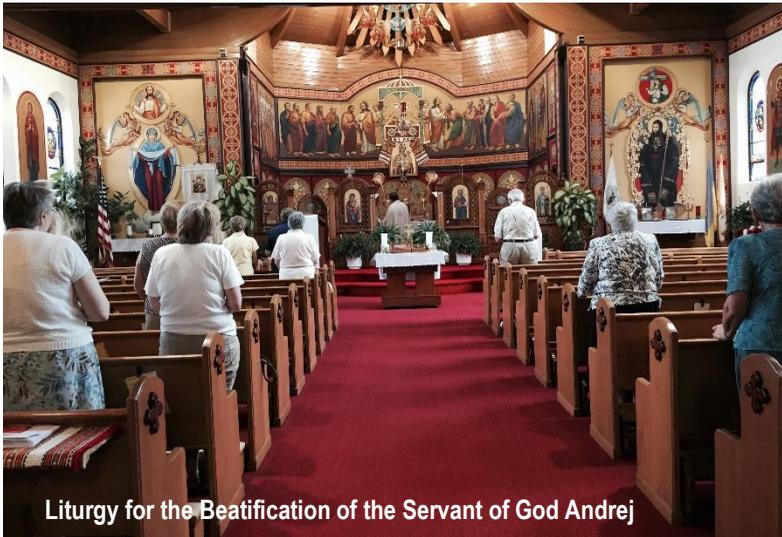




Eliana Iwanyczko with Family and friends at the funeral of +Eugen Wusatj – Vichnaya Pam'iat to late Eugen!



Liturgy for the Beatification of the Servant of God Andrej



SAINT NICHOLAS UKRAINIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH  УКРАЇНСЬКА КАТОЛИЦЬКА ЦЕРКВА СВЯТОГО МИКОЛАЯ



№ 31 ПІД ОПІКОЮ ПРЕЧИСТОЇ ДІВИ МАРІЇ ОДІПТРИЇ 
31 UNDER THE PROTECTION OF MOTHER OF GOD

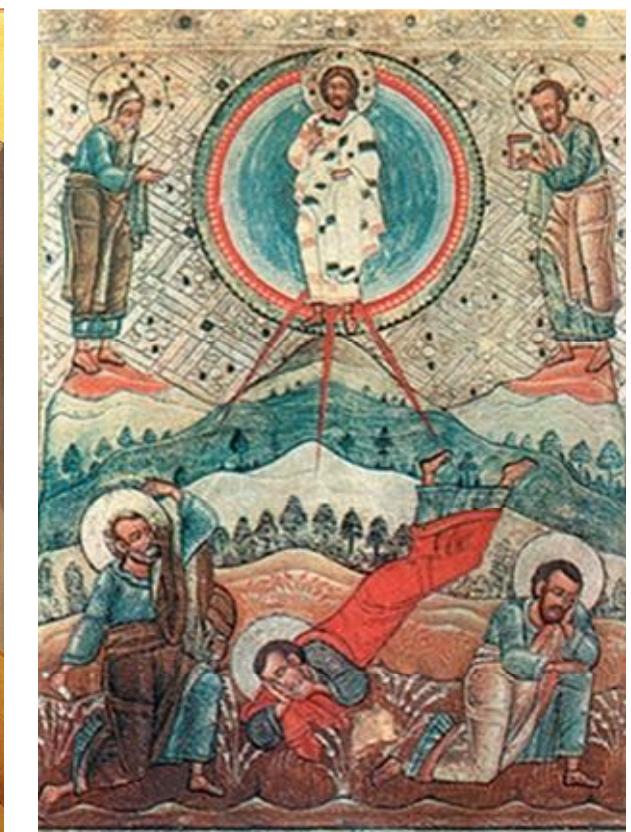
CHURCH BULLETIN
 August 2 – 2015 – 2 Серпня
 ЦЕРКОВНИЙ ВІСНИК

Вітаємо всіх на Церковному Пікніку! We welcome all at our Church Picnic!

Пророк Ілля – Prophet Elijah



Переображення - Transfiguration



№ 31 AUGUST 2015

CHURCH BULLETIN

August 2 – 2015 – 2 Серпня
ЦЕРКОВНИЙ ВІСНИК



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

LITURGICAL SCHEDULE

ПОР'ЯДОК СВ. ЛІТУРГІЙ

4:30 PM For Parishioners – За Парохіян

August 2, 10 S. aft. Pent. – 10 Н. по ЗСД

12:00 +Salvatore & Anna Militello (Anne Eтіrio)

Monday, August 3 Серпня, Понеділок

8:00 AM +Hilary & Julia Holowaty

(Michelle, Michael Michalow)

Tuesday, August 4 Серпня, Вівторок

6:00 AM +Anna Komar (Ivan Zudac)

Wednesday, August 5 Серпня, Середа

No Liturgy – Нема Відправи

Transfiguration – Преображення Г.Н.І.Х.

Thursday, August 6 Серпня, Четвер

10:00 AM For all workers at the Church Picnic

За всіх, що працювали при пікніку

Friday, August 7 Серпня, П'ятниця

9:00 AM +Olga Belmega (A. G. Diakun)

Sat. August 8 Серпня, Субота

8:00 AM +Kathryn Nyznyk

(Karen & Frank Kozlowski)

4:30 PM For Parishioners – За Парохіян

August 9, 11 S. aft. Pent. – 11 Н. по ЗСД

12:00 +Nina Smietana (Katarina Smietana)

The Liturgical Choir of the Buffalo Deanery will meet for a rehearsal of the Moleben to the Mother of God, in the Saint Nicholas Church Hall at 6:00pm on Monday, August 17, 2015. Director Leo Orynowka respectfully urges all members to attend.



Святого Пророка Іллі

2 Серпня: 9 Неділя по 3. Св. Духа

10:00 р. +Юлія і Степан Гривняк, +Іван і Марія

Ткач, +Василь Лехновський

(Катерина Лехновська)

9 Серпня: 10 Неділя по 3. Св. Духа

10:00 р. +Дмитро і Марія (Анна Ганицька)

Вічне Світло в честь П.Д.М.
Горить За МІР в Україні

The Eternal Light burns
All Church Picnic volunteers

IMPORTANT ---- PLEASE NOTE!

**NO NOON LITURGIES ON THE
FOLLOWING 4 SUNDAY'S**

August 16, August 23,

August 30 & September 6

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jahawryluk@gmail.com



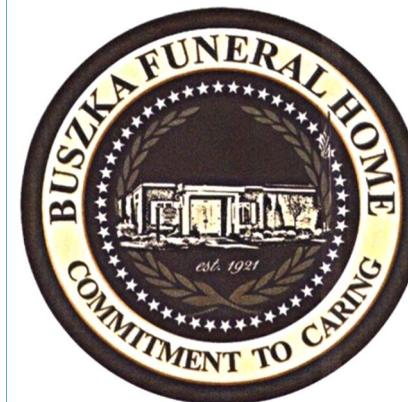
PHONE 893-1025

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Friday 9:30 am – 7 pm | Saturday 9:00 – 1 pm |

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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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Ukr. Radio Program on WJLL 1440 AM Every
Sunday at 2:00 PM?
Thank you for your donations!
We welcome your comments.

Чи ви слухасте нашу радіо передачу
«Милосердний Самар'янин»
Неділя, 2 год. на WJLL 1440 AM? Сердечно
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Please include Our Church
In Your charitable donations!

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Cell Phones - Мобільні Телефони:
Please turn off or silence your cell phone
before entering the church. Thank you!

Просимо вилучувати ваші мобільні
телефони підчас Святої Літургії.

DONATIONS TO ST. NICHOLAS
IMO Joseph Andrew Procyk
Katheryna Lechnowskyj - \$500.00
Сердечна Подяка - Thank you kindly!

Save the Dates

**TODAY: August 2th – Annual Parish
Picnic, Parish Grounds**

**August 23th – Ukrainian American Day
celebrating the 24th Anniversary of
Ukrainian Independence**

**August 28th – Liturgy for Peace in
Ukraine (Feast of Dormition of BVM
on Julian Calendar) 5:00PM Fatima
Shrine, Youngstown, NY**

**August 30th – Msgr. Paul Iwachiw
Scholarship Awards Luncheon after
12:00 Noon**

**Chicken and Ribs BBQ to Benefit
ST. BASIL Ukr. Cath. Church**
12 Embry Pl., Lancaster, N.Y. 14086
August 16 12:00 – 5:00 PM.

Chinese Auction at 4 PM, Raffle and fun for all.
\$10 chicken dinner includes 1/2 chicken, spuds,
chef salad, dinner roll, dessert, pop/coffee.
\$12 rib dinner includes BBQ ribs, spuds, chef
salad, dinner roll, dessert, pop/coffee.
Help us selling the tickets.
Call 716-683-0313.

Sunday, SEPTEMBER 13, 2015
Noon to 7 p.m.

**Ukrainian
FESTIVAL**
Presented by St. John the Baptist Ukrainian Catholic Church



3275 ELMWOOD AVE., KENMORE, NY 14217
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ETHNIC UKRAINIAN FOOD (Pyrohy/Pierogi, Stuffed Cabbage, Sausage) and BEVERAGES
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Washington, D.C.

Friday, November 6 7 P.M. Exhibit Opening/Reception	Saturday, November 7 2 P.M. Dedication Ceremony 10 A.M. – 7 P.M. Exhibit	Sunday, November 8 2 P.M. Concert
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ANNUAL PICNIC



St. Nicholas

Ukrainian Catholic Church

Sunday, August 2, 2015

11:30 ó 5:00 PM



308 Fillmore Ave. Buffalo, NY

Pierogies, Cabbage Rolls, Baked Goods

Theme Baskets, Raffles



Enjoy an afternoon with your friends

Renew old acquaintances

At St. Nicholas Annual Picnic



Calling all children!!!

Meet clown Picadilly

Balloons, etcí 2-3 PM



Sunday Coffee Hours: If anyone would like to volunteer to host a Sunday, please contact Elaine, Emily or Anna.

- KITCHEN is now closed.
- Thank you for your patronage. Thanks are extended to all who helped!
- Coffee Hour - Usually Every Sunday after Liturgy in Church Hall. Please join us!

Have a nice Summer Vacation

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!



Please note: You can purchase gasoline with this card at Tops Gasoline Station.

У нас успішно продаються Карточки з крамниці "Топс". Купуючи їх ви помагаєте церкві. Для Вас не робить різниці чи ви платили грішми чи карточкою, але церква дістане від „Топс” 5%. На \$1,000 церква одержить \$50. Що б закупити слід звертатися до п. Марії Боднар, або до канцелярії. Дякуємо!

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

УКРАЇНЬКА КАТОЛИЦЬКА ЦЕРКВА СВЯТОГО МИКОЛАЯ

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Сповідь: Перед Св. Літургіями
Baptism: By appointment
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

Family members should call the Rectory
Родина повинна повідомити священика

IN EMERGENCY CALL ANY TIME

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 лічниці або приковані до ліжка!

In Memoriam – Вічна Пам'ять!

Упокоївся в Господі

+Св. П. Євген Вусатий

(18 Травня, 1925 - 22 Липня, 2015)

Пхорон був у П'ятницю о 9:45 год. р.

Зі святыми упокой, Христе,
душу слуги Твого Євгена!

Родині і приятелям складаємо
співчуття а йому хай буде
ВІЧНАЯ ПАМ'ЯТЬ!



Fell asleep in the Lord

+EugenWusatyj

(May 18, 1925 - July 22, 2015)

Funeral was Friday at 9:45 AM
(PIETSZAK FUNERAL HOME,
2400 William St., near Harlem)

We extend our sympathy
Eliana Iwanyczko and her Family.

And other members of the

Family and Friends.

May he rest in peace!

Eternal Memory!

Vichnaya Pamiat'!

Please save the date!

У суботу, 8 Серпня

На посілості Української Православної

Церкви в Чіктоваґа буде тзв.

«Шіш Кабаб»

щоб придбати фонди для потерпілих в
Україні.

Просимо допомогти і взяти участь!

Saturday, August 8, 2015,
"SHISH KABOB Fundraiser"



to support the war victims in Ukraine,
at Holy Trinity Ukrainian Church Grove
located at 200 Como Park Blvd.

Cheektowaga, N.Y. 14227,

Beginning at 4pm till 9pm.

Eat In or Take Out

- Shish Kabob
- Potato Salad
- Basket Raffle
- Games & Prizes

At this time we ask that Ukrainians and
friends in the WNY Community support this
effort by donating a gift basket or gift
certificate for the basket raffle, and to
attend our Shish Kabob event.

For more information please contact Oxana
Bandriwsky (716) 847-1281

Letter from Fr. Ray August 2, 2015

Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory Forever!

Dear _____

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

I am writing your letter from a place we know as "heaven on earth." That would be sitting under the umbrella of the patio table in the back yard of 88 Iris Ave. I hope you have your very own special place where you too, can grab a glimpse of heaven. Those special places are all around and easily found.

What a gorgeous day it is! The yard is an explosion of color from all the different varieties of flowers and vegetation now in full maturity at this beautiful, beautiful time of year. Prompted by the breeze, our Corinthian wind chimes, a special, long ago gift to me from one of our daughters, are making their glorious sounds. Glory to God for blessing us with this taste of heaven. Congratulations to Presbyteria Joanne and her "green thumb" for bringing this 'St. Joseph's Coat of many colors' to our own backyard!

Recently, the air-conditioners have been really chugging away as we try to beat the heat. Yesterday we reached a high temperature of 92 degrees. Interesting fact for your trivia game: it was the first time in over two years that we had a high temperature over 90 degrees. High enough for me!

Now as I write, the temperature is struggling to reach 80 at two o'clock in the afternoon. It might get there as the afternoon progresses, but not too much more than that. In addition to the lower temperature of the past few days, today we also have a lovely, cooling breeze straight off of Lake Erie. We love the natural air conditioners of the Great Lakes in summertime. The combination of the lakes and winter are, however a very, very different story.

I hope I have painted a picture in the above words enough so you can see how it all has combined to make for one very pleasant and salubrious day. All of these sights, sounds and smells of summer should continue into tonight which is forecast to be a great night for star gazing and moon watching. Remember this is the month of the "Blue Moon"

which will have occurred on Friday July 31. "Where would you rather be than right here, right now?" Coach Levy once asked.

Having this weather stuff in mind, today I heard that question which always is music to my ears. A bit ago, Presbyteria popped her lovely head out the door and asked, "Should we open up the house?" With the thought that there is nothing better than the cooling, natural lake breeze the answer was, "Yes!"

Put it under the title of *Old Curmudgeon*, or "You can never please him," but I love it when we don't have to succumb to the A/C for our comfort. Oh yeah, I'll be the first to admit the mechanical contraption is great to get a good night sleep on a stuffy summer night, or to seek its comfort when the afternoon temperatures and humidity climb to those yucky summertime levels.

I suppose this is another of the many self-revealing confessions I often include in your letters. But do you feel that way too? Isn't it a kind of schizophrenic existence when we live in and out of the A/C? One minute we are nice and cool, then hot, or vice versa. To me, sometimes on bright, albeit hot days, the house feels like a dungeon when the air is on and the doors and windows necessarily are shut up. Right now the lovely, refreshing and cleansing air is blowing through the yard and house. Love it!

I'll tell you this, though. Hot air, humidity, yes or no to the air conditioner NOBODY in their right mind is complaining. There is no snow on the roof, the gutters are ice free and no water is leaking inside. Great!!

Speaking of last winter's snow reminds me... "Did you see the news reports (locally and nationwide) about Buffalo's 'still melting snowpile?' No need to cruise to Alaska- we've got our very own glacier right here! Remember the storm called *Snowvember*? As part of the street cleaning efforts tons and tons of that snow were trucked to a big field in the city of Buffalo. There are reports and video showing a still, huge amount of that snow, that in spite of the recent hot weather, previous heavy rains, and the fact that it is the end of July, has not yet melted!! Firemen

were photographed the other day as they hosed down the huge mounds (said to be the size of two or three school busses) to hasten the melting process. The streets commissioner, when asked how long the pile will remain, simply smiled and said, "Maybe till next winter." ☹️ So if you've got visitors from out of town and they would like a piece of history or to touch some real "Lake Effect Snow" take them over to the Old Train Station. There's still lots there!!!!

After each Sunday Liturgy we have a session that has come to be known as "Byzantine Tidbits." These are short talks describing who we are and why we do the things we do as Eastern Catholics. Last week we discussed our Venerable Father Metropolitan Andrew Sheptytsky, his life and the process of his proposed canonization as a saint of the Catholic Church.

My little talk was prompted by LUC President Marion Hrubec who asked all regional chapters to remember this holy one of our church as July 29 was the 150th anniversary of his birth. Presbytera Joanne and the LUC members of St. Mary's set up a very informative display in the vestibule of our church depicting the life of the great bishop via cards, pictures and other printed articles.

For as many people who know about Met. Andrew, I believe there as many, if not more, who know absolutely nothing about him. So it is a good thing the LUC is publicizing this important biography, not only to get to know him, but also because his cause for sainthood is now being considered. It is very good to see the LUC membership taking up "the cause for sainthood" of Metropolitan Sheptytsky. Believe it or not, the whole process was actually begun in the 1950's and was kept alive at various times by the LUC, and especially by one of the



members, a lady of blessed memory named Esther Bilon.

The long-awaited proclamation of sainthood received a big boost on July 16, 2015 when Pope Francis declared this good bishop to be called "Venerable." Metropolitan Andrew led the Ukrainian Catholic Church in the tumultuous period of both World Wars and at the beginning of Soviet occupation from 1901 to 1944. He was a man of piety, faith and courage standing steadfast in the face of the evil one in the form of the godless governments of Russia, Poland and Germany. It would be good for us to learn as much as we can about him, but also to pray for his beatification and also to ask for his intercession in our needs. He was, and still is an amazing man! May this new start of the process for sainthood end in his being called an "official" Saint. Here is a short prayer we can use: "O my God, I adore Thy infinite Majesty

with all the powers of my soul. I thank Thee for the graces and gifts which Thou didst bestow upon Thy faithful Servant, Metropolitan Sheptytsky. I ask Thee to glorify him also on earth. For this end I beseech Thee to grant me the favour which I humbly ask from Thy Fatherly mercy. Amen." (Imprimatur +Isidore Borecky Bishop of Toronto Oct. 1, 1959)

It's time for me say so long for another week. I'm glad you enjoy receiving your letters. Thank you for all the nice things you say. Glory to God! I always remember you and pray for you. God willing, and the creek don't rise, we'll talk a bit again next week. Enjoy this beautiful upcoming month of August! May God bless you and cause His face to shine upon you! May our Holy Lady Theotokos protect you!

In His Love,
Fr. Ray



The Ukrainian Congress Committee of America, Inc., Buffalo Branch, invites everyone to attend

Ukrainian American Day

Celebrating the 24th Anniversary
of Ukrainian Independence
on
Sunday, August 23, 2015
at

the Ukrainian Cultural Center "Dnipro"
562 Genesee Street, Buffalo, NY

Hours: 1:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Prayer of Thanksgiving
("Moleben") at 1:45 pm

Authentic Ukrainian food, live vocalists and musicians, Ukrainian dancers, art displays, craft vendors, full selection of Slavic beer, huge basket raffle, bounce house and children's activities.

Featuring performances by Toronto's DESNA DANCE COMPANY

FREE ADMISSION

Ample parking available

For more information contact:

W. Serediuk: 821-0711

Akacia Belmega: 674-4916

Andrew Diakun: 632-4212

Luba Terech: 359-3075

Dnipro: 856-4476



Please visit our website at www.UkrainiansOfBuffalo.com

З радія "Милосердний Самарянин"

Люди завжди очікують якоїсь сильної особи, провідника, щоб на їхню думку, ця людина заступилася за них, за слабших, за немічних та опущених. Людина прагне справедливості, очікує її. І коли, на її судження, вона наступає, тішиться, а, якщо це стається на її ворогах, її втішанню немає меж. А Спаситель світу навчав та поступав зовсім по-іншому, не так, як часто очікували його учні і не так, як бажає цього світ. Син Божий голосив добро убогим, голодним, зненавидженим, але не в цьому світі й не на землі, лише у вічності. Він твердив про необхідність любити ворогів та чинити їм добро й, щоб це не було тільки на словах. Теж перестерігав про загрозу нещастя для тих осіб, про котрих усі люди добре говорили б та, хто цього очікував би (пор. Лк 6,20-22; 26-27). А народ, навіть ті, хто себе зараховує до дуже віруючих, прагнуть тільки добрих слів та похвали у свій бік. Ісус Христос, натомість, навчав, щоб боятися похвал, уникати їх до тієї ступені, щоб права рука не знала, що чинить ліва. Значить, у похвалі та признанні міститься небезпека, котра загрожує духовному життю. Людина часто чинить якесь добро, очікуючи похвал, а Ісус Христос пригадує, що в такому випадку Господь не може нагородити таку особу, бо вона отримала свою зарплату, похвалу (Мт 6,1).

У книзі Царів описано про діяльність святого пророка Іллі. В той час царем в Ізраїлі був Ахав, що чинив велике зло в очах Бога та його дружина, безбожна Єзавель. Їхнє життя було грішне і Господь залишив їх, попереджуючи про кару, котра чекає їх, що вони стягають на себе ради негідного життя. Ілля повбивав усіх Ваалових пророків, що не служили правдивому Господу. А Єзавель погрозила Іллі, що він загине так, як він розправився із фальшивими пророками, яких підтримувала цариця. Пророк Господній злякався погрози Єзавелі, не радився з Богом, втік, щоб рятувати своє життя (пор. 1 Царі 9,3). Цар із царицею не переставали грішити перед Богом. Завдяки Єзавелі, підступом було вбито Навота й забрано його виноградник царем Ахавом. Господь послав Іллю до царя попередити його та погрозив йому карою. А про Єзавель, царицю, сказав: «Пси пожеруть Єзавель на єзреельським

полі» (Іцар 21,23). Ахав чинив негідне в Божих очах, бо до цього його спонукала жінка, Єзавель, «виробляв гидоти над усяку міру, ходивши слідом за бовванами». Вони покинули правдивого Бога, а поклонялися мерзотним божкам, а, коли Ілля погрозив цареві, той надягнув на себе вереття і постив. Упокорився і Господь пообіцяв, що за його життя не наведе лиха на нього. Господь дотримав свого слова, лише вкінці життя ізраїльського царя було пробито стрілою із лука і він помер. А безбожну Єзавель було викинуто з дому, вона впала і забилася а пси роздерли її тіло (пор. Іцар 9,35).

Знаємо, що Господь послав Іллю у Сарепту сидонську, де вдова за повелінням Божим прокормила пророка, коли панувала посуха. Святий Іван Золотоустий, Учитель Церкви, ставить запитання: чому Ілля був посланий до вдови? Сам й відповідає: «Ілля став прообразом Спасителя, бо його прогнали свої, юдеї, а прийняла його чужинка, вдовиця. Подібно і Христа прогнали юдеї, а приймають погани («Бесіда про Іллю та вдовицю», п.5).

Святий пророк, не знаючи цього, став прообразом Божого Сина і то не тільки в цьому випадку. Його життя було постійною мандрівкою. Він був то в одному, то в іншому місці, виконуючи волю Бога. Часами був дуже строгий, бо його боліла душа тому, що його народ віддалявся від Бога, часто служив ідолам, порушував Божий закон. А Господь вибрав Іллю як захисника й провідника служіння правдивому Богові. Про цей факт послухаймо знову повчання святого мужа, який пише наступні слова про Іллю: «Йому було приємно терпіти біди і бачити, як поправляють своє життя юдеї, чим відмінити загрозову нужду і бачити їх повернутими до попереднього нечестя» (пор. пор. св. Ів. Золот., «Бесіда про Іллю та вдовицю» п.5). Цей же святий стверджує, що пророк навів на юдеїв голод та посуху не через те, що вони його переслідували та гонили, бо Ілля терпів разом з ними, але, щоб явилася його Божественна ревність. До певної міри Ілля був твердого характеру і не бажав просити Господа, щоб той послав дощ на землю, хоч бачив великі терпіння людей, тварин й птахів від браку води. Однак, він бажав, щоб люди зрозуміли свої помилки, відверталися від поклоніння ідолам й повернулися до служіння правдивому Богові...

From "Good Samaritan" Ukr. Radio pr.

In the Vatican Gallery, hangs Sixteen Century artist, Raphael's rendering of the Transfiguration. This masterpiece was Raphael's final painting, which some consider to be his greatest. It best articulates the focus of this week's Gospel reading, where among the Heavens we gaze upon the celestial glory of Christ, and yet below we recognize the possessed boy from today's scripture, that the disciples in their own lack of faith, could not heal. Raphael brilliantly captured something of the overwhelming contrast, between the glorious mountain where Christ was Transfigured and the troubled world waiting for Him below. A world in need of faith, ministry, and healing!

On this Tenth Sunday after Pentecost, Jesus speaks to us about having faith in the Lord to remove the obstacles in our lives, the everyday difficulties and hardships we face; the mountains that sometimes seem too great for us to overcome by ourselves. "Amen, I say to you, if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you" (Matthew 17:20). Every one of us has a mountain to move. You know what this mountain is in your life, just as I know what the mountain is in my life. This mountain could be a hardship, a debt, an illness, the loss of a loved one, a work related problem, or even a relationship in trouble? But the beauty of our faith and part of the message in today's Gospel reading is that with faith even the size of a mustard seed; we can still move any mountain in our life. Today's Gospel reminds us of the infinite possibility open to us through our faith, even if it seems unsteady at times, provided that it is authentic and clear. As in the case of the centurion at Capernaum, Jesus speaks of faith as being a humble and total trust in the all-powerful goodness of God. If we have but a grain of such faith, we can risk making that faith the basis of our life in all circumstances, confident that God will not necessarily give our difficulties the precise solution we may have in mind, but that He will give them their true, their best, solution – the one He desires us to have. This would be our way of moving the mountains in our lives, those obstacles and hardships that inevitably challenge our faith.

During His time in this world, Jesus took twelve men and made disciples out of them. He instructed them and taught them their mission. In Matthew 10:1, it is recorded that before He turned the disciples loose to go out and minister in His name, He gave them power to cast out unclean spirits and to heal all manner of sickness and disease. What they did not realize is that their power was ignited by their own faith in Christ. If we simply center our own focus on Jesus, then we too can have great faith from even the most meager beginnings. Jesus had been up on Mount Hermon along with Peter, James and John. It was there that Jesus was transfigured before them. While they were on the mountain, there was a problem below. A man was desperate to heal his epileptic son so he went to Jesus' disciples, but the disciples could not heal the boy. When Jesus, Peter, James, and John came back among the crowd, they were met by this desperate father. He makes a request from Jesus to heal his son. And it was his faith in Christ that moved the man to say, "Lord, help me overcome my lack of faith." With that small grain of faith, Jesus healed the man's son. You see, Faith is our response to God, and Grace is God's response to us.

Sometimes, as Jesus revealed to His disciples in today's Gospel, the mountain can only be moved through prayer and fasting. While prayer is our ongoing source of communication with God, fasting is the personal sacrifice we make individually as part of our faith. Last year, several parishioners from St. Nicholas Church, including myself, my son, and Father Marijan, participated in a cultural exchange of ideas focused on religion and fasting at the Turkish Cultural Center in Buffalo. We were met by a very warm welcome as we shared tables, exchange conversation, expressed religious viewpoints and ideas, and "broke bread" together as we enjoyed traditional Turkish cuisine. Both Muslims and Ukrainian Catholics shared in this lovely dinner following a presentation from both faiths on the necessity of fasting as part of our relationship with God. While the Muslims were then celebrating Ramadan, it was not so long ago that we celebrated on our own Great Fast before Easter. For people of two different cultures and walks of life, it was truly fascinating to realize just how much we have in common. Both of our religions utilize fasting as a type

of meditation and personal sacrifice to help develop a deeper and more meaningful relationship with God. Certainly, we believe in Christ and read from scripture in the Holy Bible, while Muslims follow the teachings of Mohammad and the Koran, but many of our underlying beliefs in meditation, prayer, and fasting somehow keep us connected when it comes to developing and expressing our faiths. And above all else is faith which Jesus constantly reminds us of: "I tell you the truth, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only can you do what was done to the fig tree, but also you can say to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and it will be done" (Matthew 21:21).

Ellie grew up knowing she was different, and she hated it. Every day carried with it a burden; she felt she could never overcome. Ellie was born with a cleft palate, and when she started to go to school, her classmates - who were constantly teasing - made it clear to her how she must look to others: a little girl with a misshapen lip, crooked nose, lopsided teeth, and hollow and somewhat garbled speech. Ellie couldn't even blow up a balloon without holding her nose, and when she bent to drink from a fountain, the water spilled out of her nose. When her schoolmates asked, "What happened to your lip?" Ellie would tell them that she had fallen as a baby and cut it on a piece of glass. Somehow it seemed more acceptable to have suffered an accident than to have been born different. By the age of seven she was convinced that no one outside her own family could ever love her. Or even like her. And then Ellie entered the second grade, and Mrs. Leonard's class. She never knew what her first name was - just Mrs. Leonard. She was round and pretty and fragrant, with chubby arms and shining brown hair and warm dark eyes that smiled even on rare occasions when her mouth did not. Everyone adored her. But no one came to love her more than Ellie did. And for a special reason! The time came for the annual "hearing tests" given at every school. Ellie was barely able to hear anything out of one ear, and was not about to reveal yet another problem that would single her out as different - so she cheated. She had learned to watch other children and raised her hand when they did during group testing. The "whisper test" however, required a different kind of deception: Each child would go to the door of the classroom, turn sideways, close

one ear with a finger, and the teacher would whisper something from her desk, which the child would repeat. Then the same thing was done for the other ear. Ellie had discovered in kindergarten that nobody checked to see how tightly the untested ear was being covered, so she merely pretended to block hers. As usual, she was last, but all through the testing she wondered what Mrs. Leonard might say to her. Ellie knew from previous years that she whispered things like "The sky is blue!" or "Do you have new shoes?" Ellie's turn came up. She turned her bad ear to her teacher, plugging up the other solidly with her finger, and then gently backed her finger out enough to be able to hear. She waited and then the words that God had surely put into her teacher's mouth, seven words that changed Ellie's life forever were spoken. Mrs. Leonard, the pretty, fragrant teacher she adored, said softly, "I wish you were my little girl." From that day on, Ellie realized that she could be loved by others, and she never doubted the new confidence that those words had mustered in her heart. No longer was her disability a mountain to overcome!

Jesus told His disciples that even with faith the size of a grain of mustard seed, mountains can and will be moved. Jesus took twelve ordinary men and made disciples out of them. He instructed them and taught them their mission. But ultimately their power was ignited by their faith. A mustard seed is exceedingly small, but it flourishes as it grows into a very potent plant from only a few grains. It reminds me of a time when I was on the beach. I knelt down and picked up a fist full of sand. I noticed that most of the sand fell off the sides of my hand and some sand even seeped through the cracks between my fingers. But when I opened my hand, in the middle of my palm there was still a little bit of sand. A few grains remained. I still had some left. We need to realize that sometimes when things are going well, we each have a lot of faith. Then, one day, troubles come our way and some of our grains fall to the side. One day, sickness comes along or suffering interrupts our life and our faith becomes like a handful of sand, seeping through the cracks between our fingers. But I also hear the Lord saying that it is ok that some of our faith has fallen off. It is ok that some of our faith has seeped out. All God wants from you and me is to open our hands and see if we have a few

small grain left, to see if we have enough faith to believe in Him and enough trust to know that God will move the mountains in His own way and at His own time. In other words, in spite of all that is going on in our life right now; in spite of all of our trouble; in spite of our fears - Do we still have a grain of faith left? Use that grain against cancer and disease, use that grain against financial debt and stress, use that grain against loneliness and despair, use that grain against all the troubles in the world; use that grain to move mountains. Each of us has the power to move any obstacle because Christ gave us that power when He took the cross and died for our sins. He gave us that possibility through His resurrection. All we need is a grain of faith the size of a mustard seed. Genuine faith is a settled confidence that when we step toward God, His Grace will gladly receive us, and His Love will surely move mountains.



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