

Last Friday, despite the cold, Kitchen Ladies came to make varenyky. Supervisor on her throne looks on. ThankYou!



49 Branch UNWLA (SUA). Liturgy for Olga Basarab. Eternal Memory! Вічна Пам'ять!



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SAINT NICHOLAS UKRAINIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH
 УКРАЇНЬКА КАТОЛИЦЬКА ЦЕРКВА СВЯТОГО МИКОЛАЯ

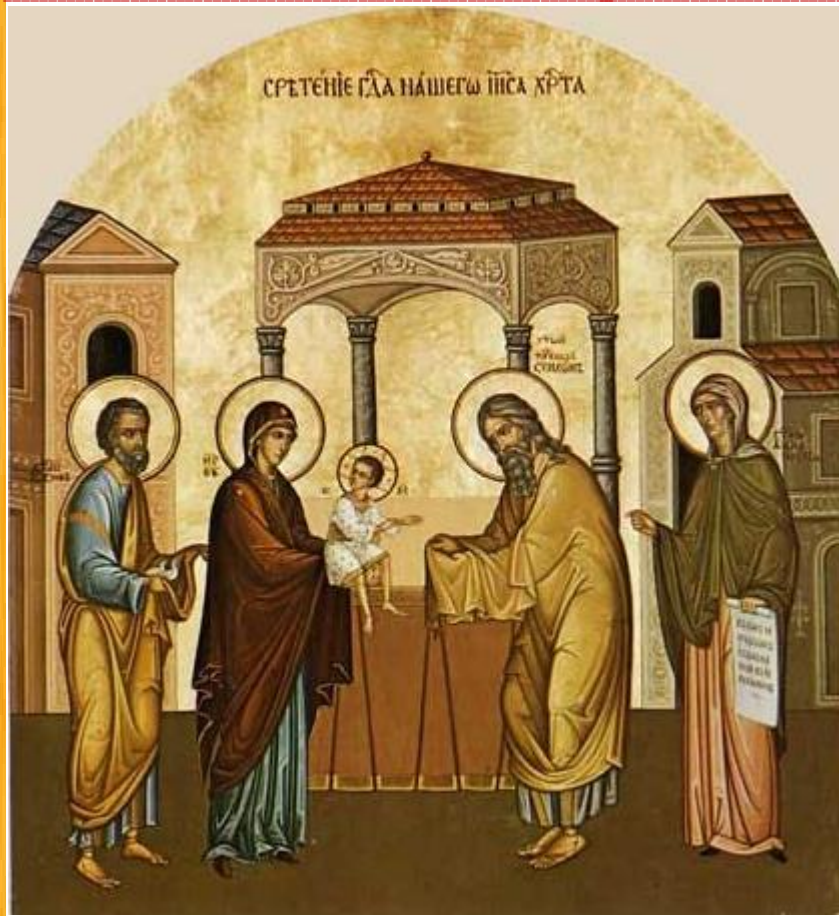


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ПІД ОПІКОЮ
 ПРЕЧИСТОЇ ДІВИ
 МАРІЇ ОДІГТРІЇ
 UNDER THE
 PROTECTION OF
 MOTHER OF GOD



CHURCH BULLETIN
 February 15 – 2015 – 15 Лютого
 ЦЕРКОВНИЙ ВІСНИК



Що ж за меч пронизає душу Богородиці? Це є пророцтвом про розп'яття, яке чекає на її Сина. Бо цвяхи і спис, від яких Він прийме смерть, пройдуть нестерпним болем і через серце Його Матері. Є ікона Богородиці, яка яскраво ілюструє це пророцтво, вона має назву "Пом'ягшення злих сердець".

Симеон: «Меч душу прошиє самій же Тобі, - щоб відкрились думки сердець багатьох».

CHURCH BULLETIN

Feb. 15 – 2015 – 15 Лютого

ЦЕРКОВНИЙ ВІСНИК

LITURGICAL SCHEDULE



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

ПОР'ЯДОК СВ. ЛІТУРГІЙ

4:30 PM +John & Mary Colomon
(Alex & Nadine Burkholder)

Feb. 15 Cheese-Fare Sunday – Сиропусна Неділя

12:00 PM За Парохіян – For Parishioners

Monday, February 16 Лютого, Понеділок

10:00 AM see Julian

Tuesday, February 17 Лютого, Вівторок

No services – Нема відправ

Clergy Retreat – Реколекції

Thursday, February 19 Лютого, Четвер

Friday, February 13 Лютого, П'ятниця

12:00 PM Presanctified gifts & Sorokouste

Sat. January 21 Лютого Субота

9:00 AM +Лев і Степанія Мельник (Анна Мельник)

4:30 PM +Mary Petryshyn – 4 years
(Husband Peter)

Feb. 22 1 Sunday of Lent – 1 Неділя Посту

12:00 PM За Парохіян – For Parishioners

The Eternal Light burns in mem. of
+Dorothy Kordrupel
Requ. by Ann Kordrupel

Вічне Світло в честь П.Д.М.
горить за МІР В УКРАЇНІ

March 22nd – One Liturgy at 10 AM
Annual Parish Meeting

Річне Парохіяльне Засідання
22 Березня, 2015

15 Лютого: М'ясопусна Неділя

10:00 p. +Федір Папіж (дружина Галя)

16 Лютого: Симеона і Анни

10:00 p. +Александра Грега (Богуслава Лонг)

22 Лютого: Сиропусна Неділя

10:00 p. +Ярослав Стасюк (М. Л. Стасюк)

(Сьогодні також згадаймо у своїх
Молитвах Св. Пам. Василя Савку)

IMPORTANT DATES

Stewardship meeting

Sunday February 15th after 12:00 Liturgy

February 21st - Religion (10:00 candle
blessing, Panachyda, talk about lent)

February 26th LUC MEETING 6:30 pm

2015 LUC dues are now payable. Please
make checks (\$7.00) payable to
League of Ukrainian Catholics, Niagara
Frontier Council.

Dues can be sent to

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Church Directories are available on
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Suggested donation - \$5.00.

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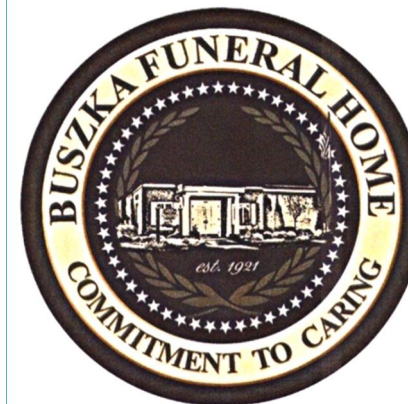
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<http://www.ukrainiansofbuffalo.com>

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

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"Brothers! We Shall Live!" tour to Rochester
NY as part of a Humanitarian Aid for Ukraine
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many songs from the newest UBC recording,
"Brothers! We Shall Live!"

Sunday, March 15 at 2:30pm

Hochstein School of Music & Dance

50 Plymouth Avenue North,
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TICKET INFORMATION

Purchase your tickets at Ukrainian FCU branch
locations in Rochester, Webster, Syracuse, or
Buffalo. Visit http://rufcu.org/contact_us.php
for branch information or call the main office at
(585) 544-9518.

\$25 - General Admission

\$20 - General Admission for Ukr. FCU members

\$10 - Students (ages 21 and under)

General Admission Tickets can also be
purchased online at:

<http://ubcrochester.eventbrite.com>

Please note that discounted tickets for
Ukrainian FCU members and student tickets
cannot be purchased online.

"The Vibrant Parish..."

Leadership

The parish is a community of faithful who, under the leadership of the bishop and their pastors, fulfill their calling to unity with God the Father through our Lord Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit. The Lord Jesus constantly acts in our communities through the Holy Spirit sending down His gifts for the development and growth of His Body. The Apostle Paul thus explains: "And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ," (Eph 4:11-13). The leadership of the parish community is exercised under the leadership of the bishop as head and father. Each parish should be an organized community in which, under the care of their pastor and in cooperation with him, members serve one another according to the gifts which they received from the Lord.

Therefore, church leadership is not the fulfillment of a particular administrative office, but first of all service to God and neighbor. In practice this means that for a parish to be vibrant, it must have active parish and pastoral councils. In addition, a parish must have well-formed and mature co-workers who assist the priest in leading catechetical schools, church brotherhoods, charitable works, youth organizations and prayer groups. One of the most important responsibilities of leadership in the parish community is discerning God's will and searching for the best ways of implementing it in the life of the parish.

(To be cont.)



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

God does not want us to get discouraged or overwhelmed by our sins. When St. Paul the Apostle looked into his own life, he exclaimed "I do not

understand what I do; for I do not do what I would like to do, but instead I do what I hate" (Rom. 7:15).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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!
- Lent starts February 16 according to Gregorian and February 23 according to Julian Calendar.

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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(ПІД ОПІКОЮ ПРЕЧИСТОЇ
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Сповідь: Перед Св. Літургіями

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Хрещення: За домовленням

Marriage: Contact 6 months in advance

Вінчання: Голоситися 6 місяців скорше

Religion classes – Релігійна Програма
Субота - Saturday

Ministry to the sick - Опіка над xvorymy

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Rev. Raymond Palko, visiting priest

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ШЕВЧЕНКА

в Неділю, 8 березня 2015
року о 1-й годині

В залі церкви

Святого Івана Хрестителя
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12:00 - 1:00

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Letter from Fr. Ray Feb. 15, 2015

Glory to Jesus Christ!

Dear _____
(Say your name right here for your very own personal letter)

I'm back! Awful sorry about your empty mailbox the last two weeks! Presbytera Joanne and I have been out of town for some vacation time-definitely as the soldiers call it: “R & R.” That would be rest and recuperation, recharging the batteries and all that. We had a great time in some beautiful warm weather and, even though we've been home for about a week, we've still not become used to this fierce winter weather with its piles and piles of snow.

When we were away we knew it was snowing here every day, but it was still a shock to arrive home and see it all. Wow! Thank God, we had the melt we did after our “Snovember” incident. Think about that...what would life be like around here had we not been given room for all this ‘bounty’ that we've got now. It's now well into February, so hopefully we can hang on a few more weeks and soon we'll start to feel the change and see the snow go back to the North Pole.

But one good and encouraging thing I did notice is that we are already getting a lot more daylight. All the houseplants near a window or in a nicely lighted room, already have their little faces turned toward the sunshine. It is Thursday February 12 (Happy Birthday-Eternal Memory, President Abraham Lincoln! We thank God for the gift of your life and all that you were, and still are, to this country and to people all around the world) and today the sun came up at 7:17am and the sunset will be at 5:42pm. Remember on the first day of winter when I told you the days were going to begin to get longer? Well, it's been happening all along, but now it is really noticeable. We are definitely going in the right direction, if you are sick of all the snow and cold! Soon all this will be another distant memory.

Yes, a lot of snow has fallen, and a lot of water has gone over the dam since I last wrote to you. It's winter in the north, and the snows, winds and cold

have come, and continue to come; the Buffalo Bills have been on their usual extended vacation by missing the playoffs for yet another year; the Sabres are absolutely pathetic as they struggle to win a game month. Then there's good ol' “Punxsutawney Phil,” and by now, we all know he saw his shadow on February 2. Now it's less than six weeks of winter! I hear a lot of towns and cities which have been buffeted by Ol' Man Winter have a bounty on poor Phil's head. Somebody once said don't shoot the messenger and good ol' Phil just calls ‘em as he sees ‘em.

As you see by the Christian greeting on the top of this sheet, our cycle of holy days, which we began way back on November 15, has now come to an end and we already find ourselves about to depart on our annual “Paschal Pilgrimage,” as we begin the Great Fast and our preparations for Holy Pascha. Pascha is on April 5th (n.s.) and April 12 (o.s.) this year. So this coming Monday, February 16 will be “Clean Monday” or the first day of Great Fast for this year. This first week of this holy time also is the signal for the annual clergy retreat.

For a good many years now, the priests of the Eparchy of Stamford have been called to make their yearly retreat during the first week of the Great Fast. So on Monday, February 16, we will once again be making our way to the Franciscan retreat house on Mt. Alvernia, located in Wappingers Falls, NY. We'll be there until Thursday February 19. You can expect your priest home sometime late Thursday. Hope the weather is ok for the drive. We've had more than one “interesting” winter drive over the years as we've made our way down there and back.

Our ‘Clergy Days’ which occur in the spring and fall are usually good ‘R&R’ days. When we gather for the annual retreat it's not so much for “rest and recuperation” as it is for the re-charging of our batteries, spiritual batteries, that is. Is this what the kids call ‘powering up?’ ☺

Each year during the first week of the Great Fast your priests of the Eparchy of Stamford are called to do for themselves all the things of which they will

soon be reminding their congregations. This coming week will be a time of great graces and will be an opportunity for confession (yes, priest's really do go to confession!), to hear the retreat master's sermons, to read a little and also to begin the cycle of the Lenten services which will put us in the right spirit and right frame of mind and focus for the Fast. Time to put on our game faces!

Speaking of this retreat, I am reminded that The League of Ukrainian Catholics has just announced their annual retreat for lay people. It will be held in Sloatsburg, NY at St. Mary's Villa Retreat Center from March 20-22. If you've thought about making a retreat, or perhaps just didn't know how to go about it, consider this weekend. You can't get any better people than the LUC 'ers and I guarantee it will be a worthwhile time. Check your parish bulletins, bulletin boards, etc., for full information.

I hope you can say, "I'm looking forward to the Great Fast." This annual time of grace is indeed a great gift from God for our spiritual well-being and should be welcomed and embraced and never taken lightly. Too often, and wrongly so, the Great Fast is like the guy when asked, "Why are you banging your head on the wall?" and he answers, "Because it feels so good when I stop!" ☺ ☺

When the time of Lent is over, it will feel really great, not because we get to "stop what we've been doing," but to continue it, and embrace the goal for which we had been striving – "Glorious and Radiant Pascha!" Our Risen Lord calls us to Himself to once again re-commit ourselves to Him, to re-create ourselves so that we indeed are His image and likeness, and to arrive at the empty tomb and we will see Him and meet Him face to face as He bestows that greatest of all gifts upon us-Eternal Life!

That is what makes us able to continue through this valley of the shadow of death. "We know the rest of the story," and we walk as children of light and of the day and celebrate the presence and love of our God among us and with us. Sometimes a storm comes and it looks like the end of the world, but just a few thousand feet above us, the sun is

spectacularly shining. Now the cold and ice are all around us, but again we are comforted knowing it will soon be gone. It's warm somewhere, and somewhere the sun is shining, even though it's not right outside the door. Soon we'll get our turn.

Sometimes when we are overwhelmed by life and the situations in which we find ourselves... be it family problems, job concerns, sickness, loneliness or any of the other distractions and setbacks of this world we only need to remember that even though the storm is raging, the sun is still shining. Actually, that would be, "The SON is shining." He is always with us and comforts us and guides us and will give us everything we need unto salvation. All we gotta do is remember Him and ask Him! He will surely bless us. He will embrace us and take away the cold from our bodies and our hearts with the warmth of His everlasting Love. May we all be blessed this Lent to come to know and love Him as never before!

This is "Forgiveness Sunday" and I ask your forgiveness for any wrongs or hurt I have done to you. It is also Valentine's weekend and I leave you with a grateful heart and send you my love. I missed you... glad to be back!! May God bless you and our Holy Lady Theotokos protect you and keep you.

In His Love, Fr. Ray

**СТИПЕНДІЙНА АКЦІЯ 49-ГО
ВІДДІЛУ СУА ПОВІДОМЛЯЄ,
ЩО З 1-ГО ЛЮТОГО 2015 РОКУ,
РОЗПОЧИНАЄМО ЗБІРКУ НА
"СТИПЕНДІЙНИЙ ФОНД СУА" ДЛЯ
НЕЗАМОЖНОЇ МОЛОДІ В УКРАЇНІ.**

**ЧЕКИ МОЖНА ВИПИСІВАТИ:
UKRAINIAN NATIONAL WOMENS
LEAGUE. МИНУЛОРИЧНІ ЗВІТИ Є У
РЕФЕРЕНТОК СТИПЕНДІЙ:**

**Зірка Яцишин-Банч - 668-9504
та Оксана Салдит - 832-9331**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

God does not want us to get discouraged or overwhelmed by our sins. When St. Paul the Apostle looked into his own life, he exclaimed "I do not

understand what I do; for I do not do what I would like to do, but instead I do what I hate" (Rom. 7:15).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

З радія "Милосердний Самарянин"

У нинішньому євангельському читанні М'ясопустної неділі чули ми як осягнути життя, вічне з Господом. На кінці часу, читаємо у євангелії від Матея, перед Господом зберуться усі народи і зачнеться суд над ними. Ніхто не буде вийнятий спід нього, не буде ніякого першенства або якогонебудь оправдання, не можна буде підкупити справедливого суддю, ані втекти, ані сховатися. Усе там буде відкрито, нічого не затаїться.

На основі чого Христос нас буде судити?

На основі нашого життя, а головню відношення до наших ближніх.

І Христос відлучить один від одних, як пастух відлучує овець від козлів, і поставить овець праворуч себе а козлів ліворуч. Тоді цар скаже тим, що праворуч його: Прийдіть, благословені Отця мого, візьміть у спадщину царство, що було приготоване вам від створення світу. Бо я голодував і ви дали мені їсти, мав спрагу і ви мене напоїли, чужинцем був і ви мене прийняли, нагий і ви мене одягли, хворий і ви навідалися до мене, у тюрмі був і ви прийшли до мене."

Рівнож скаже тим що ліворуч: "Ідіть від мене геть прокляті, в вогонь вічний, приготований дяволіві і ангелам його, бо я голодував і ви не дали мені їсти, мав спрагу і ви мене не напоїли, чужинцем був і ви мене не прийняли, нагий і ви мене не одягли, хворий і ви не навідалися до мене, у тюрмі був і ви не прийшли до мене."

І одні і другі не можуть зрозуміти, коли то вони бачили Христа і послужили або не послужили йому і приходять вияснення: "Усе що ви зробили одному з мої братів найменших – ви мені зробили, і усе те, чого ви не зробили одному з моїх братів найменших – мені також ви того не зробили." І підуть, сказано одні на вічну кару а праведники – на життя вічне. Оце і є спосіб як бачити Господа лицем у лице. Коли бачимо потребуєчих і зрозуміємо, що у них перебуває Христос, якому ми приходимо на допомогу, то і Христос побачить себе у нас, і нам прийде на допомогу, і знами буде перебувати на віки.

Сьогодні також Стрітіння Господа Бога і Спаса нашого Ісуса Христа. Нехай наші серця наповняться радістю і світлом у день цього чудового свята. Сьогодні Ісуса принесено, даровано, посвячено Отцеві у Його людській особі.

Стрітіння означає зустріч. Про яку зустріч тут мова? Про ту, яка відбулася в єрусалимському храмі за законом Мойсея, і завдяки якій така ж таїнственна зустріч щомиті можлива для нас. Навіть тоді, коли тілесними очима ми бачимо чоловіків, жінок, дітей, старців, це Ісус приходить до нас, і ми мусимо Його зустріти. Просімо, щоб Богородиця навчила цього наше серце.

У центрі цієї події ми бачимо Богородицю, яка позбувається своєї Дитини. Дитина вже їй не належить. Вона посвячує Його, приносить улюбленого Сина Отцеві, від Якого отримала Його. Він не її, і вона віддає Його Отцеві. Дивна річ, що приймає Ісуса з її рук старець Симеон. І через цей незвичайний момент нам також запропоновано прийняти Його до свого серця. У ту мить обітниця, яку Бог виконав у своїй вірності, зустрічається з очікуванням – очікуванням Симеона та нашим очікуванням. Відбувається зустріч обітниці з її сповненням, зустріч Ісуса, дарованого Матір'ю, і серця, яке вміло чекати Його.

Богородиця виконує більше, ніж припис закону. Вона на правду сповнює обітницю, ту, якій Авраам посвятив усе в своєму житті, аж до пожертви власного сина Богові, сина, якого він отримав у дарунок з ласки Божої. Бо і він зрозумів у вірі, що повинен позбутися свого сина, віддаючи його Богові, Богові, Який не бере, а лише віддає себе безкорисливо. Чому Авраам приносить цю самовіддану жертву? Бо Його серце цілковито посвячене серцю Бога, Який віддає нам свого єдиного улюбленого Сина, щоб усі люди мали життя.

Серце благодатної Богородиці того дня зливається із серцем Отця, що розкрилося, аби віддати нам свою Дитину. Тому Симеон наперед духом бачить її серце там, де все звершиться – під хрестом, – де меч болю проше серце Богородиці, і вона віддасть свого Сина, Який уже належить не їй, а лише Отцеві, а через Нього – всім дітям Отця. У ту мить вона стає нашою матір'ю, матір'ю всіх живих (див. Йо. 19, 25 – 27) ...

From "Good Samaritan" Ukr. Radio pr.

Today is the Sunday of Forgiveness, and it is also the day before we enter into our Great Lent. We have been given a blueprint for our life within today's Gospel reading. God is ready to forgive us, but are we ready to be forgiving? The Holy Scripture says, the Saints say, the Holy Spirit directs us to: *'forgive, forgive, and forgive'*. Jesus lets us know that if we refuse to forgive, then we really have not grasped our own need for forgiveness. When we have our eyes fixed on the cross, and the pain and suffering that Jesus endured in order to forgive us and cleanse us from our sin, it can appear pretty foolish not to forgive those who have trespassed against us. By forgiving one another, we are ultimately trusting that God is in control. We release our own right to get even, and allow the forgiveness that God grants us to flow through our hearts and into another person. Genuine forgiveness is demonstrated in our willingness to pray for and to facilitate good things happening in the lives of those who have hurt us. We cannot undo the sins that we commit, no more than we can go back in time and remove the wounds Christ endured, but we can seek His forgiveness. Forgiveness is something we can still receive, each and every day, but we have to be willing to humbly approach the Lord in order to receive His absolution.

Today's Gospel reading, taken from the book of St. Matthew (6:14-21), opens with this precept of forgiveness. *"If you forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, then neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."* The fact that the Church has chosen this verse from scripture shows its clear intention of making forgiveness the dominant theme as we enter into our Great Fast. Truthfully, forgiveness does not come easy, but since we are made in the image of Christ, then we too must be forgiving – we must be willing to forgive one another and to allow the Lord to help us forgive ourselves. Forgiveness is something we may think about every day – we are often faced with situation where people hurt us – but is our forgiveness

something that we truly demonstrate time and time again? When Peter asked the Lord if he should forgive seven times, Jesus replied, *"Not seven times. But I tell you seventy times seven."* St. Paul reminds us that love keeps no record of wrongs. Love covers a multitude of sins. We should learn to forgive as God forgives. When we perform an act of kindness, or offer our sincere prayers, especially for the benefit of one who may have hurt us - we can change our own attitude as well as theirs. I have found that one of the most difficult things to forgive, one of the hardest hurdles to overcome is how we forgive ourselves. The slate does not wipe so clean when it comes to our own conscience, our own offenses, the ways in which we know we have hurt or offended others. But those are the occasions when we need to pray to the Lord most fervently, because only He can wash away all sin and all tragedy, only He can help us remove the nails that pierce at our very souls, and only He can make us whole again.

Several years ago, when my grandparents were still alive, we bought them a new microwave oven. My grandmother had bravely taken on her ancient 1980's toaster oven for far too long, and I did not like the scars she had to prove it. She had been burned numerous times on the elements that were exposed, and had to leave food in far longer than she should have to get it to a suitable temperature. She grinned a huge smile when I walked into her kitchen with that new microwave. She was very grateful and appreciative. She watched intently as I unplugged the old toaster oven to make room for the new microwave. I even decided to take that huge old clunker down to the local dump to get it out of the way permanently, but then my grandmother stopped me just as she saw her beloved appliance leaving the house. She asked me to simply put that old thing in her basement. She wanted to keep it stored there. I asked her why she wanted to keep that piece of junk when there was an updated version ready to be used, sitting in her kitchen. "Just in case", she replied. I thought to myself, 'just in case', you must

be kidding me, but I knew that when my grandmother had made up her mind there was no sense in trying to change it. Years later, when both she and my grandfather passed away, that beat up 1980's toaster was still in her basement, just where I left it... just in case. When I looked at that ancient piece of scrap metal, something dawned inside of me. If this was the worst thing that my grandmother held onto, then she led a pretty righteous life. God has given us so many new things to get excited about. His spirit lives in us, but sometimes along the way, we are tempted to store old habits, bad habits, desires that eventually become hindrances, and even sins... "Just in case". But why would we want to hold onto anything old, when the new has come? St. Paul reminds us of this in his second letter to the Corinthians: *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here"* (2 Cor. 5:17). Old habits are often comfortable, but they are not useful. My grandmother may have stored that old toaster in her basement for years, 'just in case', but she never did use it again. Today, we need to think about what we are holding onto, and I do not mean those possessions we hold dear, but rather those old habits that keep us in sin. What things do we need to get rid of in order to make a more spiritually fulfilled journey through Lent?

"If we admit that we have sinned and confess our sins; He is faithful and just and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:19) God is faithful and He will forgive us, no matter how far off track we have gone, no matter how far we have run, or how much time we have lost to our sinful desires. God is willing to take our old, our brokenness, and replace it with His grand 'newness' of divine life! We do not have to go one more day or take one more step with the shame of yesterday's choices, or have unwise decisions weighing us down. God was willing to honor so many, who came before us, like Jonah and Solomon and Paul, even after their mistakes, and I trust that God will honor

each of us when we ask for His forgiveness. *"Therefore the Lord longs to be gracious to you, and therefore He waits on high to have compassion on you. For the Lord is a God of justice, how blessed are all those who long for Him."* (Isaiah 30:18) The Holy Spirit extends to us an opportunity to come back into a relationship with God, but do we accept this opportunity to live forgiven?



Great Lent begins for us tomorrow and because this time of fasting, is more than anything else, a period during which we concentrate more intently on prayer and forgiveness, let us take a moment to think about the awesome privilege of prayer. A wise priest once said, "Before I speak with people, I speak with God, so that when I speak to people, I may have something of value to say". The great importance of prayer can be clearly seen in the life of Jesus that we read throughout the Gospels. Every

major decision in the life of Jesus was preceded by prayer. He prayed before His baptism. He prayed all night before choosing His disciples. Jesus prayed before His transfiguration. He prayed early in the morning and late at night. He even prayed to His Heavenly Father before His passion. Jesus prayed in order to share in the complete fullness of God the Father. Keeping that in mind, we need to ask ourselves: How much of God do we want? Do we want only a few pennies worth, or do we want the whole fullness of His presence as He wants to be able to give it to us? Someone once wrote, "We may have as much of God as we will. Christ puts the key of the treasure chamber into our hand, and bids us to take all that we want. If a man is admitted into a billion dollar vault of a bank, and told to help himself, and comes out with only a few cents, then truthfully whose fault is it that he is poor?"

It was Mother Theresa who once said: *'If we really want to love, then we must learn how to forgive'*. Forgiveness is above all a personal choice, a decision of the heart to go against the natural instinct to repay evil for evil, or to hold ourselves

responsible for the things we seem unable to forgive. The measure of such a decision is the love of God who draws us to Himself despite our sins. The Lord wipes clean the slate of our iniquity. It has its perfect exemplar in the forgiveness of Christ, who on the Cross and in great agony, prayed: *"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do"* (Luke 23:34). If we can achieve a depth of forgiveness anything like that - which Jesus extends to us - we indeed shall find an incredible peace that will accompany us throughout our Lenten journey and all our days ahead. St. Paul wrote, *"We are to be kind and forgiving of each other, even as Christ forgave us"* (Eph. 4:32). When we really think about it, what hope has hatred ever given? What argument has ever been aided by anger? What problems have been resolved by revenge? What tragedies have ever been avoided by blame? Our brothers and sisters are so much more than what we perceive they did to us, just like you and I are more than a compilation of our sins and offenses. We are God's children on a journey toward remembering ourselves and our place in Heavenly Jerusalem. Through Christ's actions, because of His Spirit living in us, we can here and now experience forgiveness, reconciliation, and wholeness with God, because Christ bridged the gap between salvation and sin, between life and death - between God and us!

49-ий Відділ СУА повідомляє, що запланований обід, 15. Лютого, 2015 р. Не відбудеться. Обід буде переставлений на інший день.

UNWLA Branch 49 regrets that the luncheon on Sunday, February 15, 2015 will not take place because of bad weather. It will be rescheduled to another date.

Thoughts on Fasting

"If there is no element of asceticism in our lives, if we give free rein to the desires of the flesh (taking care of course to keep within the limits of what seems permissible to the world), we shall find it hard to train for the service of Christ. When the flesh is satisfied it is hard to pray with cheerfulness or to devote oneself to a life of service which calls for much self-renunciation." — Dietrich Bonhoeffer

"Let us not believe that an external fast from visible food alone can possibly be sufficient for perfection of heart and purity of body unless with it there has also been united a fast of the soul. For the soul also has its foods that are harmful. Slander is its food and indeed one that is very dear to it. A burst of anger also supplies it with miserable food for an hour and destroys it as well with its deadly savor. Envy is food of the mind, corrupting it with its poisonous juices and never ceasing to make it wretched and miserable at the prosperity and success of another. Vanity is its food which gratifies the mind with a delicious meal for a time but afterward strips it clear and bare of all virtue. Then vanity dismisses it barren and void of all spiritual fruit. All lust and shift wanderings of heart are a sort of food for the soul, nourishing it on harmful meats but leaving it afterwards without a share of its heavenly bread and really solid food. If then, with all the powers we have, we abstain from these in a most holy fast our observance of the bodily fast will be both useful and profitable." — John Cassian

Fasting is an exceptional virtue; it represses bodily impulses and gives strength to the soul to fight against the poisoning of the heart through the senses, and provides it with a remedy against any past poisoning. Fasting causes the mind to be cleansed constantly. It withers up every evil thought and brings healthy, godly thoughts -- holy thoughts that enlighten the mind and kindle it with more zeal and spiritual fervor.

— Elder Ephraim of Philotheou Mount Athos

~~~ Fast from gossip and evil thoughts!!! ~~~