



Thank you for taking part at our Christmas Dinner!

Thank you for your help in preparing. \$700.00 was raised for the Parish treasury

Christ is Born! Glorify Him! Mnohaya Lita



**SAINT NICHOLAS UKRAINIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH**  **УКРАЇНСЬКА КАТОЛИЦЬКА ЦЕРКВА СВЯТОГО МИКОЛАЯ**



**№ 03**  **ПІД ОПІКОЮ ПРЕЧИСТОЇ ДІВИ МАРІЇ ОДІПТРИЇ** 

**3** **UNDER THE PROTECTION OF MOTHER OF GOD**

**CHURCH BULLETIN**  
**January 18 – 2015 – 18 Січня**  
**ЦЕРКОВНИЙ ВІСНИК**

**№ 03**  **JANUARY**  **18**  **2015** 



**Христос Хрещається! У Ріці Йордані! Christ Is Baptized! In Jordan River!**



# CHURCH BULLETIN

Jan. 18 – 2015 – 18 Січня  
ЦЕРКОВНИЙ ВІСНИК



Saint Nicholas Church  
Церква Св. Миколая  
(Під Опікою П.Д.М.)

## LITURGICAL SCHEDULE

## ПОР'ЯДОК СВ. ЛІТУРГІЙ

4:30 PM +Jaroslawa Bobenczyk (Vera & Emil Marc)

Jan. 18 S. Of Zacchaeus – Н. Закхея

12:00 За Парохіян – For Parishioners

Monday, January 19 Січня, Понеділок

9:00 AM See Julian

Tuesday, January 20 Січня, Вівторок

10:00 AM See Julian

Wednesday, January 21 Січня, Середа

9:00 AM +Андрій Войчак (Марія Хом'як Бергман)

Thursday, January 22 Січня, Четвер

9:00 AM +Eleonor Schudlik – 40 days

Friday, January 23 Січня, П'ятниця

9:00 AM +Ольга Бельмеґа (Марія Дранка)

Sat. January 24 Січня Субота

8:15 AM +Софія Судин (Ева Ковтало)

4:30 PM За Парохіян – For Parishioners

Jan. 25 S. Of Publ. & Phar. – Н. Митаря і Фарисея

12:00 +Joseph Procyk (Eliana Ivanychko)

The Eternal Light burns for  
**PEACE IN UKRAINE**  
Parishioners of St. Nicholas

Вічне Світло в честь П.Д.М. горить за  
**МИР В УКРАЇНІ**  
Парохіяни Св. Миколая

Христос Раждається! Славимо Його!

18 Січня: Н. Перед Богоявленням. Щедрий Вечір

10:00 р. +Клим Панасевич (р. Ганицькі)

19 Січня: **БОГОЯВЛЕННЯ**

9:00 р. Вел. Повечеря з  
литією

10:00 р. Літургія Св.  
Василія Великого  
Водосвяття

6:30 в. +Дмитро  
Бараницький (Стефан Король)



20 Січня: **Собор Івана Хрестителя**

10:00 р. +Ірена Войчак (Іван Щерба)

25 Січня: Н. По Богоявленні. Н. Закхея

10:00 р. +Осипа і Михайло Захарків  
(донька Галина Білоголовська)



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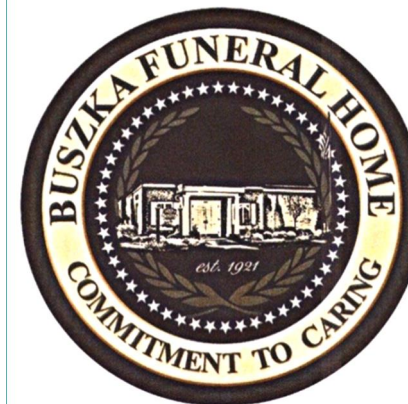
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We welcome your comments.

\*\*\*

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In Your charitable donations!**

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Щоб довідатися більше інформацій про це що діється в громаді,  
Просимо відвідати веб-сторінку.  
<http://www.ukrainiansofbuffalo.com>

Is the the web-page to find  
More information and events  
In our Ukrainian Community.

**DONATIONS TO SAINT NICHOLAS**

**"Special Appeal"**

IMO Jaroslawa Bobenczyk

Tschip Family - \$25.00

**St. John the Baptist Parish  
Christmas-Theophany Dinner**  
January 18th, 2015, starting at 12:30 PM in our Church Hall.  
The children of Ukrainian School (Ridna Shkola) will present their Christmas Play (VERTEP).  
Donation \$10:00



"Good Samaritan" project tickets droving will be during dinner time. This project is an ongoing effort to perform charitable works on a Deanery level towards our Ukrainian Catholic community both locally and globally. You can still purchess tickets at St. John Prospora Dinner.

**PASTORAL LETTER OF HIS BEATITUDE SVIATOSLAV.**

**"The Vibrant Parish – a place to encounter the living Christ"**

Dearly Beloved in Christ!

**Introduction**

Our Lord Jesus Christ before his ascension into heaven instructed his disciples, saying: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Mat 28:18-29). This commission of Christ to proclaim the Good News was given not only to the first disciples, the apostles, it is directed to the Church in all times, even to the end of the ages. The Ukr. Greek-Catholic Church, in fulfilling this commission of our Divine Savior, speaking through the Bishops of its Holy Synod five years ago, defined "Holiness of a united people of God" as the goal of her ministry. Holiness is God's gift, and the vocation of every Christian. "For this is the will of God, your sanctification," St. Paul reminds us in the letter to the Thessalonians (1 Th 4:2).

The parish is the place where Christian holiness most often germinates, grows, and matures. For this reason the Synod of Bishops of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church in 2011, in its concern for the spiritual renewal of our entire Church, focused its particular attention on the parish, that foundational portion of the People of God, which strives for holiness under the guidance of its bishop as father and teacher of the faith. The program, which the Holy Synod approved, is called, "The Vibrant Parish – a place to encounter the living Christ." The goal of this pastoral program is to help all the faithful of our Church to learn "to live in order to please God" (1 Th 4:1), and thus to grow in holiness and unity in Christ Jesus.

In this Pastoral Letter, I would like to reflect on the key components of a vibrant parish. (To be cont.)

## ЗАПРОШЕННЯ

Булава 9-ого Відділу Ю-СУМ  
ім. Батурин  
в Бофало  
має шану запросити все  
Українське громадянство на  
**СУМІВСЬКУ ЯЛИНКУ**

Святочна Програма  
відбудеться в суботу,  
24-го Січня 2015 р.  
о год. 1:30 по пол.  
в Українському Домі Дніпро  
при 562 Дженесі вул., Бофало.

Свят Вечірні Страви  
Приготовляє  
Батьківський Комітет

З СУМівським привітом:

Честь України! Готов Боронити!

Булава Ю-СУМ

## MaIa n k a-Dance”

Saturday, January 24, 2015  
ST. MARY'S PARISH HALL

6248 Main Street,  
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**PROGRAM: 6:30 pm - Cocktails**  
7:00 pm - Dinner  
8:30 pm - Dance  
Band “KARPATY”

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**ХРИСТОС РОЖДАЄТЬСЯ!  
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Sunday Coffee Hours: If anyone would like to volunteer to host a Sunday, please contact Elaine, Emily, Mary (B) or Anna.

- KITCHEN is now open.
- Thank you for your patronage.  
We need your help in the kitchen. Thank you!
- Coffee Hour - Usually Every Sunday after Liturgy in Church Hall. Please join us!
- St. Nicholas Prospora Dinner – Sunday, January 11. No noon Liturgy that day.

### TOP'S GIFT CARDS:

Please help us raise money for our Church by purchasing Top's Gift Cards from us. If you buy in Tops anyway, why not help. You do not lose or gain anything by doing this, but our Church will benefit greatly. We receive back 5% of your spending. To take advantage of this program, see Mary Bodnar or call 655-3810, or call the rectory. Thank you and God Bless!

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CHURCH BULLETIN is published weekly.  
Deadline for information is Friday Evening.  
ЦЕРКОВНИЙ ВІСНИК видається тижнево.  
Інформації подавати до П'ятниці вечора.

**SAINT NICHOLAS UKRAINIAN  
CATHOLIC CHURCH**

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**Marriage:** Contact 6 months in advance

**Вінчання:** Голоситися 6 місяців скорше

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**В разі потреби завжди можна закликати**

V. Rev. Marijan Procyk, pastor & dean

Rev. Raymond Palko, visiting priest

**Please call if you are hospitalized,  
homebound and need a priest.**

**Просимо закликати якщо ви у ліжниці  
або приковані до ліжка!**

### My Ukraine photography exhibit

<http://www.cepagallery.org/portfolio/wake-cry-revisiting-ukraine-lukia-costello/>

Please join artist Lukia Costello in her solo exhibition at CEPA Gallery titled 'As I Wake, I Cry - Revisiting Ukraine'. The show opens Friday January 30th 7-10 pm and runs through March 28th 2015. CEPA Gallery is located at 617 Main St. Buffalo, NY 14203



## “ SOCKS for SOLDIERS ”

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who supported “Socks for Soldiers”.

Your donations made it possible to send a total of 505 pair of socks to Ukrainian soldiers.

God Bless You!

*Gloria (Slava) Grega Long*



## “ Шкарпетки Воякам ”

Сердечна подяка усім що прилучилися до збірки “Шкарпетки Воякам”.

Ваші щирі датки дозволили нам вислати 505 пар шкарпеток українським воякам

Нехай Бог Вас Благословить!

*Богуслава Грега Лонг*

Христос Раждається!  
Славимо Його!



## Різдво в Україні - Блаж. Святослав

«Цього року зустрічаємо це свято в умовах війни», – такими словами Глава УГКЦ Блаженніший Святослав Шевчук розпочав інтерв'ю для італійської редакції Радіо Ватикану, яке напередодні Навечір'я Христового Різдва провела Габріелля Черазо.

«Вперше після Другої світової війни, – сказав Блаженніший Святослав, – такі обставини сильно позначили наше життя і, отже, також і наш празник. Але Різдво – це для нас велике світло, бо наш Господь виявляє нам Свою божественну солідарність. І ми відчуваємо себе насправді звільненими: ми не самі виходимо назустріч нашим труднощам. Ніжність Дитятка Ісуса може подолати насилля й війну, які в цей час приносять нам скорботу».

На запитання, яке побажання Верховний Архiepіскоп Київський прагнув би передати своїй спільноті, Блаженніший відповів:

«Найперше побажання – це побажання миру. Українська земля волає це слово: “Господи, дай нам Твій мир!” І ми бажаємо всім християнам світу, особливо тут, в Україні, щоб цей Божий мир, що його Господь дає нам Своїм народженням, став тією дійсністю, яка зможе нас перемінити і дати надію на наше майбутнє».

Згадуючи, що Різдво відзначає також і Православна Церква, Габріелля Черазо запитала, чи святкуючи Різдво можна віднайти в собі сили, щоб спільно прямувати вперед?

«Тепер в Україні свято Різдва, що є святом братерства – ми всі разом зустрічаємось з цими труднощами. Можу засвідчити, що по-справжньому відчуваємо братерську підтримку християн різних конфесій в Україні. Існує свого роду «екуменізм на практиці», особливо, коли йдеться про те, щоб дати християнську відповідь на ці виклики війни, насильства, голоду й холоду, який приносить українська зима. Ми – християни і ми разом, не тільки разом одні з одними, але разом з тим же Богом – у цьому полягає наша надія».

*(Радіо Ватикан)*

## Letter from Fr. Ray Jan. 18, 2014 A.D.

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

*(say your name right here for your very own personal letter)*

Over the years, and with the many letters which I've written to you, by now you know a lot about me. You surely know I often write about how visible God is for me in nature, even right in our own backyard. Today is Tuesday night, and a short time ago, I returned from an evening walk around the neighborhood. The temperature is a beautiful 9 degrees Fahrenheit, and with a slight wind blowing, the “feels like” temp is minus 19. Yikes! Don't put your tongue on the flagpole!! ☺ But it was so spectacular! The snow is crunchy beneath one's feet, the air is so fresh and clean, and the nighttime sky is absolutely gorgeous! Our thoughts immediately turn to our Amazing God, Who made it all! Indeed the hand of the Divine Artist is visible for all who would see! I know I've written the next words on more than once, but all I can say is, “*How great are Your works, O Lord; in wisdom You have made them all!*” (Ps. 103: 24)

If the sights are so beautiful here, what must heaven be like?! We even know the answer to that, don't we? “*Eyes have not seen, nor ears heard, nor have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.*” (1 Cor. 2: 9). Just take a look around you, and I'll bet wherever you are...on the top of a high mountain, in the quiet, stillness of a forest, in your own home just looking out the back window, or even your hospital bed, you will feel and know of the presence of God. He's always there waiting for you. Look for Him and truly expect He will somehow reveal Himself to you! And don't forget, He speaks in many ways! He's always there, ALWAYS THERE! Only, “Be still and know that I am God” He tells us in Psalm 46: 10. “I am with you always, yes, even unto the end of the world.” Mt. 28:20. In these glorious words we hear the promise of Jesus' real, although invisible, presence as it echoes the name, Emmanuel-God with us- given to Him in the first chapter of Matthew.

God's presence in our lives is exactly what we are celebrating during these days of Christmas time. “*Z Nami Boh, God is with us, Christ is Born! Glorify Him!*” Isn't it neat to still be celebrating the Nativity! The crazy world has tossed out the trees, put away the music, ate the last cookie and piece of fruitcake. Remember last week I told you how we Christians have to be counter-cultural...we celebrate and live our Faith in the world.

I was thinking about that this morning after Liturgy. In our Church of Holy Protection, we have an electronic carillon on which, besides the bells, we can play hymns and carols. Before the service, and then afterwards, we play the music for us, and for all the neighborhood to hear. I was wondering what the neighbors would be thinking when they heard the Christmas carols playing. “Crazy Byzantines...they forgot to change their tape.” “Who ever heard of Christmas music this late in January?” Or maybe, just maybe, someone heard it and said, “What a glorious sound to still hear the Carols of Christmas.” And so we will be celebrating the Nativity and singing and hearing those beautiful songs of the season to lift us up, and to lift up all who will hear it and join in with us. “Hey world: CHRIST IS BORN! GLORIFY HIM!”

January is slipping away and soon those sounds will be changed to those of another season. According to the “new calendar” this Sunday we will be hitting one of those “markers” or our yearly spiritual journey. January 18, 2015 is “The Sunday of Zaccheus” on our church calendar. Yep, it's that time again...the little guy is about to climb up that ol' Sycamore tree and meet Jesus face to face. All of us will be reflected in the person of Zaccheus- whatever he is and whatever he does, so are we; so we do.

We know that when we hear this gospel passage of the 32<sup>nd</sup> Sunday it is now time to add thoughts of the Great Fast to our prayer life, even though it is still Christmas. This is what they call “The Great Overlap.” It is very good when it happens like this because it shows us very clearly the continuing and

saving plan of our God for each of us. Nativity, Circumcision, Zaccheus, Encounter and then the Sundays of preparation and finally the beginning of the Great Fast. It is truly a blessed time!

This year Great Fast begins in less than a month on February 16; Flowery; Palm Sunday is March 29 and Glorious Pascha is April 5. That's for the New Calendar. Those who pray according to the Old Calendar, will be one week later with these special Sundays, as their Pascha is April 12.

As we have been doing for the past several years, the first week of the Fast will find all the priests, and a few deacons, at Mt. Alvernia where we will be having our yearly retreat. Today we received official notification of that and now our thoughts also turn to the upcoming time of prayer and repentance.

That's the church part. If you are a sports fan, particularly a football fan, you know of the happenings on that scene with the Bills hiring a new head coach. The media and fans have been wild with excitement! Since the announcement several days ago, the football stuff has been the only *really important* story on the local newscasts. When I see that, as priest, I can't help but wonder what a church would be like if some of the enthusiasm of a sports fan could be brought to church and parish things. What if a person was so on fire with God and His church that he would talk about it for hours, listen to others talk about it, read about it and watch it on television. Then he would be at "the Stadium"-the church as early as he could every time the "team"-priest and congregation were "playing"-praying. And he wouldn't be a bystander, but could actually be part of the team and the game! He could strive for the "goal line"-heaven and help to get his team to that prize and great trophy of victory, namely eternal life. Yes, we play, we watch sports, we enjoy it, and that's ok. However, we must be like Martha and Mary in St. Luke's gospel and know what is important and

know what the real priorities are. He said to Martha (to sports fans): "Martha, Martha you are anxious and upset about many things, but only one thing is necessary. Seek first the Kingdom of heaven!" Hope to see you at our tail gate party when we light the candles, say our prayers and prepare for the Liturgy! Always guaranteed to be a Super Game!! ☺

We must remember to send our prayers out this week for and "end to abortion and all those involved in abortion." Godspeed to the thousands and thousands who are about to journey to Washington to make their voices heard. May God bless them for their time, energy and talents! May their faith never waver! For those who cannot be physically at the March, we definitely join with them in Spirit as we become strong prayer warriors for the plight of the unborn and elderly. Those who



propose abortion are never still. They are always and everywhere chipping, chipping away and the babies continue to die. If anyone wants to know what is wrong with the world and these United States, it is clearly the disregard for life that has come about because of "the Law of the Land," abortion on demand. Just this week here in NY the State government has once again tried to push a so called "Women's Equality Act" which is nothing more than an attempt to further the taking of innocent lives. They have been after this for years and our present governor has been relentless in trying to get this passed, as well as his new lieutenant governor, both of them "Catholics." So let us pray! We pray for all those at the march and we pray especially for the poor innocents being slaughtered by the modern Herods, we pray for the modern Herods that their hearts will be changed. I hope you will pay close attention to the March this year and join in however you can, physically or spiritually. It is vitally important and the battle rages on! Be Blessed! Mary most Holy Theotokos protect you!

In His Love, Fr. Ray

### З радія "Милосердний Самарянин"

На тетраподі продовж цілого тижня ми можемо споглядати хрещення Господа Ісуса на іконі. Ця подія започатковує для нас нове життя. Не сприймаймо її ззовні, як глядачі чи слухачі. У цьому з'явленні Бога – у богоявленні – нам з'являється світло Пресвятої Тройці. Бо в цій величній події діє саме Пресвята Тройця, але діє Вона через Ісуса, Який є світлом від світла, Якого єдиного ми можемо бачити, торкатися, чути. Нехай через споглядання Ісуса на цій іконі ми наповнимся Його світлом, нехай наші серця наблизяться, уподібняться до Нього. Ми маємо стати «дітьми світла» (див. Еф. 5, 8). Господь хоче прийти в наші душі, щоб переіменити, обожествити їх. Звернімося до кількох висловів, записаних у Євангелії, і нехай Ісус просвітить нас через них.

Дивні для нас слова Ісуса, якими Він звертається до Йоана: «Личить нам здійснити всяку правду» (Мт. 3, 15). Слово «нам» тут дуже важливе. Бо воно охоплює і нас з вами! Щодо правди, то тут слід бути обережними з інтерпретацією. Йдеться не про ту справедливість, яку встановлюють судді чи трибунали. Слово «справедливість» в івриті, вживається стосовно відносин між батьком і дітьми, синівських відносин, і це чудова річ. Саме з такої позиції людина може віднайти правдиві відносини з Отцем.

Що робить Ісус, аби відновити людину на образ Божий? Він сходить до нас. Слово «сходить» також має важливе значення. У Символі віри ми кажемо: «Зійшов із небес». І справді, Ісус «розкриває небо», сходячи на землю задля любови до нас. У нашому світі здається, що небо закрите. Проте під час хрещення Ісуса воно розкрилося. Любов Отця до нас така сильна, що здатна відчинити найважчі двері. Ісус сходить до нас – і своїм хрещенням провіщає те, що згодом сповнив до кінця, зійшовши у своєму розп'ятті до незглибимого дна нашої людської смерті, а потім воскреснувши з гробу. Коли Ісус, охрестившись, піднімається з води, Він таким чином знаменує своє Воскресення.

Євангелист Лука пише, що Ісус, «охрестившись, молився» (Лк. 3, 21). Слово «молитва» також вжите не випадково. Тут не йдеться про звичайну молитву. Перед словом «молитися» є префікс «до». Той же прийменник вживає Йоан Богослов у своєму пролозі: «І Слово було Бог. З Богом було воно споконвіку» (Йо. 1, 1-2). Молитва Ісуса цілковито спрямована до Отця. І ми, які прийняли хрещення, також разом з Ним піднімаємося до Отця. У цьому сенсі хрещення Ісуса Христа – це явлення Пресвятої Тройці, Яка бере нас у свої обійми. І тоді в нас струменить нове життя, постійно підносячи нас до Отця.

Славлячи Пресвяту Тройцю, подумаймо про те, що споглядати Отця ми можемо саме в Його улюбленому Синіві. Ми справді підносимося до Отця, і свідченням того є, що Дух Отця сходить до нас, як Ісус. Святий Дух – найневловиміший із трьох Осіб. Він відкриває наше серце для слухання слова, і «у Його світлі ми побачимо світло» (Пс. 36, 10), Він – чудесний дар Отця в Сині. Дух «свідчить із нашим духом, що ми – діти Божі» (Рим. 8, 16).

Бути охрещеним – означає з Божою любов'ю зануритися у сопричастя. Пресвята Тройця – це наше середовище життя. У день хрещення Ісуса, як і в день преображення, Отець засвідчує, що дає нам своє життя у своєму улюбленому Синіві, і дає його через Святого Духа, Якого щедро зсилає на Сина. «Ти Син мій любий, тебе я вподобав» (див. Мт. 3, 17). Ці слова переіменуються зі словами ангелів у різдвяний час: «Слава на висотах Богу й на землі мир, людям Його вподобання» (Лк. 2, 14), а не людям доброї волі. Йдеться про Його волю любити нас. Він хоче для нас добра. У Христі Він хоче сповнити свій задум спасення. (о. Жан Корбон, *Це називається світанком*)

Звернім увагу також, що на преображенні є дуже важливий додаток: «Його слухайте!» За ним ми маємо іти, жити життям, що Він запропонував, чинити Його діла з любов'ю, з милосердям. Щиро і щедро.

**Христос Раждається! Славте Його!**



God of all peoples; Give us strength and courage to go through Samaria to meet our brothers and sisters from other churches. Allow us to go with an open heart so we may learn from each other.

Gracious God, often our churches are led to choose the logic of competition. Forgive our sin. We are weary from this need to be first. Allow us to rest at the well. Refresh us with the water of unity drawn from our common prayer.

Risen Lord, help us to move beyond limited horizons of self, through acknowledgement of our sin and seeing the divine in the other.

Loving God, help us to learn from Jesus and the Samaritan, that encounter opens for us the new horizons of grace. Help us to go beyond fear in following the call of your Son.

God, spring of the living water, awaken us to the truth that the gifts of the other are an expression of your unfathomable mystery. Make us sit at the well together to drink from your water which gathers us in unity and peace.

Triune God, following Jesus' example, make us witnesses to your love. May we become instruments of justice, peace and solidarity. May your Spirit move us towards concrete actions that lead to unity. May walls be transformed into bridges.

God of life, who calls us to justice and peace, may our security come not from arms, but from respect. May our force be not of violence, but of love. May our wealth be not in money, but in sharing. May our unity be not in the quest of power, but in the vulnerable witness to do your will. Open and confident, may we share today and forever, the bread of solidarity, justice and peace. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, who as a victim of our violence gave forgiveness to us all! Amen.

У Реабілітаційному центрі при Інституті медицини праці 15 січня відбулося театралізоване Різдвяне дійство. Діти організували свято для бійців, щоб показати свою активну життєву позицію, небайдужість до всього, що відбувається на Батьківщині, поділитися радістю, любов'ю, даруючи щирі дитячі посмішки.

Колядки, побажання миру, добра, теплі музичні передзвони, жваві, енергійні виступи дітей, – все це викликало позитивні емоції у наших бійців. Коментуючи події, вони зазначили, що такі заходи наповнюють найпозитивнішими враженнями, дарують радість, піднімають настрій, тому бійці з радістю чекають нових зустрічей.

Захід відбувся з ініціативи ГО «Всеукраїнської Народної Координаційної Ради Майдану» (ВНКРМ), за сприяння Відділу соціального служіння УПЦ (КП).

Діти прибули не з пустими руками, вони старанно трудилися разом з батьками, щоб пригостити бійців смачненьким, тому принесли з собою багато солодких презентів. Заступник директора школи №5 м. Києва Єфремова Наталія Сергіївна розказала, що це не перший їхній спільний захід з о.Сергієм, познайомились вони на футбольному матчі, коли учні їхньої школи грали з семінаристами. «Діти дуже раді брати участь у всіх заходах. Ми надсилаємо листи, подарунки, збираємо з дітьми гроші на фронт», – додала вона.

Заступник голови Відділу соціального служіння протоєрей Сергій Дмитрієв наголосив: «Це був виступ не звичайного вертепу, адже діти віддавали, вони не просто вітали, вони ще й принесли подарунки з собою. Поки ми не навчимося віддавати, ми не зможемо отримувати. Серед присутніх – багато дітей-переселенців зі Сходу України. І важливо навчити їх не просити, а навпаки віддавати. І цей захід є першим кроком».

Священик також наголосив на важливості побажати іншу сторону Донецька, що є патріотичний Донецьк, є віруючі люди, є люди, які бережуть традиції, тому проведення таких заходів є надзвичайно важливим. (RISU)

From "Good Samaritan" Ukr. Radio pr.

Today, we have reached a turning point in the liturgical year. For Jesus' last words in today's Gospel announce a different climate from that of the Nativity and the Baptism of Christ. "The Son of man has come to seek and to save that which was lost." Going beyond the Gospel of the incarnation, we enter into the Gospel of pardon and salvation. The time of Christmas and Epiphany has come to an end. Now another liturgical time is coming. Already in the distance, a procession moves toward us which is no longer that of the shepherds and Magi, or the Precursor and his disciples, but a procession in which praises are mixed with curses; where the standards of the King are coming - and already, though still distant, shines the mystery of the cross. We continue to read from the first Epistle to Timothy where St. Paul advises his disciple, who despite his youth is given high ecclesiastical responsibility, to be an example to all believers through his faith, his charity, and his purity. St. Paul especially exhorts Timothy to read attentively and to deepen his knowledge of doctrine. This call to meditation, to contemplation, continues to be of great importance. St. Paul writes: "Meditate on these things (divine things); give thyself wholly to them." As we are coming closer to the start of Great Lent, we should work out how, in practice, in the special circumstances of our own lives, we can reserve such a place for meditation on holy things, divine things, that will guide both our prayers and actions as we move closer to Christ's Passion and our salvation by His cross.

The Gospel for this Sunday tells us about the conversion of the publican, named Zacchaeus. As Jesus passes through Jericho after healing the blind man, this rich publican climbs a tree, to better see Jesus. Then our Lord, having caught sight of Zacchaeus, says to him: "Make haste and come down; for today I must abide in your house." Christ's words to Zacchaeus remind us of those from Revelation which are so moving: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him and

sup with him, and he with me." Jesus is saying to us what he has already said to Zacchaeus. He wants to come into our home, into our soul – not in a few days' time or tomorrow – but at this very instant: "Today I must abide in thy house". Why do we postpone the inner change which could make Jesus our guest? We can in any moment open the door to the Lord. Let us lose no time, after all Jesus said: "Make haste and come down". For Zacchaeus - to come down - meant leaving his observation post in the sycamore tree and getting back to earth; for us, it also means renouncing all those poor pretenses by which we try to raise ourselves above others. To leave behind all forms of vanity and pride, for only on the ground can we meet Jesus – and only with humility. Zacchaeus obeys and hurries down, but what about each of us?

Those who witnessed today's Gospel scene murmured: "He has gone to be a guest with a man that is a sinner..." And Jesus declares: "The Son of man has come to seek and to save that which was lost." That which was lost, to seek and to save, means there is certainly hope for all of us. The compassion of Christ is clear - Jesus walks past the religious leaders, past the leading citizens of the community and calls upon Zacchaeus by name - Jesus could have very easily passed by Zacchaeus, but this man was still precious to Jesus, even though he was a sinner. Uninvited, Christ stopped and spoke to Zacchaeus. Uninvited, Christ offered Himself to be a guest in Zacchaeus' home. Uninvited, Christ sent renewing grace into the heart of this man, and brought salvation to his home. Salvation is restoration and completion. Salvation is being made perfect and being able to cast off everything that hurts, everything that is heavy, and to be able to see Christ as He is, to be able to know the true nature of things. Salvation is when a soul changes and Zacchaeus was indeed changing. If we look not so hard at this beautiful story in today's Gospel, perhaps we can see ourselves in it, and learn the simple lesson that Zacchaeus learned from our Lord that day.



Zacchaeus was all caught up in the affairs of this world; for him it was his shady business of tax-collecting which brought him fortune. We too, get caught up in worldly things: our careers, our homes, our clothing, our food and entertainment, and whatever else comes to mind, and sometimes even at the expense of others and unjustly. Often these things become so overwhelming, they block out God from our lives - we are so busy doing what we think is so important and so necessary; then it dawns on us that we are empty, something is missing in our lives - what could it be?



And in order to see what is missing, like Zacchaeus, we have to rise above the clamor of this world. We have to humble ourselves and realize how small of stature we really are with God, even though we may be of great stature and very successful to the rest of the world. We have to stop like Zacchaeus and be willing to listen and humble ourselves in order to find Christ; and when we make this effort to do so, we suddenly realize how sinful we are, and how much in need we are of God's mercy and forgiveness. And like Zacchaeus, we soon realize just how much we need the Lord to come and be a guest in our house - how much we need Jesus to take control of our lives and change us for the better.

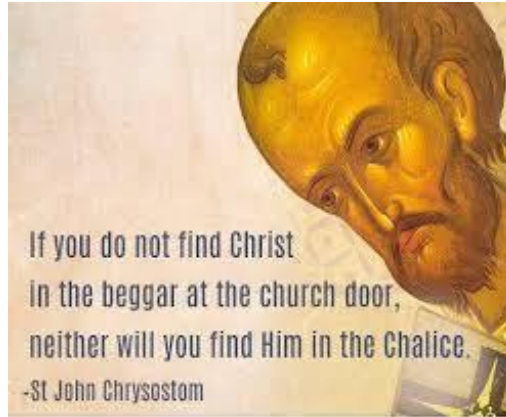


Ruth went to her mail box and there was only one letter. She picked it up and looked at it before opening, but then she looked at the envelope again. There was no stamp, no postmark, only her name and address. She read the letter: Dear Ruth, I am going to be in your neighborhood Saturday afternoon and I would like to stop by for a visit. Love Always, Jesus. Her hands were shaking as she placed the letter on

the table. "Why would the Lord want to visit me? I'm nobody special. I don't have anything to offer." With that thought, Ruth remembered her empty kitchen cabinets. Oh my goodness, I really don't have anything to offer. I'll have to run down to the store and buy something for dinner." She reached for her purse and counted out its contents. Five dollars and forty cents! Well, I can get some bread and cold cuts, at least." She threw on her coat and hurried out the door. A loaf of French bread, a half-pound of sliced turkey, and a carton of milk left Ruth with a grand total of twelve cents to last her until Monday.

Nonetheless, she felt good as she headed home, her meager offerings tucked under her arm. "Hey lady, can you help us, lady?" Ruth had been so absorbed in her dinner plans; she hadn't even noticed two figures huddled in the alleyway. A man and a woman, both of them dressed in little more than rags. "Look lady, I don't have a job, you know, and my wife and I have been living out here on the street, and, well, now it's getting cold and we're getting kind of hungry and, well, if you could help us, lady, we'd really appreciate it." Ruth looked at them both. They were dirty, they smelled bad and, frankly, she was certain that they could get some kind of work if they really wanted to. "Sir, I'd like to help you, but I'm a poor woman myself. All I have is a few cold cuts and some bread, and I'm having an important guest for dinner tonight and I was planning on serving that to Him."

"Yeah, well, okay lady, I understand. Thanks anyway." The man put his arm around the woman's shoulders, turned and headed back into the alley. As she watched them leave, Ruth felt a familiar twinge in her heart. "Sir, wait!" The couple stopped and turned as she ran down the alley after them. "Look, why don't you take this food. I'll figure out something else to serve my guest." She handed the man her grocery bag. "Thank you, lady. Thank you very much!" It was the man's wife, and Ruth could see now that she was shivering. "You know, I've got another coat at home. Here, why don't you take this one?" Ruth unbuttoned her jacket and slipped it over the woman's shoulders. Then smiling, she turned and walked back to the street - without her coat and with nothing to serve her guest. "Thank you, lady!



Thank you very much!" Ruth was chilled by the time she reached her front door, and worried too. The Lord was coming to visit and she didn't have anything to offer Him. She fumbled through her purse for the door key. But as she did, she noticed another envelope in her mailbox. "That's odd. The mailman doesn't usually come twice in one day." She took the envelope out of the box and opened it. Dear Ruth, It was so good to see you again. Thank you for the lovely meal and thank you, too, for the beautiful coat. Love Always, Jesus. The air was still cold, but even without her coat, Ruth no longer noticed.

Christ comes to us in the people we meet every day, through the gifts of the Holy Spirit. But we need to become His children today, we need to spiritually climb the sycamore tree with Zacchaeus - so we might rise above our foolish cares and begin to see clearly that which is truly needed in our lives - a genuine relationship with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Even Zacchaeus experienced a humbling transformation, a conversion of his heart, and adopted a new attitude in his life. Salvation was

brought to his home, as restitution came over his heart. Let us make haste and come down from our sins and pride, make haste to open our house to the Lord, make haste to humble ourselves and appreciate everything that we do have in our lives. I am not talking about our possessions, but rather the people we love and the relationship we have with the Lord, who gives us all these things. Our sycamore tree is the Holy Church; from this place we look toward Christ for the forgiveness of our sins, and the reformation of our lives. Zacchaeus was given a second chance to begin leading a just and righteous life. This undersized man was the least likely to succeed, the least likely to share, and the most unlikely candidate to be saved - but Jesus proclaimed him a "Son of Abraham". When we allow our lives to change course and reflect all the fullness of God that is revealed to us through Jesus - our lives are transformed in extraordinary ways. God does not love us because we are good, but we can become good because He loves us.

