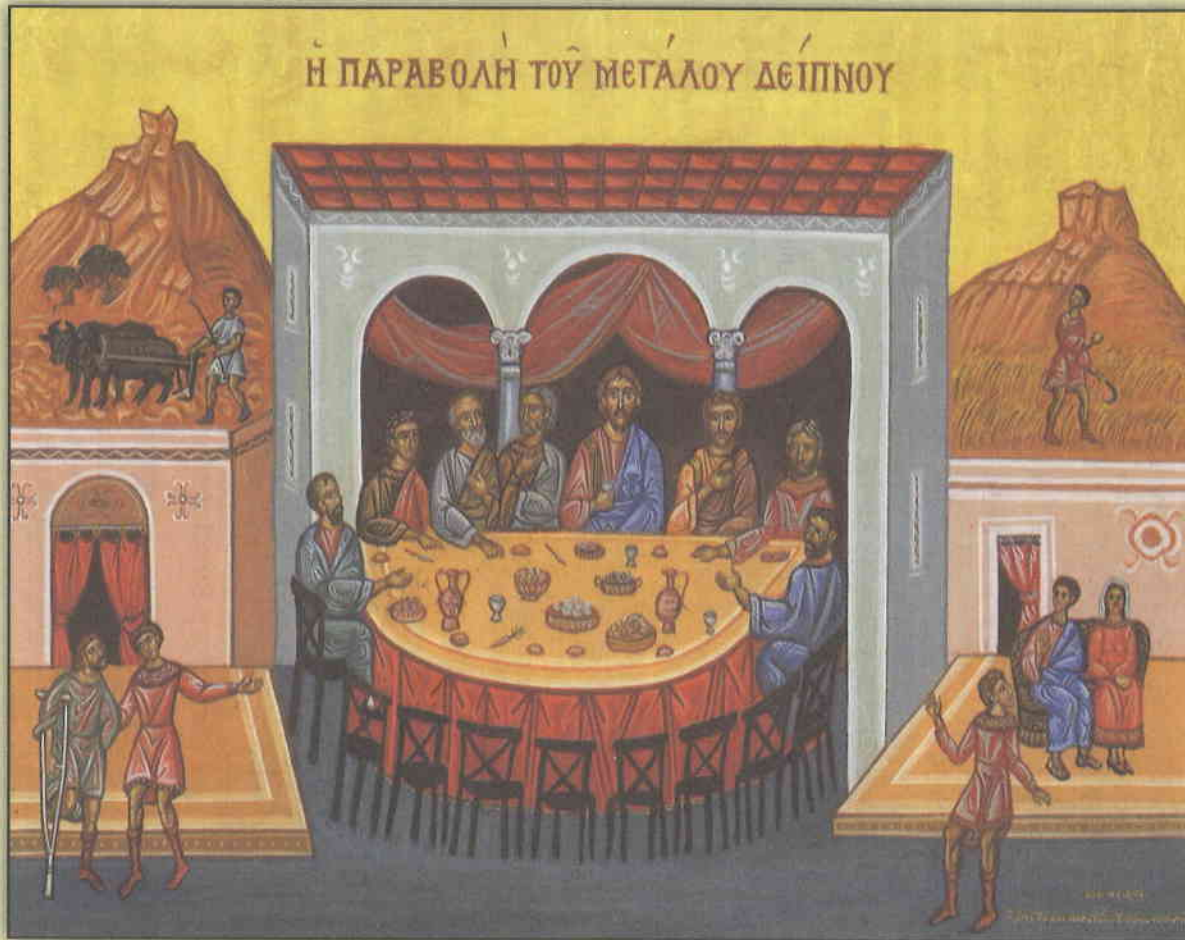


SUNDAY OF THE FOREFATHERS  
ELEVENTH SUNDAY OF LUKE



*Icon of the Great Banquet*

## Welcome to St. Michael Ukrainian Catholic Church!

St. Michael's Parish is part of the world-wide Ukrainian Greco-Catholic Church. We are Eastern Catholics – Orthodox Christians living in full and visible communion with the See of Rome, under the leadership of Pope Francis and our Patriarch, His Beatitude Sviatoslav Shevchuk. One need not be ethnically Ukrainian to worship with us. The Ukrainian Catholic Church comes from the Ukrainian people, but it is for the entire human race. *Welcome! We're very glad you're here!*

### Divine Liturgy Schedule – Порядок Богослужень

**Sundays: Usually 10:00 a.m.**

**Solemn Feast Days: Usually 7:00 p.m. on weekdays and 10:00 a.m. on Saturdays**

The schedule sometimes varies; please check the bulletin or website, or request email notifications from [ndworian@comcast.net](mailto:ndworian@comcast.net).

On the first and third Sundays of the month, the Divine Liturgy is typically celebrated primarily in English. On other Sundays and Feast Days, the Liturgy is primarily in Ukrainian. Preaching is usually bilingual: English and Ukrainian.

**To schedule a Confession, please contact Father Andriy at (480) 217-8505.**

**Божественна Літургія щонеділі о 10:00 ранку**

*Звичайно перша і третя неділя місяця - головною англійською. Інші неділі – українською. Проповіді – на двох мовах. Тому, що отець парох часом змушений бути поза містом, порядок богослужень може мінятися. Прошу перевірити порядок поданий на вебсайті та в бюлетені. Про електронні пригадки можна зареєструватися по адресі [ndworian@comcast.net](mailto:ndworian@comcast.net).*

Порядок богослужень у свята зазначений на вебсайті. Переважно о год. 7-ій вечора в будні дні, а о 10-ій ранку коли свято припадає в суботу. Про Тайну Сповіді прошу домовитися з Парохом.

Sunday, December 18, at 10:00 a.m.: Divine Liturgy, Sunday of the Holy Fathers

**Saturday, December 24: 12:00 p.m. Vespers of the Nativity of Our Lord**

**Sunday, December 25: 10:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy of the Nativity of Our Lord**

**† See the Schedule in this bulletin for all of the Christmas Cycle services! †**

### Scripture Readings for the Divine Liturgy

Today's Scripture readings (Holy Forefathers): Colossians 3:4-11, Luke 14:16-24

Next Sunday's readings (Holy Fathers): Hebrews 11:9-10, 17-23, 32-40; Matthew 1:1-25

### Troparion of the Holy Forefathers

*By faith You justified Your ancestors, and through them in advance You betrothed the Church taken from the nations. The saints exult in glory; from their seed comes the blessed fruit, the one who bore You without seed. By their prayers, O Christ our God, have mercy on us.*

## The Sunday of the Holy Forefathers

On the Sunday between December 11 and 17, the Church celebrates the ancestors of Christ according to the flesh, together with all the Patriarchs of the Old Testament who were related to Him. Before the Law these were Adam, Enoch, Melchizedech, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and his twelve sons, the founders of the Twelve Tribes of Israel. After the Law came Moses, Aaron, Joshua, Samuel, David; the four Major Prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, and the Three Holy Youths; and the twelve Minor Prophets. The liturgical texts of the Sunday point us to the Nativity:

*Today we commemorate the ancestors of Christ. Sing with fervor a hymn of praise to Christ the Savior Who exalted them among all nations. He is the Lord who does wondrous deeds because He is powerful and mighty. From them He brought forth a holy scepter, the immaculate maiden of God and Virgin Mary. From her, Christ our God came forth to give life and eternal salvation for all.*

*The great Sun, the Creator, hastens today to Bethlehem to be born of the immaculate Virgin, and to enlighten the children of Adam. The glorious memory of the Forefathers announces this miracle.*

*The commemoration of the Holy Fathers is manifested to the ends of the world. It is truly full of splendor, and it glistens with the rays of grace; Christ the splendrous Sun has shone forth on high from afar. He forms the assembly of stars which glisten with Him, and the Star reveals that the nativity of the God-man will be in Bethlehem. Therefore, we piously and faithfully clap our hands and leap for joy at this nativity, and we give praise before the feast.*

*Come, let us faithfully celebrate the memory of the Fathers who preceded the Law: Abraham who was beloved by God, Isaac who was born according to the promise, Jacob and the twelve Patriarchs. From them arose like radiant torches the prophets and the righteous ones who, by the rays of their prophecies, illumined all creation and ardently pray for the world. With Isaiah, let us cry out in a loud voice: Behold, the Virgin shall be with child and give birth to a Son, and they shall call Him Emmanuel, a name which means "God is with us."*

Let each of us approach Advent anticipating the coming of the Lord and allow this anticipation to intensify in us the presence of Christ. For the Lord is already present with us, but the Grace of Advent allows us to experience a more vivid, perhaps new, awareness of this presence. In Advent He reveals Himself to us as "He who comes," the one who desires to be with us. **Let our prayer be "Come, Lord Jesus," and throughout Advent let this prayer intensify and drive away all thoughts and passions incompatible with the coming of Christ.**

-- from *Advent: A Time of Preparation for the Coming of the Lord*,  
compiled by Fr. Nicholas Speier and Fr. John Finley



## **Report from Pastoral Council Meeting on December 6**

*By Pani Nadya Dworian, Secretary*

The air conditioning contract with Hamstra Heating & Cooling was approved pending confirmation from the Eparchy. The bid of \$17,394 includes a 10% discount if the contract is signed by December 31. Half is due by January 31, with the balance by February 24. The urgent fund drive is underway. A new plaque will recognize contributors to significant church improvements such as the interior remodel and the air conditioning replacement. Cut-off for listing is January 31, 2017.

Regarding the Bulletin, if no one comes forth to take over production of it, beginning January 1, it will be discontinued. The website is now up and running ([www.stmichaeltucson.org](http://www.stmichaeltucson.org)). As need arises, notices will be emailed and information sheets will be made available at church.

The Council reviewed more of the suggestions from the two parish meetings we had regarding a Vibrant Parish. These are just some of the action items; there's still more to be done:

Father will walk to the back of the church to give Holy Communion first to those who are handicapped, before the rest of the congregation receives theirs at the front of the church. Father will go over the song books and determine what needs to be done; Nadya Dworian has offered to then match the changes in the rest of the books. Suggestions for Group Youth Activities included a trip to St. Anthony's Monastery in Florence, bowling, and possibly a boat ride on the Desert Belle at Saguaro Lake, a two-hour drive from Tucson. Transliterated texts (blue books) are not user friendly; Father will work on one that will be easier to follow. The Council agreed to participate Labor Day weekend in 2017 in the 50+ hours of prayer at the Greek Orthodox Church with Fr. Earl Cantos. A service and fundraiser will be planned for Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky around the anniversary of either his birth (29 July 1865) or death (1 November 1944). The "Sunshine" person to notify of illness, prayer requests, or good news to share is Chotard Doll, 529-5880. To foster closeness, Sisterhood members are encouraged to gather for fellowship at private homes for afternoon or evening get-togethers.

† † †

### **New Website for St. Michael's!**

Father Andriy has completely redone our parish website – [www.stmichaeltucson.org](http://www.stmichaeltucson.org) ! Photo galleries and back issues of our parish bulletin still need to be added. Please note the additional information in the section labeled "about". Also please note the box for schedule changes on the home page: this is where schedule changes will be posted. And please fill in the contact form, which will go to Fr. Andriy and will help to automate future communications. We will continue to improve the website now that we have better control of it. If you have ideas for the website, please speak with Fr. Andriy or a Pastoral Council member.

## Reports • Prayer Requests • Announcements

**COATS FOR THE POOR:** St. Michael's is collecting coats to be given to the St. Vincent de Paul Society for distribution to the poor suffering from the cold this winter. Echoing Jesus' commands in the Gospel, St. Basil the Great said, *"Those extra coats in your closet belong to the poor; when are you going to give them to them?"* Please bring coats to church by next Sunday, December 18. See also the last page of this bulletin regarding St. Michael's food drive for the poor.

**COLLECTIONS: Thanksgiving, November 24:** \$215.00 Candles: \$27.00

**Sunday, November 27:** \$1,047.00 Candles: \$28.00

**Sunday, December 4:** \$1,060.00 Candles: \$25.00 Books: \$100.00 Icons: \$40.00

Second Collection for St. Andrew's Pence for the Church in Ukraine: \$612.00

Church Air Conditioner Replacement Donations: \$1,000.00 Thank You!

**SUNDAY SOCIAL HOUR:** Many thanks to **Valentina Lautaire** for providing a delicious Advent lunch last Sunday, and to those who gave donations of \$87.00 to support the Sisterhood's work!

Dec. 11: St. Nicholas pizza party Dec. 18: Halyna Chirovsky Dec. 25: Iryna Petryna

**PRAYER REQUESTS:** Please pray for Joe Cybulsky, Lubomyra Lutz, Zenon Korytko, Stefa Szubak, the Skibicky family, seminarian Martin Nagy and his son Elijah, Eparchial Administrator Fr. Richard Janowicz, and all those involved with selecting our next bishop.

**CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS:** A big thank you to Valentina Lautaire's sons Frank, Max, and Edouard; and Carla, Veronica, and Josh Liesemeyer, for putting up the Christmas tree in the hall, and to Pani Halia Chirovsky for decorating the church with poinsettias!

**NEW STAR:** The December issue of New Star is now available in English and Ukrainian on-line at [esnucc.org/new-star](http://esnucc.org/new-star). If you do not have a computer to access it, please contact Nadya Dworin.

**GOD'S HEALING LOVE RETREAT in Tucson January 21-22:** Do you seek healing of body, mind, or spirit? Do you desire a deeper faith? Do you seek a greater trust in Jesus? Do you want a renewal of power and gifts that comes with a fresh touch of the Holy Spirit? Tucson-based Vine of Grace Retreat Ministry will hold a two-day retreat on Saturday and Sunday, January 21-22, at the Tucson Convention Center. Fr. Greg Bramlage of the Missionaries for the New Evangelization will lead the retreat, and Tucson Bishop Gerald Kicanas will celebrate the closing Mass. For more information, visit <http://www.vineofgrace.org> or call 520.742.6687. The \$45 fee for both days includes meals, and registering in advance is highly encouraged due to limited seating.

**RETREAT FOR HEALING FROM ABORTION February 24-26:** Rachel's Vineyard of Southern Arizona is offering a retreat for healing for those suffering from an abortion decision, on February 24-26, 2017. For more information, please contact Gail at [rachelsvineyardtucson@cox.net](mailto:rachelsvineyardtucson@cox.net).

**TWO ARIZONA TAX CREDITS FOR 2016:** Arizona residents who owe 2016 Arizona income tax may receive dollar-for-dollar state tax credits in two ways. Note that these are not deductions, but are direct credits off your Arizona taxes owed.

**1) Catholic Tuition Support Organization (CTSO):** You may receive a dollar-for-dollar tax credit by contributing to the CTSO, which helps low-income students receive a Catholic education. Single persons may contribute up to \$1,087 and couples up to \$2,173. Consider supporting Immaculate Heart High School, where parishioner David Maciborski teaches theology. For more information, visit [www.ctso-tucson.org](http://www.ctso-tucson.org), call (520) 838-2558, or see the CTSO brochure in the church.

**2) Qualifying Charitable Organizations:** Donations to pre-approved organizations that assist poor persons and children with disabilities may also be dollar-for-dollar tax credits of up to \$400 for singles and \$800 for couples. Details and a list of approved organizations may be found at <https://www.azdor.gov/taxcredits/qualifyingcharitableorganizations.aspx>. Consider supporting ReachOut Women's Center, which provides free counseling, ultrasounds, and material assistance to pregnant women. Call 321-4300 or mail a check to 2648 N. Campbell Avenue, Tucson 85719.

### **Report from Sisterhood Meeting on December 4**

*By Pani Nadya Dworian, Secretary*

The healthy balance in the Sisterhood bank accounts is largely due to the weekly luncheons provided by parishioners, and also the Chirovsky, Gojnycz and Dillon families who provided their homes and hard work and held yard sales last month. [Thank you!] As a result, the Sisterhood unanimously approved the donation of \$5,000 toward the air conditioning project which needs almost \$18,000 by the end of February. Carla Liesemeyer and her children assembled 50 gift bags for St. Nicholas to pass out to children on Sunday; the excess will go to Casa de Los Ninos. The Christmas tree in the hall is up and decorated, thanks to the Lautaire and Liesemeyer families. Iryna Petryna will provide lunch on Christmas Sunday. The church Christmas tree will be put up just before Christmas. Pani Halia Chirovsky and Sonya Capar will decorate the church with flowers. Carolers will visit three care facilities to entertain Pani Stephania Szubak, Pani Maria Mandziy, and Mr. Michael Gabriel after December 25th, either on a Sunday or weekday afternoon.

*Behold, the time of salvation is drawing near. O cave, prepare yourself, for the Virgin is coming to give birth. O Bethlehem, O land of Judah, adorn yourself and be happy since the Lord will shine forth from you. O mountains and hills and lands around Judah, hearken, for Christ is coming that He may save His creation because He is the Lover of mankind.*

***Let us observe a fast acceptable and pleasing to the Lord. True fasting is to put away all evil, to control the tongue, to forbear from anger. If we renounce these things, then is our fasting true and acceptable to God.***



## St. Michael's Advent Giving to the Poor

As we prepare ourselves spiritually for the coming of Our Lord in the flesh, the Church urges us to give generously and sacrificially to the poor in our midst. Our Lord Himself was born in poverty. When we serve our poor neighbors, we are serving Him!

Large numbers of people in our church's neighborhood suffer hunger due to poverty. Often these are families whose parents work two or more minimum-wage jobs but still cannot make ends meet. Children are especially impacted: without sufficient food, they are unable to concentrate in school and thus fall farther and farther behind. Many hungry high school students simply give up and drop out, and therefore end up trapped in minimum-wage jobs themselves.

We must help. This Advent St. Michael's is collecting both **food** and **winter coats** for the poor (see the separate announcement re: coats). **Please bring fresh-dated, nutritious, non-perishable foods to the big box at the east door of the Hall.** The St. Vincent de Paul Society at Sacred Heart Church (on Ft. Lowell, near our church), will give this food to needy families in our area.

Catherine deHueck Doherty, foundress of the Madonna House apostolate in Ontario, writes:

*This is no time for Christians to be buying expensive homes or worrying about our "images." It is simply a time to become poor -- to give to others of our surplus, yes, but also of our necessity. Can we not live normally and curb our unruly desires for a thousand unnecessary gadgets and status symbols? This is the time for becoming Christians in the fullness of that simple phrase, "followers of Christ." Christ's life stands as our example.*

Pope St. Leo the Great (5<sup>th</sup> century) exhorted all Christians to help the poor sacrificially (this quote is from the excellent book *The Binding of the Strong Man*, by Anne Field, O.S.B.):

*We must be ungrudgingly generous toward our under-privileged or handicapped brothers and sisters. It is only right that we should help others out of the store God has given us, so that we may all thank Him together and rejoice in what we share....*

*By denying ourselves we shall be able to bring help to the needy and so cause many voices to praise God in thanksgiving. **The poor are God's special friends, and if He finds us caring for them He will see His own love reflected in us.** Indeed, it is only because He lives and loves in us that we can do any good at all.*

*We need never fear to be left with nothing for ourselves if we go on giving, because what we give to the poor we give to Christ, and He who was able to multiply the loaves and fishes as His disciples distributed them is able to multiply not only the material goods we give away but also the time, the strength, and the patience we spend in serving Him in His friends.*

***Our truest possessions are the things we give to the poor, because they are stored up for us for all eternity in Heaven.***

**Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory Forever!**

**December 11, 2016**

**St. Michael Ukrainian Catholic Church**

**Українська Католицька Церква св. Михаїла**

**Sunday of the Holy Forefathers – НЕДІЛЯ ПРАОТЦІВ**



Right Rev. Andriy Chirovsky, S.Th.D., Pastor

715 W. Vanover Road (at 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue)

Tucson, Arizona 85705

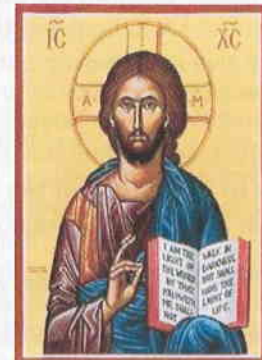
*(Between Interstate 10 and Oracle Road,  
and Miracle Mile and Grant Road)*

Church phone: (520) 298-4967

Pastor's cell phone: (480) 217-8505

[www.StMichaelTucson.org](http://www.StMichaelTucson.org)

[www.facebook.com/stmichaeltucson](http://www.facebook.com/stmichaeltucson)



***Invited to the Banquet***

It is written in the Gospel: The Master sent out his servants to call them who wish to come, inviting them: "My banquet is ready." But those who were called began to excuse themselves, one saying: "I bought some yoke of oxen." Another: "I have married" (Luke 14:16ff). You see, he was ready who called, but the invited refused. They themselves were alone responsible in the way they answered.

Thus, so great is the dignity of Christians. Consider, the Lord has prepared for them the Kingdom and has called them to enter, but they have refused. Concerning the gift that Christians will receive by way

of their inheritance, one could rightly say that if anyone, from the time of Adam's creation to the end of the world, should battle against Satan and put up with afflictions, it would be nothing in comparison to the glory which he is to obtain. For he will reign forever together with Christ. Glory to Him who so loved such a person that He gave himself and His grace and entrusted himself to Him. Glory to His greatness!

*Pseudo-Macarius*

**For more information on Eastern spirituality, visit  
[www.ecpubs.com](http://www.ecpubs.com)**



## **St. Michael Ukrainian Greco-Catholic Church, Tucson, AZ**

### **2016-17 Schedule of Services for the Christmas Cycle**

#### **Friday, December 23, Pre-Feast of the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ**

5:00 PM Royal Hours (a service of prophetic Scriptural readings)

#### **Saturday, December 24, 2016 Christmas Eve (Day of Abstinence)**

12:00 PM noon Vespers of the Nativity of our Lord

#### **Sunday, December 25, Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ**

10:00 AM Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great

#### **Monday, December 26, 2016, Synaxis of the Mother of God**

10:00 AM Divine Liturgy

#### **Tuesday, December 27, 2016 Feast of St. Stephen Protomartyr**

10:00 AM Divine Liturgy

#### **Sunday, January 1, 2017 Circumcision of the Lord; St. Basil the Great**

10:00 AM Divine Liturgy

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#### **Thursday, January 5, 2017 Eve of Theophany**

1:00 PM Royal Hours of Theophany(service of prophetic Scripture readings)

5:00 PM Vespers and Liturgy of St. Basil the Great, 1st Great Blessing of Water

#### **Friday, January 6, 2017 Theophany of Our Lord**

10:00 AM Great Compline of the Theophany (excerpts)

followed by Divine Liturgy, Great Blessing of Water

#### **Saturday, January 7, 2017 Synaxis of St. John the Baptist;**

##### ***Julian Calendar Christmas***

10:00 AM Great Compline of the Nativity of our Lord (excerpts)

followed by Divine Liturgy for the Nativity of the Lord

#### **Sunday, January 8, 2016 Sunday after Theophany**

10:00 AM Divine Liturgy

#### **Sunday, January 15, 2016**

8:00 AM Divine Liturgy - Fr. R. Rankin (Fr. Andriy in Ottawa)

#### **Sunday, January 22, 2016**

10:00 AM Divine Liturgy

**Українська Греко-Католицька Церква св. Михаїла -- Тусон, Арізона**

**Порядок Богослужень на Різдвяний Цикль 2016-17 р.Б.**

**П'ятниця 23-го грудня 2016 Предпразденство Різдва**  
5:00 попол. Царські Часи

**Субота 24-го грудня 2016 Навечір'я Різдва (Піст)**  
12:00 полудня Вечірня

**Неділя 25-го грудня 2016 Різдво по плоті Господа Нашого Ісуса Христа**  
10:00 Божественна Літургія св. Василя Великого

**Понеділок 26-го грудня 2016 Собор Пресв. Богородиці**  
10:00 рано Божественна Літургія

**Вівторок 27-го грудня 2016 св. Первомученика Стефана,**  
10:00 рано Божественна Літургія

**Неділя 1-го січня 2016 Обрізання Господа Нашого Ісуса Христа; Св. Василя Великого, Неділя по Різдві**  
10:00 ранку Божественна Літургія св. Василя Великого

**Четвер 5-го січня 2016 Навечіря Богоявлення (Піст)**  
1:00 попол. Царські Часи Богоявлення Господнього  
5:00 попол. Божественна Літургія, Велике Водосвяття

**П'ятниця 6-го січня 2016 Богоявлення Господнє**  
10:00 ранку Велике Повечір'я (урибки) й Бож. Літургія, Вел. Водосвяття

**Субота 7-го січня 2016 Собор св. Івана Хрестителя**  
**Різдво по плоті Господа Нашого Ісуса Христа (за юліянським календарем)**  
10:00 ранку Велике Повечір'я й Божественна Літургія Різдва Г.Н.І.Х.

**Неділя, 8-го січня 2016 Неділя по Богоявленні**  
10:00 ранку Божественна Літургія

**Неділя, 15-го січня 2016**  
8:00 ранку Божественна Літургія -- о. Р. Ренкін (о. Андрій в Оттаві)

**Неділя, 22-го січня 2016**  
10:00 ранку Божественна Літургія



## METROPOLITAN ARCHEPARCHY OF PHILADELPHIA

Ukrainian Catholic

827 North Franklin Street

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19123-2097

Phone (215) 627-0143 Fax (215) 627-0377

ukrmet@ukrcap.org

No. 645/2016 O

*This Number Should be Prefixed to Your Reply*

*Office of the Metropolitan*

### PASTORAL MESSAGE OF THE UKRAINIAN CATHOLIC HIERARCHY OF THE U.S.A.

TO OUR CLERGY, HIEROMONKS AND BROTHERS, RELIGIOUS SISTERS,  
SEMINARIANS AND BELOVED FAITHFUL

#### **CHRIST IS BORN!**

Once again we focus our attention and recall with affection and devotion the marvelous miracle in which “the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us” (Jn. 1:14). The God-Man Jesus, sent by our merciful Father with love to all of humanity, came to save us from sin and from ourselves. Jesus came to empower us to live life to the full. It is little wonder, then, that the Story of Christmas is so appealing to young and old and to rich and poor alike.

Well before December 25<sup>th</sup>, we become preoccupied with Christmas preparations. Beyond all this, one searches for the true Spirit of Christmas in order to lift our individual and collective spirits to reflect again on the celestial chorus: “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace to all who enjoy His favor” (Lk. 2:14). We can catch a glimpse of the Spirit of Christmas as we savor the fellowship enjoyed by our families whose members gather from far and wide to be together for our Christmas Eve Holy Supper. And yet, such fellowship is but a shadow of that divine fellowship enjoyed by all mankind as a result of the Birth of the Second Person of the Most Holy Trinity. “To all who did accept Him He gave power to become Children of God” (Jn. 1:12) indicates a radical change which this divine fellowship entails: God became human so that human beings might become like unto God.

Therefore, the celebration of Christmas ought to raise certain questions for each one of us. How is my personal life affected? How does the Christmas Event relate to our society with all its challenges? If we travel mentally around the world, what do we see? Violence of all sorts, physical and sexual abuse, violation of the rights of the unborn and defenseless, unconcern for the poor and migrant, abandonment of children and the elderly, the unjust aggressions suffered by Ukraine, the horrific massacres in the Middle East and Africa, are a fraction of our society’s illness which should cause us to wonder if the story of Christmas will ever succeed in getting across to all people its principal message. That message is simply that the salvation of each of us must be through love and in love. This fantastic message of Christmas is, for very many, the greatest secret still yet to be fathomed: God’s love for all has been revealed in the Word made flesh!

This greatest secret revealed in humanity of God’s only-begotten Son is like the sun radiating sunshine to one and all. Likewise, all of us who are receptive of God’s “greatest secret” personified in our Lord Jesus Christ, must show some sort of transformation. That is precisely what is signified in the Christmas Story told over and over again in every language and to all people.



Our Lord Jesus Christ was born in the shadows of an incredulous world. Of all peoples, the Christmas miracle was first announced to shepherds, so-called insignificant people of Bethlehem. Considered to be on the lowest rung of society's rating, those shepherds chosen by God, must have had their self-esteem and self-worth lifted to high heaven when they heard the Good News proclaimed: "Behold I bring you news of great joy, a joy to be shared by all people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you: He is Christ the Lord" (Lk. 2:10-11).

Convinced of the great love which Christmas reveals, we receive power to become children of God. Realizing that power from God-made-Man, we can then proclaim by word and example, at home and in society, that which underlines all the fellowship, carol-singing, gift-giving, and merry-making: "Yes, God loved the world so much that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him may not be lost but may have eternal life" (Jn. 3:16). That is why we joyfully and devoutly exclaim, "Christ is born. Glorify Him!"

A blessed and joyous Christmas to all of you. May the mystery of Jesus' Birth bring you the grace to renew yourself and live a God-centered Christian life all through the New Year!

**Christ is Born!**

**+Stefan Soroka**

**Archbishop of Philadelphia for Ukrainians**

**Metropolitan of Ukrainian Catholics in the United States**

**+Paul Chomnycky, OSBM**

**Eparch of Stamford**

**+ Bohdan Danylo**

**Eparch of St. Josaphat in Parma**

**+John Bura (author)**

**Auxiliary Bishop of Philadelphia**

**Very Rev. Richard Janowicz, Apostolic Administrator**

**St. Nicholas Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy in Chicago.**

**Christmas 2016**



## METROPOLITAN ARCHEPARCHY OF PHILADELPHIA

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**ПАСТИРСЬКЕ ПОСЛАННЯ ЄПІСКОПІВ УКРАЇНСЬКОЇ КАТОЛИЦЬКОЇ ЦЕРКВИ  
В СПОЛУЧЕНИХ ШТАТАХ АМЕРИКИ  
ВСЕЧЕСНИМ ОТЦЯМ, ПРЕПОДОБНИМ ЧЕНЦЯМ І ЧЕРНИЦЯМ,  
СЕМІНАРИСТАМ ТА ДОРОГИМ ВІРНИМ**

**ХРИСТОС РАЖДАЄТЬСЯ!**

І знову ми зосереджуємо свою увагу і звертаємося з любов'ю та побожністю до захоплюючого чуда, в якому «Слово стало тілом і оселилося між нами» (Йо. 1, 14). Бого-чоловік Ісус, посланий нашим милосердним Богом з любові до всього людства, прийшов спасти нас від гріхів і від нас самих. Ісус прийшов, щоб дати нам можливість жити життя у всій його повноті. Тому не дивно, що історія Різдва є однаково привабливою для молодих і старих, багатих і бідних.

Саме перед Різдвом нас охоплюють найбільше Різдвяні приготування. Але і у вирі клопотів, ми шукаємо справжнього духа Різдва, щоб піднести свій особистий та суспільний дух до роздумування над ангельським восклицям: «Слава на висотах Богу й на землі мир людям його вподобання» (Лк. 2, 14). Ми відчуваємо дух Різдва, коли ми тішимося товариством нашої родини, яка з'їхалася зблизька й здалека на Святу вечерю у переддень Різдва. І все ж, така близькість є лише тінню того божественного моменту єднання, яким втішалося все людство, коли народилася Друга особа Пресвятої Трійці. «Котрі ж прийняли його – тим дало право дітьми Божими стати» (Йо. 1, 12) вказує на принципову зміну, яку принесла ця містична і захоплююча подія: Бог став чоловіком, щоб люди могли уподібнитися до Бога.

Тому, святкування Різдва ставить перед кожним з нас певні запитання. Як Різдво впливає на моє особисте життя? Яке відношення подія Різдва має тепер до нашого суспільства з усіма його проблемами? Якщо би ми подумки облетіли цілий світ, що ми побачимо там? Усілякі насилля, фізичні і статеві, порушення прав ненароджених і безборонних, нехтування бідними і мігрантами, відмова від дітей і занедбання старших, несправедлива агресія від якої страждає Україна, жахливі масові вбивства на Близькому Сході та в Африці – це тільки частинки хворіб нашого суспільства, які можуть зародити в нас сумнів, чи правдива дух Різдва коли-небудь прийде до всіх людей. Це послання є дуже просте – спасіння кожного з нас повинно відбутися через любов і в любові. Це чудове послання Різдва є для багатьох найбільшою таємницею, яку ще слід збагнути: Любов Божа до всіх відкрилася в Слові, яке стало тілом!

Ця найбільша таємниця явлена людству у втіленні Божого Єдинородного Сина подібна сонцю, яке освічує своїм світлом одного і всіх. Подібно і всі ми, хто сприймає Божу «найбільшу таємницю» уособлену в нашому Господі Ісусі Христі, маємо пройти певне перетворення. Власне це і є те, про що говориться у Різдвяній історії і що повторюється знову і знову на всіх мовах і всіх народах.

Наш Господь Ісус Христос народився в тінях та невідомості недовірливого світу. З поміж усіх людей, чудо Різдва було найперше проголошено пастушкам, так званим маленьким людям з Вифлиему. Незважаючи на те, що вони були на найнижчому щаблі суспільної драбини, достоїнство та гідність цих Боговибраних пастушків піднеслися також до небес, коли вони почули проголошення Доброї Новини: «Не бійтеся, бо я звіщаю вам велику радість, що буде радістю всього народу. Сьогодні народився вам у місті Давидовім Спаситель, він же Христос Господь» (Лк. 2, 10-11).

Переконані в великій любові, яку Різдво розкриває нам, ми отримуємо силу стати дітьми Божими. Усвідомлюючи цю силу Бого-Чоловіка, ми можемо проголосити словом і прикладом, вдома і в громаді, те, про що наголошують усі братерства, колядування, обдарування і святкування: «Бог бо так полюбив світ, що Сина свого Єдинородного дав, щоб кожен, хто вірує в нього, не загинув, а жив життям вічним» (Йо. 3, 16). Ось чому ми радісно й благоговійно голосимо: «Христос народився! Славимо Його!»

Благословенного і радісного всім Різдва. Нехай таїнство Ісусового народження принесе вам ласку відновлення і Богоугодного християнського життя впродовж усього Нового року!

#### **ХРИСТОС РАЖДАЄТЬСЯ!**

**+Високопреосвященний Стефан Сорока**  
Митрополит Української Католицької Церкви у США  
Архієпископ Філадельфійський для Українців

**+Преосвященний Павло Хомницький, ЧСВВ**  
Єпископ Стемфордської єпархії

**+Преосвященний Богдан Данило**  
Єпископ Пармської єпархії святого Йосафата

**+Преосвященний Іван Бура (автор)**  
Єпископ-Помічник Філадельфійський

**Всечесніший отець Ричард Янович**  
Апостольський Адміністратор, Чиказької єпархії святого Миколая

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