



НАША ДОРОГА NASH DOROHA

PM40007760 ♦ весна/spring 1(84)/2024



Divine Mercy | 2 Years of War | Pro-Life



[HTTPS://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/72.BRIGADE.BEST](https://www.facebook.com/72.BRIGADE.BEST)

Prayer to stop the attack of the Russian invaders

O Lord, quench the ragings of all Russian sinners who oppose Your commandments and decrees and have raised their hand against our peaceful people.

Restore to them the remembrance of Thy commandment: Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called sons of God.

And to those who oppose this commandment of Yours, send wrath, tribulation, and fierce angels, who will strike fear and pestilence into their ranks.

O Lord, Thy will be done unto us. We trust and pray to You, the Almighty, Lord, that You will protect us and bring us to peace, restrain and admonish all those who have evil or insidious intentions regarding Ukraine.

For You are the refuge, and the victory, and the salvation of those who trust in You, and we Ukrainians trust in You and ask for an end to the war, and to You we give glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto the ages of ages.

Amen!

Молитва про зупинку нападу російських загарбників

Господи, вгамуй лютя всіх грішників російських, хто противиться заповідям та постановам Твоїм та підняв руку проти мирного народу нашого.

Поверни їм пам'ять Твоєї заповіді: Блаженні миротворці, бо вони синами Божими назвуться.

А для тих, хто противиться цій Твоїй заповіді, пошли гнів, скорботу й ангелів лютих, які вселять в них страх і моровицю на ряди їхні.

Нехай же Господи буде воля Твоя над нами. Довіряємось і молимося Тобі Вседержителю, Господи, що Ти захистиш і приведеш нас до спокою, стримаєш і напоумиш всіх, хто має злі чи підступні наміри, щодо України.

Бо Ти еси захист і перемога, і спасіння, для тих, хто надіється на Тебе, а ми українці на Тебе покладаємося та просимо про припинення війни й Тобі славу воздаємо Отцю, і Сину, і Святому Духу, нині й повсякчас, і на віки віків.

Амінь!



“Stolen lives” by Sasha Anisimova from Kharkiv

INSTAGRAM PAGE: [HTTPS://WWW.INSTAGRAM.COM/SASANISIMOVA](https://www.instagram.com/sasanisimova)



“Among the ruined city stands our Kobzar. In addition to the traces of the shelling, there are words on that monument”:

“Свою Україну любить.
Любить її... Во время люте,
В останню, тяжкую минуту
За неї Господа молить”

T. Шевченко

Стоїть Шевченко. Стоїть і Вугледар!

“Love your Ukraine,
Love her... In this fierce time,
In the last, difficult moment
Pray for her to the Lord”

T. Shevchenko

Standing is Shevchenko. Standing is Vuhledar!



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Editor's Note

Winter is slowly waning. It surprised us this year. It was one of the first Christmases that wasn't a white one. And being a winter-lover, that was tough for me to swallow. The carol "I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas" took on new meaning. However, old man winter made sure we didn't forget about him. He threw us, western Canadians, -50° C (-64 with wind-chill at the airport here in Edmonton), and I know easterners always have their winter battles. Canadians are a resilient bunch. However, we certainly look forward to the days of spring flowers and budding willows, and sunshine on our faces.

And just when I look forward to the loveliness of summer I think of the war in Ukraine. The war has been raging for two years, and they fight on. They fight on through snow, freezing rain, wind, hunger, bombing, exhaustion, continual *terror*. They fight through the sacred holidays and celebrations. They fight on even when the rest of the world has forgotten about them. This issue of *Nasha Doroha* will feature reflections on the war. They are raw and honest. We need to make sure Canadians don't forget that there still is a war going on. We need to make sure the media and politicians still treat the war as relevant.

That being said, there are other wars going on in our world... in Canada. The war on "the right to life" is continual. In this issue of ND we are featuring an article by David Franko on the Pro-Life movement in Canada. From birth to death each person deserves the right to life and the dignity of love and worth.

Another theme we are diving into in this issue is the Divine Mercy—"Jesus, I trust in you." Sometimes it can be difficult to trust Jesus, especially when we don't fully understand His ways, or His plan. But I think that is what faith is. Faith, after all, is given to us by God. The Divine Mercy is God's love reaching us in our miseries. Trust is the vessel by which we receive this grace. Father Dan Wach will introduce us to, and explain, the Divine Mercy and what it means for us.

As always, there are many other treats in this issue. UCWLC members and readers are definitely creative people who are difference makers. The passion for our religion, culture, one another, and community result in wonderful fruits. What a blessing!

This Easter season, may you be wrapped in the joy of the Risen Lord. And as you pass from the nascency of spring to the beauty of summer may you cleave to the promises of The Cross.

"Spirit lead me where my trust is without borders,
Let me walk upon the waters wherever you would call me.
Take me deeper than my feet could ever wander,
And my faith will be made strong in the presence of my Saviour."

— Oceans, by Hillsong

Christ is Risen! Христос Воскрес!

And may the Lord bless and protect the soldiers fighting in Ukraine!



НАША ДОРОГА

LIV - 1(84)/2024

NASHA DOROHA

Квартальний журнал
Ліги Українських Католицьких Жінок Канади

Quarterly publication of the
Ukrainian Catholic Women's League of Canada

La Journal de la Ligue des Femmes
Catholiques Ukrainiennes du Canada

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Висловлені погляди не конечно відповідають
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RETURN UNDELIVERABLE CANADIAN ADDRESSES TO

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387 BETTS AVE
YORKTON SK S3N 1N3

ISBN 1-894022-75-0

PRINTWEST

Printed by PrintWest Communications
1111 8th Avenue, Regina, SK S4R 1E1
Phone: 306-525-2304 Fax: 306-757-2439

Front cover / Верхня обкладинка

Image of the Vilnius Divine Mercy.
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Virgin Mary. Stockbridge, MA USA.

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Від Крайової Голови ◇ From the National President

Glory Be to Jesus Christ!

On behalf of the National UCWLC, we welcome our newly ordained Canadian bishops, Bishop Michael Kwiatkowski, Eparchy of New Westminster who was ordained on November 8, 2023, and Bishop Michael Smolinski, CSsR, Eparchy of Saskatoon, who was ordained on January 20, 2024. We pray that God will bless them with good health, strength, and wisdom as they begin this new chapter in their lives of ministry and service.

AXIOS! CONGRATULATIONS! МНОГАЯ ЛІТА!

As I prepared my thoughts to write my message, the word “challenges” came to my mind. Life is full of challenges. We are living in difficult and challenging times. We are in the midst of much unrest in the world—especially in Ukraine, the Middle East, and the Holy Land. However, we must maintain hope and faith, even in these challenging times by reflecting on Christ’s promise of eternal hope and salvation.

At the time of this writing, the war in Ukraine has been raging for nearly two years. We continue to see the atrocities perpetrated by Russia’s illegal invasion of Ukraine—all the lives lost, people being displaced from their homes, and cities being destroyed. Since the onset of the war, our UCWLC Branches have been active in supporting newcomers who arrived in Canada, raising funds for both humanitarian aid, and support for Ukraine’s defence. However, support for Ukraine in the international world seems to be dwindling. Some of our allies are decreasing aid to Ukraine. Public opinion polls in the USA indicate that people are losing interest in hearing news about the war, or they feel no threat by this war, as it is being fought on a foreign land and does not directly affect

Слава Ісусу Христу!

Від імені Крайової ЛУКЖК ми вітаємо наших нововисвячених канадських єпископів — єпископа Михайла Квятковського, єпархії Нью-Вестмінстера, який був висвячений 8 листопада 2023 року, та єпископа Михайла Смолінського ЧНІ, Саскатунської єпархії, який був висвячений 20 січня 2024 року. Ми молимося, щоб Бог благословив їх міцним здоров’ям, силою та мудрістю, в час коли розпочинається новий етап служіння та керівництва у їхньому житті.

AXIOS! ВІТАЄМО! МНОГАЯ ЛІТА!

Коли я готувалася до написання свого послання, мені спало на думку слово “виклик”. Життя сповнене викликів. Ми живемо у складні та непрості часи. Ми перебуваємо в епіцентрі багатьох заворушень у світі, в Україні, на Близькому Сході та у Святій Землі. Однак ми повинні зберігати надію та віру навіть у ці важкі часи, розмірковуючи над Христовою обітницею вічної надії і спасіння.

На момент написання цієї статті війна в Україні триває вже майже два роки. Ми продовжуємо спостерігати звірства, скоєні незаконним вторгненням Росії в Україну — втрачаються життя, люди вимушено покидають свої домівки, руйнуються міста. З початку війни наші відділення ЛУКЖК активно підтримують новоприбулих, які потрапили до Канади, збираючи кошти як на гуманітарну допомогу, так і на підтримку оборони України. Однак підтримка України в міжнародному світі, здається, зменшується. Частина наших союзників скорочує допомогу Україні. Опитування громадської думки в США свідчать, що люди втрачають інтерес до новин про війну, або не відчують загрози від цієї війни, оскільки вона ведеться на чужій землі і не має на них прямого впливу. Мене це засмучує і насторожує.

Ми не можемо дозволити собі заспокоїтися

them. I find this disheartening and alarming.

We cannot allow ourselves to get complacent about what is the largest war in Europe since World War II. Our responsibility is to continue to support our Ukrainian brothers and sisters. We need to keep the conversation of the war going, attending and/or organizing rallies to bring awareness to our communities. We need to contact our Member of Parliament and let them know how important it is that Canada continues to support Ukraine with military and economic aid. We need to step up to the challenge of doing all we can to help Ukraine win this war. This war affects all of us!

May our Patroness, the Most Holy Mother of God, through her intercessions with her Divine Son, grant peace, freedom, and unity to the people of Ukraine.

Glory to Ukraine! Glory to her Heroes!

Marlene Bodnar,
UCWLC National President

з приводу того, що ця війна є найбільшою в Європі з часів Другої світової війни. Наш обов'язок полягає в тому, щоб і надалі підтримувати наших українських братів і сестер. Нам потрібно продовжувати розмову про війну, відвідувати та/або організувати мітинги, щоб привернути увагу наших громад. Нам потрібно зв'язатися зі своїм членом парламенту і повідомити йому, наскільки важливо, щоб Канада продовжувала підтримувати Україну військовою та економічною допомогою. Нам потрібно прийняти виклик і зробити все можливе, щоб допомогти Україні перемогти в цій війні — ця війна стосується всіх нас!

Нехай наша Покровителька, Пресвята Богородиця, своїм заступництвом зі своїм Божественним Сином дарує мир, свободу та єдність народу України.

Слава Україні! Героям Слава!

Марлін Боднар,
Голова Крайової Управи ЛУКЖК

LETTERS ♦ ЛИСТИ

Dear Editor,

I was pleased to see the address for the UCWLC charity in Ukraine dedicated to helping women defenders.

These brave women carry an enormous responsibility. Not only are they defending Ukraine against Russia's terrorism, but more often than not they do it in addition to raising families and assisting aging parents and other family members. Social services are at a minimum and are hard to come by, especially during this terrible war. They deserve our deepest respect and support.

I wish to help by sending \$400.00 to the First Female Veterans Space Rehab in Ukraine as it not only treats medical issues but provides counselling.

It would be very good to know what response was received as a result of your ND promotion of the facility. Please let the readers know.

I note that the cheques are to be sent to the National Treasurer and repeat the address for those who might like to make a donation in lieu of a pysanka for our dear Ukrainian women.

Rehab Space UCWLC National Treasurer
426 Nicklaus Dr.,
Warman, SK S0K 4S1

Djakuju i VPERED DO PEREMOHY!

Oksana Bashuk Hepburn
Ottawa

Dear Editor,

I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to the UCWLC Scholarship Committee for awarding me the Mary Dyma scholarship, and to the entire UCWLC for supporting the two scholarships they award annually. I am very appreciative of all the support I have received from the UCWLC throughout my undergraduate degree. As a theology student and an active participant in my parish, St. Basil the Great in Edmonton, I am honoured to be recognized for my endeavours in religious studies. These scholarships are a huge help to students, and I am grateful that they will continue to support students for years to come.

Sincerely,

Isabella Sheptak



UKRAINIAN GREEK CATHOLIC CHURCH
Major Archbishop of Kyiv-Galicia

УКРАЇНСЬКА ГРЕКО-КАТОЛИЦЬКА ЦЕРКВА
Верховний Архієпископ Києво-Галицький

Page 1 of 2

Аркуш 1 із 2-х

Kyiv,

Вих. ВА 23/329

December 28, 2023, in the year of God

Kyiv,

Вих. ВА 23/329

28 грудня 2023 року Божого

**To the Honourable
Mrs. Marlene Bodnar,**
National President of the
Ukrainian Catholic
Women's League of Canada

**Високоповажній пані
Марлін Боднар,**
голови крайової управи
Ліги українських католицьких
жінок Канади

Dear Marlene Bodnar!

Dear members of the

Ukrainian Catholic Women's League of Canada!

Високоповажна пані Марлін!

Дорогі членкині

Ліги українських католицьких жінок Канади!

In this letter, we offer our congratulations to the worthy members of the League, which is celebrating its 80th anniversary this year. First of all, we thank the Lord God for blessing your honoured founders, whose many efforts allow you to celebrate this anniversary today. We thank Him also for the fact that you did not lack active, self-sacrificing leaders, leaders who, united by the idea of service to God and neighbour, carried out many great projects. Some of your members have already departed from this world to a heavenly reward, leaving you an example to follow and to build on their achievements. To them is this—our honour and gratitude. From our merciful God—eternal memory!

At this, your festive time, I want to thank each of you for the titanic work you do in the context of the UCWLC. All of this is done along with other important responsibilities such as raising children, maintaining the family hearth and home, and fulfilling professional tasks. You deserve deep respect for this! We are proud that our Church has such a community of believing women.

For eight decades, the League was not only a church and public organization, but also a bastion of Ukrainian culture, Christian values, and Greek Catholic patriotism in Canada. The Church will never be able to forget the League's role in the past and the

У цьому листі складаємо слова вітань достойним членкиням Ліги, яка цього року святкує 80-ту річницю від свого заснування. Насамперед дякуємо Господу Богу, що благословив ваших славних засновниць, які доклали чимало зусиль, щоб ви сьогодні могли святкувати цей ювілей. Дякуємо Йому й за те, що вам не бракувало активних, жертвних провідниць, які, об'єднані ідеєю служіння Богові та ближньому, здійснили чимало великих проєктів. Деякі з ваших членкинь вже відійшли з цього світу по небесну нагороду, залишаючи вам приклад для наслідування та примноження їхніх здобутків. Їм за це — честь і наша вдячність, а від милосердного Бога — вічна пам'ять!

У цей святковий для вас час хочу подякувати вам за титанічну працю, яку кожна з вас звершує в контексті Ліги жінок на додаток до інших важливих обов'язків щодо виховання дітей, підтримки родинного вогнища, виконання професійних завдань. Низький вам за це уклін! Пишаємось, що наша Церква має таку спільноту віруючих жінок.

Вісім десятиліть Ліга була не тільки церковно-громадською організацією, а й бастіоном української культури, християнських цінностей, греко-католицького патріотизму в Канаді. Церква ніколи не зможе забути її ролі в минулому і того

colossal experience it carries into the future. It has had a role in supporting Ukrainian students all over the world, building Greek Catholic parishes in Canada, and uniting and fostering Ukrainian Christian culture in the turbulent conditions of diaspora life. All this was woven by the League with golden threads on the fabric of the history of our Church.

We, burdened with problems and caught up in the whirlwind of life, do not always thank you properly. But be assured that the very fact of the existence of our Church, after decades of bloody past, is a manifestation of the highest gratitude to all the workers of Christ's vineyard. We are glad that we managed to establish, with you as an example, the League of Women of Ukraine, which is still actively developing in the Ukrainian context.

I am writing this greeting to you at a time when a brutal war of aggression continues on Ukrainian land. Mothers with tears in their eyes prayerfully accompany their children in the armed defence of the Motherland. Their pain can only be understood by a woman, a mother... Please continue to support our struggle, pray that God's just peace will come to Ukrainian land and that our women will meet their fearless soldiers alive.

Through the prayers of the Most Holy Theotokos, may the Lord God bless you and help you continue to serve fruitfully for the good of our Church. May He give you strength, inspiration and worthy successors for great achievements in the coming decades of the League's existence.

We pray for God's abundant blessings for you. As a deposit for this, we grant you the archpastoral blessing.

God's blessing on you!

† SVIATOSLAV

колосального досвіду, який вона несе в майбутнє. Підтримка українських студентів у всьому світі, розбудова греко-католицьких парафій у Канаді, гуртування і плекання української християнської культури в бурхливих умовах діаспорного життя – усе це Ліга золотими нитками виткала на полотні історії нашої Церкви.

Не завжди ми, обтяжені проблемами та підоплені виром життя, гідно дякуємо вам, але будьте певні, що сам факт існування нашої Церкви після десятиліть кривавого минулого є виявом найвищої подяки всім трударям Христового винограднику. Тішимося, що нам вдалося заснувати, маючи вас за зразок, Лігу жінок України, яка активно розвивається вже в українському контексті.

Це вітання пишу вам у той час, коли на українській землі триває жорстока загарбницька війна. Матері зі сльозами на очах молитовно супроводжують своїх дітей у збройній обороні Батьківщини. Їхній біль може зрозуміти тільки жінка, мати... Прохаю вас, продовжуйте підтримувати нашу боротьбу, молитесь, щоб на українській землі настав Божий, справедливий мир і щоб наші жінки зустріли живими своїх безстрашних воїнів.

Хай за молитвами Пресвятої Богородиці Господь Бог благословить вас і допоможе вам і надалі плідно служити для добра нашої Церкви. Хай дарує вам силу, натхнення та гідних наступниць для великих звершень на прийдешні десятиліття існування Ліги.

Вимолюємо для вас щедре Боже благословення. Як завдаток цього, уділяємо вам архипастирське благословення.

Благословення Господнє на вас!

† СВЯТОСЛАВ



**UKRAINIAN CATHOLIC
ARCHDIOCESE OF WINNIPEG**



**УКРАЇНСЬКА КАТОЛИЦЬКА
АРХИЄПАРХІЯ ВІННІПЕГУ**

To: Marlene Bodnar, President, UCWLC National Executive
and Members of the Ukrainian Catholic Women's League of Canada

Слава Ісусу Христу!

Glory be to Jesus Christ!

Dearly Beloved in Christ!

On the occasion of the 80th anniversary of the Ukrainian Catholic Women's League of Canada, I extend prayerful best wishes to you and to all UCWLC members as you celebrate this important milestone in the life of your organization. To mark this event, you have chosen as your theme, "Hope and Resilience." Indeed, "resilience" has been the characteristic of the life of the UCWLC during these past 80 years, while "hope" is the key attribute that will lead you into the future years that lie ahead.

Since the creation of the UCWLC there has been constant change in our world, in our Church and in our community and personal lives. In spite of the difficulties and confusion these changes have caused, the members of the UCWLC have moved forward in faith and resilience, establishing this organization as one of the pillars of the Ukrainian Catholic Church in Canada.

And now as we look towards the future with war in Ukraine and social and moral upheaval in Canada, we see the need for a continuation of the role of the UCWLC and its members who, by their faithfulness to the Gospel message, can offer a sign of hope in today's world.

It is my fervent prayer that in marking this important anniversary, you, the members of the UCWLC, will be renewed in your faith-filled dedication to your families, to your organization, and to your parishes, and thus by your hope and resilience you will continue to help build the Kingdom of God on this earth.

May the Lord bless you for many years to come, through the prayers of the Mother of God—*na mnohi i blahi lita!*

Sincerely in the Lord,

Most Rev. Lawrence Huculak OSBM
Metropolitan

2 January 2024

Prot. H/01/2024

Кому: Марлін Боднар, Голові, Крайової Управи ЛУКЖК
Та Членкиням Ліги Українських Католицьких Жінок Канади

Слава Ісусу Христу!

Glory be to Jesus Christ!

Дорогі у Христі!

З нагоди 80-річчя Ліги Українських Католицьких Жінок Канади я передаю найщиріші молитовні побажання вам та всім членкиням ЛУКЖК у час святкування цієї важливої віхи в житті вашої організації. Щоб відзначити цю подію, ви обрали тему «Надія та Стійкість». Дійсно, Стійкість була характерною рисою життя ЛУКЖК протягом цих 80 років, тоді як Надія є ключовим атрибутом, який буде вести вас у майбутні роки, що чекають попереду.

З моменту створення ЛУКЖК відбувалися постійні зміни в нашому світі, в нашій Церкві, у нашій громаді та особистому житті. Незважаючи на труднощі та сум'яття, ці зміни призвели до того, що члени ЛУКЖК просунулися вперед у вірі та стійкості, утвердивши цю організацію як одну з опор Української Католицької Церкви в Канаді.

І тепер, коли ми дивимося в майбутнє з війною в Україні та соціальними і моральними потрясіннями в Канаді, ми бачимо потребу у продовженні ролі ЛУКЖК та його членкинь, які своєю вірністю Євангельському посланню можуть запропонувати знак надії в сьогоденному світі.

Я палко молюся, щоб відзначаючи цей важливий ювілей, ви, членкині ЛУКЖК, були відновлені у сповненій вірою відданості вашим родинам, вашій організації та вашим парафіям, і таким чином завдяки вашій надії та стійкості, ви продовжували допомагати будувати Царство Боже на цій землі.

Нехай Господь благословить вас на довгі роки, молитвами Богородиці — на многії і благії літа!

Щиро в Господі,

Преосвященний Лаврентій Гуцуляк ЧСВВ
Митрополит

2 січня 2024 р.

80th Anniversary Feature: Saints Who Demonstrate Hope or Resilience

Mary Magdalene

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 Mary Magdalene, the first person to witness the joy of the Resurrection, 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 5:3-5

- “And not only this, but we also celebrate in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit Who was given to us.”

Mini-reflection

- In the book of Romans, the Apostle Paul tells us that we will have troubles in life, but if we celebrate in those tribulations, we can mature in our faith. Mary Magdalene was on a sinful path, till she had a conversion when she encountered Jesus.
- Let's go deeper into what we know about Mary Magdalene
 - **Disciple of Jesus:** Mary Magdalene is mentioned in the Gospels as someone who accompanied Jesus during His ministry, witnessed His crucifixion, and played a significant role in the events surrounding His Resurrection.
 - **Witness to the Resurrection:** According to scripture, Mary Magdalene was the first person to encounter the Risen Jesus. She went to the tomb on the morning of the Resurrection and found it empty. Jesus appeared to her, and she became the bearer of the good news of His resurrection to the other disciples.
 - Her feast day is celebrated on July 22nd.



Connection to Spiritual Theme of Hope and Resilience:

- Mary Magdalene is an example of hope and resilience. Through her conversion, she demonstrated resilience in her faith. She was the first to announce the good news of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, which is the ultimate hope for us.

Special Petition

- We also pray for the joy of the Resurrection to enter our hearts. May we also encounter the Risen Lord. O Lord, hear us, and have mercy.

Suggested Action

- Spend time looking for ways to deepen your faith and joy in the Risen Lord.

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



Historic Milestones of National UCWLC

By Holly Paluck

This issue of *Nasha Doroha* continues to share some highlights from the second era of the organizational development of the National UCWLC as documented by National Past President Shirley Lisowski (2004). She based her comments on Congress records. We have entitled this era “Organizing the Organization” as we see the UCWLC move past its formative years and into the era of organizing some of its components from which it could be further nurtured.

As you read, remember that during this time, the primary means

of communicating with one another and their Spiritual Advisors was by phone, letter writing, and in-person meetings. Typewriters, gestetner printing, and postal mail were the technological options and means of the day for sharing information. Also during this time, in many parishes across Canada women were organized by “ladies auxiliary” groups or an equivalent. The women and organization of the UCWLC offered something greater to all who joined—locally, eparchially, and nationally. Some faced adversity in their own parishes for encouraging the opening of a

UCWLC branch—for envisioning something more for the women and their role in the parish and Church. Together, much more could be accomplished, and in many cases, these efforts bore fruit with support for the establishment and growth of Branches. For this we are grateful! These women understood challenges of distance and diversity in the UCWLC. They, too, experienced difficulties, yet were resilient and hope-filled as they saw the progress and difference they made when they overcame obstacles. Indeed, these were future-minded women!

Organizing the Organization: 1964-1984

At the 9th Congress (Edmonton 1968) the membership fee was raised to \$2. At this Congress the idea of a journal was first raised by Anna Maria Baran of Saskatoon. It was decided to produce a monthly bulletin until funds could be found for a larger journal. The Congress topics included the family, Ukrainian language and religious classes, parish kindergartens, and our youth. These topics continue to be the focus of workshops and resolutions for most Congresses.

Since 1968, the National term became three years with a rotational system required by the Constitution. The original Constitution was based on the one used by UCB (БУК) and formulated by Fr. Semczuk. In 1951, the Constitution was revised and continues to be an ongoing process as new practices are developed; new symbols such as the flag, pins, and a journal were added. A major revision was adopted in 1971, and in 2003 a revised English version was compiled by Lena Sloboda incorporating further changes. The Ukrainian version is being produced.¹

The 10th Congress, in 1971, was held in Toronto. Fifty cents was added to the membership fee for subscription

costs. Much of this Congress was taken up with issues including whether the administrative and editorial aspects should be in separate hands or done by the same person. The Congress created an administrative board to work with the editor. This board was revived in 2001 at Plenary in Regina. It was also decided to publish a UCWLC brochure in both languages. (However, the new 2003 version is in English only.) An important policy item was resolved: Congress decided that the UCWLC will not have official representatives on the National Council of Women because of its stand on abortion. Finally, at this Congress, Mary Dyma gave out Honorary Life Memberships to worthy members in all the Eparchies.

The 11th Congress (Saskatoon 1974) is noteworthy for several reasons: Judge Mary Wawrykow brought up the need for constitutional revision; the Mother of God icon was presented to each new President; a plaque for presidents names was begun; and a Ukrainian/English Executive installation ceremony, very similar to the one used [in] Regina (2001), was used.

The 12th Congress was held in 1977 in Winnipeg. It was decided to open a Reserve Fund with \$1,800 and raise it to \$50,000 with contributions from the branches according to a fee schedule (up to 25 members \$10; 25-40, \$15; over 40, \$25). To pay for rising costs of ND and other expenses, the membership fee was raised to \$5. The term “Canada” was added to the

¹ Editor’s Note: In 1979, the revised Constitution was printed in Edmonton in both Ukrainian and English languages.



UCWLC acronym. A triplicate membership form was approved for use. As well, the incoming executive was to deal with such matters as presidents pins, at the national and eparchial level, and flags for branches. It was resolved to use the term flag not banner. In 1974, the UCWLC had a member on the WUCWO executive.

The 13th Congress was held in Edmonton, 1980. The theme was: *Let us Renew the Religious Spirit of our Families*. Other focuses were organizational structures; work of committees; and leadership development. To commemorate the 35th Anniversary of the UCWLC, 6,000 buttons were prepared; 20,000 distinct tags were printed for League Day; special covers [were designed]

for *Nasha Doroha*; [and] new pins were designed. During her tenure, Lena Sloboda worked on gaining a charter for the League. It was granted in 1980. Publication of *Nasha Doroha* was centered in one eparchy.

The 14th Congress was held in Toronto. Major topics included raising the Reserve Fund to \$100,000 from \$50,000; ways to revitalize the League; and [how to] encourage new members to join. Dominion Regalia of Toronto [was] chosen to produce new flags.

Written by †Shirley Lisowski
National Past President, UCWLC (2001-05)

This content was originally printed in the 60th Anniversary Issue of *Nasha Doroha*, Fall-Winter (14-15) 2004, p. 28



Голови – Presidents Spiritual Advisors Крайової Управи ЛУКЖК – National Executive UCWLC

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <p>Марія Дима – Mary Duma
Вінніпер – Winnipeg
1944-46</p> <p>Марія Бовден – Mary Bowden
Вінніпер – Winnipeg
1946-47</p> <p>Люба Вал – Luba Wall
Вінніпер – Winnipeg
1947-50</p> <p>Марія Дима – Mary Duma
Вінніпер – Winnipeg
1950-53</p> <p>Михайлина Войтків – Mychalina Woytkiv
Rev. Basil Chopey
Едмонтон – Edmonton
1953-54</p> <p>Анна Прийма – Анна Прума
Rev. Basil Chopey
Едмонтон – Edmonton
1954-56</p> <p>Катерина Кравс – Katherine Crouse
Most Rev. Isidore Borecky
Торонто – Toronto
1956-58</p> <p>Стефанія Потоцька – Stephanie Potoski
Rev. Volodymyr Korba CSsR
Саскатун – Saskatoon
1958-61</p> <p>Марія Дима – Mary Duma
Rev. Semen Izyk
Вінніпер – Winnipeg
1961-64</p> <p>Ірина Павликовська – Iryna Pawlykowsky
Rev. Petro Kachur
Едмонтон – Edmonton
1964-68</p> <p>Ірина Малицька – Irene Malyska
Rev. Volodymyr Zolkewycz
Торонто – Toronto
1968-71</p> | <p>Стефанія Потоцька – Stephanie Potoski
Rt. Rev. Mitrat John Olynyk
Саскатун – Saskatoon
1971-74</p> <p>Віра Бучинська – Vera Buczynsky
Вінніпер – Winnipeg
1974-77</p> <p>Лена Сlobода – Lena Sloboda
Rev. Nicholas Diadio
Едмонтон – Edmonton
1977-80</p> <p>Марія Долішна – Maria Doliszny
Rev. Volodymyr Zolkewycz
Торонто – Toronto
1980-83</p> <p>Аделя Дудар – Adeline Dudar
Rev. Dr. Vladimir Mudri
Саскатун – Saskatoon
1983-86</p> <p>Ярослава Татарнюк – Yaroslava Tatarniuk
Sr. Jerome Chimy SSMI
Ню Вестмінстер – New Westminster
1986-89</p> <p>Евгенія Шерман – Evhenia Sherman
Most Rev. Myron Michael Daciuk, OSBM
Вінніпер – Winnipeg
1989-92</p> <p>Катерина Чічак – Catherine Chichak
Rev. Nicholas Diadio
Едмонтон – Edmonton
1992-95</p> <p>Марія Комарницька – Maria Komarnycky
Rev. John Barszczyk
Торонто – Toronto
1995-98</p> <p>Евгенія Палюк – Jayne Paluck
Rev. Methodius Kushko, CSsR
Саскатун – Saskatoon
1998-2001</p> | <p>Ширлі Лісовська – Shirley Lisowski
Most Rev. Metropolitan Michael Bzdel, CSsR
Вінніпер – Winnipeg
2001-05</p> <p>Олена Гедз – Olena Gedz
Most Rev. Cornelius Pasichny, OSBM
Торонто – Toronto
2005-07</p> <p>Люба Ковалчик – Luba Kowalchuk
Rev. Janko Herbut
Едмонтон – Edmonton
2007-10</p> <p>Глорія Ленюк – Gloria Leniuk
Rev. Yurij Lazurko
Саскатун – Saskatoon
2010-13</p> <p>Софія Манулак – Sophie Manulak
Most Rev. Metropolitan Lawrence Huculak OSBM
Вінніпер – Winnipeg
2013-16</p> <p>Маруся Барщик – Marion Barszczyk
Rev. Peter Galadza
Торонто – Toronto
2016-19</p> <p>Барвара Глусь – Barbara Hlus
Most Rev. David Motiuk
Едмонтон – Edmonton
2019-22</p> <p>Марлін Боднар – Marlene Bodnar
Deacon Harrold Salahub
Саскатун – Saskatoon
2022-present</p> |
|---|--|--|

Editor's Note: Identification of the National Spiritual Advisors from 1944 to 1953 and from 1974 to 1977 could not be confirmed in time for this issue's publishing date.

Eastern Rite Catholics and

Divine Mercy

By Fr. Daniel Wach, OSBM

As Eastern Rite Catholic Christians, when we hear of **Divine Mercy**, or of God's Mercy, perhaps we call to mind the of the number of times we call upon the mercy of God in the **Divine Liturgy** of St. John Chrysostom. In fact, that would be **137 times**, in one Divine Liturgy!

Or maybe we would think of the **Jesus Prayer** that we pray on our "чотки" (*chotky*). This is a circular prayer rope made up of a hundred beads with a cross in the middle. The prayer goes like this, "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner." In praying this devotion once, **we call upon God's mercy a hundred times**.

Sacred Scripture may also come to mind when we think of God and His Divine Mercy. In fact, "**mercy**" is found **212 times in Sacred Scripture**; two thirds of this are found in the Old Testament and one third is found in the New Testament. (So much for thinking that God's mercy can only be found in the New Testament!) In fact, Fr. Mitch Pacwa, S.J., in his book, *Mercy, A Bible Study Guide for Catholics* (Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division, 121 pages), does a masterful job in looking at the different Hebrew and Greek terms used to describe God's mercy in Sacred Scripture.

One of the most common words used for "mercy" in the Old Testament is the Hebrew word "*rahamim*". It is in the plural form, and it is derived from **the Hebrew word for "womb"**. A soul experiencing God's mercy can be compared to an infant having all its needs satisfied in the womb. The Lord asks the prophet Isaiah this question, "Can a woman... have no compassion on the son of her womb?" (Isaiah 49:15) It would have been hard to imagine that she would not have mercy on her child, but to show the greatness of God's mercy. He continues, "Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you." (Isaiah 49:15) **God's mercy is always available to us!**

However, today when one is speaking of Divine Mercy, one is most likely speaking of the events surrounding **St. Faustina Kowalska**. She was born on August 25, 1905, in Poland. Her name was Helena Kowalska, and she was the third of ten children. She was seven years old when she heard for the first time God's voice in her soul. He was inviting her to a

vocation to the religious life.

She went to a dance when she was 18 and there saw for the first time Jesus, covered with wounds. He admonished her saying, "... how long will you keep putting Me off?"

When she was almost 20 years old, she entered a convent whose mission was for the care and education of troubled young women. She took the monastic name Sister Faustina. In time, Fr. Michael Sopocko became her spiritual director and was made aware of her mystical experiences. He **directed her to write down all her encounters with Christ in a diary**.

She did this and today anyone can purchase this book, called *Diary: Divine Mercy in My Soul* by Sister M. Faustina Kowalska (Marian Helpers, Stockbridge, MA 01263, 697 pages). This book (in Polish) received its "*Nihil Obstat*" and "*Imprimatur*" in Krakow in 1979, and the English translation was given the same approval in 1987. The "*nihil obstat*" and "*imprimatur*" are the Church's declarations that the book is considered free from doctrinal or moral error.

The Lord had asked St. Faustina to promote four main aspects of **devotion to His Divine Mercy**, namely:

- 1) Have an artist paint a **picture of Jesus as Divine Mercy** so that it could be venerated by the people. It is an image of the resurrected Lord with rays of red and white (symbols of His Passion) streaming outwards. Beneath the image, are the words, "Jesus, I Trust in You."
- 2) Promote the recitation of the **Chaplet of Divine Mercy**, which is to be recited on a regular rosary. On the "Our Father" beads, the following prayer is to be said instead:

"Eternal Father, I offer you the **Body and Blood, soul and divinity** of your dearly beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. For the **atonement** of our sins and those of the whole world."

On the "Hail Mary" beads, we are to pray a prayer **similar to the Jesus Prayer**; "For the sake of His sorrowful Passion, **have mercy on us** and on the whole world." ►

3) Promote a **Novena to the Divine Mercy**. Say the Divine Mercy Chaplet each day for nine days, starting on Good Friday, with each day having its own special intention.

1st day: For all mankind, especially **all sinners**.

2nd day: For the souls of **priests and religious**.

3rd day: For all devout and **faithful souls**.

4th day: Those who do not believe in God, and those who **do not yet know Him**.

5th day: For those who have **separated themselves from His Church**.

6th day: For the **meek and humble** souls and the souls of little **children**.

7th day: For souls that especially **venerate** and glorify **His Mercy**.

8th day: For all souls in **purgatory**.

9th day: For all souls that have become **lukewarm**.

4) Promote the celebration of the **first Sunday after Easter**, as **Divine Mercy Sunday**.

St. Faustina died of tuberculosis in 1938 when she was only 33 years old. She was canonized on Sunday, April 30, 2000, at St. Peter's Square in Vatican City by St. Pope John Paul II. This was also the day in which St. Pope John Paul II instituted the feast day of Divine Mercy Sunday for the whole Catholic Church and it was the first day that the Divine Mercy Sunday was celebrated.

In regard to the **Divine Mercy image**, the veneration of icons is something that is not strange to Eastern Rite Catholics. We do so by incensing them and praying before them during our Divine Liturgies. There are many icons of Christ depicting all aspects of His life and His teachings. Some have Christ holding a scroll or a book with a passage of scripture written on it, often with a **candle lit in front of the icon, streaming light from His heart**. This may call to mind when St. Josaphat gazed upon the icon of the Crucified Christ, a Divine Spark flew from the heart of our Lord and into his heart filling him with the knowledge of God's Love and Mercy. Even Jesus' disciples exclaimed, "Did not our hearts burn within us, while He talked to us...?" (Luke 24:32)

On the iconostasis there is an Icon of Christ, often holding an open gospel book, with this passage written, "Come to me, all who labour and are heavy laden,

and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." (Matthew 11:28-30) Those who are heavily burdened with sin, **Jesus is calling us to "trust in Him"**. Confess your sins and He who is gentle will lift the burden from your heart. So too with those who are burdened with anxieties, fears, frustration and worries. He is calling us to **trust in Him**, surrender all our problems to Him, and He will make our burdens light.

The first prayer that St. Faustina was given by our Lord is also very important. By **repeating** this prayer, it **imprints** on our minds and souls that when we receive the Holy Eucharist, we are actually **receiving the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ!**

In Old Testament times, goat and lamb sacrifices were offered in the Temple to make **atonement** for the sins of their families. However, such **atonement was not able to wash away their sins**. That's why the scribes were repulsed at Jesus when he told the paralyzed man, "My son, your sins are forgiven." (Mark 2:5) They were questioning in their hearts, "Who can forgive sins but God alone?" (Mark 2:7) So when we offer to the Father **the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ** for the **atonement** of our sins and those of the whole world, it is because **Jesus can** and wants to **do this. He washes away our sins** as He did with the paralyzed man.

In the **second prayer** we profess that **Christ's suffering** during His Passion was not something without value; rather, it was of **infinite** value. Through it He was able to save all mankind. So, we call upon the Father to apply the value of His Son's suffering on us and **have mercy on us and on the whole world**.

The **novena** is a **list of nine prayer intentions that God is asking us to pray for**. So often when we pray we have a list of things that we want God to do for us. However, when Jesus taught us the Our Father, He taught us to **pray that "Our Father's will be done"**! It would be good to pray for the intentions He wants us to pray for.

The **Sunday after Easter** is called **St. Thomas Sunday** in the Ukrainian Catholic Church. The **gospel** reading for this day is **John 20:19-31**. It is interesting to note that this is the exact **same gospel** that the Roman Rite uses to celebrate **Divine Mercy Sunday**. **All seven spiritual works of mercy are taught by Jesus in this gospel reading**. That makes it, then, quite easy for an Eastern Rite priest to preach on Christ's Divine Mercy on St. Thomas Sunday.

Looking at the gospel of St. Thomas Sunday we can see Christ teaching us by living out these seven spiritual works of mercy:

- 1) **To admonish sinners.** Jesus had mercy on St. Thomas, and admonished him saying, "... do not be faithless, but believing" (John 20:27)
- 2) **To instruct the uninformed.** Just as God the Father sent Jesus to teach His apostles, Jesus instructs them, also, to have mercy on those who were not informed and teach them the gospel of His mercy, "As the Father has sent me, even so I send you." (John 20:21)
- 3) **To counsel the doubtful.** Jesus did this when He appeared to doubting Thomas, counselling him with words that dispelled his doubt saying, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side." (John 20:27)
- 4) **To comfort the sorrowful.** On Easter Sunday evening, the apostles gathered in the upper room, filled with sorrow over the death of their Lord. To comfort and to show them His great mercy, Jesus appeared to them saying, "Peace be with you." (John 20:19)
- 5) **To be patient with those in error.** When Thomas declared his unbelief in the Resurrection saying, "I will not believe" (John 20:25), Jesus was merciful and patient with him, waiting "eight days" (John 20:26) before correcting his error.
- 6) **To forgive offences.** Jesus wanted to extend His mercy to all His people by forgiving them through His apostles, when He said to them, "If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven." (John 20:23)
- 7) **To pray for the living and the dead.** In revealing Himself to the apostles after He rose from the dead, He prayed with them saying, "Receive the Holy Spirit." (John 20:22) Jesus showed them that there is life after death, and we can show mercy by praying for (the special needs of) those who are living and of those who are alive after death. St. Peter said that after Jesus died, "... he went and preached to the spirits in prison." (1 Peter 3:19) These were the souls that were not yet in heaven and were in need of His Mercy.

Finally, I think it would be important to listen to and **trust the Lord's promises** that He made to St. Faustina. It should give us hope, great comfort and a sense of being able to do something for our loved ones

who may have distanced themselves from Christ and His Church. These are some of the promises that our Lord made regarding His Divine Mercy:

- "The souls that say this chaplet **will be embraced by My mercy** during their lifetime and especially **at the hour of their death.**" (Diary #754)
- "Whoever will recite it will receive great mercy at the hour of death." (Diary #687)
- "**Priests will recommend it to sinners** as their last hope of salvation. Even if there were a sinner most hardened, if he were to recite this chaplet only once, he would receive grace from My infinite mercy. (Diary #687)
- "**To priests** who proclaim and extol My mercy, I will give wondrous power; **I will anoint their words** and touch the hearts of those to whom they will speak." (Diary #1521)
- "When **hardened sinners say it**, I will fill their souls with peace, and the hour of **their death will be a happy one.**" (Diary #1541)
- When people "**say this chaplet in the presence of the dying**, I will stand between My Father and the dying person, not as a just Judge but as a merciful Saviour." (Diary #1541)
- "The prayer most pleasing to Me is **prayer for the conversion of sinners.** Know... that **this prayer is always heard and answered.**" (Diary #1397)
- "Souls who spread the honour of My mercy I shield,... and at the hour of death I will not be a Judge for them, but the Merciful Saviour." (Diary #1075)
- On Divine Mercy Sunday, that is, St. Thomas Sunday "The soul that will go to Confession and receive Holy Communion **shall obtain complete forgiveness of sins and punishment.**" (Diary #699)
- Mankind **will not have peace until it turns to the Fount of My Mercy.** (Diary #699)

If people are interested in listening to some very inspirational and informative videos on Divine Mercy, they could go to ewtn.com and click on "on demand" go to "Live Shows" then click on "Living Divine Mercy" with Fr. Chris Alar, m.i.c.

How to Recite the Chaplet of Divine Mercy

The Chaplet of Divine Mercy is recited using ordinary Rosary beads of five decades. The Chaplet is preceded by two opening prayers from the *Diary of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska* and followed by a closing prayer.

1. Make the Sign of the Cross

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

2. Optional Opening Prayers

You expired, Jesus, but the source of life gushed forth for souls, and the ocean of mercy opened up for the whole world. O Fount of Life, unfathomable Divine Mercy, envelop the whole world and empty Yourself out upon us.

Repeat three times:

O Blood and Water, which gushed forth from the Heart of Jesus as a fount of mercy for us, I trust in You!

3. Our Father

Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, Amen.

4. Hail Mary

Hail Mary, full of grace. The Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death, Amen.

5. The Apostle's Creed

For Eastern Rite Catholics, recite the Nicene Creed

6. The Eternal Father

Eternal Father, I offer you the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Your Dearly Beloved Son, Our Lord, Jesus Christ, in atonement for our sins and those of the whole world.

7. On the 10 Small Beads of Each Decade

For the sake of His sorrowful Passion, have mercy on us and on the whole world.

8. Repeat for the remaining decades

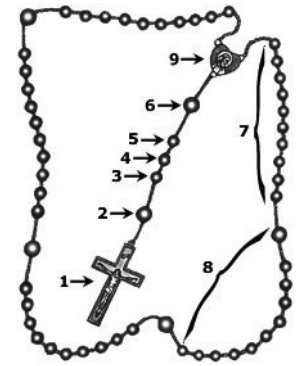
Saying the "Eternal Father" (6) on the "Our Father" bead and then 10 "For the sake of His sorrowful Passion" (7) on the following "Hail Mary" beads.

9. Conclude with Holy God/ Trisagion Prayer (Repeat three times)

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us and on the whole world.

10. Optional Closing Prayer

Eternal God, in whom mercy is endless and the treasury of compassion— inexhaustible, look kindly upon us and increase Your mercy in us, that in difficult moments we might not despair nor become despondent, but with great confidence submit ourselves to Your holy will, which is Love and Mercy itself.



My Never Again List

Never again will I confess "I can't", for "I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me".

(Philippians 4:13)

Never again will I confess "lack", for "My God shall supply all (my) needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus". (Philippians 4:19)

Never again will I confess "fear", for "God hath not given (me) the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind". (2 Timothy 1:7)

Never again will I confess "doubt and lack of faith", for "God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith".

(Romans 12:3)

Never again will I confess "weakness", for "the LORD is the strength of my life" (Psalm 27:1), and "The people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits". (Daniel 11:32)

Never again will I confess "supremacy of Satan over my life", for "Greater is He that is in (me), than He that is in the world". (1 John 4:4)

Never again will I confess "defeat", for "God always causeth (me) to triumph in Christ". (2 Corinthians 2:14)

Contemplating the Spirit: The Jesus Prayer

The Christian of the future will be a mystic or will not exist at all.

When the Catholic theologian Karl Rahner penned these prophetic words in 1981, he meant that people will either have a faith that affects their daily life in new and creative ways, or it will be just a series of empty formulas with no power to energize any aspect of their lives.

To be a mystic means to pray in a way that places oneself before God and empty the mind and heart of distractions, creating room for the Holy Spirit to work. The aim of this kind of prayer is not a multitude of words to God, but about becoming transformed.

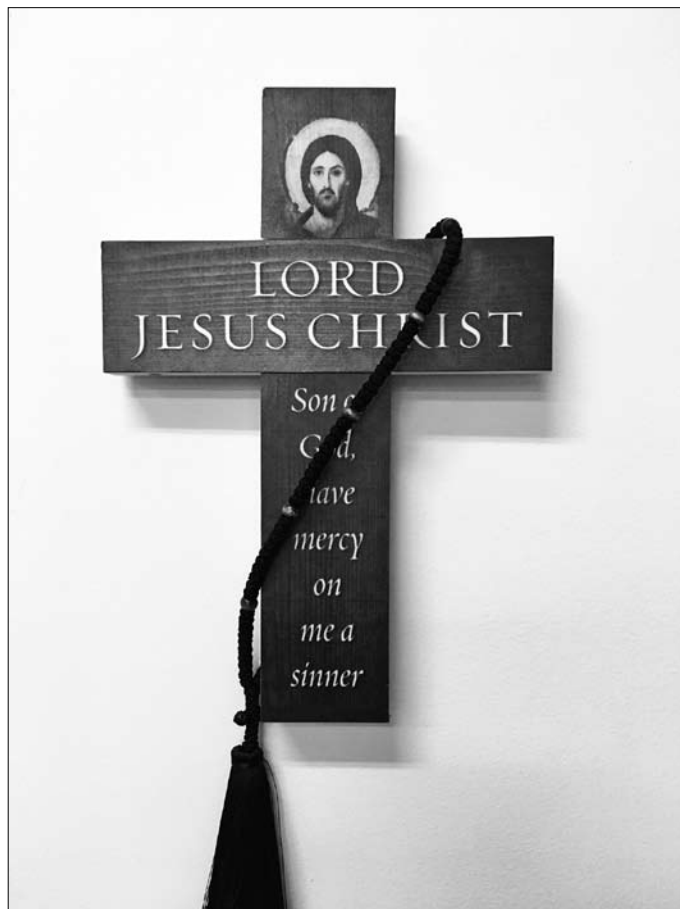
The Eastern Christian tradition places great emphasis on this form of prayer, which it describes as contemplative or *hesychastic*. The word *hesychasm* stems from the Greek word *hesychia*, which means “stillness, rest, quiet, silence.” Although it is a quiet way of praying, it is not passive. It is intensely active. Those who pray are actively cooperating with God’s grace to open themselves to the change that the Spirit will bring about. It is the simplicity of the words and their rhythmic repetition that assist the mind and heart to reach a silence, which creates room for the Holy Spirit.

With the fall of humanity, our likeness to God was lost. Christ came not only to heal us from our sins, but also to lay open the possibilities for us to grow again in that likeness, that is, to become *godlike*. Through the practice of contemplative prayer, fertile ground is created in us so that God’s presence may work within us and change us at our very core.

The most treasured contemplative prayer of our tradition is the Jesus Prayer. Two factors were instrumental in the formation of the Jesus Prayer as we have it today:

The 3rd century saw a great growth in monasticism. Monks, a product of this, were holy people who came to be well respected because of their dedication to God and their practices began to be emulated by others hoping to grow in holiness as well. These deeply devoted people had the habit of praying short repetitive prayers such as: *Lord, help* or *Have mercy*. These prayers would be on their lips and in their minds throughout the day. In this way they followed the exhortation of St. Paul to “pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

Much of their resultant writing reflected on the Scriptural testimony of the power of speaking the



name *Jesus*, revealing a deep reverence for His name. Over a number of centuries, these two factors combined to become the Jesus Prayer.

Praying the Jesus Prayer

The prayer is often prayed using a prayer rope called “*chotky*” (counters). There are no beads, but special knots tied on a wool cord. Although not essential, the prayer rope is a tool that can help one focus. Experience teaches that when the hands are busy it is easier to calm the mind.

The words are simple: LORD JESUS CHRIST, SON OF GOD, HAVE MERCY ON ME, A SINNER.

Some variants use this form: LORD JESUS CHRIST, SON OF THE LIVING GOD, HAVE MERCY ON ME, A SINNER.

The Jesus Prayer can be chanted, recited, or sung and, as one progresses, it can be silently repeated in the mind. We breathe in the goodness of God (Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God) and breathe out the hurt of our sins (have mercy on me, a sinner). ▶

The first part of the prayer focuses on Jesus

■ LORD

Jesus is our LORD. Only the King is addressed as Lord. When we call Jesus “Lord” we are proclaiming that He is above all. There is no other above Him. Nor are there other gods beside Him. To Him alone do we bow in worship. To say “Lord Jesus” is to acknowledge the power of the Holy Spirit in the prayer because “no one can say ‘Jesus is Lord’ except by the Holy Spirit” (1 Corinthians 12:3).

■ JESUS

The very act of calling Jesus by name brings us closer to Him. In our daily interactions, addressing others by name creates a feeling of closeness. Rather than saying simply “Hello,” but “Hello, Sarah,” for example, immediately creates a sense of connection. So, when we call Jesus by name, we are expressing that same desire for intimacy with Him, but on a deeper level.

We know that there is power in the name JESUS, a name meaning “God is our Saviour,” the one who came to “save His people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21). In pronouncing His holy name, we release the transforming power of God the Word. This is well attested to in Scripture. Here are just two of the many examples:

Therefore, God also highly exalted Him and gave Him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Philippians 2:9-11

There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved.” Acts 4:12

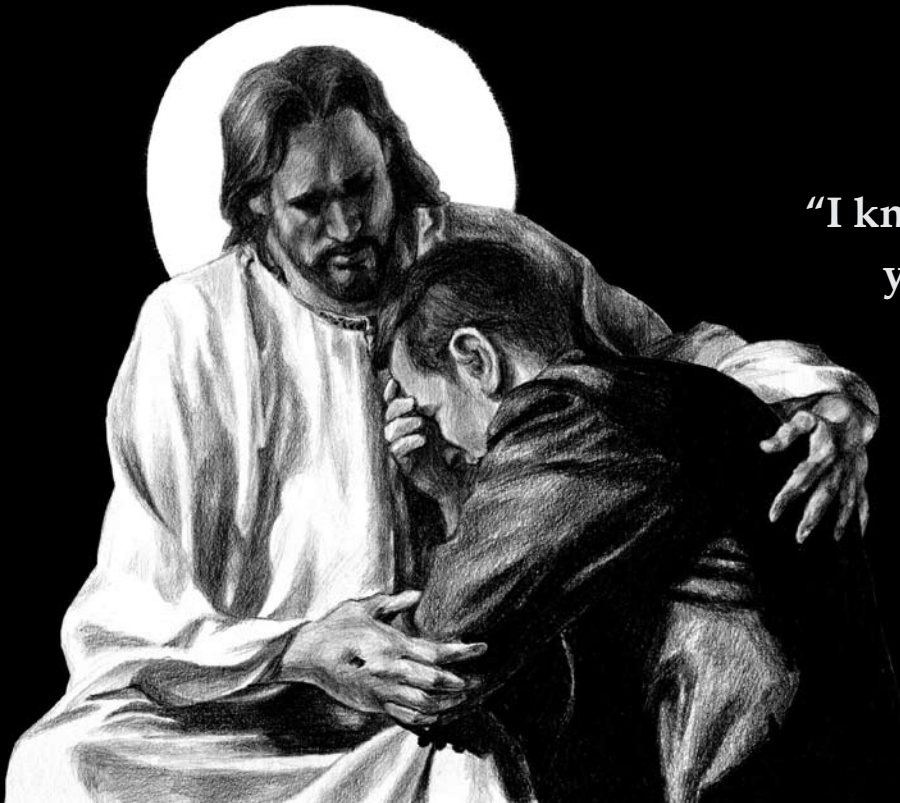
■ CHRIST

He is the CHRIST. The Greek word *christós* means “anointed.” Jesus is the promised Messiah, the anointed one of God. He is not a prophet in a line of prophets. He stands alone as the Christ.

■ SON OF GOD

We recognize Jesus as GOD, and as the SON OF GOD. Our God chose to become human for the sake of all humanity. This is a bold statement that only Christians can make. We worship Jesus, we praise him, and we proclaim Him as God.

Recognizing the power of these few words “Lord Jesus Christ Son of God” brings us to a place of profound humility as we dare to approach our God who is beyond all human understanding. ▶



**“I know now, Lord, why
you utter no answer.
You are yourself
the answer.”**

— C.S. Lewis

Next, we focus on ourselves

■ HAVE MERCY

MERCY in English is the translation of the Greek word *eleos* which comes from the same root as the Greek word for olive oil (олія in Ukrainian). Since ancient times olive oil continues to be used to heal and soothe wounds. In English, “mercy” is the usual translation of the Hebrew *Hesed* (or *Chesed*) which means *steadfast, dependable love*. The Ukrainian “помилуй” or “милувати” adds the sense of “loving tenderness.”

When we repetitively ask for mercy, we are not obsessively expressing our fear of God’s punishment for our wretchedness as some may think. Instead, we are recognizing God’s compassionate, healing, steadfast and dependable love for us—His beloved ones. We are asking Him to lovingly caress us and pour the healing oil of His love over us, allowing it to penetrate and heal our self-inflicted wounds and perhaps wounds that have been inflicted on us by others.

■ A SINNER

We recognize that we are SINNERS. We rupture relationships and push ourselves away from God and others. When we are separated from God, we cannot be who God created us to be. Sin is an illness requiring God’s healing mercy to restore us to our true selves. The mercy of God enables us to see our sinfulness, especially in the way we have hurt others, and gives us the resolve to seek their forgiveness and to atone for the harm we have caused them.

In these few words we profess the great mysteries of our faith: Incarnation (why God became human), Holy Trinity (the nature of God beyond human comprehension) and the infinite loving mercy of God for all of us, regardless of our unworthiness.

Conclusion

Progressing in one’s ability to quiet the mind and body to allow the Spirit to speak, and opening the heart is a journey that does not occur overnight. It is recommended that one find a spiritual director or mentor to walk with on the journey. It can be challenging and even frustrating, but the benefits for the one who prays, and thus for the world, are immense. I encourage all faithful to begin the journey of praying the Jesus Prayer.

I leave you with the words of Bishop Ignatius Brianchaninov from *On the Prayer of Jesus*: “By repeating the Jesus prayer, human beings touch that part of ourselves which is created in the image and likeness of God and learn how we ourselves can become sons and daughters of God.”



This is the journey of our lives. This gives us direction. This gives peace. What could be better?

Some books that can help in the journey with the Jesus Prayer:

The Way of the Pilgrim (various English translations are available)

On the Prayer of Jesus – Ignatius Brianchaninov

On the Invocation of the Name of Jesus – Lev Gillet

The Jesus Prayer: A Way to Contemplation – Simon Barrington Ward

The Power of the Name: The Jesus Prayer in Orthodox Spirituality – Kallistos Ware

Chanted versions to lead you into the prayer can be found at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OEOtQ97Vqik>
– Ukrainian

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=87f0NyututQ>
– English

<https://eeparchy.com/2022/01/19/the-jesus-prayer>
– English and Ukrainian

Bernadette Mandrusiak, MDiv
Codirector Family and Life Ministries
Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Edmonton

The Myrrh-Bearing Women

By Cornelia Mary Bilinsky

The Holy Gospels tell us that the first to learn of the Resurrection were women, those who had followed Jesus and ministered to Him and His disciples. One can only imagine their sorrow as they witnessed the suffering and death of their beloved Master. This story explores the gamut of emotions that these women may have experienced on the first Easter morning.

It was still dark when Salome awoke. The darkness hung over her like a heavy mist. She felt it in her body too, the heaviness that comes from grief and too much weeping.

For a moment she couldn't understand why she felt so pained. Then she remembered. Quickly, she slipped out of bed and reached for her robes. She would have to dress in a hurry. The others would be arriving soon.

When she was ready, Salome checked over the vessels she had left near the door. The fragrance of myrrh accosted her nose, rekindling her anguish. When she and the other women had gathered to prepare the ointments, it had been a cathartic experience. As they mixed the spices and oils, their tears had flowed freely, giving vent to their sorrow and at the same time strengthening their resolve. There was nothing they could do to change what had happened, but *this*—this was something they *could* do... *would* do. They would make sure their beloved friend was laid to rest with all the proper burial rites.

Vessels in hand, Salome stepped outdoors. There was just the faintest glow of pink light on the horizon. The sparrows in the garden were awake, noisily chirping a welcome to the new day. Suddenly Salome was overcome by a feeling of resentment. Jesus was dead. Gone forever. She had seen where they had laid His lifeless body. How could the birds go on singing like this, as if nothing had happened? But just as quickly, the feeling passed, replaced by anxiety over what had to be done. Mary Magdalene and the other women were already approaching, heads bent, conversing in hushed tones.

"Shalom!" She called out, alerting them to her presence.

"Ah, there you are!" Mary Magdalene kissed Salome on the cheek. "I see you have the ointments."

"I do," said Salome, as she distributed the vessels. "Shall we go?"

Mournfully the women started on their way toward the outskirts of the city. Salome was unable to erase



Cornelia Mary Bilinsky

the images plaguing her mind... *Jesus, His body scourged and swollen, trudging painfully uphill, the heavy cross tearing into His shoulder, His scalp bleeding profusely beneath a crown of thorns.* Like the other women, she had been a follower, ministering to Jesus and His disciples. She had followed Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, and just two days ago, she had followed Him all the way to Golgotha. She had watched the nails driven into His flesh. She had watched Him die. "*Do not weep for me,*" He had said. "*Weep for yourselves and for your children.*" How could she not weep for Him? What had Jesus done to deserve this cruel punishment? He had given them only love, joy, and hope. It was all so very wrong.

Mary, the mother of James, made an attempt at conversation.

"It was good of Nicodemus to give us the spices. It's a shame there wasn't enough time to do a proper anointing before Jesus was placed in the tomb."

"Well, the Sabbath was upon us," Mary Magdalene responded. "But now we will do what we must do."

Salome felt anxiety building up inside her. "How are we going to do this?" She blurted out, "Who's going to remove the stone for us? It was sealed tight."

"Perhaps the guards will help us," suggested Mary.

"But what if they are not allowed to open the tomb?" wondered Joanna.

"And our own men are nowhere to be seen," Mary Magdalene shook her head despondently. "Peter, Andrew, and all the others... his best friends, and they're hiding somewhere!"

There was nothing more to be said so the women continued their way in silence.

When they reached Golgotha, the sun was already peeking over the horizon.

"Where exactly is the tomb?" asked Joanna. She had not been present at the hasty burial.

Salome shaded her eyes from the ascending light and scanned the area.

“Over there! In that garden!” she cried. “I think I see someone there. Do you think maybe Peter has come, or one of the others?”

The women broke into a run. When they reached the spot, they stopped still and gaped in utter amazement. The great stone had been rolled away from the tomb! There was no sign of Peter or any of the other disciples.

Mary Magdalene ran to the tomb and peered inside. “Oh no! He’s gone!” she cried, her voice breaking. “Someone has taken him away!” Sobbing, she retreated to another part of the garden.

Salome turned to the others. *What now?* she gestured.

“Are you looking for Jesus of Nazareth?” a quiet voice startled the women. Sitting on a boulder was a young man, a stranger, dressed in a shining white robe, a soft glow around his head. How odd it was that they had not seen him before!

“Jesus is not here,” said the young man. “He is risen,



13th century icon of the myrrh-bearers

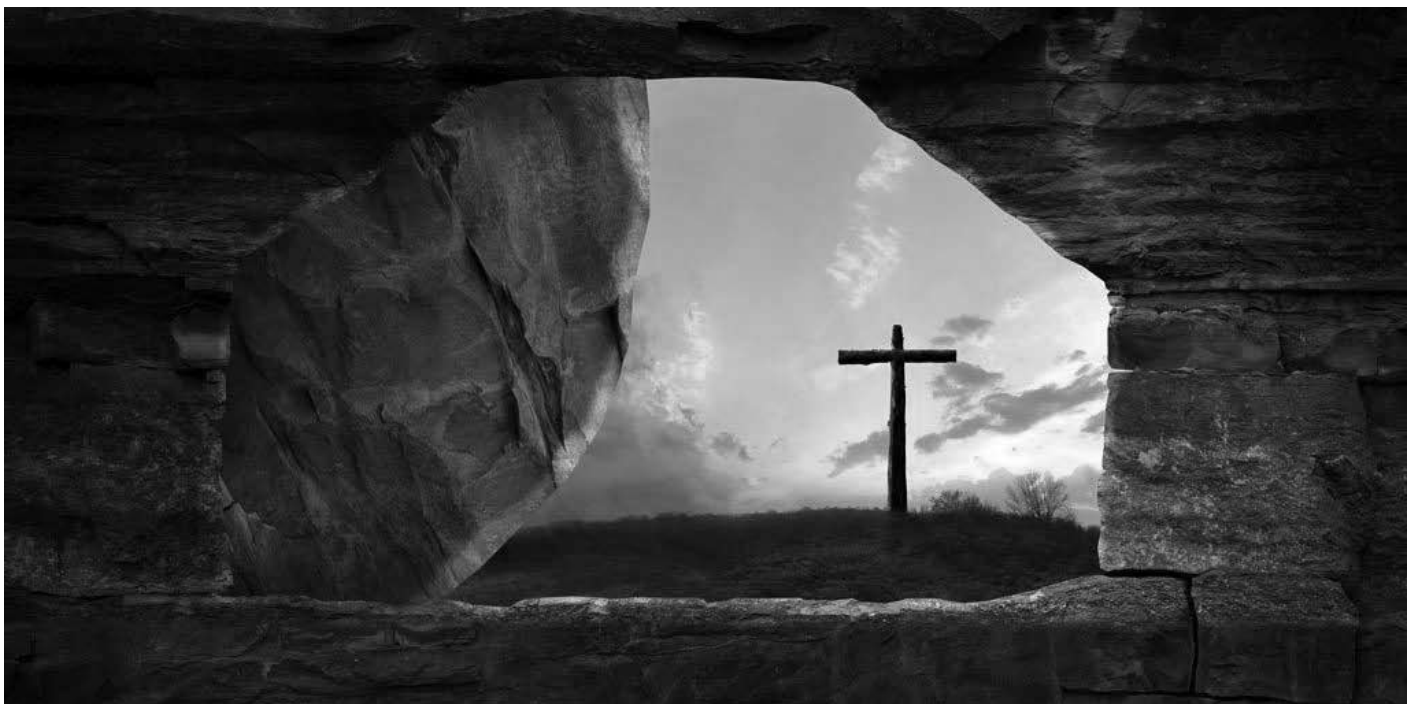
just as he said he would. Look!” He pointed to the burial linens, which were neatly rolled up inside the tomb. “Go now and tell his disciples!”

Terrified and confused, the women turned and began to run. Salome’s heart was all aflutter, the stranger’s words echoing in her ears. *He is risen!* Could it be that Jesus was alive! That was impossible! But, she realized, the tomb was empty!

“Wait!” she called to the others. The women stopped

and looked around. By now, the sun had completely risen, illumining the world in beautiful morning light. The sky was bluer than blue and the leaves of the trees were greener than green. But there was something else too. Salome felt it in the very depths of her being. *Peace.* Peace had descended on her soul... the kind of peace she had felt before whenever she had found herself in the presence of Jesus. *He is near,* she thought. Suddenly, Salome believed... believed without a doubt that what the messenger had said was true. Jesus was risen!

“He is alive! I just know it!” she cried, her voice full of joy. “Let’s go tell Peter!”



Ukraine's Victory is a Victory for the World

By Oksana Bashuk Hepburn

THERE IS NOTHING IN THE WORLD LIKE UKRAINE.

For two years it's been standing against Russia's claim of being the "2nd best army in the world"—in reality, only 2nd best in Ukraine! The whole world is watching. Many are helping. The most important job now is Ukraine's victory.

I *admire* Ukraine, its president, the military headed by General Valeryj Zaluzhny, and its outstanding people.

I *admire* the friends and allies helping Ukraine, like Canada. It has contributed over 2 billion dollars. It is not a gift. Mostly it pays for Canadian military and medical services, equipment, and training. Canada benefits tremendously, chiefly because it gets to know Russia, our chief enemy, firsthand.

Many small countries like Holland, the Scandinavians, and Baltic States contribute well above their size. They know Russia is bad news. It worms its way into societies, contaminates them with propaganda, and bribes to spread hate.

I *fear* the terrorist gang in the Kremlin. It's the only term to describe a government that breaks international laws that are supposed to ensure the world's peace and stability. This terrorist gang creates hell just because it wants to!

I *fear* how it corrupts politics even those in the United States. And listen to the anti-Ukraine language of Canada's Conservative Party. When and why has it turned against helping Ukraine? Its leader must apologize and come to his senses or lose sane people's votes. Anti-Ukrainianism is as discriminatory as antisemitism. Unacceptable!

It's scary to think that if Ukraine does not get enough support to win against Russia, some 300 years of Western civilization will be lost to a globally emerging gangster rule. The consequences are unthinkable for the entire world. Putin and the other dictators will be strengthened. They will trample international law and advance on all democracies.

Already Russia's propaganda—its war of words—promotes falsely that Ukraine is not a country; that it and the USA started the war and that Russia's security is threatened. It lies, denies that it kills, injures, rapes, imprisons, kidnaps people, abducts babies and children, and destroys homes and lives.

Yet it has the nerve to claim that it wants peace and Ukraine is preventing that.

Yes, it does! But not that "peace" that's needed; rather, a piece of Ukraine, then other pieces of Europe like Moldova, or the Baltic States. Then pieces of Africa, Asia, Latin America, even Canada. It already states

that the Arctic is Russian!

There's a lot to fear. But my *hope* is stronger than my fear.

I *hope* that by the time you're reading this America has provided Ukraine with "whatever it takes" to win. That Ukraine, the largest country in Europe, is or nearly is a member of the European Union. That Canada and all friends and allies have tightened sanctions and aren't letting their companies sell parts to Russia's war machine to kill our brothers and sisters.

Above all, I *hope* that Ukrainians living in occupied territories aren't conscripted into Russia's army to kill their own. It's against international law and makes Russia a war criminal. So does the theft of children. Once in Russia they are forced to hate their own with songs like "Putin is our father, Russia our mother".

I *hope* the war has ended and the invader is paying for the mess it's created. The turnaround to peace only needs Ukraine's victory. And Russia's already losing. It's time to start treating it as such.



COURTESY PHOTO



Recently, Luxembourg showed the world how it's done. At an international conference its representative told Russia's foreign minister, Lavrov, to stop lying and walked out. And Greece refused Russia's oil tankers passage in its Black Sea waters. And, at long last, a whole fleet of oligarchs' multimillion-dollar yachts will be seized.

We should urge Canada to behave similarly. For starters it needs to call in the Russian ambassador and tell him that it's a criminal act to steal Ukraine's children and force their parents to fight on the Russian side. Then ask him to reduce his staff, and declare Russia a terrorist state as the petition from a Saskatchewan MP states. (Please see petition link below.) *Most* people still know right from wrong. Still, because of Russia's propaganda, it diminishes our ability to do so. Each decision against what is right moves us towards normalizing evil.

That's what the Olympics are doing. The world's youths are competing with representatives of a genocide state that has murdered some 300 of Ukraine's Olympians. No amount of rationalization about "no Russian flags" changes that, but our values shift towards acceptance of kids playing with killers. The shift allows the criminal to continue his war as there's no reason to change. Russia wins!

It's time to stop the bloody aggressor with a victory for Ukraine. The alternative is Ruskij Mir, the return to the USSR that Putin is pushing. It will impact us all and then, God help us!

You can help Ukraine by signing the petition for Canada to declare Russia a terrorist state like North Korea, Iran, and Hamas. Please open this link:

<https://www.ourcommons.ca/petitions/en/Petition/Details?Petition=e-4631>

We don't fight with bullets, but we win with words!

Oksana Bashuk Hepburn served for 13 years as the editor of *Nasha Doroha*. She writes about Ukraine's aspirations to be a modern sovereign state by writing to the international press. Please google her name to read more.

For those keen to learn more about the war from Ukraine's sources, please visit The Kyiv Independent at <https://kyivindependent.com> and The Kyiv Post at <https://www.kyivpost.com>.

Reflections on Two Years of War in Ukraine

By Maria Rypan

This heartbreaking topic is not easy to write about. In my heart I believe Ukraine will be victorious—it **must win!** We have truth on our side! But why is it taking so long?

I cannot believe how much evil there is out there, and I try to stay away from too much negative news. I cannot comprehend the twisting of facts; the stealing of our history. (Rus' people were central to 9th to 10th century state formation from which Ukraine—a term for borderland—descends. Rus' was baptized by St. Volodymyr the Great in 988. Muscoviya originated in 1263. In 1721 the Rus' name was swiped, and Muscovy evolved into the Russian Empire until its dissolution in 1917.) Make no mistake—these are two very different people and cultures. We are **not brothers!**

The attempts to eradicate the beautiful Ukrainian language and culture, the brainwashing of zombified masses who believe language does not matter, hurts. **The Ukrainian language matters!** Why else would they be trying to eradicate it? I cannot believe the lies delivered by certain media and social media outlets; they spin bizarre tales. Therefore, I choose to eliminate access to such falsehoods by blocking and avoiding them.

I choose to share positive, upbeat messages of support for the Ukrainian Armed Forces who are defending Ukraine. As we matter-of-factly go about our daily tasks, I like to highlight valiant volunteers and humanitarian aid triumphs. I show how Ukrainian Catholic parishes work in their communities, especially concerning religious feasts and their observances. I pass along little-known historical facts about Ukraine, highlight the

culture, and show how resilient the people are by creating some very original art and events.

Our brains can only process one thought at a time. I choose to keep it positive and believe in peace. This requires work and fervent prayer.

For **prayer**, I encourage everyone to tune in daily to "Вєрвиця єднає" (The Rosary Unites) on ZhyveTV. Every day a different parish takes turns leading the recitation of the rosary at 8:00 pm (20:00) Kyiv time. ZhyveTV is the official network of our Church which directly transmits "The Rosary" and streams it on YouTube for all Ukrainians in the world to pray the rosary together for peace. Immerse yourself in this prayer and believe in its power!

For those of us outside of Ukraine, here's the **work** portion: contribute funds to back the defenders with shipments of supplies. Support organizations who provide humanitarian aid to the good people who are actively working on the ground to make a difference. Send necessary items as required, help refugees, and promote peace on the informational front.

In preparation for this reflection on war in Ukraine, I asked two fellow UCWLC members from my branch to share their thoughts about the second year of war in Ukraine. Each one prepared such a thoughtful essay; I asked the editor of our Eparchial *Obizhnyk* newsletter to print them in their entirety in Ukrainian along with my translation for all readers to understand.

Nika Goutor, President of St. Demetrius UCWLC, is passionate about Ukraine and reflected on "96 Weeks of War—Ukraine Struggles." ▶

“What Christmas will come to our compatriots in Ukraine? In the country where martial law was introduced, it is trying with all its might, for the second year in a row, to protect its borders from Russian invaders. The cost is incredibly high, it’s the lives of Ukrainian defenders. How will Ukraine welcome the New Year 2024, where the streets are illuminated by rocket attacks, and children cry in fear from the sounds of sirens? When will the war end and victorious peace we all wish for finally come...?”

Nika’s “heart is crushed by a bitter sense of guilt. Guilt for all of us who live in peace and tranquility, although with compassion, but watch the events from afar. Guilt for the collective impotence of the civilized world, unable to stop the terrible destructive power of the war of aggression... People are fighting for the right to live in their free state.”

Like most Ukrainians in the diaspora, she prays “daily for the victory of Ukraine and helps with her share in this struggle.” In Nika’s opinion, “the most important thing today is the need to unite our efforts and prevent Ukraine’s war against Russian aggression from becoming commonplace for the world. Remember this long-term struggle is extremely exhausting for the entire Ukrainian society. The help of Western countries is vital for the victory of Ukraine, as is the support of the Ukrainian diaspora. Active informational support is important—our appeals are to the government structures of Canada and to the population. We demand the delivery of truthful information about the situation in Ukraine and the inhumane crimes of the Russian army. Wherever we are, we must speak the truth about Ukraine and the heroism of the Ukrainian people.”

Tetyana Tkachuk, our newest UCWLC member since September 2023, experienced “the first days of the Muscovite invasion. Fear and anxiety not only for yourself and your family and friends, [but] fear for the country. Can this really be happening? Confusion, helplessness, loneliness... Feelings changed continuously. The news was horrifying with its brutality. So much destruction, violence, murder, rape, and hatred brought to us by our enemies. How to forget it? How to forgive? The understanding came by itself: one must act, do something. And we saw in one moment. We united in a single rush against the enemy. Volunteers stood in queues near the military commissariats, no one wanted to be left out, everyone wanted to contribute to the fight against the enemy. They wove nets around the clock, collected funds, sent medicine, food, and clothes to the front. Everyone did what they could. And the enemy’s expectation of an instant victory failed.”

She wrote, “However, the trials did not stop for us. Yes, in a short time we became stronger than ever before, more durable, more resilient. Despite the fact that hatred for the enemy grew, we began to support each other more, learned to love our neighbour and love God more. It has been a long time since a prayer so sincerely flowed from people’s lips not only for their lives and for their loved ones, but for every soldier, military medic, for the fate of our long-suffering Ukraine. We understood: God is there where it is most difficult. Military chaplains joined forces with the defenders. And the people who defend their country with a prayer on their lips cannot be doomed to defeat.

“It’s a fact: the war affected each one differently. Millions of people have been forced to leave their homes and look for a place to start living anew.” Tetyana shared her trials and tribulations about leaving Ukraine to join her daughter in Canada. She “didn’t dare leave right away. Everything was so frightening for me: a foreign country, absolute ignorance of the language, people, customs, complete material dependence...”

However, once she arrived (in Canada), the next day she went to St. Demetrius the Great Martyr Church to offer gratitude for the successful trip. Thanks to the “kindness and understanding the church community showed,” Tetyana became an active member of the community. She volunteers, helps with varenyky-making, assists the needy. She joined the St. Demetrius branch of UCWLC in September. “It was with great pleasure and responsibility that I started volunteering at the Ukrainian Canadian Care Centre. Canada accepted me as a native. I attended free courses to learn English, received financial and social support from the country’s government. The powerful Ukrainian diaspora is attentive and shows support to every newly-arrived Ukrainian. The fear gradually disappeared for me, but thoughts and anxiety about Ukraine are constant.”

Tetyana writes, “My thoughts are in Ukraine. And these thoughts replace each other. Now we are more united than ever and more than ever we realize the importance of everyone’s contribution to victory... No one knows for sure what will happen after the war. But it is still worth dreaming and working towards the realization of dreams.”

Nika writes, “I know that my country will stand up, rise to its full height and loudly say: ‘Glory to Ukraine!’ And the whole world will answer: ‘Glory to the heroes!’”

May God bless Ukraine with peace, and fill the hearts of Ukrainians with joy, faith, and hope.

Maria Rypan, member of St. Demetrius Branch of UCWLC

Ukrainian Immigration Stories Through the Eyes of Displaced Young People

The students of the Ukrainian program at Bethlehem Catholic High School, Saskatoon, under the supervision of their teacher, Viktoriia Marko, have launched a project with the aim of collecting and publishing stories of high school Ukrainians of our Catholic school division (Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools) who arrived from different parts of Ukraine due to the full-scale invasion of Russia. They want to show how the war impacted them personally as well as their families; how they adapted to Canadian society; and how the war brought about immediate kindness and generosity from Saskatoon's people. As well, they want to show where our Lord is in all of this. Some stories

are simple, some are more tragic, but they believe that each of them is unique and guided by God. It will be a bilingual book with both Ukrainian and English versions of each story. This book will be a valuable treasure and legacy for future generations, shared to us by young Ukrainians—witnesses of this horrible war.

This article presents to you a simple, long (but filled with grace) journey of a 14-year-old girl, her two sisters, and her parents from the western part of Ukraine to Saskatoon. Pray for us!

The English version of this article will be published in the summer 2024 issue of *Nasha Doroha*.

Я, чотирнадцятирічна дівчина з України, ділюся з Вами своєю розповіддю про мій шлях до Канади.

Двадцять четверте лютого, о п'ятій ранку, в мою країну прийшла війна. Москальська ворожнеча ввірвалась в межі наших кордонів і розпочала свій бій. Холодний піт перейшовся до п'яток після звуку першої ракети, яку я почула крізь свій сон. Я вискочила з під теплої ковдри і в страху виглянула у вікно. За ним все було тихо. Я подумала, що це був насправді сон, бо після телевізійних новин та соцмереж не так й наснитись може. Я знову поринула в сон. Однак, другий звук російської ракети незабарився. Різко розплющивши очі, до останнього невірячи, я зрозуміла, що це реальність. Не довго думаючи, я побігла до кімнати своїх батьків. Коли я відкрила двері і побачила маму і тата, мені стало трішки спокійніше. Я побачила в очах мами п'ятисекундний страх. Однак, все ж таки ми знали, що Бог завжди поруч з нами. Він для нас був великою підтримкою та

опорою на той час. Трішки заспокоївшись, я повернулась у свою кімнату. В моїй голові пролунало питання: "Ми йдемо сьогодні в школу, чи ні?". Не роздумуючи, я взяла телефон і відкрила групу нашого 6-го класу у вайбері. Там побачила сотні повідомлень від моїх друзів. У всіх була паніка. Тисячі відео про війну було «запощено» в різні соціальні мережі. Нас було повідомлено, що школу відмінили. Ще пару днів ми сиділи вдома, обдумуючи все і надіючись, що ось-ось все закінчиться. Однак, все що нам залишалося робити, це чекати на новини і молитись. Кожного дня в темній, на всяк випадок заштореній кімнаті, ми сиділи і чули, як над нашим селом літали військові гелікоптери. Було страшно виходити на вулицю. Навіть собаку запустити в хату було лячно, бо хто знає, що могло б статися в ту секунду. Я все ж таки переборола себе і швидко вибігала з будинку, знаючи, що моєю цуценяті страшно також.

Напочатку березня 2022 року, батьки нас повідомили, що татові зателефонувала сім'я з Німеччини

і запропонувала перечекати війну в них. Я спершу дуже зраділа, що ми будемо в безпеці. Та не довго я була рада. Тато сказав, що вони відвезуть мене і ще двох моїх сестер туди, а самі ненадовго повернуться, щоб закінчити всі справи. Нас буде опікувати інша, чужа для нас сім'я. Я почала плакати. Я казала, що не хочу їхати нікуди без батьків, що не хочу залишати друзів, школу, собаку, що не хочу жити в іншій сім'ї, де абсолютно все чуже і не моє. Та все вже було вирішено і дороги назад не було. Тато одразу погодився відвезти нас, щоб ми не бачили цих жахів. Мені це не подобалось і було дуже страшно. Заспокоювали мене слова мами, коли вона казала, що скоро вона нас забере додому після двох, а може і трьох місяців весни. Тоді я прийняла все це і погодилась їхати.

Сьомого березня в мого тата день народження. Автобус, яким ми мали їхати спершу в Польщу, був зареєстрований саме на цей день. Зранку ми з мамою поїхали у місто. Там ми востаннє заїхали до неї на роботу. Вона працювала головним лікарем швидкої

допомоги. Поки ми чекали на маму, я уявляла, як ми приїдемо додому після цих двох-трьох місяців і все буде гаразд, жажіття війни закінчатся. Ми повернулися додому, спакували валізи. Від'їзд мав бути о першій годині дня. В останні секунди перед виходом, я думала, чи варто брати свій скейтборд. Я вирішила його залишити, ми ж все одно мали б повернутись. Коли ми вийшли на вулицю, моєї собаки ніде не було. Я навіть не змогла з нею попрощатись.

Ми прибули на автобусну зупинку і чекали на автобус. Я ледве стримувала сльози і вдавала, що я ще мала дитина, яка не розуміла, що зараз коїться. Побачивши в маминих очах сльози, я розвернулася спиною до батьків, і дозволила своїм очам просльозитись. Автобус прибув. Мене посадили біля шістнадцятирічного хлопчини, який без батьків втік за кордон. Від нього дуже смерділо сигаретами. Сидіти біля нього було неможливо, тому я час від часу мінялася з мамою місцями. Але знаючи, що їй ще важче сидіти біля нього, я терпіла і сиділа більшість часу поряд з ним. Ми вирушили в дорогу. Я пам'ятаю, як я махала татові через вікно; як він вдавав, що все гаразд, але насправді було помітно, що йому також не легко. Мене відволікало те, що ми цілу дорогу до Польщі розмовляли з сім'єю, яка сиділа позаду нас. Ми дуже довго стояли на блокпостах. Два дні і дві ночі. Люди вже просто виходили на вулицю і гуляли, ходили по їжу, а дехто цілий час спав. Діти з пледів будували халабуду, бігали по автобусі, грали на планшетах. І наче все було весело. На деякий час я вже й забула, куди ми їдемо і чому. Дорослі почали розмовляти про війну. Незважаючи,

що я відволікалась у планшеті, який мені подарували на день народження два місяці до війни, ця розмова викликала у мене сльози. Це помітили дорослі і закінчили розмову.

На митниці ми простояли не довго, може три години, під час яких я спала. Перетнувши кордон, ми попрямували до Варшави. Там нас зустрів друг моєї старшої сестри, який забрав нас у місто Вроцлав, де він жив. Прибули ми о третій ночі. Під гарячою водою в душі, яка лилась із дивного крану, я роздумувала над тим, куди я попала, і за що мені це все. Втоплена, швидко заснула.

Я нічого не пам'ятаю що було в Польщі. Однак пам'ятаю, що настрої в мене покращився і я вже відчувала захоплення, а не страх, від того, що ми будемо жити в іншій сім'ї. Там ми пробули одну ніч.

В Німеччину нас мала відвезти машиною мамина знайома, пані Анна. Пізно ввечері ми збирали всі свої речі і помалу виходили на вулицю. Мене знову охопив страх. Я не хотіла їхати. Мені хотілось повернути декілька годин назад, щоб знову не боятись.

Ми вирушили в дорогу. Я розуміла, що з кожною секундою ставало все ближче і ближче до того моменту, коли ми зустрінемося з нашою новою сім'єю. Залишалось 15 хв до приїзду, я стала дуже хвилюватись. "Невже не можна повернути все назад?", "Невже це реальність?" — я запитувала себе. Я знала, що сім'я розмовляє англійською. Мене це трішки заспокоювало, бо до того моменту, коли зустрілась з ними, я думала, що знаю англійську ідеально.

Наша опікунка, пані Емма, зустріла нас на вулиці і запросила до хати. У хаті нас чекала дівчинка мого віку. Вона протягнула

руку і сказала своє ім'я. Я у відповідь зробила те саме. Нам показали наші кімнати і ми пішли розкладати речі.

Я сіла на ліжко. Обнімаючи свої коліна, з комком в горлі, оточена страхом, роздумувала над тим, що через день моя мама поїде, і буде ще страшніше жити ці три місяці. Перший день не був дуже важким. Коли мама поїхала назад в Україну, стало важче. Ми повинні були самі давати собі раду, повинні були навчитись жити із зовсім чужими для нас людьми.

Перший місяць ми тільки реєструвались в школу, робили різні документи, привикали до чужих людей. Другий місяць ми добре здружились з дітьми. Ми бігали в магазин за морозивом, катались на велосипедах, грали в відео ігри кожен вечір, вчилися спілкуватись, кожен день ходили в школу. І так за два місяці звикли до всього. Не помітили як ці місяці збігли.

Одного ранку, я заплітала волосся своїй молодшій сестрі у ванній кімнаті. Ми побачили, як хтось тихенько пробує відкрити двері, ми дуже злякались. Як двері відкрились, ми побачили там маму і тата! Я застрибнула на тата, поки сестра обнімала маму. Ми не вірили своїм очам. Батьки не попередили нас, бо хотіли зробити нам сюрприз! Ми були дуже раді. Я побігла на перший поверх повідомити мою «другу маму», яка піклувалась про нас весь час. Вона вже стояла з великою посмішкою, чекаючи побачити нашу реакцію. Я побігла знову наверх, я не могла знайти собі спокійне місце, радість аж «зашкалювала». Однак, мені декого все ж таки не вистачало. Це була моя собака. На жаль, вона залишилась в Україні. Батьки не змогли її перевезти за кордон.



Наступного місяця мамі довелось знову поїхати в Україну. Мені, звісно, було сумно, але тато був поруч, тому я не плакала. Я молилась кожен день за маму, щоб вона повернулась жива і здорова.

В середині травня, ми несподівано отримали візи в Канаду. З того моменту я зрозуміла, що в Україну ми не повернемось більше. Нове життя для нас розпочалось ще з моменту, як ми перетнули кордон. Час збіг швидко. Мама повернулась в Німеччину. Ми з пані Еммою чекали на її автобус. Коли мама вийшла з автобуса, я кинулась їй обнімати. Мама і пані Емма заплакали. Я обійняла їх обох, взяла одну із сумок і пішла в машину.

Настав час прощатися із нашою новою сім'єю. Я дуже не хотіла їхати. Я плакала. Однак, я дуже була рада, що навчилась жити з чужими людьми. Це було випробовування, в якому провадив мене Господь. Я навчилась більше англійської, я стала сильнішою і комунікабельнішою, я

побачила частину світу.

Другого червня ми виїхали з Німеччини в Італію до бабусі. Ми їхали через Францію, Швейцарію, де споглядали надзвичайну красу природи. Два тижні перед виїздом до Канади ми змогли ще побути з бабусяю, яку бачили дуже рідко.

Після двох тижнів настав час вирушати в Канаду. Політ літаком був вперше у моєму житті. Мої враження були неперевершеними. Летіли ми через Калгарі в Саскатун. Нас зустріла сім'я з українським корінням, вони відвезли нас до нового дому.

Канадійця на ім'я Стівен, в якого ми мали жити, ми цілком не знали. Ще в Німеччині, одного дня, коли мама відкрила Святе Письмо, їй кинулось в очі речення, яке дуже їй промовило до серця. Я не пам'ятаю конкретно як звучав стих, однак воно говорило, що це не ті люди, які повинні нам допомогти. Оразу після того, тато на фейсбуці знаходить пост, який каже, що один

канадієць хоче прийняти до себе українську сім'ю і допомогти їм тут. Мама одразу йому написала і він нас вже чекав.

Я була досить смілива ще коли ми вийшли з машини. Але як тільки ми подзвонили в дверний дзвінок і відкрилися двері, мене знову вкрила хвиля страху. Стівен запросив нас всередину, показав всю хату і сказав почуватися як вдома. Я дуже сильно соромилась його, не звикла ще зовсім до Канади, до нього, і до всього, що було навколо. Ціле літо ми старалися з ним знайти спільну мову. Стівен нас возив по всьому місту, розважав, старався дати нам все як найкраще, поки батьки були зайняті документами та іншими різними довготривалими справами. Ми здали тест на рівень англійської мови та пішли у школу. Там я знайшла багато друзів, однак не відразу.

Роки 2022-2023 йшли дуже довго. Від кожного я вчилася чогось нового. Дуже багато друзів втратила і знайшла. Дуже багато пережила хвилювань і тривоги. Також дуже багато чого змінило моє життя і саму мене. Улітку 2023-го року я подорожувала, пробувала щось нове, приймала важливі рішення. Це вчило мене життю. Зараз я у 9-му класі. У школі я знайшла ще більше друзів. Я навчилась бути відкритою і вчитись від інших. Однак, найбільшою для мене підтримкою був Бог. Без Нього в мене б нічого не вийшло і моя сім'я не була б зараз в Канаді. Я молилась і це мені дуже допомагало.

Порада, яку я б дала людям, які хочуть приїхати в Канаду, або в будь-яку іншу країну, або ж досягнути чогось: віддайте все в руки Бога і довіртеся Йому, бо молитва і довіра відіграє велику роль в житті.



The Art of Religious Embroidery

By **Karen Lemiski**, Head Curator of the Basilian Fathers Museum

Initially inspired by a faith in the power of protective symbols, embroidery has existed in Ukraine since prehistoric times. As with designs of early pysanky, many of the early motifs originated in Asia and entered the Dni-pro River valley through migration, trade, and war. The symbolic ornamentation was incorporated into woven cloth either during the weaving process or later embroidery. Among the oldest pieces of embroidered cloth is a veil from the Church of the Tithes (destroyed by the Mongols in 1240).

Yet following the adoption of Christianity in Rus' and the new influence of the Byzantine Empire, these early symbols were modified and transformed into more complicated patterns. This led to a differentiation of pictorial religious embroidery from folk embroidery. Not only were there new subjects, but religious embroidery had a different character than folk embroidery: while the stitches of the latter are counted by threads (*chysnytsi*), pictorial embroidery uses a more complicated

technique of flat stitches to create an image.

While the cities of Kyiv, Lviv, and Brody became centres for the embroidery trade (*haftiarstvo*), producing cloth for the Cossack *starshyna* and the nobility, religious embroidery evolved separately in the monasteries, developing into a form of art along with iconography and church architecture. In addition to the shroud (*plashchanytsia*) carried in Holy Week processions, embroidered icons had a portability that made them ideal for holding services near battlefields and for evangelical missions into pagan territories. Entire iconostases were created from cloth that could be rolled up for transport.

Despite its own history of adorning vestments with saints and biblical figures, Western Europe recognized the beauty of Byzantine-style religious embroidery. The only medieval vestment in the Treasury Museum of St. Peter's Basilica is a sakkos, the gift of the Metropolitan of Kyiv, Isidore (1385-1463), to Pope Eugene IV. The piece features embroidery with gold, silver, and coloured threads on blue silk: on the front, Christ Enthroned is encircled by angels and saints, with kings, patriarchs, bishops, monks, and nuns at His feet; the Transfiguration and Ascension are depicted on the back.

Pictorial religious embroidery emerged in western Canada with the arrival of the Sisters Servants of Mary Immaculate, who sewed and embroidered vestments, altar cloths, and processional banners for the earliest parishes. Their mastery of this ancient art



is perhaps best seen in the images of the central medallion on the back of the priest's outer vestment (phelonion), typically Christ or Mary. In some examples, the fabric behind the embroidery is first painted and then highlighted with lines of embroidery, just enough to give the impression of a fully embroidered figure. Other pieces are solidly embroidered, with a

blending of colours and stitches to create shading and detail.

Similarly, the elaborate decoration on processional banners is a complete composition, much like an embroidered painting: a central figure of Christ or Mary, the Eucharist, or a patron saint is united with symbols such as grapes (sacrifice), wheat (prosperity), and flowers (an attribute of Mary).

The Art of Religious Embroidery is currently on display at the Basilian Fathers Museum (Mundare, AB). For more information, contact the curator: klemiski01@gmail.com or 780-764-3887.

Basilian Fathers Museum
5335 Sawchuk Street,
Mundare, AB T0B 3H0
Tel: 780-764-3887

Hours: Monday–Friday; 10 am–4 pm

Embroidery and the Ukraine Connection

By Joyce Sirski-Howell

The war in Ukraine bolstered an interest in embroidery. Five UCWLC members from three provinces met via Zoom for a *sorochka* class. The organizer of the class, Sarah Pedlow, resides in Amsterdam, but the instructor and her translator live in Lviv. Over six months (January 2023 to July 2023) Hanna Rohatynska presented six classes on Zoom. How did this come to be?

For me, it began in June 2018. I read an article in the newsletter from the San Francisco School of Needlework & Design, written by Sarah Pedlow. Sarah described her experience of working on an independent embroidery study in Lviv with Hanna and a translator in 2017. This caught my eye because, at that time, my husband and I were travelling to Ukraine on a special tour. We would be in Lviv for several days. I emailed Sarah and she sent a note to Hanna that I was interested in meeting her. Hanna replied to me, and in mid-September 2018 I spent about four hours with her, needing no translator.

Time has passed and Sarah continues to hold a special interest in ethnic embroidery. Please visit her



website <https://threadwritten.com>. You will get an idea of what and how Sarah is doing to preserve ethnic embroideries, including Ukrainian embroidery! I reconnected with Sarah when I registered for her two-hour Borshchiv stitch class in December 2020, via Zoom.

Shortly after the war started on February 24, 2022, Sarah felt that Ukrainian embroidery classes could be a means to support the ladies with whom she studied in Ukraine. On March 17, 2022, I was one of over 600 people signed up for “Stitch Gathering for Ukraine.” Organized by Sarah, supported by “Tatter” in New York, and taught by Hanna in Lviv, the project raised \$16,000 US which was donated to

two organizations. We stitched an 8-point star using the *hlad* stitch. In issue #80 of *Nasha Doroha* there is an article on St. Nicholas Parish, Edmonton, who did their own amulet project for Ukraine, “180 Amulets for the Ukrainian Military” page 37, by Joyce Chrunik-Rudiak.

Stitchers from many countries wanted more embroidery classes! The April 24, 2022, workshop taught by Hanna featured a floral motif chosen from an embroidered *plakhta* from the Chernihiv region. It is the largest piece in the photo. On November 12, 2023, the workshop focused on the stitch seen on the ornate *sorochky* from Ternopil. Note the stylized flowers in the sample piece. Besides showing us

how to execute the stitch, our instructor, Iryna Slipetska, shared with us the effects of the war on her, those she knew, and all of Ukraine. So touching was the experience with Iryna, that

participants wanted more than a two-hour class. That is how the “*sorochka*” class came to be!

As of writing this in Fall of 2023, the five of us are at various stages of progress. One is finished,

yet one hasn’t even started (Joyce) due to several other commitments. Khrystia Habrowych, UCWLC member in Ottawa, is also sharing her journey in stitching a traditional *sorochka*.

The Beauty of Embroidery

By Khrystia Habrowych, UCWLC Ottawa

Whenever I’ve admired old Ukrainian *sorochky* I’ve always wondered: How exactly were they made? A hundred years ago, how did a Ukrainian woman measure? Did she have a pattern? How did she adapt to the fact that hand loomed linen was narrow?

When I saw that Sarah Pedlow of *Threadwritten* was offering an online six-session workshop to create a traditional *sorochka*, I decided to enroll. She would begin with how to take measurements to draft a pattern, and ending with hand stitching the pieces together. I had taken the workshops (mentioned by Joyce) organized by Sarah that were taught by Hanna Rohatynska, of the *Mayster-nia Magdy Dzvin* in Lviv, so I knew the instruction would be of the highest quality.

There was one lesson a month from January to June 2023. Several days before each lesson, participants received a PDF with detailed material for the upcoming lesson, which was recorded, with the recording sent out a few days later. This allowed us to refer to it as often as we needed. I won’t say how many times I watched the segment

“turning a corner while doing *merzhenka*”!

Hanna and her translator, Mariana K, patiently guided us through all the steps of making a traditional “*khlopianka*” cut *sorochka*—one of the oldest and simplest cuts for a traditional Ukrainian *sorochka*. A *khlopianka* could be made to fit a man, woman, or child. We started with taking our measurements for the body piece, sleeves, and neck-hole/neckline. That part involved a mathematical

formula! After drafting a pattern and sewing a muslin to check the fit and make any necessary adjustments to our pattern, we cut out our *sorochka* pieces from our chosen fabric. We learned to cut along a fabric thread, and then mark out with sewing thread the centre line of the body, shoulder line, neckline, neckline slit, and seam allowances. These markings aided in correct placement of the embroidery and later in sewing all the pieces together.

Hanna provided us with a choice of two embroidery patterns, both taken from antique Bukovinian *sorochky*. She also gave us suggestions on how to choose appropriate fabric and thread. I decided to make what we called the “Yellow Sorochka,” a geometric design stitched in pink and yellow with some blue accents, because it was stitched using DMC Perle Cotton (which I wanted to try working with) and because it incorporated a number of different techniques. Some, such as satin stitch, backstitch, and *merzhenka* I already knew how to stitch, but others such as *circa* stitch, *prutyk* hemstitch, *prutyk* joining stitch, buttonhole zigzag stitch, and



blanket stitch for finishing the neckline slit edges were new to me.

Once a month over Zoom, the participants met with Sarah, Hanna, and Mariana for a two-hour lesson, working our way through the course outline that Hanna prepared. The lesson was in Ukrainian, with Mariana providing the translation for the non-Ukrainian speakers. Usually, Hanna and Mariana joined us from their homes in Lviv, but for a few classes, because of the issues with electricity in Ukraine due to the Russian bombing of infrastructure, they taught from the studio at the Maysternia Magdy Dzvin and the class time had to be adjusted so that they could get home before curfew. There was ample time to ask questions and Hanna was always willing to demonstrate something several times to make sure everyone understood. The



question that was always asked of Hanna and Mariana at the end of each class was, “How are you doing?” and we listened to them talk about what life is like in Lviv because of the war. More than once I logged out of Zoom with tears in my eyes.

Our course finished in June, and my *sorochka* is nearing completion.

All the embroidery is finished and I am now hand stitching the pieces together. I am enjoying the process of stitching it together by hand, although it is time-consuming, I feel it gives me greater control over what I am doing, as opposed to sewing on a machine. Hopefully, by the time you are reading this it will be completely finished.

I am so grateful that I was able to take this course. I learned so much. I have a binder full of resources that I’ll be able to use over and over again. I have a much greater understanding and appreciation of the Ukrainian *sorochka* and I hope to pass on what I have learned to others. At this time when the enemy is trying to destroy our beautiful, rich culture, it’s more important than ever for all of us to learn as much as we can about it, to cherish it and protect it and share it.



Photo at right is a sample page of the book (inset).

If you recognize this embroidery book, you will recall seeing it in the 1980s. It is one of few Ukrainian embroidery books published in Canada. On page 8 “From the Editor” it is written, “**In order to introduce those interested in understanding the fundamental features of embroidery from the various regions of Ukraine, the New Horizons Seniors’ Group, *Our Heritage and Tradition*, which is affiliated with the Ukrainian Catholic Women’s League of Canada, Eparchy of Toronto, decided to publish a collection of photographs depicting examples of embroidery and *rushnyky*...**”

Pages 17-34 depict colour samplers in designs from 18 regions in Ukraine. Four pages illustrate church vestments, while pages 43-56 cover *rushnyky*. The book is bilingual, published in 1982, and is complete at 68 pages. It is a timely embroidery book to revisit.



Nanaimo UCWLC Cookbook

By Joyce Sirski-Howell



Many may recall the article written in *Nasha Doroha* #76 Spring 2022, “From Nova Scotia to Vancouver Island,” which is about two cookbooks, one being from Nanaimo. The Nanaimo Branch was one of the first branches to respond to the National “Save the Cookbooks” project. President Donna Kaminsky wrote in her letter, “I wanted to make

sure ours was included in the collection. Unfortunately, most of whom were involved in the making of this cookbook are no longer around.” I received the wonderful gift of their cookbook, and its documentation, in December 2021.

According to Donna, the cookbook, although not dated, was published in 1985. It has 60 pages of recipes, with extra pages, from a to h. These extra pages contain useful information not found in new cookbooks: charts for oven temperatures, for baking, roasts, and turkeys; instructions for cooking vegetables, and candy making; plus, handy hints, ingredients substitutions, and herbs for flavour.

The cookbook may be small, but the recipes collected nearly 40 years ago are as significant today as then. Pages 1-12 feature recipes for Christmas and Easter.

Seven separate pages illustrate 45 advertisements from businesses who supported the branch’s cookbook printing. For history buffs, what a source for businesses that existed at the time!

The cookbook was published in Chicago, Illinois, by Women’s Clubs Publishing Co., Inc. Like the publisher North American Press, which was responsible for Vegreville’s first cookbook (see issue #73 Spring 2021), were there travelling salesmen for the Chicago company? Might someone have an answer?

Searching the company name, according to www.bizapedia.com, the company dissolved September 21, 1989, after 34 years in business.

To date, the *Cooking with Ukrainian CWLC Nanaimo, British Columbia* is the only documented British Columbia UCWLC or parish cookbook. I am aware of the Eparchial cookbook, first printed in 1983. However, having

received no documentation and cookbook, it will not be possible to feature it in a future column. However, the “Save the Cookbooks” project is on-going.

Donna Kaminsky offered two recipes to feature from this cookbook. Both are from founding members. I realize one has been featured, but who among us doesn’t enjoy trying more than one version? The recipes: page 11, pampushky; page 18-19, spring beet borsch.

■ Pampushky

Leona Osowetski’s recipe

3 pkgs. yeast	4 eggs
1 tsp. sugar	1 tsp. salt
2 c. lukewarm water	10 c. flour
1 c. scalded milk	1 c. warm honey
¼ c. butter or margarine	¾ c. oil

Dissolve 1 tsp. of sugar in 1 cup lukewarm water, add yeast and let stand 10 minutes in a warm place. In a large bowl, place the flour, making a well in the middle. In another bowl beat the eggs, oil, melted butter, honey, milk, balance of water, and salt. Add this to the flour. Add yeast and mix. Knead in bowl for 10 minutes. This dough should be soft. Cover and let rise in a warm place until double in bulk. Punch down, knead a few times and let rise again. Take small egg-sized pieces of dough, flatten each or roll ½ inch thick. Place a generous portion of the filling in the centre, bring edges together and press to seal securely. All edges must be free of filling. Place pampushky on a lightly floured board and let rise one hour. Deep fry in oil for about 3 minutes, turning them to brown evenly on both sides. Drain on absorbent paper.

Poppy Seed Filling

1 c. ground poppy seed	1 tsp. grated lemon rind
⅓ c. honey	1 egg white

Mix poppy seeds, honey, and lemon rind in a small bowl. Beat the egg white until stiff and fold into the mixture.

Prune Filling

1 lb. prunes	1 tbsp. lemon juice	½ c. sugar
½ tsp. cinnamon	½ c. nuts	

Cook prunes until tender. If pitted, remove pit and chop. Add remaining ingredients and mix well. ▶

■ Spring Beet Borsch

Tania Wagner's recipe

Donna wrote that this "recipe was basically used for ALL UCWLC/church functions until Tania retired from doing the cooking and has unfortunately passed on." Donna added that this is her base recipe, but omits the potatoes; she uses a 796 ml can of diced tomatoes instead of canned tomatoes. Instead of shredding cabbage, Donna buys coleslaw mix (way easier) and fries it with the onions.

4 medium beets with tops	3 tbsp. butter
2 medium carrots, diced	1 tin canned tomatoes
3 large potatoes	1 tsp. sugar
1 small head of cabbage, shredded	salt and pepper to taste
½ c. sweet cream	chopped dill
1 medium onion, chopped	(about a handful)
	sour cream

Clean beets and chop with tops. Put in pot. Cover with meat stock or plain water (about 7 cups). Add carrots, potatoes, cabbage and simmer ¾ hour until tender. In a frying pan, add the butter and chopped onion, fry until soft but not brown. Add the tin of tomatoes and simmer for 10 minutes or so. Add salt, pepper and sugar to the borsch. Taste to suit. Add the sweet cream and turn off the heat. Add the dill when ready to be served. If desired, add a teaspoon of sour cream to each bowl of borsch.

In case you did not hear or read this:

On July 1, 2022, UNESCO declared "borscht" to be added to the list of Intangible Cultural Heritage in need of urgent safekeeping. For further information, search "UNESCO borscht."

*** Fun fact follow-up on poppyseed chiffon cake:

Just for fun I checked this, because Edmonton Eparchy had the chiffon cake competition, with an article about it in the Spring, 2023 *Nasha Doroha*. A September 24, 2023, posting on Facebook "We are Ukrainian" caught my eye. "What kind of frosting do you like to use on a poppyseed chiffon cake?" Not until November 19 did I read the comments. My rough calculations--19 or so different preferences, with lemon glaze mentioned 9 times, no icing 6, 3 for peanut butter icing and for cream cheese. Quite a number used instant pudding mixes with cool whip or whipping cream.



2023 Recipient of the Mary Dyma Religious Studies Scholarship

ISABELLA SHEPTAK is a fourth-year student in the Faculty of Arts at the University of Alberta. She is completing her major in anthropology and minor in Catholic theology. She is a parishioner of St. Basil the Great Parish, Edmonton, where she is a cantor and a member of the UCWLC. In May of 2023, she served as the Youth Representative of Canada at the World Union of Catholic Women's Organization's General Assembly in Assisi, Italy. She works at the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village Museum and at the Alberta Council for the Ukrainian Arts, and in her free time volunteers with Big Brothers Big Sisters and sings in Нове Життя choir.

"People pray for the cake. Then God gives them the batter, eggs, oil, icing, a pan & an oven, then they get frustrated & leave the kitchen." Let that sink in. Sometimes you have everything right in front of you, but how bad do you want it?



“BUT...”: DO WE BRING EXCUSES OR SERVICE TO OUR BRANCH?

It seems that every club, no matter how large or small, faces some of the same challenges in the normal course of carrying out its projects. Those challenges come in the form of comments or actions that can quickly make or break enthusiasm and momentum.

Have you heard or seen some of them?

“**BUT we always do it that way!**” is one of the quickest comments to stall a project. It shows an unwillingness to try anything new, and an unwillingness to listen to new ideas. The poor member who made a suggestion and got that response will likely never speak up again.

Lucky we all have volunteers to spare and won't miss a few if they get discouraged and drop out.

“**BUT nobody's ever complained before!**” This is the second-quickest way to shoot down a suggestion. This is another comment that makes whoever had a suggestion feel like they are complaining in front of their fellow members, when maybe they were just thinking of a new way (and possibly better way) to do something. I have seen this happen myself: it humiliated the person who dared to make a comment, and she solved the problem by never offering a suggestion again.

Lucky we all have volunteers to spare and won't miss a few if they get discouraged and drop out.

“**BUT why aren't we doing this—?**” This comment will hopefully elicit the swift reply, “Are you willing to do it?” Whether in a club or

a family, if you aren't willing to try to help to make something better, it might be better to say nothing rather than criticize. People who have all kinds of comments but won't step forward to act on them are contributing nothing to a project except raising resentment.

Lucky we all have volunteers to spare and won't miss a few if they get discouraged and drop out.

“**BUT why...?**” A group doesn't always have to agree on everything, but they have to *talk* about everything. Openly. Some groups have the “mumblers”—those members who won't say anything outright to the group but have plenty to say as they lean towards their neighbour in the next chair and hold their agenda sheet over their lips, as if this hides the fact that they are talking out of turn.

Lucky we all have volunteers to spare and won't miss a few if they get discouraged and drop out.

I'm joking with the above line, of course. We all know that every member, every volunteer, is valuable. And yes, indeed, we would miss them very much if they dropped out! How can we stop that from happening?

This leads us to the next points: our meeting “to do” list.

DO be respectful of whoever is running the meeting. This means not talking when she is talking, raising your hand to ask a question, asking questions courteously, and listening to the answers given. And yes, thinking before you speak. In the heat of a moment, it is easy to

sound negative, stubborn, accusatory or angry, but it's very difficult to take those words back. Pause and say a Hail Mary before you speak on an issue that may be volatile.

DO follow meeting etiquette. The time to voice your opinion or idea is during the discussion *before* a vote is taken. If you say nothing, then vote, then expect executive to listen to your concerns after the fact because you don't like the outcome of the vote, you are wasting everyone's time. This is another disrespectful action. By all means express your concerns, but at the proper time; and be gracious and cooperative even if the vote is not what you hoped for.

DO listen and consider ideas. There is almost always more than just one way to get something done. Just because it has always been done a certain way doesn't mean it is what necessarily works best now. Think about new ideas, talk about them, but don't shoot them down without considering them first. Learn to talk calmly as a group and try to always respect both the wisdom of age and the exuberance of youth.

DO be welcoming. It is only natural to sit down at a meeting with people we know and feel comfortable with. But every member of any club should attempt to be mindful of being so closed into a circle that it excludes other members. The meeting is not “going for coffee with girlfriends”; it is a group of people with a common interest gathering together, and everyone who attends should feel free to sit down anywhere and be welcomed.

DO work together. We are there to accomplish something that God wants us to do. Are we doing everything we can to make that happen? Whether it is a bake sale or a perogy bee or prayer service, every member is called to do their best and work as a team together. Rather than look for excuses of why something won't work, try to find good ways to *make* it work.

As Catholic ladies, we belong to our branch to try and do pleasing work for God and for our church or community. Keeping this goal in mind will help us avoid small and petty problems that might arise, such as those listed above, where we

focus on ourselves or our reluctance to change and grow, or work with certain people, rather than finding the best possible way to accomplish a task. We each have unique and wonderful God-given talents that are to be used for the service of others.

Mark 10:45 tells us that “the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve”, and if we have any question of this, all we have to do is think about Jesus’ life which was full of service to the poor, the sick, and those suffering in any way. Right up to the last, on Holy Thursday, He *served* as He washed the disciples’ feet. Then on Good Friday, Jesus *served* with the ultimate gift to us,

His very life, so that we would be saved. The sign of the cross reminds us daily of that ultimate sacrifice. Let us make the sign of the cross often, so that we remember often.

We are called to serve, too, in ways that God gives to each of us. Working together with our branch, we can accomplish great and wonderful things. But we must realize and remind ourselves that “it is not about us.” Rather it is about serving God and being an example and inspiration to others of that faithful service in action.

Blessings to you.

By Debbie Hayward



AMULETS FOR UKRAINIAN MILITARY

Upon reading the spring issue of *Nasha DoroHa* and the article about amulets, it was only natural that our UCWLC branch at the Dormition of the Mother of God Ukrainian Catholic church in Mississauga took this project upon ourselves. We had just started an embroidery club for recent refugees to meet members and enjoy some *vyshytia*.

Once word got out, we had material and threads donated to this worthy project. What started out as “Let’s see if we can make 200” ended up being 400 crosses embroidered

over the span of five months. As one of our refugee participants said, “Just making 200 was not enough with so many soldiers on the front.” We met weekly to embroider, chat, and restock. Each cross was hand finished around the edges by one of our members.

The printed laminated prayers were donated by Orest and Oksana Pucak of Trident Printing in memory of their fathers who fought for Ukraine during WWII.

Our pastor Father Tom Hrywna suggested the crosses and prayers be blessed on October 1st, the Feast Day of the Protection of the Theotokos. After the Liturgy, the

crosses were blessed by Father Volodymyr Nesterenko. Many of the ladies who embroidered the crosses were present as well as Orest Pucak. We felt grateful that we were able to send messages to our soldiers. We hope to embroider more crosses over time.

All 400 crosses have been distributed to the front lines. We cannot express the feelings that overcame us when we saw the pictures of the crosses and prayers in soldiers’ hands.

God bless and keep all our soldiers safe.

Daria Twerdochlib

WYNARD SACRED HEART UCWLC CELEBRATES THEIR 55TH ANNIVERSARY

On Sunday, May 28, 2023, the Sacred Heart UCWLC celebrated their 55th anniversary. The celebration started with pinning of corsages on all members and the arrival of members from Gold Acres, Foam Lake, and special guests from Yorkton. A group photo was taken, and membership then joined in the reciting of the rosary.

A UCWLC prayers service was held for deceased members opening with the UCWLC hymn "Always Protect Us" and the lighting of candles. Then, 113 names of deceased members (from 1968 to 2024) was read aloud. Divine Liturgy was celebrated with the congregation and officiated by Fr. Jeffery Stephaniuk.

At the luncheon, master of ceremonies Merle Wasylynka welcomed all guests, giving a toast to all UCWLC members present celebrating the 55th anniversary. Fr. Jeffery gave blessings. The buffet luncheon was enjoyed by 55 guests and a program where special service year pins and recognitions were presented.

Sacred Heart UCWLC President Jackie Babey gave a short history of the organization with special recognition to five charter members, with a brief history and a certificate of appreciation for their 55 years of service. Charter members are: Lena Latoski, Alice Yarocki, Helen Shular, Alexandra Lazorko, Sally Lalach. There was a special introduction of our oldest member, Mary Lipka, who is 101 years old. Mary received a special

congratulations and a 50-year service pin, which was a great honour.

Other people receiving 50-year pins were Bernice Petryshen and Jackie Babey; the 40-year pin, Audrey Bodnar; and Mariann Lalach received her 20-year pin. Special recognition went to Anne Lalach for 45



Guest speaker Doreen Rathgeber, newly-elected Eparchial president of Yorkton, SK.



UCWLC 55th Anniversary Wynyard Sacred Heart Branch, May 28, 2023.

Front row: Charter member Alice Yarocki, Centenarian Mary Lipka, Charter member Lena Latoski.

Second row: Mary Bartoszewski, Bonnie Bodnarchuk, Bernice Petryshen, Branch Pres. Jackie Babey, Charter member Helen Shular, Charter member Sally Lalach, Nancy Pitzel. Back row: Charter member Sandra Lazorko, Anne Lalach,

new member Shirley Yewsiuk, Merle Wasylynka, Daria Stephaniuk, Yvonne Chorney, Linda Karakochuk, new member Theresa Stolarchuk, Mariann Lalach, Beverly Bzdel. **Missing from photo:** Audrey Bodnar, Bernadette Bzdel, Rose Bzdel, Shirley Wasyliw.

years of service; Linda Karakochuk, 35 years; Yvonne Chorney, 25 years; and Shirley Wasyliw for 15 years.

Two new members were welcomed into the organization and received their membership pin: Shirley Yewsiuk and Theresa Stolarchuk who were affiliated through our sister parish of Krasne. We were honoured to have guests Doreen Rathgeber and Elizabeth Zahayko of Yorkton attend. The guest speaker for the celebration was newly elected Eparchial President Doreen Rathgeber. Anne Zaluski made a presentation to the UCWLC from St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church.



Charter members Sally Lalach and Sandra Lazorko cutting the anniversary cake.

A beautifully decorated anniversary cake was served, and the crowd enjoyed musical entertainment by Natalia Stephaniuk on the violin. It was an exceptional, inspirational, and consoling presentation.

Submitted by Jackie Babey, President of Sacred Heart UCWLC, Wynyard, SK

UCWLC ST. GEORGE'S BRANCH OF PRINCE ALBERT CELEBRATES 70 YEARS



Celebration of 70th anniversary of UCWLC St. George's Branch, Prince Albert, SK. Incoming President Iris Cannon, Past President of 7 years, Gail Smith.

The Prince Albert Branch of the UCWLC celebrated their 70th anniversary on November 30, 2023, with a Divine Liturgy, led by Fr. Andrei Kachur, Spiritual Advisor for the group. That was followed by a catered lunch, prepared by Shanigan's Coffee & Dessert Bar, held in the Knights of Columbus Hall. There was a lot of visiting and catching up with old friends. A special anniversary cake to commemorate the occasion was enjoyed by all. A very short program consisted of passing forward past president and president pins, and the following brief history of the branch, read by Iris Cannon.

In 1910 the women of the community were not a structured group but would join with neighbours and organize services in their homes. These women would raise money by baking and selling bread and other food to help in the fundraising efforts for their first church. In 1941, as their numbers grew, they adopted the name Women's Association of St. Ol'ha. Then on December 27, 1953, after a visit from the eparchial representatives, the members unanimously voted to reorganize their group into the Ukrainian Catholic Women's League, UCWL, now incorporated as The Ukrainian Catholic Women's League of Canada, UCWLC. Down through the years, our branch

has focused not only on the aims of UCWLC, but also on the needs of the parish. When the new church was built, the women's league managed to donate \$23,416.83, a substantial amount in 1962. Then in 1963 they also paid \$8,200 for the painting of the church. Throughout the years, this branch has provided for the needs of our parish and community, not only monetarily, but also giving of their time, that is, bringing comfort to shut-in parishioners with visits, and delivering traditional Easter and Christmas baskets to the elderly members. Scholarships are donated to students at the Catholic schools and donations are made to the Ukrainian Museum in Saskatoon and many other charities in need of assistance. Today, our UCWLC branch is still a very vibrant group of women who love to meet regularly and plan their activities to work together for a common goal. (Taken from Ukrainian Catholic Parish of St. George Prince Albert, Saskatchewan Our Story, 1920-2020.)

Fr. Andrei concluded the afternoon with acknowledgement and thanks to the ladies for all their hard work and dedication and hours and hours of volunteerism to the parish and the community.

Submitted by Iris Cannon

RECOGNITION OF 65-YEAR MEMBERSHIP IN UCWLC



In 2024, Branch #2 of the UCWLC at St. George Church in Oshawa, ON, will be celebrating 65 years of existence. ANNE MELNYCHUK has been a member of UCWLC for all those years and more. In recognition of this, in November of 2023, Anne was proudly presented with a bouquet of flowers and a special UCWLC

65-year membership pin.

As a young married woman, Anne first joined the UCWLC branch in Sudbury, ON. There, she was instrumental in starting up a “Junior” UCWLC group. One of the main achievements of this group was to set up a Ukrainian sadochok, a pre-school program for the youngest members of the parish.

In 1964 Anne and her husband, Bill, moved to Oshawa, where she immediately joined Branch #2. While raising her family of five children and caring for her household, Anne dedicated much time to the work of UCWLC, serving as President for a while and working on various committees throughout the years. Anne was proud to be a member and appreciated the contribution of Branch #2 to the life of the community as well as to her own life and that of her family.

Branch #2 of the UCWLC at St. George Church in Oshawa had been founded in 1959. Just as in Sudbury, the aim of this newly-established second branch at the parish was to attract the participation of younger women, many of whom were English-speaking. The new members brought fresh ideas and an abundance of energy into the works and aims of UCWLC. Recognizing the need to involve their children in the life of the community, members assumed the responsibility for organizing events for youth and children. Today, 65 years later, Branch #2 continues to foster the Lviv Ukrainian Dance Ensemble and to spearhead events such as Pysanka-Writing Day, Baba’s Christmas Bazaar, Solemn Holy Communion Brunch, and the Visit of St. Nicholas.

These days, Anne Melnychuk is mostly confined to her home due to health issues. She recollects that she always enjoyed working with other members and looked forward to meetings and events. She contributes whenever she can with donations and baked goods, and keeps in touch through phone calls and emails.

All members of UCWLC wish Anne good health, peace, and joy for many years. Mnohaya Lita!

SISTER LAURA PROKOP, SSMI

*“Come and listen, all who honour God,
And I will tell you what God has done for me.” Psalm 66:16*

ALL THAT I AM, all that I have received, is a gift. My life, my faith, my family, my friends, my religious vocation, all are gifts. Even the opportunity to share my story is a gift from our gracious and generous God. In sharing my story, may it bring to mind, the many and wonderful ways that God is working in your lives, as well.



As a child, I had the good fortune of attending Sacred Heart Academy in Yorkton, SK, where most of my teachers were Sisters Servants of Mary Immaculate. I was a day student and was envious of the resident students who had the opportunity to attend daily Divine Liturgy. However, I discovered quickly that I, too, could attend Liturgy daily because I lived only two blocks away from our church. I had a choice of 6:30 a.m. or 8:00 a.m. I chose the 6:30 Liturgy in order to have time to come home for breakfast and then go to school.

What stood out for me about the Sisters was that they were always so cheerful. Their faces simply

radiated joy. I often wondered about their secret. I was actually surprised when Sister Superior one day met me in the corridor and said to me, “Elizabeth, it’s written all over you that you will be a sister.” I did not think that was possible. My response was, “Me? Of all people!”

God continued to pursue me in ways I did not expect. The very month when I began High School and was living away from home, my mother was brought into the city. She had suffered a mental breakdown. She did not recognize any of her children. That, to the family, was the greatest pain—Mother had always been the heart of our home. Although this grieved the whole family, it seemed to hit me the hardest—not that the others loved Mother less, but they were married and received support and strength from their spouses. My younger brother was too young to understand the impact of a mental breakdown. I felt the pain most severely because I seemed to be so utterly alone. Until then, Mother had always been my strength and support in every distressing situation and now she no longer recognized me. I recall how I reacted—I locked myself in the bedroom, cried my heart out, and kept repeating over and over again, “Why, why my mother?”

It was difficult to rationalize at this time, but I knew one thing for certain: we had to pray. I wanted to see a priest and ask for a Divine Liturgy to be offered for Mother. Early the next morning, I went to church. When I gave the stipend to Father and told him the intention, he immediately wanted to know the seriousness of Mother’s illness. I burst out crying. It was so painful to explain. However, through much sobbing I managed to relate it to him and ended off feeling sorry for myself by saying, “It happened right on my birthday.”

All the while, Father listened compassionately and empathized with me deeply. Through him, I sensed the understanding and tenderness of a loving God. Slowly and thoughtfully, he said to me, “Elizabeth, take it as a birthday gift from God and be grateful for it. This is how God treats those whom He wishes to draw close to Himself. You may be sure that God loves you very much.” I was perplexed by those words, thinking, what a way to draw me to Godself! Although I couldn’t understand, I believed Father because I loved and respected him as a man of God. I knew that he wasn’t saying it just to make me feel good but because this is what he believed and lived.

Many beautiful things began to happen. We began to pray together as a family for Mother’s recovery. We experienced the power of prayer. Mother was back with us within a month, much to the surprise of doctors and

friends. It was during that month that I bargained with the Lord. I told God that I will do anything He asks of me—even give myself completely to God alone, regardless of how hard it may be—as long as He gives my mother health of mind.

Seeing that the Lord carried out His part of the bargain, I had to do likewise. Little did I know at the time that it was God that carried out both ends of the deal, because myself I can do nothing.

I entered the Novitiate after completing grade 10. Soon after I began Novitiate, I knew that this was the life for me. At my Clothing Day (six months after entering), my mother told me that ever since she had her first child she always prayed that God would choose at least one for His service. Her prayers were answered.

Another powerful connection with my mother occurred one summer when she was visiting me in Toronto. Mom and I were outside, enjoying the beautiful surroundings at our Provincial Home and I was sharing with Mom many of my joys and experiences of religious life. After listening to me and seeing how much in love with life I was, she turned to me and said, “You just about weren’t.” I was puzzled by that comment. She went on to say that prior to my birth she had a tumour in her womb which should have been removed. The doctor told her that another pregnancy would be a risk for her. She was scheduled for a hysterectomy. The day before surgery, she visited a friend who advised her not to go for surgery but to pray. Both prayed. Mother did not go for surgery. The tumour disappeared. I was born. Five years later, my brother was born. The pregnancies did not harm Mom in the least. After hearing Mom’s story, I was all the more grateful for the gift of life.

My 61 years as a Sisters Servant of Mary Immaculate have been most fulfilling. I have discovered through my vow of obedience that I have gifts galore simply by going where I am sent. In community, I have worked as a seamstress, sewing church vestments, as an educator, as a religion consultant in the rural areas of Alberta, principal at Immaculate Heart of Mary School in Winnipeg, parish work in Australia and in Calgary. There certainly have been bumps along the journey, but there is always Someone who sees me through. I experience God’s gentle and quiet presence in those who love me and support me, no matter what.

Paraphrasing the words of the Psalmist, I could say, thank you for listening to some of the things that God has done for me. There are countless more God incidents that fill my heart with utmost gratitude.

З нагоди святкування 105 річниці з Дня смерті Блаженної Йосафати — співзасновниці Згромадження Сестер Служebниць Непорочної Діви Марії

Сестра Ореста Сворац, СНДМ

В Церкві також зустрічаються герої, які не є завойовниками чужих територій у лицарських походах чи війнах, лише переможці особистого „его”, що розіп’яли свої тіла з Христом, а духом покорили висоти християнської досконалості безмежною любов’ю і вдячністю Богові, терпеливістю і смиренною покорою та життям у послуші. Висміяні в очах світу, вони зложили свою велич і хвалу у ранах Христа. Пожежі, вогонь і звуки їхньої битви віддзеркалювали

ехо подій, покритих блиском любові до розп’ятого Христа.

„... Ми бо стали видовищем і світові, й ангелам, і людям... нас ображають, а ми благословляємо, нас гонять, а ми терпимо, ... ми мов те сміття світу стали...” (1 Кор. 4, 9-13). Ідучи за волею Божою, життя героїв прославилося чудесами багатьох зцілень, тому Церква ставить їм нечувані пам’ятники. Це пам’ятники не з каменю, чи мармуру — це живі пам’ятники палаючих любов’ю сердець, які горять величчю і красою дітей Церкви.

Одним з таких пам’ятників є монумент пошани, побудований у серцях почитателів співзасновниці Згромадження Сестер Служebниць Непорочної Діви Марії — Блаженної Сестри Йосафати Гордашевської. В цьому році, а саме 7 квітня, святкуватимемо 105-річницю з дня смерті Блаженної, дату якої вона сама передбачила три тижні наперед. З нагоди важливої події, хотіла б поділитися з читачами журналу про дві героїчні чесноти Сестри Йосафати, які чітко виражалися в останні

Поема про чесноту вдячності Бл. Йосафати

Голос серця — дивна мудрості дорога,
Що пробуджує зі сну і людей веде до Бога,
Відкриває очі правди на світло Христа
І скріплює віру в терпіннях життя.

Згідно з послухом — волі Творця
У посвяті Йосафата прямувала до кінця,
„все надіслане”, приймаючи „з цілого серця”
Вірила, що скарб принесе тиха жертва...

Невтомна молитва — Йосафати зір прекрасний,
І дар Божої Любові, як вогонь негасний —
Випромінював агонію — гірких мук Христа...
У її стражданнях, вірності — щодня!

Посідати Бога у безмежній чистоті
І **вдячно** втопитись в Його глибині,
У трепеті серця — надію гасити,
Єдиним бажанням у злуці з ним жити...

Ось світогляд Йосафати, як любити і прощати,
Як морально і духовно — народ піднімати,
В безконечних пробах — заздрості, інтриг
Зберігати людську гідність — правило для всіх!

Вдячність дозволяла допуст Божий розуміти,
До останньої хвилини себе не жаліти,
Віддаватись примхам і прагненням — вміло,
У смиренні довіряти — Йому душу й тіло.

Вдячність вимагала — Господа любити,
Так, як він достойний, — лиш Йому служити,
Великої досконалості набути внутрі,
Зростати в любові — у щастя джерелі!

Йосафата зрозуміла Божу доброту,
Що плила від милосердя, зроджувала чесноту —
Постійної **вдячності** — за безмірну допомогу,
За промінчик світла, що з’їдав тривогу!

Вдячність надихала дарами ділитись,
Не втрачати гумор, роздавати вчитись:
Радість і усмішку, жертвенну любов,
Там, де нема сенсу — дякувати знов!

За ясні хвилини у самотній час,
Як нестерпний біль вичерпав запас:
Енергії, стриманості, сили до життя,
Підтримки благала з **вдячністю** — вона.

Вдячність багатила в очах у Христа,
В спілкуванні виростала єдності мета,
Витривалість відкривала — правду про свій стан,
Могутність молитви і спасіння план.

Вдячність проявляла за квітку суху,
Що з Бразилії привезли для неї — одну,
Здивувалась витвором Божої руки,
Що в ній розмальовував красу чистоти.

роки її хворобливого життя і були б актуальним прикладом для використання християнами у сьогоднішній час — це чесноти терпеливості й вдячності.

Проживаючи у Львові, вже з 1914 року Сестра Йосафата почала відчувати біль у крижах і використовувала паличку при ходьбі. Під час встановлення помилкового діагнозу, вона терпіла нестерпний біль, часто непритомніючи, через проходження неправильної лікувальної терапії. Згодом був поставлений діагноз - туберкульоз кісток, який у той час не піддавався лікуванню. На плечах і стегні утворювалися нариви, які лікар прорізав, не вживаючи знеболювальних уколів, щоб випустити гній. Свідок, сестра Йосифа Делкевич,

розповідає: „Чи можна собі уявити який-то біль терпіла Сестра Йосафата при такій операції, яку лікар робив наживо, без ніяких обезболень. Сам лікар дивувався з її героїчної терпеливості”. Вона терпіла без нарікань, старалась не тривожити нікого без потреби й за найменшу послугу щиро дякувала. Страждала спокійно, мужньо, не підвищувала голосу з нетерпеливості, усміхаючись, говорила мало, та споглядала на хрест, не втрачаючи рівноваги у випробуваннях, бо поєднувала страшні болі з терпіннями Ісуса Христа. Вона оцінювала безмежні терпіння, як дар Божої любові, вміла смиренно приймати всі хрести з рук милосердного Ісуса і вважала це, як місію продовження Агонії Христа. Її тендітна

душа благала Божу Всемогутність: „Господи, забери мене з цього світу в тих літах, в яких я буду найкраще приготована!”

Аналізуючи чесноту терпеливості Блаженної Сестри Йосафати, можна спостерігати не тільки її надзвичайно важкі болі під час фізичних страждань, але також травми й духовні рани, спричинені людською заздрістю та недоброзичливістю Сестер, від яких хотілося б почути співчуття і правдиве розуміння життя у спільноті. Особливо трагічним випадком для неї була подвійна відмова у складанні довічних обітів. Чи можемо собі по-людськи уявити, що того, чого найбільше прагнула її душа, вона не отримує? У таких випадках переважно слабкі душі заломлюються,

Присутність Ісуса — спокій, мир вселяла,
Коли людська злоба справедливість продавала,
Молитва прослави з уст щиро бриніла,
Вдячність Йосафати — героїзму народ вчила.

Вдячність відкривала мужності дорогу,
Додавала сили й віри в перемогу,
Ревністю запалювала святі поривання,
Надихала Йосафату на свіжі змагання.

Коли Сестри обертали на простирлі хвору,
Куски тіла відпадали, як мили — „Небогу”!
Як треба любити, щоб не нарікати,
Щоб муки пекельні — даром Божим називати?

Як треба палати в вірності незламній,
Щоб покорою вмивались, наче в росі ранній,
Та прагнути тихих обіймів Христа,
Щоби поєднатись в Євхаристії — щодня!

І в ранах Христових гасити свій біль,
В гарячій молитві досягати ціль,
Витирати сльози хусткою надії,
Сподіватись порятунку — в страшні буревії.

За обслугу Сестрам **дякувала** чемно,
Щоб не залишитись у боргу даремно.
Йосафата обіцяла в Ісуса благи,
Щоб кожна „святою” — могла позістати!

Вдячність вимагала старанно терпіти,
Всім, що Бог зсилає,— охоче радіти,
Спрагу проявляти лише за одним,
Як завжди тривати з Ісусом живим.

У молитві виростала **вдячність** і любов,
Серця їх єднала — Ісусова Кров...
Йосафата підносила очі до висот,
У небо злітав журавлиний рій чеснот..!

Яка школа мудрості необхідна у житті,
Щоби загубитись в Божій доброті?
Щоб наслідувати Йосафату у тайні Любові,
Правду відкривати у Христовім Слові?

І постійно **дякувати** Богу кожному мить,
Коли ллються сльози — ось, що вона вчить:
„На зло не здаватись ворогам лихим,
Бог терпіння перетворить на добро — усім!”

Як смиренно у молитві будемо згоряти
Та щоденно Богу **вдячність** проявляти,
То смуток й тривога — в спокій проросте
В Любові гарячій — серце спалахне!

С. Ореста Сворака, СНДМ

але не Сестра Йосафата, бо її велика душа міцніла і розвивалася не піддаючись зневірі. Вона покладалася на Боже Провидіння і з цілого серця дякувала за випробування, розуміючи що Бог все перетворить на добро!..

Дихаючи атмосферою віри, Блаженна Йосафата відкриває у своєму покликанні чесноту вдячності, усвідомлюючи, що все в житті залежить від безмежної милосердної Божої доброти! Вдячність — це почуття, що виникає на базі емоційної та раціональної оцінки того що відбувається, тобто визнання отриманого добра, уваги, послуги, добродійства на ділі. Сестра Йосафата була переконана у тому, що все, що Господь не зробив би для нас є радістю, тому Його доброту ми відтворимо

через особисту вдячність, яка робить нас подібними до Нього і відкриває Його милосердя для нас.

Сестра Йосифа Делкевич, перебуваючи в кімнаті з вмираючою Йосафатою, розказує, що вона попросила її читати книжку про життя святого Йосафата Кунцевича, а також молитися з нею. Після закінчення хвора чемно подякувала і бажаючи ще більше віддячитись за старанну послугу спитала: „А що маю попросити в Ісуса для Тебе коли я Його зустріну?“ Вона не хотіла залишатися перед сестрою із несплаченим боргом любові, бо знала що вже швидко наближається остання година життя. Упродовж короткої земної мандрівки, Блаженна Йосафата абсолютно за найменшу дрібничку була вдячна Богові, бо

її велика вдячність була результатом контемплативного глибокого єднання з Богом і Його святою волею. У її щоденнику знаходимо відповідні слова: „Вдячність допомагається, щоб я Тебе любила й тішилася, що Ти один щасливий і гідний тисячі сердець!“ У поемі „Про чесноту вдячності Блаженної Йосафати“ буде більше згадуватися за що саме вона щоденно дякувала Творцеві Всесвіту.

Отже, коли людина відкриває внутрішній світ і бачення того ким вона є і куди прямує, тоді може подолати своє „єго“ (самого себе з усім негативізмом), мужньо нести особистий хрест і його наслідки, терпеливо піддаватися Божій волі, щоб чинити подвиги любові серед ближніх та бути вдячному Богові за все, як Блаженна Йосафата.



ЛІГА УКРАЇНСЬКИХ КАТОЛИЦЬКИХ ЖІНОК КАНАДИ
Крайова Управа

UKRAINIAN CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE of CANADA
National Executive

A wonderful opportunity exists for our Ukrainian young people at the university level. The **Ukrainian Catholic Women's League of Canada National Executive** offers two scholarships to students enrolled in Ukrainian Language Studies and Religious Studies.

The Vera Buczynsky

Ukrainian Language Studies Scholarship

for **\$1,000** is offered to a person who is a member of a Ukrainian Catholic Church in Canada who is enrolled in Ukrainian Language Studies at the post-secondary level. Criteria and applications are available online at www.ucwlc.ca and can be submitted electronically to the:

Vera Buczynsky Ukrainian Language
Studies Scholarship Committee
ucwlcnationalscholarships@gmail.com

The Mary Dyma

Religious Studies Scholarship

for **\$1,000** is offered to a lay woman who is a member of a Ukrainian Catholic Church in Canada who is enrolled in Religious Studies at the graduate level. Criteria and applications are available online at www.ucwlc.ca and can be submitted electronically to the:

Mary Dyma Religious Studies
Scholarship Committee
ucwlcnationalscholarships@gmail.com

Deadline for receipt of completed applications is October 1.

“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

✠ Helen Trakalo



Helen Trakalo passed away at the Canora Hospital, Canora, SK, on June 18, 2023, at the age of 82 years. She was born on the family farm near Gilbert Plains, MB, December 31, 1940, to Michael and Anne (nee Juzwishyn) Chudobiak. At a young age, she moved to Dauphin, MB, to seek work. She waitressed in a restaurant where she met William Trakalo. They were married on October 9, 1961. Helen and William settled on the family farm north of Canora. They were blessed with four children. Helen raised four children while maintaining multiple gardens, sewing, crafting, giving haircuts, cooking delicious meals, canning, caring for livestock, chickens, and baking every type of baked good. She also worked in Canora at the Robinson's store, Kozy Kove, Tran's Restaurant, and as a cook at the Gateway Lodge. Her Ukrainian Catholic faith was a cornerstone of her life. She was active in Antoniowka, then Canora church. She was a member of the Ukrainian Catholic Women's League for 49 years and an

enthusiastic member of the perogy bee at church. She was instrumental in teaching young people how to make perogy dough and perogies. She spent many hours volunteering at the church hall. She was a very special person who will be deeply missed. *Vichnaya Pamyat — Вічна пам'ять — Eternal Memory.*

✠ Joyce Lucille Spelay



Joyce Lucille Spelay, wife of Michael Spelay, daughter of Mike and Mary Tulik, passed away November 11, 2022, at the age of 77.

She was born in Canora, SK, where she attended Monastyr School, Buchanan School, and Canora Composite School. She married Michael Spelay on October 10, 1964. Together they raised a family of five children. They spent their life mainly in Canora, involved in various community clubs. Joyce was active in softball, curling, bowling, and golf. She served on various committees: President of the aquatics club; Chairperson of the Starlites Precision Skating Club; Secretary

of the Canora UCWLC; Secretary of Sts. Peter and Paul Parish, and auditor for both the UCWLC and the parish.

She had many hobbies, including gardening, canning, sewing, cooking, baking, knitting, dancing, and travelling. She was a member of the Canora UCWLC for 20 years and often helped in the hall for Fall Suppers, banquets, and lunches. As well as being active in the community, Joyce also worked in retail, at the hospital, for the CIBC for 20 years, and at Gateway Coop for 10 years.

Joyce was diagnosed with cancer in 2020 and bravely fought the hard fight. She did not allow cancer to take away the joys of living. She enjoyed her family, her friends, and living life to the fullest.

Vichnaya Pamyat. Eternal Memory.

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.

Living As a Pro-Life Catholic Church Militant

By David Franko

Daily, we find ourselves immersed in a culture that embraces death at every stage of life, from the womb to the tomb—spanning issues of abortion; the harm inflicted upon children, men, and women; to the complex matter of euthanasia. Regrettably, the overwhelming majority of Christian Catholics, encompassing lay individuals, church administrators, leaders, as well as ordained priests and bishops, often remain conspicuously silent in confronting the encroachment of this culture of death. Many individuals express their concerns about these challenging times in private conversations with friends and family, yet hesitate to actively participate in public discourse or visibly demonstrate their faith to resist the pervasive influence of this deadly trend.

We as the Christian Catholic Church members are called to be engaged in the public square and not keep God's gift of faith to ourselves. "And He said to them, 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.'" (Mark 16:15, NKJV). St. Paul urges Timothy to speak the word in all circumstances, "Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching." (2 Timothy 4:2, NKJV)

The church militant refers to the church on earth struggling with sin and temptation and engaged in spiritual warfare with the world, the flesh, and the devil. Earth is the battleground, and all Catholic Christians are part of the church militant engaged in that spiritual battle whether we know it or not. St. Paul reminds us, "For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." (Ephesians 6:12, NKJV). The "weapon" of the church is the Word of God, "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." (Ephesians 6:17, NKJV). Furthermore, it is said "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ." (2 Corinthians 10:3-5, NKJV).

The laity, however, are given this special vocation: to make the Church present and fruitful in those places and

circumstances where it is only through them that she can become the salt of the earth (Lumen gentium 33).

Thus, every lay person, through those gifts given to him, is a witness and the living instrument of the missionary Church. "But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift." (Ephesians 4:7, NKJV).

A profound illustration of living and upholding God's faith is found in the Exodus narrative, particularly in Moses' relentless pursuit of the Jews' liberation from Pharaoh. The directive to "fight the good fight of the faith" is vividly exemplified as Moses, who in his quest for the release of the Jews, made not just one, but ten appeals to Pharaoh. Despite the formidable power wielded by Pharaoh, and after some prompting from God, Moses persisted in his efforts, repeatedly returning to plead for the liberation of the Jewish people. His unwavering determination eventually led to Pharaoh's agreement to release them, despite the inherent risks to Moses' own position.

This narrative prompts reflection on how we, too, can engage in the struggle for faith. It beckons us to consider contemporary moral dilemmas, such as abortion, euthanasia, and medically assisted death (MAID), which are deemed ethically acceptable in today's culture. How will we confront and grapple with these issues in a manner consistent with our faith? The story of Moses challenges us to reflect on our convictions and take principled stands, even when faced with powerful opposition, for the sake of upholding our faith and moral values.

An Example of Church Militant

Amanda Achtman is the creator of "Dying to Meet You," a project of cultural renewal to humanize the dialogue on suffering, death, meaning, and hope.

There were two events that came together at the same time that began to shape her desire to counter the culture of death that permeates Canada today. The first was when the Canadian government began to discuss the legalization of euthanasia for those whose deaths were "reasonably foreseeable" and the second was journeying with her grandfather, who was in his mid-90s. Amanda said that this time spent with her grandfather forged her character "and became one of the greatest gifts he ever gave me."

Amanda launched Dying to Meet You on August

1, 2023, in Calgary, AB. She said, “God has put on my heart two key objectives: the prevention of euthanasia and the encouragement of hope” and added that “the aim of this cultural project is to improve our cultural conversation and engagement around suffering, death, meaning, and hope through a mix of interviews, writing, videos, and events.”

In mid-August of 2023, she approached Bishop Willam McGrattan of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Calgary seeking to do her first open house event called “The Church as an Expert in Humanity.” The bishop responded enthusiastically. The daylong event featured a Ministry Hall of Exhibits, Afternoon Panels, and an Evening Program of Testimony and Catechesis. The open house happened in the morning and featured exhibits with 18 table displays of ministries throughout the Calgary diocese doing the best work on suffering, accompaniment, grief, and caregiving.

In the afternoon, there were three panel presentations. The first panel was titled “And We Will Be Changed.” The theme for this panel was to explore the topic of how we do not so much have a culture of death as we have death without culture. How can we bring cultural renewal to death and dying? This panel involved Catholics of diverse cultural backgrounds speaking about hospitality and accompaniment in their respective traditions. The panel included a Filipino diaconal candidate, a Ukrainian laywoman working with refugees, an elderly Indigenous woman who is a community leader, and an Iraqi Catholic priest.

The second panel discussion was called, “Tell Me About the Hour of Death,” during which participants heard from two doctors, a priest, and a longtime pastoral care worker. The focus of this discussion was on what it is like to bring Communion to the sick and what it is like to hear someone’s confession shortly before death? Panelists also explored the value of dying naturally rather than prematurely through euthanasia.

The third panel focused on papal documents pertaining to death, hope, and eternal life and was titled, “Unshakeable Things Will Remain.” Panelists explored John Paul II’s “Letter to the Elderly,” Benedict XVI’s encyclical on hope, *Spe Salvi*, and Pope Francis’ catechetical series on the meaning and value of old age.

The evening program included seven short testimonies by different speakers that were narratively framed as echoes of the Seven Last Words of Christ. Among the speakers were a privately sponsored Middle Eastern Christian refugee, a L’Arche core member who has a disability, a young father whose daughter only lived for 38 minutes and an elderly lady named



From May 2023 March for Life, Ottawa, ON.
PHOTO CREDIT: CAMPAIGN LIFE COALITION. USED WITH THEIR PERMISSION

Christine who got a tattoo in her eighties that says, “Don’t Euthanize Me.”

Amanda also produced a short film about Christine and her tattoo. You can watch it by visiting DontEuthanizeMe.com.

In addition to her work with the Dying to Meet You project, Achtman does ethics education and cultural engagement with Canadian Physicians for Life and works to promote the personalist tradition with the Hildebrand Project. She can be found and contacted at DyingToMeetYou.com.

UPCOMING CANADIAN PRO-LIFE SPRING EVENTS

40 DAYS FOR LIFE

<https://www.40daysforlife.com/en>

- 40 Days for Life is an internationally coordinated 40-day campaign that aims to end abortion locally through prayer and fasting, community outreach, and a peaceful all-day vigil in front of abortion businesses
- The next campaign will run during **Lent 2024 from February 14th to March 24th**
- Check their website to locate communities hosting these events and sign up to pray ▶

MARCH FOR LIFE

<https://marchforlife.ca>

- The national March for Life event, typically the largest annual protest on Parliament Hill, takes place in May to mark the Day of Infamy, when the 1969 omnibus bill passed under Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau, decriminalizing abortion. Pro-lifers rally in front of our Parliament building and march through downtown Ottawa, demanding that our elected representatives fight for the right to life of every human being
- The next March for Life will take place in Ottawa on **May 9, 2024**
- There are numerous provincial Marches for Life that will have a local life march in a number of major cities across Canada

- The local Marches for Life can be found by doing a web search for that particular province
- **The local life marches will be held the same day as the national event on May 9th**
- e.g., Alberta March for Life <https://albertamarchforlife.com/about>

David Franko is a member of St. Stephen Protomartyr Ukrainian Catholic Church in Calgary, Alberta. Currently, he is the Charity Director on the St. Stephen Parish Council, a member of the Social Mission Commission for the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Edmonton. Recently, he organized and facilitated a series of sessions on the Horizons of Hope: A Toolkit for Catholic Parishes on Palliative Care for the Edmonton Eparchy. He is married to his wife Arlene and has five adult children.

The Synodal Path of the Church and Its Service in Communion of Love

Submitted by Sr. Oresta Svorak

The synodal path was the main theme of the Synod of the UGCC held in 2022, with an emphasis on the “healing of wounds.” The Pontifical Synod in the Vatican concluded the topic “on synodality” (moving forward together) in October 2023. The word “synodality” (Greek) means “to go together” in love, while remaining sensitive to the needs of others: not to punish, but to heal. In order to evangelize, we must go together, creating communities, moving towards joint action, mutual thinking, and walking.

A joint journey at different levels (from local to universal) allows the Church to proclaim the Good News according to the mission for its growth as a synod under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Father says that “the Holy Spirit is the main protagonist of the synodal process, not us! He opens people and communities to listening; it is He who makes the dialogue authentic (valid, probable, true) and fruitful; it is He who enlightens discernment, He directs choice and decision. It is He, above all, who creates harmony and communion in the Church.” The synodal movement includes: lay people, consecrated persons, deacons, priests, bishops,

and the Pope himself. The Pope emphasizes that the Holy Spirit is the first actor/person of the synodal path, where people listen to each other, and everyone listens to the Holy Spirit—the “Spirit of Truth” in order to know what “the Spirit says to the churches” (Od. 2, 7).

The leading idea of the encyclical “Frattelli tutti” is common, belonging to the human race through recognizing each other as brothers and sisters, children of the same Creator, who are together in the same boat, which requires the realization that in a global and interconnected world salvation can only be achieved together. Since the original sin violated and broke the law (harmony), which provided for “walking together” (and the Will of God consists in the salvation of every person), then God establishes an alliance/covenant with man, because He wants to walk together (synodally) in the “second Eve”—the Virgin Mary—to restore the original harmony. In the womb of Mary, the “new and eternal” union of God and man is carried out where God and man “walk together” in Jesus Christ. It is Jesus Christ who takes upon Himself everything that belongs to man, becoming “the Way, the Truth and the Life,” restoring the original state, liberating

from spiritual death, saving a person, and uniting him with God forever.

Human existence takes place (passes) in three dimensions:

- 1) It is connected with God, who in the sky, is a vertical dimension.
- 2) United with brothers and sisters, it is a member of the respective people—this is a horizontal dimension.
- 3) It is connected with the world to which it owes its life—this is the material dimension. Now we see that people walk together—synodally—with God, with neighbours, with this world, recognizing ourselves precisely through the named three dimensions. The individual is *in* the world, but is not *of* it. The person is different from others due to the combination of physical, mental and spiritual levels, because there are no two identical, similar people. The individual is unique and inimitable, because of being endowed with creative ability; she is not God, but similar to God, because she was created in His image and likeness.

The “old man,” self-loving and self-absorbed, drowns in the Jordanian water, and the “new man” comes out of the water, already synodal. But the “old man” continues to live in us, and therefore, in the life of a person, like Jesus Christ, there is a struggle with the devil, which is essentially anti-synodal! The fight is on.

- 1) Conversion from bread for oneself to sharing one’s bread with others;
- 2) Conversion from *dominion* over others to *servicing* others;
- 3) Conversion from seeking glory for oneself to listening to God and feeling the needs of one’s neighbour. This is the main essence of the process of evangelization.

Jesus Christ multiplies bread for others and becomes the bread of life. He is the One who serves, the One who listens to His Father and goes to meet those in need. His way of service culminates with the greatest miracle, the establishment of the Holy Eucharist. He gives Himself for spiritual nourishment during the transformation of bread and wine: “This is My body..., this is My blood...” An old person, focused on himself, cannot be synodal. He is unable to “go together” with others, or be “outgoing,” service-oriented, responsible, merciful, and sacrificial.

Therefore, at the Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan, God reveals Himself in the Holy Trinity:

- 1) He is the Father in heaven, who proclaims that Jesus is “My beloved Son!”;
- 2) The Holy Spirit appears in the form of a dove;
- 3) Through the Son, Jesus, we “put on” Christ; we become “beloved sons and daughters,” “brothers and sisters in Christ,” and among ourselves... God’s people. We sing on holidays: “All who were baptized into Christ, put on Christ. Alleluia!”



PLEASE NOTE:

The second half of this article will be printed in the upcoming summer issue of *Nasha Doro*ha.

Sophia's Dream

A Trip to Brampton

By Dr. Melanie Turgeon

Late Friday afternoon, immediately before the Labour Day long weekend the phone rings in my office at The King's University. I'm walking out the door. Should I go back and answer it? Something pushed me to go back and pick it up. That phone call changed our lives in so many ways. We received the most exceptional news! We had been selected as the adoptive parents of a baby girl, whom we named Sophia. Our wait was over. Our prayers were answered. We were overjoyed!

I was born and raised in the church. My family attended St. Josaphat Cathedral in Edmonton and church was an integral part of my upbringing. My husband, Marc, grew up near Lac La Biche and his family attended the local Roman Catholic Church. We got married at St. Josaphat and decided this would be the church we would attend with our children. Immediately from the time of Sophia's birth we involved her in our family traditions and were excited to share our faith with her. Around the time Sophia was a year old, my sister and brother-in-law moved from Ottawa to Edmonton. This was an important part of Sophia's faith formation. My sister, Monica, is Sophia's Godmother and my brother-in-law, Danylo, was a Deacon at that time. They were exceptional parental role models for us. What they did with and for their children, we

followed suit. We particularly enjoyed gathering not only for birthdays, but also to celebrate Christian Name Days.

Shortly before Sophia turned two, we started noticing that she was not developing as she should. She was slow to walk, not really talking at all, and was bothered by various things such as crowds and noise. Still, we were not overly concerned. So many people assured us and shared how their child, grandchild, niece, nephew, etc. didn't talk until they were three, or walk until they were 18 months. We assumed she was a little delayed, yet we agreed to undergo further testing. When Sophia was just over two years old, she was diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). We were devastated. The more we read about the condition, the more discouraged and depressed we became. We had to turn off and shut out all the information and try our best to simply focus our love and attention entirely on Sophia and not attempt to predict what will be or not be in the future. It was a horrible time for both of us. We were filled with such immense grief, yet it felt like there was no time to grieve. We needed to accelerate our acceptance because Sophia needed us. The lifelong task of advocating for her commenced. This was also a time of absolute helplessness, knowing her diagnosis, yet not knowing what to do.



We educated ourselves on what government and community supports existed and we tried to get Sophia into programming as soon as possible so that we could be taught how to help and support her. Knowing that we had to wait several weeks before we could start programming felt like forever because there was much emphasis placed on early intervention.

Sophia started in a program called GRIT (Getting Ready for Inclusion Today). It was a very comprehensive program that included speech therapists, behaviour specialists, occupational therapists, an individual aide, etc. Our home became a place of people coming and going

throughout the day. It no longer felt like our home. Once we got into a bit of a routine with all this programming, we began to realize how many exceptional people this brought into our lives. They were truly talented at what they did. Little by little we softened, and we started to embrace this new journey and atmosphere.

So much had changed yet the one thing that remained constant was our faith. Thankfully we did not turn away from God. Instead, it felt like He was the only one who knew what we were living through and experiencing, and we needed that time to go to church and try to make sense of things, or plea for patience, wisdom, and understanding, or forgiveness. We tried our best to integrate Sophia into church, but this was a real challenge. Children with autism have a heightened awareness of everything. Sounds were too loud, especially because of the acoustics of the church. St. Josaphat was too big and visually overwhelming for Sophia. She didn't fit in at Sunday School. She could not maintain the required focus, attention, and behaviour to be able to participate. Often elderly members of the church would reprimand us for not being able to keep Sophia quieter or more consistently in her pew. They thought she was just a terribly behaved kid, and we were incompetent parents. They did not realize that she has a disability. As much as this angered and offended us, it got us thinking. Autism was not on people's



radar 40, 50 years ago when these individuals were likely parents. Sophia looked like a typical kid, and this often was a huge challenge. As parents, we would almost like for people to see her disability so that they could have more understanding and compassion. Now that she is older, we don't have these same challenges because it is more evident that she has a serious disability. Some are very understanding, but others often just stare. Sophia loves to ask random people questions. Some respond, while others ignore her. You realize the polar extremes of the world. The kindness that exists as well as the cruelty.

Routine is everything for kids with autism, and routine also benefits typically developing kids. Opportunities exist within the Divine Liturgy for kids to participate. These meaningful moments bring structure and consistency. Sophia has enjoyed participating in ways such as venerating the Gospel Book

at the Small Entrance, holding a candle during the Gospel reading, ringing little bells during the Hymn to the Mother of God, and receiving a treat after Liturgy during non-fasting times. These are markers in the service and Liturgical year that help children find structure and gain understanding. Our parish has incorporated a couple of these ideas and we have attended other parishes that have incorporated others.

There have been two prolonged times where Sophia absolutely refused to attend church. The first time occurred when she was still non-verbal. To this day we have no idea what set her off. She got scared and for approximately two years she could not return to our church. Sophia has exceptional spatial awareness within Edmonton. She knows the city inside out, where to turn and where things are. When we drove within a few blocks of St. Josaphat she would already begin crying and getting anxious. It is unreal how perceptive she is. It took two years of gradually coaxing her back to church. We started with being able to drive by. The next goal was being able to sit in the car in the parking lot. Thereafter, the goal was being able to play in the parking lot (maybe with a ball or bubbles). Eventually, it was the children's choir that made her want to go back into the church. Sister Emmanuela was conducting the children's choir at our parish at that time. She was aware of

Sophia's struggles, and she texted me a video of the kids singing and enjoying themselves. Sophia was so uplifted by this that she put aside the fear that existed and she went straight up to the choir loft to check it out. What a relief! Everyone did everything they could to welcome her back. This illustrates Sophia's desire to be with other kids and hopefully fit in.

More recently Sophia went through this same thing. It was near the start of COVID and all she could verbalize was that "church is too scary." Again, something scared her, and she refused to go to St. Josaphat for over a year. Thankfully this time she was willing to attend another church. Sophia does much better in a smaller church. The spaciousness of St. Josaphat overwhelms her, yet this is our home parish. Nevertheless, we have attended other churches as needed to be able to work through these challenges with Sophia.

Sophia loves processions! Whether it is our parish Feast Day or Easter, Sophia literally trembles with excitement when she gets to witness the tradition of banners, a cross, flags and various holy items in procession. Our former pastor, Fr. Peter Babej, was immensely supportive of Sophia, and he recognized how important this was to her. He would allow her the privilege of participating in our parish processions. She was usually assigned to either the *Artos* or a cross that contains relics of St. Josaphat. Sophia was overjoyed to take part in this way. I think it was very uplifting for the congregation to see the immense joy displayed on her face and in her

disposition. She was bursting with pride. There are so many things people like Sophia cannot do. Fr. Peter recognized that this was something she could handle, and he put that trust in her and she succeeded. This has brought so much meaning to her life. Sophia's dream is to go to St. Elias Ukrainian Catholic Church in Brampton for Easter. She has witnessed their mega-processions on YouTube, and she needs to experience this live. She keeps asking us to book tickets to go in early May 2024.

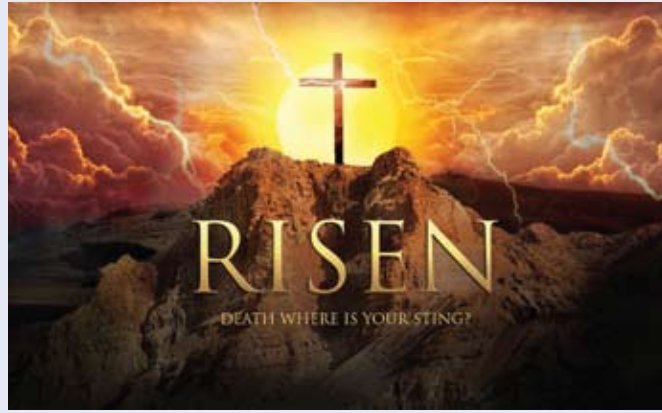


Being part of a church community is crucial for support. Parishioners support each other with their presence and particularly with their prayers. We have a prayer group at our parish called The Apostleship of Prayer. They have been wonderful to always include Sophia on their prayer list. We have offered countless Divine Liturgies for her intentions. Despite having severe autism, in our eyes Sophia has succeeded in so many ways. She loves Ukrainian dance. She is a superfan of

all the local dance groups and especially her younger brother, Joseph, and an avid dancer herself. Sophia plays the piano, and she has recently started playing the flute. She is an amazing artist, and she has gifted some of her most treasured paintings to special people in her life. She has also taken advantage of some of the unique opportunities for people with disabilities. Sophia used to ride horses with Little Bit Therapeutic Riding Association. In the winter she skis with CADS (Canadian Association for Disabled Skiers).

In closing, allow us to share some thoughts that have helped us in this journey and have brought us hope. As difficult as it is, you must own and embrace your child's disability. You will do them a disservice if you ignore it or do not fully accept it. It is only when you completely accept it that you are capable of truly helping them and never feeling embarrassed of them. Walk with them every step of the way, during the happy times, the horrible times, and the goofy times. They are yours and what others think should never matter. As challenging as it is with a child who has a severe disability, try to remember that there are so many others in the world who are equally struggling or have it even worse. There are always positive things to celebrate. See the glass to be half full. Even on the very worst days, remember that tomorrow is a new day, and it has the potential to be a better day. Finally, cling to these words: "... with God all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26). With faith, prayer, and steadfast love you never know what goals your child will reach.

CHRIST IS RISEN! ХРИСТОС ВОСКРЕС!





“New Life”

VAL BOYKO Ukrainian Canadian Artist Cultural and Scenic Oil Paintings

Val Boyko (nee Hewko) was born and raised on a farm in the Ukrainian community of Mundare, Alberta, and presently resides in St. Albert with her husband Ken. She has three married sons and seven grandchildren. The house in which she grew up, built in 1918, has been moved to the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village and is being restored as a heritage house.

Val has a Bachelor of Education degree from the University of Alberta and has retired from her teaching position with Edmonton Catholic schools. She began exploring and developing her artistic talents as she neared retirement by taking classes and workshops in different art mediums from a variety of instructors. Her paintings are inspired by her life experiences and extensive travels around the world. She discovered that her passion in art is

in oils and she has completed hundreds of paintings, including still life, cultural scenes, and portraits. She displays a gallery of travel memories and family portraits in her home and continues to sell, gift, and donate many of her paintings.

All her original pieces are painted with oils on canvas using many layers of paint to achieve the final result. The size of the canvas and the number of hours of labour determine the cost of the painting. She also makes giclees (digital reproductions) of many of her paintings on both canvas and fine art paper, allowing her to sell excellent reproductions of her work at a much lower price.

Artist Statement

“People and places throughout the world continue to fascinate me. I enjoy capturing the uniqueness of events and destinations, the scenes that give a true insight into the lives of the people at that time and place.”

valboyko-culturalpaintings.com | kvboyko@shaw.ca