dowel for a carolling star. And experimenting with different kinds of paper is fun, too.”

INSTRUCTIONS:

Mama, tato, baba, dido, round up construction paper, scissors, a ruler, pencil, and glue stick. Don’t forget the children!

The step-by-step illustrations were done using a 3.2 cm (1¼ inch) square. The finished star measures 9 cm (3½ inches) across point to point.

1. Cut 8 squares in the desired size and colours.
2. Fold each square in half on the diagonal.
3. Open each. Fold 2 sides toward centre diagonal line.
4. Glue these “triangles” down. This becomes the “wrong side.”
5. Note the position for gluing along the diagonal fold line. Glue first 2 points. The reverse also falls along the diagonal fold line.
6. Continue gluing with the remaining 6 pieces. Be careful with the last one—to tuck the one side under the first point.
7. These pictures show the reverse side. The sample also shows a half circle glued. This is one way to finish the reverse and gives the star some strength. It is also how to hold a popsicle stick in place.

Other notes:

- * Recycle a Christmas card for a picture on the front of the star. Or make one star slightly larger and glue 2 together.
- * Refolding the diagonal line emphasizes the structure and gives the star a little shape.
- * Idea: Make a mobile of various sizes and lengths.
- * Not only children can have fun making these.
- * Share a picture for *Nasha Doroha* of your beautiful stars.

accompanied by a variety of instruments. It's an entertaining time which results in the merrymakers receiving treats of candy, food, drinks, and even money (which is collected for a worthwhile cause).

Koliadky are incomplete unless they are interspersed with *vinshuvannya*—the spoken blessings for the season.

The *vinshuvannya* our family recites most often is "*Zirnychka z neba svitlo kydaye*"—which tells us that the heavenly star casts its bright light as it gives glory to the birth of Baby Jesus. It includes wishes that the Christmas star brings health and all that is good for many years.

Along with *vinshuvannya*, other ritual *koliadky* of the season include *shchedrivky* and *zasivalky*.

Probably the most commonly heard *shchedryk* is "*Shchedryk, Shchedryk*" written in 1916 by Ukrainian composer Mykola Leontovich. Derived from the Ukrainian word "*shchedryj*" meaning "bountiful," this folk song is about the generous *lastiwka* (swallow) that brings news of a bounty of money and goodness to the lucky household. The music of "*Shchedryk, Shchedryk*"

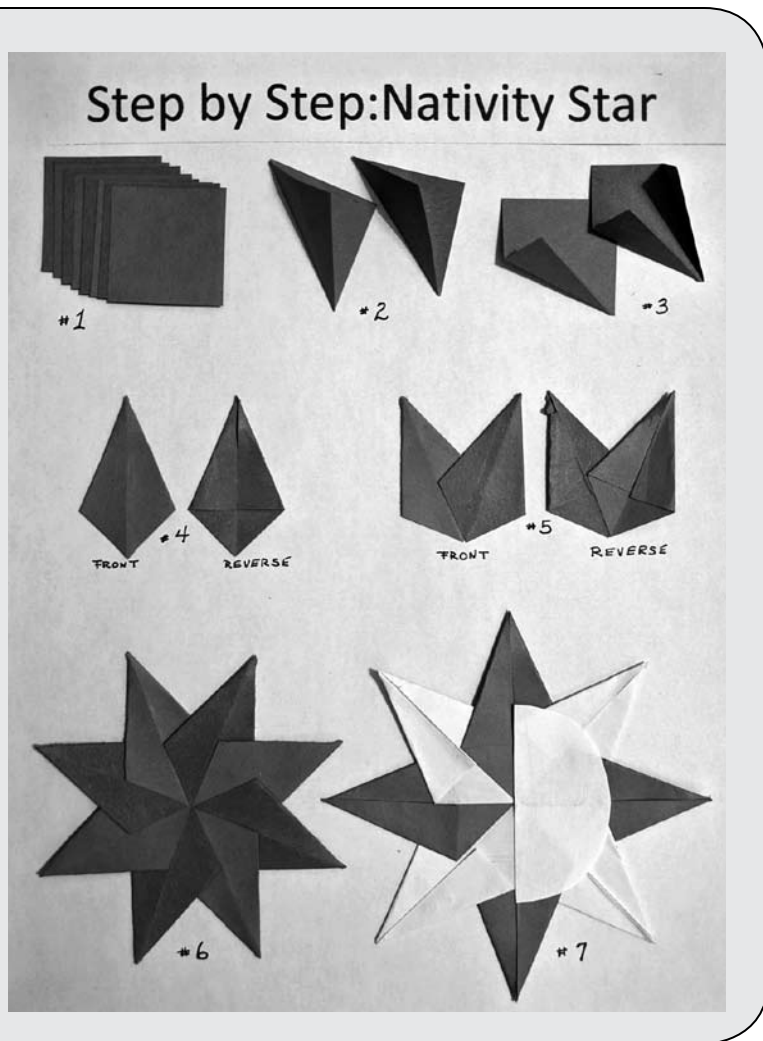
is widely recognized in English as "Carol of the Bells."

Zasivalky are sung, or recited, on New Years Day. Seed sowers start their visits to family and friends in the early morning, even before dawn. They scatter grains of wheat, rye, barley, or buckwheat while wishing that the household will have bountiful crops, wealth, harmony, and all sorts of other good things in the new year. It would be bad luck to chase away these sowers!

As the horrible Russian invasion of Ukraine continues its attempt to destroy an entire nation, it is even more important to preserve our art and culture by celebrating, learning, and teaching. The next time you pick up a *koliadnyk* (carol book) or respond during Liturgical services throughout the Christmas season, watch for references to the sun, to the stars, to the light. My wish for you is to reflect on the true meaning of Christmas and follow the goodness of the powerful light of life granted to us by the birth of Jesus. For it is the birth of Jesus Christ which separates light from darkness.

During this season of *Rizdvo*, while in Church, at the *Sviat Vechir* table, or with others in the community, be sure to sing! Sing our *koliadky*! Share the good news of Jesus' birth. Send the dark and cold winter away. Replace it with warmth and light! Especially sing for those who cannot.

Христос раждається! Christ is Born!



Extra Christmas Star—Zirka Instructional Links

Researched by Sylvia Baran:

In youtube and www, some phrases searched:

- * як зробити різдвяні зірки
- * як зробити колядницьку зірку
- * how to make a Ukrainian Christmas star

Simple, smaller size. Using regular paper.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JCP6U5X8wLc>

Using cardboard.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CLu82g42RMc>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S_MhXxz7Tvk

Little cardboard stars. Could easily be adapted to something a bit bigger with not quite so thick cardboard.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o_xRDltaa9g

Plywood 45cm x 45cm. Narrator also gives good history - in Ukrainian.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ISfM8kU1W7g>

Various styles shown. No detailed construction instructions.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6fuHs6TQP8s>

A Celebration of Christmas in Ukraine

By Natalia Gilbert

Святкування Різдва в Україні

Підготувала Наталія Гілберт



CHRISTMAS IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT CHRISTIAN HOLIDAYS. On this bright luminous day, believers are filled with a special spiritual joy because of the birth of their Saviour Jesus Christ. The Christmas holiday symbolizes the birth of God in the soul of every Christian. From childhood, Ukrainians hold preserved, pleasant memories of a generous table, gifts, songs, and carols. Every year, people look forward to the time when they can once again have a joyous time in the circle of family and friends.

The traditions of the celebration have been preserved from ancient times to the present day, and have been passed down from generation to generation. On Christmas Eve, Ukrainians prepare the Holy Supper and try not to eat anything until the evening before the first star appears in the sky, for it was at that time that Jesus Christ was born.

On this night, the host brings hay into the house and the hostess spreads it under the tablecloth because Christ

РІЗДВО — ОДНЕ З НАЙВАЖЛИВІШИХ ХРИСТІАНСЬКИХ СВЯТ. У цей світлий день вірян наповнює особлива духовна радість від народження спасителя — Ісуса Христа. Свято Різдва символізує народження Бога в душі кожного християнина. Ще з дитинства зберігаються приємні спогади про щедрий стіл, подарунки, пісні та колядки. Щороку усі з нетерпінням чекають тієї години, коли знову зможуть приємно провести час у колі родини та друзів.

Традиції святкування збереглися з давніх часів до нині та передаються із покоління до покоління. Напередодні Різдва українці готують Святу вечерю, а також намагаються не їсти нічого до вечора поки не з'явиться на небі перша зоря, бо саме в цей час народився Ісус Христос.

У Святвечір господар вносить до хати сіно, а господиня розстеляє його під обрусом, оскільки Христос з'явився в яслах на сіні. Також у Святвечір



was laid in hay in a manger. Also, as a rule, people do not visit anyone on Christmas Eve as this holiday is a purely family event. Before dinner, a candle is lit, and everyone prays aloud together remembering those who are no longer with them. After that, the family begins to eat dinner, which traditionally consists of twelve meatless dishes.

The main Christmas dish is kutia, and the other eleven must be lean without meat, milk, eggs, and fat. There are many recipes for preparing kutia, which differ in each region of Ukraine:

Bukovynians add halva to kutia, while Galicians cook it thick as porridge and generously seasoned with nuts and poppy seeds. In Volyn kutia is served two ways: thick without compote (uzvar), or thin. However, everyone serves borsch with mushrooms and whole boiled potatoes on Christmas Eve.

In Luhansk, kutia is usually cooked from rice, and many pies with various fillings are baked. While in the Ivano-Frankivsk region, their main dish is lean borsch with mushrooms served at the festive table along with *kraplyki*, which are dumplings with finely chopped herring. Hostesses from Transcarpathia fry lean potato pancakes and cook *galambets*, which are sausages made of corn porridge.

There are also special, symbolic items that must be included on the Christmas table.

A burning candle is a testimony of a person's faith and shows that they belong to the Divine Light. Each person has a special candle that accompanies them from baptism to the end of life.

Salt is important, for without it you cannot taste the fullness of the dish. Likewise, a person cannot do true good without being in harmony with God. Therefore, salt symbolizes the inner essence of a person.

Garlic is placed on the four corners of the table (under the tablecloth) to drive away evil spirits from the family and house. It is also a symbol of purification, fertility, and health.

After the holy supper, carolling begins. Children, young men, and women dressed in costumes walk from one household to another performing Christmas plays about the Nativity Scene—Vertep. It is honourable to carry the Christmas Star in the Vertep. In the past, young men entered the houses first, while the girls remained in the yard singing special songs of praise for the hosts.

These are some of the main traditions celebrating Christmas in Ukraine. Everyone excitedly waits for it to come because it brings comfort, tranquility, and hope for a better future.

в гості, як правило, не ходять, бо це свято суто родинне. Перед вечерею запалюють воскову свічку і всі разом вголос моляться, згадуючи в молитвах і померлих. Після цього сім'я приступає до вечері, яка традиційно складається з дванадцяти пісних страв.

Головна різдвяна страва — це кутя, інші одинадцять мають бути пісні: без м'яса, молока, яєць та жиру. Існує безліч рецептів приготування куті, які відрізняються в кожному регіоні України.

На Буковині до куті додають халву. На Галичині її варять густу, як кашу, і щедро заправляють горіхами та маком. На Волині головну страву подають і густу, без узвару, і рідку. Також на різдвяний стіл подають борщ з грибами та картоплю в "мундирах".

На Луганщині кутю зазвичай варять із рису й печуть багато пирогів з різними начинками. На Івано-Франківщині до святкового столу подають пісний борщ з грибами, та готують "краплики" — вареники з дрібно нарізаним оселедцем. Господині із Закарпаття смажать пісні деруни, готують "галамбиць" — ковбаски з кукурудзяної каші.

Також існують особливі символи, які обов'язково мають бути на різдвяному столі.

Свічка, її горіння є свідченням віри та приналежності людини до Божественного Світла. Свічка супроводжує людину від хрещення й до кінця життя.

Сіль, без неї не можна відчутти повноти смаку страви. Так і людина не може творити справжнього добра, не перебуваючи в гармонії з Богом. Сіль символізує внутрішню суть людини.

Часник, його кладуть на чотири кути столу, під скатертину, щоб відігнати від родини і хати злих духів. Це символ очищення, родючості та здоров'я.

Після Святого вечора приступали до колядування. Парубки і дівчата одягалися в костюми та ходили по дворах і влаштовували різдвяні вистави — Вертепи. Почесним у Вертепі було носіння Різдяної Зірки. Також вважалося що першим у будинок повинен увійти хлопець, тому дівчата залишалися на подвір'ї, та співали особливі величальні пісні господарям.

Ось такі головні традиції святкування Різдва в Україні. Його очікують усі, адже це свято тішить своїм затишком, спокоєм та надіями на краще майбутнє.

Musée Ukraina Museum

**Researched and written by
Musée Ukraina board member
Bill Gulka**

Musée Ukraina Museum, Saskatoon, SK, is home to a unique piece of religious artwork—a painting commissioned by Stefan Sluchinski which was rendered by Iconographer/artist/painter Stefan Meush on April 24, 1935. The painting, entitled *The Birth of the Holy Mother of God*, was commissioned as a consequence of a message in a dream that Stefan Sluchinski claims to have received from Heaven by the Immaculate Virgin Mary:

“Whenever you should come to me with your requests, I shall always intercede on your behalf to Our Lord God. Those who with faith kneel before this image, and bring to it even the smallest of offerings, will leave with not only absolution but also having received assistance toward the fulfillment of their requests.

Oh Lord, have mercy on the people of Ukraine.”

On April 21, 1936, Stefan Sluchinski claimed that these words were delivered to him from Heaven for the protection of all people and for the remembrance of his life in this community. He recommends these words of the One Mother of God (Theotokos) for all eternity. This work of art was given to the Ukrainian Catholic Church of St. John the Baptist in Dana, SK. When the church at Dana



ceased to hold regular services, the work was relocated to the Ukrainian Catholic Shrine of Our Lady of Sorrows near Cudworth, SK. When the chapel at the Shrine was determined to be unsafe, it was donated to Musée Ukraina Museum, Saskatoon, SK where it currently is displayed.

This work is a painting of a religious theme depicting the birth of Mary, the Mother of God, to Joachim and Anna. The

work itself measures 1 metre (39.5 inches) in height, and 67 cm (26.5 inches) in width. But if the dimensions of the frame in which it is enclosed are included, the piece measures 1.54 metres (61 inches) in height, and 111 cm (44 inches) in width. It is a large piece of artwork.

There are a number of unique aspects to this work. Joachim’s outer garment is blue, while his inner garment is white. Anna’s outer garment is red, while

her head is wrapped in a white shawl. Mary is wrapped in a pink cloth. Joachim assumes a kneeling posture before Anna and Mary, who are seated on the bed. The bed is proportioned and aligned with the floor, ceilings, and walls according to architectural and artistic conventions, but the bed canopy is at an odd angle compared with the floor, walls, and ceiling. Three angels are found at the top of the painting. Do they represent the Holy Trinity? They are realistic and do not conform to representations used in writing icons. They are identical to the style of angels the artist used in painting the dome of St. Mary's Church in Yorkton, SK. The window and flowers suggest looking out, a glimpse into the world, but like the main characters of this work, are painted in a realistic style. Conversely, the holiness and importance of the

event is prominent, suggesting the world's limited understanding of the event.

Is it an icon or is it a painting? The work cannot be classified as an icon because it is stylized in the sense of incorporating modern items as we recognize them (e.g., window and flowers), but in a realistic style. The features of the main figures reflect realism (human forms and expressions as we know them) in contrast to the style employed in iconography. Significantly, the work is signed by the artist, contrary to the practice followed by writers of icons. As a result, this artwork can probably best be classified as a religious painting. Whatever genre one places this work of art in, it is intriguing and captures one's attention.

Another interesting aspect of this work is the ornate wooden frame in which it is situated.

The frame is an example of *rizba*, hand-carved patterns in wood. The frame is a blue colour with touches of gold. Stefan Meush used this technique to decorate the main and side altars of St. John the Baptist church in Smuts.

Stefan Meush's work can be found in a number of churches in Saskatchewan, dating from the early period of the exarchate (prior to 1956) when churches were being built in many communities. In addition to St. Mary's Church in Yorkton, Stefan Meush's work is featured in Smuts (St. John the Baptist), Arran town (St. John the Baptist), Prud'homme Rural (Sacred Heart - Hawryliuk) and Stenen (St. Nicholas). The original St. Basil's church in Regina featured Stefan Meush's work, but the building was replaced by the current structure so that work has been lost.

Joyce Sirski-Howell Has an Essay Published by Culinary Historians of Canada

Written by Fiona Lucas co-founder, board member, editor of *Culinary Chronicles*

Joyce's illustrated essay, "My Search for and Documentation of Ukrainian-Canadian Cookbooks," appeared in the autumn 2023 edition of *Culinary Chronicles: Occasional Papers of the Culinary Historians of Canada*. She recounted the story of how being an inadvertent collector of Ukrainian-Canadian cookbooks became serious research in 2015. She's documented over 400 titles, including the identification of a mysterious pre-First World War title. In 2019, she initiated the national "Save the Cookbooks" project with

the Ukrainian Catholic Women's League of Canada (UCWLC) and in 2021 helped the UCWLC start a cookbook library. Both projects, and her essay, encourage the importance of collecting community cookbooks. Joyce's essay is one of six that explore the theme of "Collecting Canadian Cookbooks."

Members of the Culinary Historians received the journal as a benefit of membership, while others may purchase through <https://culinaryhistorians.ca>.

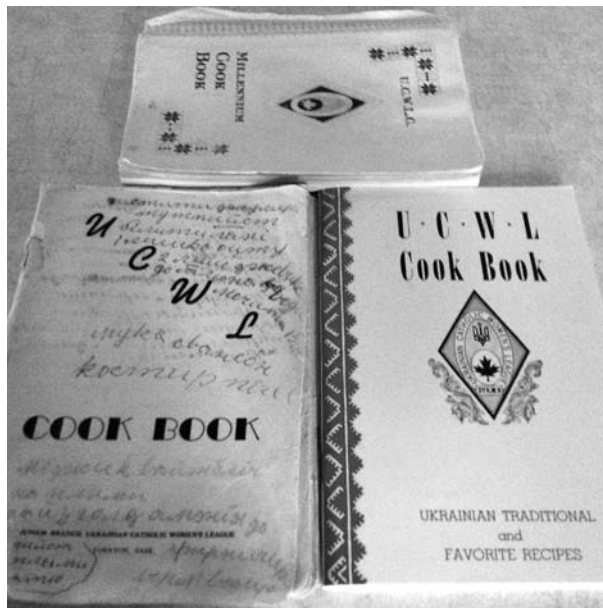
YES..... 50,000 COPIES!

By Joyce Sirski-Howell

It is truly an achievement that between 1970-1983 St. Mary's UCWLC Yorkton Branch sold 50,000 copies of their second edition cookbook *U.C.W.L. Cook Book Ukrainian Traditional and Favorite Recipes* in nine printings. St. Mary's reprinted this edition in 2012 and sold 1,000 copies in no time. The reprint was coil bound vs the staple format of the 1970 original. Thanks to Elizabeth Zayahko for contributing a copy of this cookbook for the library project. Joyce Sirski-Howell is also donating a copy of the original print to the "Save the Cookbook Project." Ironically, she found a copy in Yorkton's Value Village while she was on a trip to Dauphin.

The first edition of the cookbook was printed in 1960, titled *UCWLC Cookbook - Junior*. The third edition, *U.C.W.L.C. Millennium Cook Book* was printed in 1988 by Branch II. Elizabeth Zahayko sent a copy of this edition for the project as well. We now seeking someone to donate a copy of the 1960 edition for the library project.

This past summer Joyce received a package from Elizabeth containing the third edition, *Millennium Cook Book*; the 2012 reprint of the 1970 cookbook; *Celebrating 100 Years 1915-2015 / Ukrainian Catholic Church of St. George / Melville, SK*; *Mother's Best Recipes Cook Book, St. Vladimir's College (Roblin)*; and *Family Favourites from Kuroki / The Kuroki Community Club / Kuroki, Saskatchewan* (many church members contributed to this cookbook). What wonderful additions for the



library project! Elizabeth included documentations as well, including two cookbooks that she had sent photos of earlier in the project.

Through several email exchanges about cookbooks, Elizabeth shared some history about St. Mary's UCWLC. She passed along her favourite fruitcake and rhubarb cake recipes from the 1970 cookbook.

About the first cookbook Elizabeth wrote: "The Junior issue was published in 1960 when the younger ladies at St. Mary's didn't want

to join that branch which started in 1947, so they started a new branch. They called it Junior to identify the younger women. When they did come up with the new recipe book in 1970, the two branches were then known as Branch I and Branch II." Elizabeth added that most of the original Junior members have gone to their eternal rest. Elizabeth could not find how many copies of the 1960 cookbook were printed. Elizabeth's copy is well used!

In a later note, Elizabeth wrote: "Today there is only St Mary's UCWLC branch. Branch I was dissolved due to the old age of the members, and only a few members still alive. Then both branches decided to amalgamate and have only one branch... On February 3, 2002, Branch I and II amalgamated to become one branch of St. Mary's UCWLC, Yorkton."

Choosing a recipe to feature from the 1970 cookbook was easy. We don't know how Elizabeth chose to bake the Dark Christmas Fruitcake on page 65, as there are seven other recipes that all sound excellent to a fruitcake baker. However, Elizabeth wrote this about her favourite one: "I have made the Dark Christmas Cake many times for family weddings. [I bake them] in four loaf pans and when baked, I cut them into 12 - 1 lb. cakes to give out as a gift to friends and family. I loved eating the cake in middle of summer beside a campfire and drinking coffee brewed over a campfire. It was a cake many English war brides introduced to Canadians after the war." →

Myrna Arychuk is giving a friendly reminder to *Nasha Doroha* readers from British Columbia:

If you have a UCWLC or Parish cookbook to donate toward the "Save the Cookbooks project," please contact Myrna at 604-617-7200 or email her at myrnatravel@shaw.ca. Myrna has offered to look after sending them to Joyce Sirski-Howell.

■ Dark Christmas Cake

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 lb. butter | 1 lb. seeded raisins (2 cups—see note below on raisins) |
| 2 cups white sugar | 1 lb. seedless raisins (2 ² / ₃ cups) |
| 12 eggs | 1 lb. sultana raisins (2 ³ / ₄ cups) |
| 1 cup jelly (uses apple or grape jelly) | 1 lb. currants (2 ³ / ₈ cups) |
| 3 ¹ / ₂ cups flour (divided, see method below) | 1 lb. dates (2 cups) |
| 2 teaspoons cinnamon | ³ / ₄ lb. mixed peel (1 ¹ / ₂ cups) |
| 1 teaspoon nutmeg | 1 lb. glazed cherries (2 cups) mixed red and green |
| ¹ / ₂ teaspoon ginger | ¹ / ₂ lb. almonds (see note) |
| ¹ / ₂ teaspoon cloves | ¹ / ₂ lb. walnuts (2 cups) |
| ¹ / ₂ teaspoon salt | |

Method: Wash and dry fruit. Use 1 1/2 cups of the flour to flour the prepared fruits. Cream butter until fluffy. Gradually add sugar, beating well after each addition. Add eggs one at a time, beating well after each one. Mix the remaining 2 cups flour with the spices and salt. Add to creamed mixture a small amount at a time. Add jelly. Add floured fruits and nuts about 2 cups at a time, stirring until well blended. Divide evenly into prepared selected pans. Bake slowly (300° F) for 2-3 hours, depending on pans.

* **Elizabeth's tips:** The recipe fills the 3-set wedding cake pans, or 4 loaf pans, lined with parchment. Once baked and cold, she cuts loaves into 3. Elizabeth wraps each piece with wax paper, tin foil and stores in separate freezer bags. Let sit on counter for a week then can be frozen.

* **Since writing this article, Joyce has baked the cake. Here are her comments:** Check cake for doneness at about 1 3/4 hours. If browning too quickly, cover loosely with tin foil. As well, some of you may have noticed that the recipe has no baking powder. The eggs are acting as a leavener. However, I did add 1/2 tsp.

Some additional notes and thoughts:

- For this recipe, a scale would be useful, but not everyone has one. Regarding almonds, it does not specify what type, and by weight it would not matter. However, 1 lb. whole almonds yields 3 1/2 cups; 1 lb. sliced almonds yields 5 1/3 cups; 1 lb. slivered is 4 cups. Confusing? Best to weigh out the product. I suggest using slivered almonds, which are also Elizabeth's choice.
- Raisins, glazed fruits, nuts may be exchanged for one another if the amounts remain the same.
- All candied/glazed fruits (cherries, mixed fruit, citron, pineapple, peel): 1 lb. measures 2 cups.
- Raisins and currants only need washing. Bulk purchased raisins may need water changed a couple of times. Older small towels (not tea towels) absorb moisture faster. Placed on a sided cookie sheet, the towel and raisins can go into a warm oven to speed drying. But do not over dry—keep them plump. Dates need to be cut into small pieces.
- To prepare pans, use parchment paper. Use 2 layers. No need to grease. Trace the bottom of the pan onto

parchment that is wide and long, including the sides. Cut from each corner towards the drawn corners. Fold along drawn lines, place into pan (greasing the pan bottom holds the parchment in place) and overlap the corners. (In older recipes, brown paper was suggested and used as parchment was not readily available.)

- For baking, place a pan of water, onto the bottom of the oven. This adds moisture for the long baking.

Joyce's research on raisins: Older recipes, such as this fruitcake, have an ingredient that is not readily found in this decade—seeded raisins! What to do?

Seeded raisins may be difficult to find. These have the seeds removed before drying. Muscat, one type, is considered a specialty item. It is a larger raisin than sultana. Lexia is another type. I could not find a source in Edmonton at the time of writing. Substitute suggestions were dates, prunes, and dried cranberries. Elizabeth wrote that she uses what raisins she can purchase in Yorkton. Be sure to keep the amounts as listed.

Seedless raisins are the majority of raisins found in grocery stores. One kind is Thompson and should be available. One new to me, Jumbo Flame raisins, are huge! I purchased some at Bulk Barn (Edmonton) and will use them as my substitute for seeded raisins. Elizabeth questions the size, so I may cut some in half.

Sultanas are what Canadians tend to call "raisins." They are seedless but are dipped in vegetable oil and acid, then dehydrated. The size is about the same as Thompson, but lighter in colour.

Golden raisins are where, in the dehydration process, sulfur dioxide is used to prevent the raisin turning dark. I prefer to keep golden raisins for white fruitcakes.



Celebration of 75th Anniversary of UCWLC - Oakburn and Rosssburn, MB. Marion Antoniw Rosssburn President

UCWLC BRANCHES CELEBRATING 75 YEARS

The Oakburn and Rosssburn Ukrainian Catholic Women's League of Canada (UCWLC) celebrated their 75th Anniversary on Thursday June 1, 2023. Due to the pandemic, both branches were unable to celebrate their own anniversaries in 2021 (Oakburn) and 2022 (Rosssburn). After waiting for the restrictions to ease and settle down, both branches decided to celebrate together.

Dressed in their traditional blouses, the women gathered in Rosssburn at the Sacred Heart Ukrainian Catholic Parish to start the celebrations with a Divine Liturgy of thanksgiving. Fr. Jay Korban, the current spiritual director of both branches, and Fr.

Volodymyr Bashutsyy, a former spiritual director for Rosssburn, concelebrated the Divine Liturgy.

Once the photos of each branch and one large group photo of both branches were taken, everyone gathered in the basement to enjoy a supper prepared by N & L Restaurant.

Fr. Jay led a short program, which began by welcoming Archeparchy of Winnipeg UCWLC President Janet Kuchma, along with Martha Gawiak, HLM. 75th Anniversary plaques were presented to the branch presidents, Kay Wilk (Oakburn), and Marion Antoniw Janet (Rosssburn).

During the program there were also Ukrainian dance performances from the local Vinok Ukrainian Dance Group. A few songs were sung with Adele Mychasiw

(Rosssburn) singing a beautiful song in Ukrainian that she wrote herself about a young girl arriving to a new country. Fr. Volodymyr also brought greetings, congratulating everyone on their work. A special anniversary cake was dished up and enjoyed by all.

The evening concluded with each member being presented with an etched wine glass commemorating the 75th Anniversary, along with a holy card of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The wine glasses were kindly donated by the Braendle-Bruce Funeral Service, Russell.

Throughout the history of the Oakburn and Rosssburn UCWLC branches, members have been blessed with the faithful support of the communities served.

Submitted by: Marion Antoniw



“STRIDES FOR SOLIDARITY”: A WALK-A-THON FOR UKRAINE

“Strides for Solidarity” took place on September 9, 2023, at Lakeside Park, Mississauga, ON. Our branch at the Dormition of the Mother of God Ukrainian Catholic Church, Mississauga, organized this walk-a-thon to raise funds for needs in Ukraine as well as for refugees recently displaced here in Mississauga.

The organizer, Daria Twerdochlib, reached out to her son, Stefan Twerdochlib, a graphic designer in Stockholm, Sweden, to design a motto and T-shirt for the event.

Over the last three months, our members, ranging in age from 35 to 87, presented a unified effort collecting donations and participating in our walk-a-thon. We were delighted to have a recent refugee from Ukraine walk with us as one of our newest members. Lakeside Park, along the shores of Lake Ontario, was perfectly set up to hold our event. We were able to design two walking routes, a shorter 2.5 km course and a longer 5 km course. This allowed everyone to participate to the best of their abilities.



Many sponsors were approached, and all gladly donated to our cause. Some even walked with us in support of Ukraine.

We had many dignitaries: city councillors Chris Fonseca (Ward 3), Alvin Tedjo (acting mayor Ward 1), Stephen Dasko (Ward 2), and Member of Parliament Peter Fonseca. The walk began with opening commentaries from our President, Irene Kujtan, and walk-a-thon organizer Daria Twerdochlib. Before venturing off on the trails, Father Bohdan Winnicki led us in

prayer and blessed everyone taking part. It truly was a day full of positive energy and a sense of accomplishment.

Daria Twerdochlib, Fundraiser Chair
Photos: Courtesy of Mykola Swarnyk



Prayer to End Human Trafficking

Almighty and Merciful Father, help us to see the face of your Son in all those suffering from sexual exploitation and human trafficking in our world today. May your Holy Spirit strengthen the broken hearted and fill them with your love while changing the hearts of the exploiters. Grant us the courage to respond in solidarity with those who suffer and the wisdom to advocate for justice. Guide our civil leaders to work for the common good and to protect the vulnerable. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen. Mary, Mother of all the living, we implore your intercession for graces of healing for those who are exploited and conversion for the perpetrators, that all may live the abundant life of Jesus Christ. Amen.

An Introduction into Understanding Human Trafficking

THE WORLD WITNESSED with horror the start of the Russian invasion of Ukraine in early 2022. Over 1½ years later, the conflict continues, prompting millions of Ukrainians to seek refuge in neighbouring countries and elsewhere. Amid the global call to respond, informal networks formed in communities to offer home shares, necessities, and employment—it was a fine example of people coming together to help in a crisis.

But soon after, concerning reports¹ of individuals seeking to exploit the growing crisis by targeting those fleeing the war (mainly women and children) started trickling in. Driven by hope for safety, many Ukrainians continued their challenging journey into Canada, but despite the distance, reports of fraud, manipulation, and violence persist, underlining the challenges faced by displaced Ukrainian nationals. The interplay of conflict, natural disasters, and displacement can create fertile grounds for various forms of exploitation, including human trafficking. In response, The Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking connected with prominent Ukrainian Canadian civil society

organizations to share awareness materials translated into Ukrainian² and participated in a number of educational activities to raise the profile of this emerging risk amongst stakeholders assisting with resettlement efforts in Canada.

Human trafficking typically involves using force, fraud, or coercion to exploit individuals and force them into providing labour or services—including sexual services—for the benefit of someone else. Human trafficking is a severe human rights violation. Trafficking happens in various sectors in Canada, including, but not limited to, domestic work situations such as caretaking or housekeeping, construction, agriculture, hospitality, and the commercial sex industry. While trafficking can be international, the majority of sex trafficking in Canada is domestic; someone can be trafficked without ever leaving their home community. Traffickers may use lies, violence, threats, isolation, and extortion to control people. Traffickers often have a pre-existing relationship with their victim or may position themselves as a romantic partner, friend, sponsor or host, teacher, or employer. Traffickers often seek to take

advantage of an individual's lack of resources, whether physical or social, by promising things such as a better life, opportunity, safety, and security. This can disproportionately affect Ukrainian nationals who have left their homes, jobs, and community bonds because of the war.

This spring, national news outlets³ began sharing stories of Ukrainian women in Canada who reportedly felt pressured to provide sexual services to earn income and/or cover their basic needs and housing costs. Ukrainian nationals seeking refuge in Canada should never be asked to provide unpaid labour or sexual services in exchange for accommodation or other necessities a host family may offer.

Moreover, hosts should always respect their guests' freedom to move around, refrain from monitoring communications, and never hold another person's passport or important documents. As for employment, employers are obligated to pay their employees according to minimum wage standards and in compliance with Canada's employment regulations.⁴ Newly settled Ukrainians of working age with a valid temporary residency permit

¹ <https://www.unhcr.org/news/stories/ukraine-crisis-creates-new-trafficking-risks>

² https://www.canadianhumantraffickinghotline.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/CHTH_Poster_Ukrainian_8.5x11.pdf

³ <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/london/ukrainian-women-sheltering-in-london-ont-say-they-were-asked-by-the-host-if-they-wanted-to-do-sex-work-1.6799495>

⁴ <https://www.ontario.ca/page/coming-ontario-ukraine#section-3>

can apply for an Open Work Permit⁵ to find safe, legitimate employment while in Canada. Newcomers should be cautious of job advertisements with ambiguous details, offering seemingly large sums of money for relatively simple or little work, no candidate requirements, and other “too good to be true” features like free shelter and childcare.

Newly released data⁶ from the Canadian Human Trafficking Hotline underscores the presence of trafficking in big cities, smaller communities, and rural areas. Historically marginalized groups, including the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, Black Indigenous People of Colour, homeless youth, migrant workers and asylum seekers, are at the greatest risk of being targeted for human trafficking.

Those deeply moved by this issue and driven to effect change

If you suspect that you or someone you know may be being exploited, if you want to access support, or if you want to learn more, call **1-833-900-1010**.

often ask, “How can I make a difference? What actions can I take?” The first step you can take is to educate yourself about human trafficking and become familiar with the indicators of grooming and luring by seeking accurate information from a reliable source.⁷

Understand who is most impacted by trafficking in your community and share this knowledge within your circle (among youth, friends, and family). Play a role in promoting online safety.

Spread awareness by posting or sharing the Canadian Human Trafficking Hotline⁸ number in your community. The Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking has created posters in Ukrainian.

You can also initiate fundraising efforts or contribute to local or national anti-trafficking organizations like The Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking.

Written by Ashley F. Tingley
Director of Stakeholder Relations
The Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking

► **RESOURCES**

- Ukraine Canadian Congress**
<https://www.ucc.ca/human-trafficking-concerns>
- Operation Ukraine Safe Haven**
<https://ukrainesafehaven.ca>
- OSCE, Be Safe Campaign**
<https://www.helpforukrainians.info>

⁵ <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/immigrate-canada/ukraine-measures/ukraine-open-work-permit.html>

⁶ <https://www.canadiancentretoendhumantrafficking.ca/human-trafficking-trends-in-canada-2019-2022>

⁷ <https://www.ucc.ca/human-trafficking-concerns>

⁸ <https://www.canadianhumantraffickinghotline.ca/promotional-resources>

Continued ►

Current Guidelines for Nasha Doroha submissions

Branch events	no cost
UCWLC Member Profile – 200 words with a photo	no cost
In Memoriam – up to 50 words and photo	\$35.00
51 - 100 words and photo	\$55.00
101 - 150 words and photo	\$75.00
Announcements – anniversary, birth, wedding, etc.....	same as In Memoriam
General Articles – between 500 and 600 words	no cost
Sea to Sea Reports – no longer than 75 to 100 words	no cost

Photos are a choice. For the above articles, **send cheque payable to “UCWLC National” with a copy of the article to:**

**ND Administrator
c/o Elizabeth Zahayko
387 Betts Avenue, Yorkton, SK S3N 1N3**

ALSO please send the original copy to your Eparchial Nasha Doroha Representative who will forward to our editor, Lyrissa Sheptak. All articles should be typed.

Human Trafficking

What is God calling me to do?

Written by Inessa McIntyre

Human trafficking is modern day slavery that affects every country worldwide. It often takes the form of sexual exploitation (prostitution), but can also include forced labour or organ harvesting, among other forms. In Canada between the years 2010 and 2020, 96% of human trafficking victims were women and girls. A quarter of the victims were under the age of 18 years old, and 20% of the victims were aged 25 to 34 years old. On the perpetrator side, a little under 65% of those accused of trafficking were men aged 18 to 34 years old (trafficking of persons in Canada, Statistics Canada 2020). It should be noted that there is a difference between smuggling and trafficking. Smuggling attempts to bring people into the country illegally. Trafficking is controlling a person for the purpose of exploitation. Traffickers are in their business to turn a profit. Unlike the sale of weapons or drugs, which generate a one-time profit, traffickers can sell the bodies of their victims repeatedly. A report from the Criminal Intelligence Service Canada estimated the profit from one victim of trafficking in 2008 to be \$280,000 per year.

Not only should we be concerned that sexual exploitation is occurring in our neighbourhoods and cities, but it violates all the principles of Catholic Social Teaching (CST). Purchasing sexual services disrespects life and the dignity of our fellow human beings. Traffickers deny their victims' rights to basic needs, including food, clothing and shelter. Threatening the safety of trafficked persons ensures compliance with the trafficker's wishes. Prostitution strips people of their right to legitimate work; people find themselves in situations that not only inflict physical, but also psychological harm. Finally, prostitution preys on our vulnerable sisters and brothers in society. While CST guides us to consider the preferential option for the poor, prostitution targets the poor, isolated, and those struggling with substance abuse or mental health issues or trauma in their past (The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops *For Freedom Christ Has Set Us Free: Pastoral Letter on Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation in Canada*, 2021).

“One of the most troubling of those open wounds is the trade in human beings, a modern form of slavery, which violates the God-given dignity of so many of our brothers and sisters and constitutes a true crime against humanity.”
— Pope Francis¹

With the war breaking out in Ukraine and many finding themselves in vulnerable circumstances, the risk of human trafficking has escalated in the war zone. The Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe (OSCE) Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) conducted an online survey of 969 Ukrainian refugee women from August 22 to September 19, 2022, to identify safety and security concerns. The infographic (<https://www.osce.org/odihr/536019>) highlights issues these women experienced in transit or destination countries such as fraud, threats, blackmail/coercion, discrimination, or domestic violence, to name a few. Refugees, especially those who have experienced sexual or gender-based violence, are particularly susceptible to human trafficking. Almost half of the respondents had not received any information on human trafficking or signs to watch for (https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/b/a/535383_0.pdf).

Human trafficking is a community issue. As human beings, we are all part of a community. The first step to combatting human trafficking is education. We can then raise awareness of the issue, learn to recognize the signs of trafficking, and connect victims to resources. Taking time to learn more about human trafficking is something that we can all do.

Working Towards Freedom is a study guide based on the CCCB Human Trafficking Pastoral Letter put together through a joint effort of the Archdiocese of Vancouver, Roman Catholic Diocese of Victoria and Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon (<https://rcdos.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/AHT-booklet-Final.pdf>). Consider running a small group study with 4 to 8 people, working through the four-part study guide which uses a see, learn, pray, act model.

¹ Greeting to the Second European Assembly of RENATE, 7 November 2016 (https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2016/november/documents/papa-francesco_20161107_tratta-esseri-umani.html)

With the internet, we have so much information at our fingertips. Online resources include The National Human Trafficking Education Centre (<https://www.nhtec.ca>), The Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking (<https://www.canadiancentretoendhumantrafficking.ca>) and The Joy Smith Foundation (<https://joysmithfoundation.com>). It is important to spread the word and share what you learn with family and friends.

Explore organizations in your communities working to end human trafficking and sexual exploitation. Invite a speaker to do a presentation at your UCWLC meeting.

Put up Canadian Human Trafficking Hotline posters in your parishes and community meeting places (<https://www.canadianhumantraffickinghotline.ca/promotional-resources>). Posters are available in various languages, including Ukrainian.

Pray for the victims of human trafficking. Commemorate the International Day of Prayer and Awareness Against Human Trafficking (February 8) in your parish community. This is also the feast day of St. Josephine Bakhita, the patron saint of trafficked survivors.

Advocate for policies to end human exploitation. Defend Dignity has a page on government advocacy with forms that can be filled out to send letters to your Member of Parliament and other relevant Ministers (<https://defenddignity.ca/get-involved>). Bill S-210, requiring pornography sites to verify the age of their consumers (reducing the harm associated with youth exposure to pornography), has been passed by the Senate and is in the House of Commons.

A resolution was passed at the 2019 National UCWLC Congress “that the UCWLC proactively support and undertake programs, at every level of our organization, to educate and alert all members of the parishes and our faith communities, as well as the Canadian public in general, to this alarming issue of human trafficking for sex, with the objective of eradicating this unconscionable victimization of any

members of our Canadian society.” As UCWLC members, we are called to participate in this important work.

Human trafficking, a crime against humanity, can seem like an impossibly large issue to combat. Through prayer and education, we as individuals can all take steps to work towards ending the slavery and violence that affects so many of our sisters and brothers in Christ.

“It happens in our communities” Canadian Human Trafficking Hotline poster. Reprinted with permission from The Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking

Pastoral Letter on Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation in Canada

<https://www.cccb.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/CCCB-Human-Trafficking-Pastoral-Letter-2021-1.pdf>

In 2022, the Archdiocese of Vancouver and the Diocese of Victoria developed a Study Guide entitled *Working Towards Freedom* to accompany this Pastoral Letter. The Study Guide may be accessed here: <https://rcav.org/aht/study-guide>

Human Trafficking Hotline Canada

If you suspect someone is being sexually trafficked or exploited, please call the 24/7 Canadian Human Trafficking Hotline at **1-833-900-1010** or visit <https://www.canadianhumantraffickinghotline.ca>

"We have loved [her] in this life; let us not abandon [her] in death, but rather by our prayers, let us conduct [her] to the bliss of eternal glory."

St. Ambrose

"Ми любили (її) в цьому житті; не покидаймо (її) в смерті, а радше своїми молитвами провадьмо (її) до блаженства вічної слави."

Св. Амвросій

† **Doris Sylvia Chaychuk**
(*nee Sheptak*)

Feb. 1, 1941–June 25, 2023



Doris Chaychuk of Dauphin, MB, passed away in Dauphin with family by her side on June 25, 2023, at the age of 82 years. She was born on February 1, 1941, in Porcupine Plain, SK, to parents Dmytro and Pauline (Shuya) Sheptak.

Doris was an active member of the church and community. She was member of St. Joseph's UCWLC, the Royal Purple Association, and the Army and Navy Club in Thompson, MB. Doris loved creating magic in the kitchen: she was a camp cook, a restaurant owner, and ran her own catering company. When she moved to Dauphin, she became active with UCWLC at Ukrainian Catholic Church of the Resurrection. She also gave of her time to St. Paul's Auxiliary and the senior's centre. Still loving to make tantalizing meals, she continued to cook.

She served on many executive and branch positions with the UCWLC both in Thompson and Dauphin. She was president of Holy Resurrection Branch in Dauphin; never missed a convention;

was Chair of membership for many years; Chair of Food Services several times; and actively involved at League meetings. She was also Secretary of the Pastoral Care committee of the parish. When she took on a committee, she gave it her all. She was a UCWLC member for over 50 years and received her recognition pin for it.

She loved her children and grandchildren dearly, who are now cherishing their many fond memories of her.

Vichnaya Pamyat! Eternal Memory!

† **Дарія Гошуляк**
Почесна Довічна Членка
ЛУКЖК

10 вересня 1920–14 лютого 2023



14-го лютого 2023 року упокоїлася наша найстарша та найвизначніша членка **Дарія Гошуляк**.

Дарія народилася у Рогатині, Україна, у родині отця Юліяна і добродійки Ольги Фіцалович. У 1943 році Дарія одружилася з Остапом Гошуляком, студентом богословії. Згодом молоде подружжя з маленькою дитинкою

емігрують до Німеччини. Після закінчення Другої світової війни та перебування у таборах для переселенців у Німеччині, подружжя виїздить до Туніс (Африки) на чотири роки праці при будові греблі. В 1952 році родина Гошуляків з двома малими дітьми переїхали до Канади. В короткому часі вони стали парафіянами церкви св. о. Миколая, а Дарія стала членкою Ліги Українських Католицьких Жінок Канади та включилася до активної праці. Цілі ЛУКЖК захопили Дарію, бо духовність, українська культура та допомога другим також були пріоритетами Дарії.

У 1969 році владика Ізидор Борецький висвятив Дарії мужа на священника, а згодом призначив сотрудником при Катедрі св. свцм. Йосафата. Дарія тоді переходить до відділу ЛУКЖК при Катедрі. Дарія була матір'ю п'ятьох дітей, мала дев'ять внуків і трое правнуків.

Добродійка Дарія була дуже скромною і глибоко віруючою людиною. Завжди була чутливою до потреб ближніх. Особисто спонсорувала та допомагала фінансово семирічній дівчинці в Бразилії аж до закінчення учительського ліцею. Також спонсорувала теолога та робила багато інших добрих діл. То не дивно, що більшість її праці в ЛУКЖК добр. Дарія присвятила для референтур харитативної діяльності та суспільної опіки.

Дарія працювала на відповідальних становищах у відділі,

Епархіяльній Управі та Крайовій Управі. Була головою відділу при Катедрі св. свщм. Йосафата в молодому віці, а другий раз коли Дарії було 89 років.

У 1970-тих роках Дарія працювала в Епархіяльній Управі ЛУКЖК Торонтонської Епархії. Впродовж двох каденцій була заступницею голови Епархіяльної Управи. Як харитативна референтка, протягом 15 років, провадила таємні зв'язки із переслідуваними єпископами, священиками, монахинями, політичними в'язнями в Україні і Чехії та на засланні, посилаючи їм посилки та фінансову допомогу. Займалася спонсорванням 72 українців з Польщі до Канади та влаштовує їх на помешкання і працю.

Впродовж 25 років була представницею від ЛУКЖК Торонтонської Епархії до Суспільної Служби Українців Канади – Централі і Філії.

У Крайовій Управі ЛУКЖК була референткою Суспільної Опіки та представницею від Крайової Управи до Світової Ради Суспільної Служби при Світовому Конгресі Українців.

У жовтні 2022 року Дарія взяла участь у 33-тому З'їзді ЛУКЖК Торонтонської Епархії, та була нагороджена грамотою 75-ліття ЛУКЖК.

Добродійку Дарію відзначено численними грамотами і нагородами, так як:

- Ювілейною Грамотою від Єпископа Кир Ізидора за віддану працю для Помісної Української Католицької Церкви та Українського Народу;
- Найвищою пошаною ЛУКЖК – Почесним Довічним Членством ЛУКЖК;

та численними іншими нагородами.

Ми вдячні добродійці Дарії за довголітню віддану працю для ЛУКЖК та раді що мали нагоду працювати з нею. Дарія залишила нам багато гарних спогадів співпраці, розсудливих поради та прикладів до наслідування. Бажаємо, щоб у кожному відділі була така членка як добродійка Дарія.

Вічна їй пам'ять!

✠ Daria Goshulak Honorary Life Member of UCWLC

Sept. 10, 1920–Feb. 14, 2023

On February 14, 2023, we lost the eldest and most distinguished member of our Branch at St. Josaphat's Cathedral in Toronto.

Daria Goshulak was born in Rohatyn, Ukraine, daughter of Reverend Julian and Dobrodika Olha Fitzalovych. In 1943 Daria married Ostap Goshulak, a theology student. Later, Daria, with her husband and infant child, fled Ukraine, lived in Germany, and from there moved to Tunisia (Africa), where they lived for four years (her husband worked there constructing a dam). In 1952 they came to Toronto with two small children and became members of St. Nicholas Parish UCWLC Branch. The aims of UCWLC (spirituality, Ukrainian culture, and help for the needy) were also priorities for Daria. Therefore, it was not unusual that most of her time in the UCWLC was spent on charitable and social committees. Daria's husband was ordained by Bishop Isidore Borecky in 1969 and became an assistant pastor at St. Josaphat's Cathedral. Daria then joined the parish UCWLC Branch.

Daria was the mother of five children, had nine grandchildren,

and three great-grandchildren. She was a deeply religious and humble person, always ready to help others. She personally financially sponsored a seven-year-old girl in Brazil until the completion of her studies as a teacher. She also sponsored a theology student and accomplished many other good deeds.

Daria had responsible positions at the Branch level, Eparchial Executive, and National Executive. In 1970 she was elected to the Eparchial Executive as Vice-President for two terms; was chair of the Charitable Committee for 15 years; and in charge of Archives. For years she was in secret contact with families of political prisoners in Ukraine, sending them packages and financial aid. Dobrodika Daria was also instrumental in sponsoring 72 Ukrainians to Canada from Poland, providing them with housing and jobs. For 25 years she was the representative from the Toronto Eparchial Executive to the Ukrainian Canadian Social Services, National and Branch levels. At the National Executive of the UCWLC, Daria was the representative to the Council of Social Services at the Ukrainian World Congress. In October 2022 Daria was at the 33rd Eparchial Convention of the Toronto Eparchy, where she was awarded the Jubilee 75-year award.

Daria received many awards in recognition of her service, including:

- the Toronto Eparchy Jubilee Certificate from Bishop Isidore Borecky for her dedicated work for Ukraine;
- the Honorary Life Membership of UCWLC;

and many more.

We are grateful to Daria for her many years of work for the UCWLC

and the opportunity to work with her. We wish that every UCWLC branch would have a member like Daria.

May her memory be eternal.
Vichnaya pamyat!

✠ **Lorris Lydia Kuz**
Mar. 13, 1939–Sept. 3, 2023



With great sorrow in our hearts that St. Athanasius Branch UCWLC (Regina) shares the passing of our member and friend, Lorris Kuz, on September 3, 2023, in Regina, SK.

Lorris was born on March 13, 1939, north of Ituna, SK, to Harry and Katherine Smycniuk. In 1960, Lorris married Steve Kuz. Lorris loved her family dearly, devoting her life to raising five beautiful children resulting in eleven grandchildren, in whose lives she was incredibly active and present at their events.

Lorris had a strong relationship with her Ukrainian Catholic faith. St. Athanasius Parish was her religious home and second family. She was a committed UCWLC member and volunteer for 25 years. She was a gentle, precious soul with a great sense of humour. She loved music, singing, and dancing since childhood, and was a dedicated member of our parish choir. Lorris freely gave her time and energy to readily help everyone in need and was a good friend to many. We are grateful to God for the gift of Lorris, our

friend, and shall miss her until we are reunited again—*Vichnaya Pam'yat!*

For the full obituary, please visit: <https://bit.ly/3EQ2sCW>.

✠ **Olga Wynnyk**
Oct. 1, 1930–Sept. 11, 2021



Olga Wynnyk (nee Zuk), a member of the St. Nicholas UCWLC in Edmonton, AB, passed away peacefully at the age of 90 on September 11, 2021.

Olga was born on October 1, 1930, in Derwent, AB. She grew up in a family with four sisters and two brothers. Olga married Harry Wynnyk on October 21, 1950, and they started their life together on their farm. They were blessed with five daughters and one son. After Harry sustained a farming injury, they moved around, eventually settling in Edmonton.

One of Olga's first jobs outside of the home was working as a tailor's assistant. Over the years, Olga explored a variety of careers including hairdressing, residential and commercial painting, as well as cleaning. Olga's children learned how to paint when they worked alongside her and recall her meticulous attention to detail.

Olga enjoyed cooking, playing cards, reading, gardening, and travelling. Faith and devotion to the church were very important to Olga and she took great pleasure in

helping her grandchildren follow along in the English prayer books when they attended Divine Liturgy together. *Vichnaya Pamyat!*

Submitted by Inessa McIntyre
St. Nicholas UCWLC Branch

✠ **Marion (Marusia) Barszczyk, HLM**
Feb. 4, 1948–Sept. 17, 2023



Marion (Marusia) Barszczyk was born to nurturing parents, Dmytro and Evhenia Luchka, who were active in the Ukrainian Catholic Church. Her brother Michael became a priest and through him, Marusia met and married John Myron Barszczyk, who himself was ordained to the priesthood in 1978. They were blessed with one son Alexander (Olesh).

Marusia was an excellent organizer, a tireless worker and accomplished speaker in a myriad of Ukrainian and Catholic organizations. She served first as the Eparchial President of the UCWLC, then as the National President of UCWLC; as President of the Board of Directors of Ukrainian Canadian Social Services, Toronto Branch; as a member of the World Council of Ukrainian Social Services, and the Accreditation Committee for Ontario College of Social Workers. She was the Program Manager of Development, Social and Health Service Management

of Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Toronto and a committed worker for Catholic Children's Aid Society, just to mention a few. Always being ready to lend a helping hand, Marusia never hesitated to share her professional expertise in productive work for community, parish, eparchy and ecumenical purposes. Being experienced in child welfare service and senior administrative leadership, Marusia trained and facilitated professional groups in terms of how to handle domestic violence; she led marriage preparation; and she visited the sick, elderly, bereaved and isolated individuals within parish and ethnic communities.

As such an active volunteer in our community, Marusia received Volunteer Service Recognition awards from both the Ontario and Federal governments; the Ontario College of Social Workers; Toronto City Hall Administration; World Youth Day Preparation Committee; and last, but not least, UCWLC Honorary Life Member (HLM) designation.

Marusia was a true helpmate for Father John, first at Our Lady of Perpetual Help (Свята Покрова), Toronto, then at Dormition of the Mother of God (Успення Пресвятої Богородиці), Mississauga; and finally at St Josaphat's Cathedral (Катедро Святого Священномученика Йосафата), Toronto.

With her beautiful smile and welcoming manner, she acted as a gracious hostess to everyone from family, friends, and fellow workers to dignitaries, priests and bishops.

Marusia joined the UCWLC in 1974. She was on the UCWLC executive in every parish as well as on the eparchial and national levels where she served as Cultural Convener, Spiritual Development Convener, Eparchial President of the Eparchy of Toronto and Eastern Canada, and in 2016, the National UCWLC President. As Marusia was a natural leader and accomplished speaker, she presented workshops on many topics at all three UCWLC levels and at regional conferences.

As a Dobrodiyka, she led by example rolling up her sleeves to help with whatever needed doing. I remember calling her and Father John telling me that she had rushed off after dinner to St. Josaphat's as there was a function to prepare for. She was a "We" person, never an "I" person. When we worked with her, we heard "we did this" or "we did that" and never "I did." That is the sign of a true talented leader. In her last National President's message to all of us, she said, "We must believe and pray that we are lay women who are following in the deeply rooted footsteps of our founders... we must

practise tolerance and respect for each other." She energized the people around her. Even when she was already ill and feeling unwell as UCWLC National president. She had a gift for rallying those around her to work even harder and certainly better, and we all did.

Вона була перш за все добра людина — великодушна, працьовита, віддана, а найбільше жертвенна особа. Між нами всіма вона світилася як самоцвіт.

She will be missed by many, but especially by her husband of nearly 50 years this month, Father John, who was by her side every day throughout her illness. She will be missed by her son Olesh who was the apple of her eye, her pride and joy. She told me that she was at peace and glad that Olesh had found his soulmate in his wonderful fiancée, Christina.

Marusia, I too, will miss you greatly. With you, I feel I was a better person. I was honoured to call you my friend and sister in my heart. I know you are with God and your loved ones in heaven. Вічна пам'ять!

Olha Karaim
Past-President of the UCWLC
Eparchy of Toronto and Eastern
Canada
Past President of the UCWLC
branch at the Dormition of the
Mother of God, Mississauga

Let us remember those who have departed in our prayers.
Send announcements and tributes to *Nasha Doroha*.



Згадаймо тих, що відійшли у Вічність, у наших молитвах.



Надсилайте до редакції посмертні згадки про ваших рідних, друзів, знайомих.

Is St. Philip's Fast Still Relevant for Us Today?

By Marcia Coulic-Salahub and Deacon Harrold Salahub

As soon as December starts, many people say that there is so little time to get all the preparations done for Christmas. There is planning for the meal, the purchasing of special gifts, and making plans with family. In our busy society, is it still even worth the effort to focus on St. Philip's Fast—the 40-day period of fasting and preparation observed by Eastern Catholics in anticipation of the feast of the Nativity of Jesus Christ?

A wise saying is that we should spend 20 minutes of prayer each day, and when we think we are too busy, or have too many things on the go and time is short, we should spend 30 minutes in prayer. This almost sounds counterintuitive, but there is wisdom in this saying. In life, we can all be busy, but we are not always productive. Sometimes we use the analogy that we are spinning our wheels but going nowhere. If we spend the time spiritually preparing, being ready for what the day may bring, then we become more productive.

In a similar manner when we

spiritually prepare for the Nativity of our Lord and Saviour, we can then celebrate and focus on the things that are important, such as giving thanks and realizing the magnitude of this feast. God came down to be born as a little child to bring salvation! When we sing "God is with us" we can truly understand the importance of that statement.

The Nativity of Jesus is a huge celebration, and sometimes we overcomplicate it with extra details of having the elaborate foods and décor. A good rule to remember is that we should put in equal time to our spiritual preparation for the Nativity as we do with the physical time spend to get everything ready. Then we can truly have a memorable Nativity.

One element of spiritually preparing for the Nativity during St. Philip's Fast is fasting. Fasting has many benefits. Our Catechism book, *Christ Our Pascha*, tells us that authentic fasting helps us *to put away all evil, to control the tongue, to resist anger, and to abstain from lust, slander, falsehood, and perjury* (569). Not only

are we fasting from physical foods (so they taste so much better during the Christmas season), but we are also spiritually fasting from things that separate us from God and from one another. It is easier to fast from chocolate cake than gossip, but both will bring us benefits.

Another benefit to observing St. Philip's Fast is to increase prayer time. This becomes an opportunity to deepen one's relationship with God and to help us get along with others, especially the difficult people we encounter. When we pray, we change ourselves and align our will with God's Will.

So, to return to the question, is St. Philip's Fast still relevant? We all must make that decision for ourselves. There are many benefits of being spiritually prepared for the Nativity. Physically fasting and fasting from things like gossip, as well as increasing our prayer time, will help us spiritually prepare for the birth of Jesus. There is still time for the St. Philip's Fast, will you take the challenge to participate? You will be glad you did.



Let us prepare our hearts to welcome Jesus,
the true Light of the World



**Saint John
the Baptist
Ukrainian Catholic
Shrine, Ottawa**

Photo: Fr. Ireneus Prystajcky



SISTER STEPHANIE OLYNYK, SSMI

In our Ukrainian Catholic Church, Lourdes, Frances

Sister Stephanie, baptized Stephania, was born in 1943 to parents George and Mary Olynyk. She was the third oldest of seven children. She lived on a farm in the Holar Parish area, seven miles from the town of Elfros. She attended the country public school and most of high school in the town of Wynyard. Stephania graduated Grade 12 from Yorkton Sacred Heart Academy, taught by the Sisters Servants of Mary Immaculate.

Signs of a religious vocation began showing early when Stephania, at 6 years old, was asked to offer a bouquet of flowers to greet Bishop Roborecki of Saskatoon when he blessed their new church in Holar Parish. Father John Syrota, the local priest, placed his hand on her head saying, "Stephania, one day you will be a Sister." She began reading on religious mission life. She loved summer Catechism classes taught by the Ukrainian Sisters, and she prayed to be a Sister, if God willed.

After Grade 12, Stephania worked as a nurse's aid in Lestock, SK, at the Grey Nun's Hospital, situated in an area with several Indigenous reserves. This was a good experience and she loved meeting and helping people.

On August 4, 1962, she entered the Novitiate of the Sisters Servants of Mary Immaculate in Ancaster, ON. After taking First Vows in 1965, Stephania was sent to care for the orphans in the orphanage in Mundare, AB. Later in 1965, she entered the nursing profession and graduated as a registered nurse in 1969 from the Ottawa General Hospital, directed by the Grey Nuns.

Sr. Stephanie nursed in hospitals in Mundare and Willingdon, AB, as well as in nursing homes in Dauphin and Winnipeg.

In February 1983, Sr. Stephanie volunteered to accompany Sister Isidore Nozak, originally from Mundare, to serve in the mission at Lourdes, France, in the Ukrainian Catholic Church, built by Father Pryma.

Lourdes, France, is an international pilgrimage site where Our Lady appeared in the grotto to St. Bernadette 18 times in 1858. Since then, many miracles and healings have occurred there.

The SSMI hosted Ukrainian pilgrims and toured and prayed with them on their pilgrimage. Sr. Stephanie, and other Sisters, took the Ukrainian pilgrims to pray the Богородице Діво in Ukrainian and to sing "Levado Dolyno" over the microphone during the evening rosary and candlelight procession.

Sr. Stephanie served many Ukrainian and Roman Catholic groups from France, England, Germany, Croatia, etc., who had Divine Liturgy in the Ukrainian church.

When Ukraine opened up in 1991, many groups came from Ukraine on pilgrimages to Lourdes, and later went to work in the nearby countries of Italy, France, Spain, Portugal, England, Germany. They were very poor in Ukraine.

Sr. Stephanie served 28 years at the beautiful Lourdes Mission in France. In August of 2013, Sr. Stephanie returned to Canada. She served in Winnipeg, Montreal, and now resides in Mundare at St. Joseph's Home. She is very grateful to Our Lady, Mother Mary, for guiding her and helping her to serve Jesus, Our Lord throughout these years, supported by her family, her Community of Sisters, and friends. Sr. Stephanie prays for more young girls to follow Jesus in the religious vocation.