



“...Let Us Pray to the Lord...”

Praying is what we do—for a living! Not just the clergy, altar servers and the cantor—everyone who believes. After all, the word “believe” can trace its root to the phrase “be alive in”. So, if we are alive in our faith we pray.

It is a mark of our sharing in the priesthood of Jesus Christ, in which we were enrolled upon our baptism, chrismation and communion—illuminated, strengthened and fortified in the Holy Trinity.

We are quite familiar with the external factors of our prayer. We are used to the sights, sounds, smells and sensory attributes, and might think that prayer is a formal series of candles, incense, singing, icons, sermons and even socializing. Each of these segments is valid, but nothing more than aids to help us express our dependence upon God for all that we have or want.

The liturgical structure has developed over the centuries and we have become accustomed to hearing the deacon or priest list our needs—peace for the world, the Church, for good weather and other factors of life so we can aptly reply: “Lord, have mercy” (compassion).

Lately, though we have had a period of deprivation of these soul-soothing moments. Our lives have been turned upside-down. Everything familiar is topsy-turvy. Our comfort zone has been breached. We have to endure imposed hardships.

We may be comforted a bit by examining what it is we express, as we hear the prayers for our Church’s hierarchy—Francis, Sviatoslav, Borys, Benedict. Especially do we address our concerns in the commemorations within the anaphnora. Adding to the cry for “mercy” is the further plea for these leaders to have the charism to “rightly impart the Word of [God’s] truth”. With divine guidance we have had coping mechanisms passed along to us.

With regard the anxiety caused by the pandemic inflicted by a virus put into a perspective, we find a defense against this vile enemy. The hierarchs have offered sound advice

based upon several factors: history and science.

It is noted that although this novel coronavirus has not specifically been encountered, we are not in unprecedented territory. Without much difficulty the history of such epidemics can be studied. Remediation can be suggested in learning from past episodes that have occurred (for thousands of years) before. Knowing the tactics viruses use to spread its disease-causing attributes, we received pro-active suggestions to avoid close contact with others; to keep a certain space between others; to wear protective covering over our nose and mouth—as a reciprocal line of defense. We become less likely to spread any contagion, and are better equipped to not cause others to contract the disease.

We’ve had to endure quarantines of varying time frames—often extended in duration.

It has been grueling, frustrating and inconvenient. It has been confusing because unknowable conditions develop that prolong the period of isolation. We live in unsure circumstances. Our home life is disrupted. Our work schedule totally destroyed. Conflict might easily arise due to cramped quarters, and no tangible exit can be predicted. We’re impatient. Learn to cope.

Without compromising the principle of Church/State-separation, here is where another request is addressed as we pray for our civil authorities—fed-

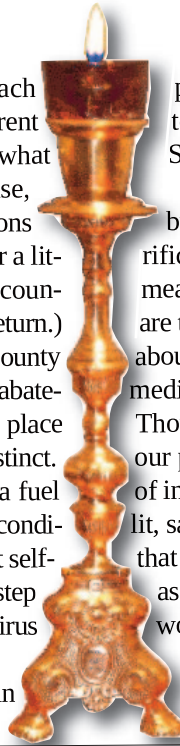


Unexpected complications arose with the global coronavirus pandemic. A period of quarantine and restricted travel impacted many couples’ visits from abroad expecting to adopt a child provided by a surrogate mother in Ukraine. Read what bishops of Ukraine replied in regard this situation, [page 12](#).

eral, regional, local—scattered over a wide geography each with its own degree of contagion. Each on a seemingly different time schedule. Each eating away at our freedom to act as what we consider to be normal. Obvious financial difficulties arise, and concerns about an uncertain outcome prompt temptations to expect it will all go away without taking precautions—for a little longer. Our eparchy covers two-thirds of the area of the country. There is no one answer to when it will all end. (Or even return.) Each parish may even have some areas where a particular county or city differs from another in the stage of flattening or even abatement of COVID-19. Take care to not jeopardize others—or place yourself in a tenuous predicament. It is part of the survival instinct.

Patience wears thin, and confusing and contradictory dicta fuel unrest and unrealistic “let’s see what happens if we relax the conditions” attitudes to forgo common-sense precautionary steps at self-defense in this threat to our well-being. It is almost a suicidal step to take a risk that is optimistically seen as a “safe bet.” A virus does not play fair. It will attack the vulnerable.

Well, our hierarchs have allowed us to be able to “shelter in



place” and use technology to keep the restrictions of the Centers for Disease Control as a morally safer course to take. Science met uncertainty with caution, prolonging isolation.

We often think of our liturgy as a sacrifice—which it is—but do not connect it with the underlying concept of a sacrifice. Sacrifice is not supposed to be comfortable. It is not meant to be enjoyable. It is not going to be easy. But if we are to “be alive” in our faith we might be a bit less enthusiastic about even a trial “restoration of ‘normalcy’” by easing off remedial actions to seek temporary relaxing of our “suffering”. Though in our homes, as we watch a streamed broadcast from our parish, we may not have the burnt-offering rising smoke of incense ascend as a prayer to heaven, we *can* have a candle lit, sacrificing wick and wax thus providing the light of Christ that shines in the world. We can spend time, praying alone, or as a family unit. Read the day’s scripture selections, read the words of the liturgy, a moleben or recite other prayers.

Pray.

And be pro-active as long as is necessary.

Bishop Emeritus Basil Losten of Stamford Celebrates 90th Birthday

Basil Losten was born May 11, 1930 in Chesapeake City, Maryland. To pursue his education for the priesthood, he attended St. Basil School in Philadelphia and went on to attend the Ukrainian Catholic Seminary, Stamford, Connecticut. He graduated from St. Basil College with a bachelor of arts in philosophy. In 1957, he completed his graduate work in theology at the Catholic University of America.

On June 10, 1957, he was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Constantine Bohachevsky. His first assignment included work as chancery secretary for the archeparchy as well as working in several Philadelphia parishes. In 1962, he was named personal secretary to Archbishop-Metropolitan Ambrose Senyshyn. This position led him to various posts within the archeparchy, including comptroller and consultor; president of Ascension Manor, a senior citizens complex he initiated; director of the Archdiocesan Insurance Commission; and a member of the Archdiocesan Building Commission.

In 1968, St Pope Paul VI raised him to the rank of papal cham-

berlain. He was nominated to the episcopacy on March 23, 1971, and was consecrated on May 25, 1971 as auxiliary to the Ukrainian Archdiocese of Philadelphia and in 1976, during Senyshyn’s failing health, Pope Paul VI appointed him apostolic administrator in charge of diocesan affairs.



On September 1977, Bishop Basil was named Eparch of Stamford, which comprises New York State and all of the New England states, succeeding Bishop Joseph Schmondiuk. He retired on January 3, 2006, and was succeeded by Bishop Paul Chomnycky.

May God grant His servant many years!

Patriarch Sends Greetings to Bishop Basil

“I would like to personally and on behalf of the Synod of Bishops of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church sincerely congratulate you on the occasion of the great anniversary. Celebrating your 90th birthday is a big event for all of us. Together with you, we bring our

prayers to the throne of the Most High, thanking Him for calling you to the path of sacrificial dedication to the Church and the our people,” says the greeting.

“Bishop Basil became a good father for people in the lands of distant America, a zealous preacher of Christ’s truth,

a defender of their rights and freedoms. As a devoted follower of Patriarch Joseph, the bishop made a lot in order to develop the seminary in Stamford, the graduates of which were many of our respected clergy. He took and continues to take an active part in the activities of the Synod of Bishops of the UGCC.”

His Beatitude: *“Europe has probably retreated from the fundamental principles of unity and solidarity, but I am sure that this will change”*

His Beatitude Sviatoslav, speaking about his visit to Germany which, due to obvious reasons, had been cancelled, shared his thoughts on peace in Ukraine and Europe in an English-language interview. The Primate also expressed his own vision of the current state of Europe and specified the prerequisites to address the pressing issues.

"We need to strengthen solidarity and global cooperation in order to win the battle against the virus that knows no borders, as well as against all military conflicts and wars on the European continent," said the Father and Head of the UGCC. "This is impossible if personal interests of the member states will dominate the common good."

His Beatitude believes that solidarity and global unity will not be strengthened if the international order established after the Second World War is not observed. "You can't remain silent if someone changes the map of the world around you, as tomorrow it may happen to you. The aggressor must be stopped by a collective stance for action," said the Primate.

According to the Head of the UGCC, the current crisis related to COVID-19 has shown that Europe has retreated from the fundamental principles of unity and solidarity, but it is not too late to correct this. "I am sure that this will change," said the spiritual leader of Ukrainians.

In an interview, His Beatitude reiterated the need to preserve Ukraine's statehood in the fight against the aggressor in Donbas,

since "Ukrainian statehood is a guarantee of peace in Europe" and the Ukrainian military "protect peace in Ukraine and Europe at the cost of their own lives."

In conclusion, the Head of the UGCC recalled the European choice of Ukrainians affirmed during the Revolution of Dignity: "Ukraine made a choice for the future of Europe during the Maidan, and this choice was confirmed not only by political statements and official documents, but also by the blood of people shed on the Maidan."

Department for Information of the UGCC



Video link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9t_N_GKAdUw

Happy Father's Day!

Clip-art flowers of Mother's Day greetings have given way to ties, tools and tidings expressed in three words—"Happy Father's Day!" in a variety of font styles and colors, on badges, banners or beverage cups.

Does that mean that fathers do not like flowers? Or is it simply a way that graphic artists try to focus on the uniqueness of every person who has the distinct joy to be called "father"?

Each father is special. Some are formal, some less so—all have their own likes and dislikes—their taste in

such things as sentiment and attention. Whatever the reason, there is one gift all need and appreciate, an expression of love and affection found in bestowing prayers and blessing to all fathers, today—and every day. "God grant them 'Many Years'—or 'Eternal Memory'!"





TWO UCU TEAMS ENTER INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION FINALS ON DEVELOPMENT OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE HELD BY MICROSOFT:

Two teams from the Ukrainian Catholic University (UCU) entered the finals of the international competition of AI projects “The next AI Guardians” under the auspices the technology company Microsoft. The final of the competition will be held on June 18, 2020, reported citing the company’s press service.

In particular, Ukrainian teams have developed two projects: Key-



Access—the software for Windows and UNIX operating systems that enables configuring the keyboard for those users who are struggling with cerebral palsy or other diseases that require a special keyboard configuration to use it;

Smart Educational Assistant (SEA) is an electronic assistant that allows the user to choose a profession and determine the skills that they want to develop, and also provides the latest online resources with training courses and combines them into a full-fledged curriculum.

According to the report, the finalist teams will get a chance to sell their idea to representatives of the most successful companies.

Each team will also receive a business mentor to help them outline their idea in a meaningful business plan.

RISU

PRIME MINISTER OF UKRAINE CONGRATULATED HIS BEATITUDE SVIATOSLAV ON HIS BIRTHDAY:

Prime minister of Ukraine Denys Shmyhal personally congratulated His Beatitude Sviatoslav, Head and Father of the UGCC on the day of his 50th birthday anniversary. He passed a greeting letter from the Ukrainian Cabinet of Ministers.

“Undoubtedly, you are one of the most prominent and respected figures in spiritual and religious areas in our country. Your thought—through decisions, this your willingness to be a faithful adviser for everyone, the one who sees Ukraine a developing European country and awaits defense and support—are

seeming traits of a spiritual leader of millions of faithful”, the greeting says.

“Your Beatitude, we congratulate you on your anniversary and wish your mission serves as a measure of excellence, with a help of what you will greatly succeed not only on a way of ministering a numerous Greek Catholic congregation, but you will be



able to rejoice in a feeling of a fulfilled obligation and harmony in the world”, the letter follows.

As a present from the prime minister, His Beatitude received an icon of The Transfiguration of Christ.

“Thank you for this symbolic gift, as for an icon painter an icon of the Transfiguration is the first one he needs to paint, so his eyes can change and he is able to see the world differently, I will try to change my eyes”, noted His Beatitude Sviatoslav.

The UGCC Department for Information

HERE IS SOME GOOD ADVICE TO HEED, IN BLACK AND

WHITE: Wash your hands often. The coronavirus experience alerted us to this regemin. Make that a “from now on” routine. No need to tempt the virus to return.

Keep yourself familiar with your local regulations concerning use of a mask, and maintaining a “social spacing” and maximum number of people allowed to be gathering together.

Some “regulations” may be designated as mandatory—others strongly suggested as

a matter of general health precautions. The virus may remain latent for a while. It may become dormant, and return again—this year, or even next year, or the year after that. Be cautious in returning to “normal”—it may be different.

Be considerate of others’ needs and sensitivities in addition to your own. Respect your body as a temple of the Holy Spirit—and remember, your neighbor, as well, enjoys the same attribute: made in the image and likeness of God!



A Cloud of Witnesses

I belong to a small prayer group of men that used to meet in person once a week to help each other grow in spirituality and to pray for our needs and the needs of those around us. We now have remote meetings via “Google Duo.” Often we read a spiritual book and share our insights about it. At Christmas, one of the local Roman Catholic churches passed out copies of Matthew Kelly’s book *Rediscover the Saints*, which we started to read together during Lent. The author is the founder of the website www.DynamicCatholic.com, which publishes what I would characterize as “Catholic self-help” books and materials. Some of the titles are *The Rhythm of Life*, *The Biggest Lie in the History of Christianity*, and *Rediscover Jesus*. I usually find them to not have much substance. However, his book about the saints turned out to be full of insight and practical ways which allow the examples of certain saints to help us deal with the problems that we face every day. It has been particularly helpful during this present pandemic.

The prologue to the book gave a fictional account of the life of St. Dismas, the “good thief”. Matthew Kelly attempts to justify his behavior by visualizing that he had a rough life. He imagined that this thief lost his mother as a young boy and was abandoned by his father. This led him to a life of pilferage, ostensibly to survive. As he grew older he attempted to obtain various jobs, but was rejected because of a lack of experience. Finally he was caught stealing a chest of valuables from an itinerant trader and arrested by the Romans. In jail he felt remorse for his wasted life. When he was crucified alongside Jesus, he had thoughts about how our Lord was treated unjustly and asked to be remembered by Jesus when He establishes His kingdom. In the Eastern Christian churches, the good thief is memorialized on Great and Holy Friday. One of the prayers of the Royal Hours is (Ninth Hour): “Seeing the Author of life hanging on the cross, the good thief cried out with his act of faith: If the one crucified with us were not God in the flesh, the sun would not have hidden its rays, nor would the earth have trembled with fear. And you patiently hear all this: remember me our Lord, in Your Kingdom” (*Divine Office*, Stamford, 2003). We pray this in the Prayer before Holy Communion. We are called upon to repent of our sins and ask for the mercy of Jesus before we receive His body and blood.

In his article about St. James (brother of St. John), Matthew Kelly reminds us that life is a pilgrimage and we sometimes need one to clearly recognize our purpose in life (111). At his Ascension, Jesus instructed His apostles to go to the ends of the earth and preach the Gospel. Tradition tells us that St. James went to Spain and is buried in Santiago de Compostela, on the west coast. Many people go on a 500-mile pilgrimage from southern France to this place. We might not be able to do this but we can certainly make local pilgrimages to our various different parish churches for spiritual growth.

All of our different churches have a large number of icons of Jesus, Mary, angels and saints on the icon screen and the walls of the church. Some have magnificent icons depicting the feasts of the church painted (written) on the walls and ceiling. During my period

of isolation, I was able to observe liturgies that were broadcast on the Internet from Byzantine churches and cathedrals around the world. Some of the icon screens are quite beautiful and add to the reverential atmosphere of the temples. In the Letter to the Hebrews, the writer reminds Jewish Christians of the history of the various Old Testament holy men and women and how they kept their faith despite difficult circumstances. He talks about the various ways martyrs suffered for their faith even though they did not receive the promise of a Messiah (11: 32-40). In Chapter 12: 1-2, we read “Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God” (RSVCE, read on the Sunday of all Saints). The icons in our churches remind us of this “cloud of witnesses” who are examples of how we should live our lives by trusting in God in spite of the circumstances around us.

In the Byzantine Christian Churches, we celebrate All Saints day on the Sunday after Pentecost. *Christ—Our Pascha* (317-322) informs us that holiness is connected with witnessing to the faith. The word “martyr” is from the Greek word for witness. Martyrs, holy people from the Old and New Testaments, presbyters and bishops, confessors and others, who have nurtured our Church’s faith by their lives are honored. Every day of our church year is devoted to a memorial or feast of a saint or Our Lord or the Mother of God. Short biographies of these persons can be found on our church calendars and web sites. These, and those not known, are prayed for on All Saints Sunday. “All you saints who rejoice with a splendor that surpasses every spirit, the psalmist calls you gods because you dwell close to God and receive the deifying rays from his light” (Matins, Sunday of All Saints, quoted in *Christ—Our Pascha*). Our Church also glorifies a vast assembly of saints who were martyred in recent centuries, especially under persecution by Russian Tsars and the atheistic regimes of the twentieth century (322-324). In this century, the war in eastern Ukraine is producing many new martyrs. On the second Sunday of Pentecost, our Church celebrates the Sunday of All Saints, later for saints of Ukraine and Kyivan-Rus’.

There is a purpose for all of us to be physically present in church, to be reminded of those who are in Christ’s presence interceding for us. Hopefully, this may happen for all of us soon. Through the prayers of our holy fathers (and mothers), O Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us.



Widowhood

A woman who has lost her spouse to death, is a widow. A man who loses his spouse to death is a widower. They both belong to a group called Widowhood.

St Lawrence the Deacon, of Rome, who was martyred, called Widows the treasure of the Church. Maybe that is why certain international rights groups are looking at discrimination of widowers, but I digress.

Widowhood can be one of the most traumatizing events in a person's life. It can come on unexpectedly, allowing neither time nor means for preparation. Or it can occur after years of caregiving, allowing both time and means for preparation, yet the surviving person always finds it unexpected. It can come alone or surrounded by family who shows loving support and then leaves.

Interestingly, both the Quran and the Bible put widows and orphans together. It is because it became a family obligation to take care of the widow. In the Hebrew Scriptures, God is the protector of widows (Ps 146); and a curse is put on those who do widows an injustice (Dt 27).

In James in the Christian Scriptures, is written "Religion that is pure and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to care for orphans and widows in their affliction and to keep oneself unstained by the world. (1:27). In Christianity, it is still an obligation of the family, but it is extended to the Church, as a family, as well.

It is God's concern that miracles are recorded in the Scriptures as well for widows. When a woman's husband died, the obligation of care fell to her son. If the son died, the woman had no legal status in society and no means of support. The most famous biblical mention is of the funeral of the only son of a widowed mother, the Widow of Naim. The funeral cortege is coming out of the city, toward the cemetery. At the same time, coming into the city was Jesus and His followers. They did not step aside to let the funeral pass. The widow figured that this group was expecting the funeral to move to the side. Instead, Jesus walked up to her and told her not to cry. She probably thought that this was not only a strange request or inappropriate. She was expected to be grieving. She had lost everything, and this crowd that was following would shortly abandon her. She was crying for her son and herself. Jesus raised her son and restored him to her. This is probably the prayer of every widow or even every mother that loses a child. But, it does show us an example of God's concern for a widow.

The widow Naomi was cared for not by her sons but by her daughter-in-law, Ruth. Other widows such as Abigail and Judith use other qualities to take care of themselves. While it appears these women seem to have taken care of the situation, it not by a miracle but through regular human interaction. Scripture, though, does not see it that way, it sees God's Hand at work.

Our churches are filled with widows, and we are dependent upon their activity in supporting and building up the Church.

Many a pastor has said that the Church was built by the pyrohy-making women. While the Church takes advantage of their labors, does it also take care of their spiritual needs?

They can have anger with God, not only from the loss of a spouse, as in the story of the widow's mite. The fact that she gave all that she had was also a sign she had forgiven God for the loss of her husband. Her financial status had changed and this caused problems not only practical, but also spiritual. Being in Widowhood means that the person's heart was removed, stomped on, cut to pieces, and only a portion of it was returned. There may be a smile on the face, but there is probably some depression behind that smile. The Church must provide meaning for life to continue in this new form and hope that makes that life worth living.

Widowhood also means a change in identity. A husband and wife were, for many years, part of a couple. Now there is only one. Married friends no longer see them as members of their group. Widows so often find their social life with other widows. This is why so many are involved in Church activities. They make the Church their life. The Church needs to help make their lives fuller. They need to share their stories and their grief with others. This is where our religious women can be especially helpful in leading groups of women where they can talk about their issues without the presence of a man.

The Church reaches out to the marginalized; and widows and widowers should be reached out to as well. After the funeral is over is not the time to end the pastoral care but a time to begin it. Visits from their priests and deacons to make sure everything is all right can help. One widow remarked when her pastor stopped by a week after the funeral that her husband had always handled the cutting of the grass, and she didn't even know how to start the lawnmower. No, the priest didn't start the lawnmower and leave, nor did he cut the grass himself. These would have been short-term solutions. He got a man who liked to tinker, to, as a Christian, mow her lawn, and take care of those little things around the house. At the same time, his wife and the widow would go together and have their hair done. These little things allowed the widow to find hope in her future.

Pastoral care also means forming bereavement groups. The loss of a spouse is not something that is dealt within 40 days but sometimes can take years. People need an avenue to share their anger, regrets, and guilt. Bereavement groups are not just for Widowhood, others grieve as well. The story of King David and his grief over the loss of his son is one that he brought to God.

A widow or a widower does not advertise their status in life as married couples do. They sit alone, or with their children. They are members who should expect their Church, not just its ministers, to provide spiritual concern.

Fr Jonathan Morse

God With Us + ONLINE +



Webinars Continue; Website Offers New Feature.

With a “captive audience” due to world-wide “shelter in place” mandates, the May presentations of webinars delivered a rather “extended Lent” atmosphere for a deeply spiritual presentation that emphasized the gist of the topic: Purification of the Heart.

Deacon Thomas Moses took advantage of his own experiences in the essence of Eastern Christian Spirituality to develop the theme that so often is almost unfamiliar to those who live in a Western culture.

However, it is not relegated to be foreign to us, since there are so many references to authentic “Eastern Spirituality” from the Bible; writings from the Early Fathers of the Church and modern theological works to guide us through the stages of growth of our spiritual nature, if we take the time to be involved.

As the moderator of the webinar Fr Daniel Dozier noted, the present circumstances provide a perfect setting for such introspection. The various steps in knowing ourselves, and allying with Christ and His Church, aided by the hymns and prayers of our liturgical services, can all fall into place in a most meaningful manner. It may not be easy or effortless, but worth the investment of time and energy it takes to secure our eternity.



Three sessions were merely a surface-scratching exercise, but substantial enough to provide a solid foothold in the path to holiness that is available to us through a proper understanding of the sacramental Mysteries and other elements of Church life we experience just by being attentive to what is happening while we pray together.

- Look at Christ and the world around you.
- Name 3 ways you see humanity redeemed.

Additionally, a new element has been incorporated in the website of God With Us Publications. Insofar as the webinars are an outreach of the ECED (Eastern Catholic Eparchial Directors of Religious Education), under the omophoria of the Eastern Catholic bishops in the United States, a “Voice of the Shepherd” feature has been added to the website (easterncatholic.org). [see illustration below]

This presents a short homiletic insight presented by one of the eighteen Eastern Catholic bishops in America. As of press time, the first three that appeared were delivered by Bishop Bohdan Danylo (May 3); Bishop Milan Lach, (May 10); and Bishop Nicholas Samra (May 17). It is anticipated that each Eastern Catholic bishop will have an opportunity to deliver a weekly message on a rotating schedule.

The screenshot shows the website interface with a navigation menu: ABOUT, UPCOMING EVENTS, EVENT LIBRARY, CATECHETICAL RESOURCES, CONTACT. A yellow arrow points to 'Catechetical Resources' with the text 'Go to: easterncatholic.org'. Below the menu, a list of dates is shown: 17 MAY, 10 MAY, 3 MAY. Each date is linked to a 'VOICE of the SHEPHERD' presentation by a specific bishop: Bishop Nicholas Samra (May 17), Bishop Milan Lach (May 10), and Bishop Bohdan Danylo (May 3). A vertical label on the left says 'click on title line'. Three circular portraits of the bishops are shown to the right of the presentation cards.

The listing sequence places the most recent at the top; *i.e.*, the May 3 presentation, though first, is last on the list; (A biblical reference to priorities?).

REMINDER: It is necessary to register for Webinars. Do so now for three presentations on St Paul’s epistles (June 3, 10, 17).

Longing for the Truth Is what Makes Us Free

Second part of a serialized feature of *New Star*

Chapter II. Secular solutions

The secular world sees these threats, and we should be grateful to the brave political and public figures responsible for peace and security in this difficult time. Ukrainians are particularly aware that, without the current system of security and values embedded in the international order, Ukraine would not be able to maintain its independence.

However, precisely because, in today's globalized society, all peoples are so interdependent, we should pay close attention to the stress points causing the weakening of the world order. As is often the case, these weaknesses are the antithesis of our civilization's strengths. Sometimes, the leaders' conviction in their chosen path blinds them to their own errors as they stray from the truths of life. These errors are manifested in two ways.

The "legitimacy of all viewpoints" trap:

truth does not belong to everyone

During its development, the Western world developed a classical method of defining truth, where objectivity and impartiality are fundamental criteria. However, times have changed.

According to today's rules, no one is the bearer of absolute truth in political and moral affairs, and the truth that each of us has is relative. Therefore, there is no "truth" and "lie"—there are just different points of view. To say that something is a lie is to make a moral judgment. This, purportedly, is not impartial. It is impossible to call a liar by name, because this violates the rules of political correctness. Therefore, the truth is a "golden mean" between various opinions.

This system works well as long as everyone follows the rules of the game. But the emergence of conscious liars, producing propaganda and fake news, easily destroys this system.

How does the modern world respond to this? It only rarely dismisses fake news as false. In most cases, fake information (especially if it is properly mixed with some true facts) is considered someone's opinion, as a point of view, and therefore is a valid component in "deducing" the truth as a golden mean. Needless to say, a truth "calculated" in this way is light-years away from actual truth. The democratic pluralism of tolerating varied political positions, views, and opinions, has been transformed into a valid measure to discern truth.

This is the conclusion of many contemporary researchers. But by accepting such relativity—there is no truth that corresponds to reality, there is only a "truth" agreed on by the majority [10]—humanity is endorsing its own irresponsibility as it condemns Truth to collective destruction.

To emerge from the vicious circle of post-truth, we must recognize the existence of two dimensions. On the one hand, in peer relationships between people and communities, we must recognize that no one person or group is the bearer of ultimate truth. Here postmodernism has been of great benefit. Aggressive relativism, on the other hand, must acknowledge the chaos it has created; and

the vertical dimension must be brought back into the life of the world, namely, the recognition that Absolute Truth exists. It is encoded in the DNA of our civilization, and further destruction of this code will lead to the destruction of the world.

We see no other way out of the situation than to formulate a post-post-truth discourse and return to an ethical dimension—in particular, to an ethical assessment of truth and falsehood. The problem will not be solved except by explicitly recognizing a fake to be a lie, and by imposing moral and material sanctions on the producer of the lie. This requires a major reconstruction of the viewpoint postulated by the modern world. These viewpoints were developed to overcome modern crises; but today they must be reconsidered, because they are causing new crises.

For a believer, this return to the ethical dimension can be communicated by the saying, "let us put on the armor of light" (Rom. 13:12). This demonstrates our conviction that God provides every human generation with the proper algorithms to recognize the Truth, and we must find and be guided by these processes in our lives.

A Christian who lives in harmony with God, who is in the grace of God, cultivates the ability to stop, not spread, negative messages. He or she understands where positive statements end and where gossip begins. This gossip is used by the devil to drive a person out of the light, resulting in the moral decline of society.

The "security" trap: losing truth leads to a loss of security

The tragedy of our time is the fact that we cannot find a way out of an apparently insurmountable dilemma. On the one hand, many Western politicians admit that the international order is broken, and proper civilizational values have been shunted aside. However, these politicians are not ready to defend the system and values resolutely, because they believe that open confrontation with violators will almost certainly cause a Third World War.

So far, Western civilization has found a way out only by "pretending not to see" the cynical bullying of world order, in order to prevent war and maintain a semblance of peace. Therefore, values such as truth, love, compassion, freedom, dignity, honor and other moral principles, are increasingly becoming a luxury that hinders one's progress. These values obstruct governments when they try to make decisions motivated by political or situational expediency. That is why even the most moral governments today are forced to ignore value motivations at times, especially when security arguments come to the fore.

However, this is precisely the trap: ignoring values brings such disturbances into the life of the world that it is precisely what they want to protect—security—that is under threat. In this situation, it is impossible not to mention the formula of Jesus: "He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for my sake will find it" (Mt. 10:39).

We are aware that the dilemma of "values vs security" is not easy to solve, and therefore we hesitate to judge today's politicians too

harshly. However, we also know that “artificial peace will not produce any positive results. International order cannot be restored with the cooperation of nations that violate international order. Moreover, violation of rules should not be grounds for modifying international law. Our attitude towards violators/lawbreakers must change... Europe’s tactical inertia has already proven ineffective and is a constant threat” [13].

So, in our view, the fundamental solution to the security dilemma lies not in the political but in the value sphere. To illustrate: In the first half of the twentieth century, when Europe became infected with the viruses of military might and nationalistic exceptionalism, political leaders emerged to fulfill these desires, spreading these same viruses. Today, Europe (broadly speaking) is infected with the viruses of moral relativism, situational deception and this same national exceptionalism—and leaders are once again coming to the fore to spread these viruses.

Therefore, the root problem is a collapse of values, which creates false political demands; this collapse should drive our reaction. That is why attempts to guarantee security at the expense of values will not produce a lasting effect: distorted values will give rise to changes of the international order which will become even more dangerous.

In addition, we should bear in mind that values do help to create solidarity and common ground for positive action, but only on one condition: that they are based on the unchanging commandments of God (cf. Ex. 20:1–17), where one of the fundamental values is the respect for human freedom and dignity, which are in turn the fruits of divine love.

Ukraine’s experience:

a clear confrontation between truth and error

Ukraine has experienced this confrontation in recent years while defending itself against Russian aggression. The Kremlin has launched a powerful information war against our country across the globe, distorting our desire for independence and the nature of democratic processes in Ukraine. The “fascist clique”, “nationalists seizing power”, and “under-state” are just a few examples of the clichés which the Kremlin uses to disorient the world community.

However, lies are not static; they lead to hatred. When they deny your right to exist and to be true to yourself, this inevitably leads to hatred and aggression.

“[Putin’s media] produce not ideas, but hatred, and they do it very effectively. To match Solovyov and Kiselev to say where they lied again, is senseless...” [14]. “An unprecedented regime, built in the Russian Federation, is simply unthinkable without hatred. This is the spiritual ‘hook’ on which its power hangs, and the whole history of Putin’s Russia is a history of cleverly directed hatred of different people, social groups, countries, and peoples” [15]. Ukrainians are one of the first targets of this hatred.

Hatred inevitably causes aggression. Russia has violated many international agreements and, in defiance of its Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with Ukraine, as well as the Budapest Mem-

orandum, has annexed Crimea and occupied a part of Ukrainian territory. For this, the Kremlin has employed its latest crafty inventions, such as “little green men” and “they-are-not-there.” The circle is thus closed, as aggression and violence inevitably lead to the outright lies by which the Putin regime seeks to elude responsibility. Thus, this regime becomes like the mockingbirds of Isaiah, who “made lies their refuge, and in falsehood have they taken shelter” (cf. Isa. 28:15).

When defining the cunning and deceptive nature of Russia’s current regime, we cannot agree with the politically correct language preferred by the West, because this distances us from the truth. The world must decide to call a threat by its real name, because this is the logic of justice and spiritual security: “You shall not hate your brother in your heart, but you shall reason with your neighbor, lest you bear sin because of him.” (Lev. 19:17). Not to reproach the Kremlin for information aggression—or to rebuke it by expressing only “deep concern”—means to bear its sin, that is, to share responsibility for this crime; since without reproach, you indulge the criminal.

Chapter III. Solutions from Christian communities

Having come to today’s principal problem—the lack of a spiritual alternative to an arrogant and triumphant devil—we must turn our gaze to the Church of Christ. Therefore, must ask the question: “How would Jesus confront this civilizational threat? What would He say to people at this particular time?”

We are grateful to the Church for her attempts to show us the spiritual guideposts that allow us to discern the right path. He who has good will, hears the call of the Church. However, the spirituality of the present world is decaying too quickly for the Church to properly respond. Therefore, the people of God must ask themselves why their testimony is so unconvincing to those who are “outside the flock.”

Below are some suggestions illustrating our conclusion.

The “ownership of truth” trap

There are Church communities where “truth” is a cold ideological formula, not a passionate love. This is a type of Christianity that turns away from the principles of democracy and is trapped in fundamentalism. For such Christians, the “truth” is the strike of the sword they inflict on wounds, not a healing balm. Such “truth” elevates communities to an apex of pride, which engenders the cruelty of “possessing the ultimate truth”. “We are all cruel, and especially cruel when right” [16].

In these communities, people feel a constant need to assign blame; their mission is to expose and condemn the sinner. For them, the Church is a legitimate playground from which to fling thunderbolts at perpetrators real or imagined, thus satisfying their spiritual “hunger.” This illustrates perfectly the need for Jesus’ cautionary words: “Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven” (Luke 6:37).

All too often, such Christians are correct in the content of their accusations, but theirs is the truth of a thunderous judge having no doubt about his own sinlessness. However, a righteousness that merely conceals anger and a lack of love, ceases to be God's truth. That is the mistake of all Christian fundamentalists who are trying to find a way out of the crisis we are experiencing, when democracy as a social order is being transformed into an ideology. It is impossible to find a proper solution if we go to the opposite extreme, when we oppose ultra-liberal ideology with an ideology of Christian fundamentalism. The truth can be found in the middle, where ideology dissolves in faith. This is where the four principles of a just society are upheld: respect for human dignity, solidarity, subsidiarity, and the common good.

The “political correctness” or “dialogue at any price” trap

Other church communities go to the other extreme—that of political correctness. In general, they rightly share the caution of modern secular culture not to demonize opponents. “The truth of statements can be recognized by their fruits: whether they cause controversy, spark controversy, instill remoteness, or vice versa—lead to conscious and mature reflection, to constructive dialogue, to useful activity” [6].

However, not every wound inflicted with the word of truth signifies a lack of love—sometimes the opposite is true. The Lord loved the Apostle Peter, called him a rock, and promised, “upon this rock I will build my church” (Mt. 16:18). However, it was He who told Peter when he was worried about Jesus' life: “Get behind me, Satan! For you are not on the side of God, but of men” (Mark 8:33). Did these words not wound the stricken apostle? Could we not call the words of Jesus a direct “demonization” of the apostle? And was this “demonization” not in fact a manifestation of love?

The newest formula in inter-church dialogue—“talking about what unites”—is a truly powerful tool if the partners in dialogue are really looking for truth. However, when dialogue is knowingly abused by some participants, this really means “not to speak the truth for the sake of apparent agreement.” But can you imagine Christ not speaking the whole truth for the sake of apparent understanding with the Sanhedrin? And was Jesus' pointed stance a disruption of dialogue? No, it was an invitation to enter a dialogue in truth. If we think otherwise, then we will be like Judas, who sought to persuade Jesus to enter into a wicked agreement with the mighty of this world.

Particular attention should be paid to the fact that the “dialogue at all costs” formula often harms the dialogue itself. After all, if an unscrupulous participant in the dialogue knows that he or she will be engaged in any case, then the temptation to abuse dialogue for the sake of greater self-interest becomes insurmountable.

Thanks to political correctness and a sincere belief in dialogue originating from the win-win principle, it does become possible to repeatedly avoid unnecessary conflicts and keep a space open for eventual agreement. But there is one critical condition: all this must be done for the sake of truth, not at the expense of truth through

its suppression or distortion, since genuine dialogue is only possible in truth.

The “security” and “peace” trap

Church communities often hesitate to condemn authoritarian regimes that do evil, fearing that this will result in greater persecution of their believers. In this case, the Church is not telling the whole truth in order not to upset dictators. At times, this leads to concessions with dictators which contradict Christian doctrine.

It is true that dictators do not like the word of truth and seek revenge for it—we have known this since the days of King Herod and John the Baptist. However, dictators need truth the most, because it is the truth that, even when it wounds, heals. This forces dictators (and all society) to test their conscience, the same conscience they were suppressing. Was this not the great mission of a Soviet-era dissident?

Also, it was Jesus who said in His Sermon on the Mount: “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so men persecuted the prophets who were before you” (Mt. 5:10-12). In other words, anyone who is a faithful disciple of the Church and who seeks to bring Christ's truth to life will inevitably come into conflict with the world of violence and error, and must be prepared for this conflict!

For a Christian, suffering for Christ—which means suffering for the Truth—is also important for Christian testimony: “This will be a time for you to bear testimony” (Luke 21:13). For it is through this testimony that Christ's Truth is affirmed!

No less meaningful are the words of Jesus: “And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell” (Mt. 10:28). The goal is not that the Church push people to unjustified martyrdom, but that she should help people seek first the Kingdom of God, which is incompatible with unrighteousness. What kind of suffering a person will undergo as a result, is a matter of the Lord's Providence. In doing this, the Church can negotiate with dictators to free those who suffer, but she cannot yield the truth to dictators.

The above-mentioned church communities, similar to the whole world in international security matters, believe there are only two ways to respond: (1) a return to the logic of hostility, or (2) an actual compromise with evil to preserve a fragile peace and the illusion of dialogue. These communities choose between the two, forgetting that there is a third way: the affirmation of truth in the language of love, and this is the case when truth is liberating (*cf.* Jn. 8:32). That is, the choice for Christians is not between telling the truth or not. Their choice is in how they tell the truth: whether they speak truth with hatred to the sinner, or out of a love for truth itself.

Truth and love are interdependent. Lack of love creates a space for deception and lies which make mutual understanding impossible. Conversely, blocking or ignoring the truth prevents the re-

lease of love that leads to forgiveness. In both cases, true reconciliation becomes impossible.

We Christians do not have a simple template that can be used to determine if we are acting properly. But in the pursuit of security and peace, we must remember that “peace is a consequence of God’s order... Peace is not a lack of war, but a positive concept in its own right... God’s peace is not compatible with evil! One cannot tolerate sin and speak of God’ peace. God’s peace is always the fruit of renunciation of evil and union with God. It is to this clear choice that Jesus calls with His words of division (Luke 12:51). Either we are on the side of God, or we have chosen the side of evil...” [17].

The Apostle’s words are food for thought: “For we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against world rulers of this present darkness, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the equipment of the gospel of peace” (Eph. 6:12–15).

Rulers belonging to darkness create a world full of malice, unrighteousness and injustice. There can be no real peace in such a world and attempts to appease such rulers will not bring the desired result. They should be combated; the question is, how to combat these rulers. Fighting through counter-hatred is unacceptable, because then we nourish within ourselves the same “spirit of malice” and would be no different from darkness. Therefore, Christians should preach a peace based on truth and justice: “These are the things that you shall do: Speak the truth to one another, render in your gates judgments that are true and make for peace” (Zech. 8:16).

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to be concluded next month.

Signatories

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RISU

Coronavirus Sequestration and Church Synods and Common Sense

Due to the various restrictions imposed on travel, and allowable numbers of people gathering together, it is apparent that international air travel, availability of accommodation for lodging and dining have been impacted. It has become necessary to postpone the planned Patriarchal Sobor, as well as the Eparchial Sobor. With uncertain estimates when the circumstances will improve, no specific date has been chosen. As events unfold, ample notification will be made.

Bishops of UGCC and RCC Demand that Ukrainian Authorities Ban Surrogate Motherhood and International Child Trafficking

A video posted on the page of BioTexCom clinic from Venice Hotel in Kyiv, which shows 46 newborn babies crying in beds deprived of parental warmth and treated as a product for which there was no buyer, prompted the bishops of the UGCC and RCC in Ukraine to appeal to the authorities with an urgent demand to ban surrogacy.

“Surrogacy, that is, the treatment of people as a product that can be ordered, manufactured and sold, which, unfortunately, is allowed by the current Ukrainian legislation, constitutes a problem, it is trampling on human dignity... It is difficult to imagine such a demonstration of disregard for the human person and its dignity. All this makes legalized surrogate motherhood possible.” This phenomenon is a moral evil that brings countless suffering and ordeal to both the child born in this way and to the woman who gave birth to this child... “The commercial basis of surrogate motherhood from a moral point of view deserves an even more severe judgment, as it is aggravated by the moral evil of buying and selling the functions of the body and the person of a newborn child. No circumstances or consequences can justify the practice of surrogate motherhood,” the bishops note.

According to them, such a gap in Ukrainian legislation dis-

credits our country in the eyes of European society.

The bishops agree with the call of the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine to prohibit international trafficking of children in Ukraine at the legislative level and demand to ban surrogacy in any form (altruistic and commercial) and to assure the children born proper custody and the possibility of adoption in families.

“We demand that the state authorities finally pay attention to family policy in Ukraine and set up an appropriate state body that would deal with Ukrainian families and take care that Ukrainian mothers are not compelled to sell their bodies and children they bear under their hearts for the sake of their own and their relatives' survival,” the bishops of the UGCC and RCC in Ukraine call.

The letter was signed by Patriarch Sviatoslav on behalf of the Synod of Bishops of the Kyiv-Galician Major Archbishopric of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, and by Archbishop Mieczyslaw Mokrzycki, Metropolitan of Lviv on behalf of the Conference of Bishops of the Roman Catholic Church in Ukraine.

RISU

Address to the Ukrainian Government and to All People of Good Will

The Coronavirus pandemic has brought to light many diseases in the life of contemporary society. Of these is surrogate motherhood, that is, treating people like merchandise which can be ordered, manufactured, and sold. Unfortunately, this is permitted by current Ukrainian legislation.

As religious leaders, we have repeatedly drawn the attention of the competent state authorities to this problem. Such trampling on human dignity compels us, the Catholic Bishops of Ukraine, to appeal to the Ukrainian authorities on all levels, once again, to condemn and ban this shameful phenomenon.

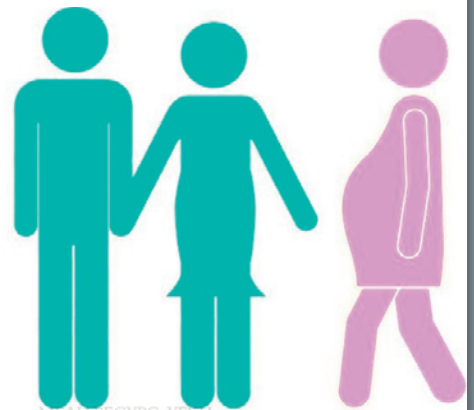
In recent days, we witnessed a video posted on the BioTexCom clinic page from the Venice Hotel in Kyiv, which shows a makeshift children's room and 46 crying babies in beds. These new-

borns were in modern incubators, deprived of maternal touch, parental warmth, selfless care, and much-needed love. They were shown as a purchased product for no-show buyers. Such a demonstration of contempt for the dignity of the human person is difficult to contemplate. And all this is made possible by legalized surrogate motherhood.

Legalization of the so-called surrogate motherhood, which should never be called “motherhood,” not only involves the horrible phenomena recently shown on the video, but also an underlying moral evil that brings immeasurable suffering and persecution to both the child and to the woman who bore it, to members of her family, and to the those who produce children as if they were pets.

Of its essence, the practice of surrogate motherhood, its qualities, pur-

pose, and means, are morally unacceptable. The same applies to the so-called altruistic surrogate motherhood, which has the same moral value. For even if the intention of the surrogate mother is good, the means and the object itself are bad. The commercial basis of surrogate motherhood deserves even harsher assessment, from a moral point of view, because it adds the moral evil



of buying and selling functions of the body and of of the person of the newborn child. No circumstances or consequences can justify the practice of surrogate motherhood.

Every child is a gift of God that should be gratefully accepted in married life. Every child has the right to be conceived naturally, and every child has the right to be born into a family and to be brought up in an atmosphere of love by a father and mother. Surrogate motherhood severely violates these rights and makes it impossible for Ukraine to follow the path of development, the path of the great European heritage. Such a gap in Ukrainian legislation significantly destroys European integration efforts and discredits our country in the eyes of European society.

We stand in solidarity with the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Ukrainian Parliament's appeal to ban international child trafficking in Ukraine at the legislative level. We exhort

and demand the banning of surrogate motherhood in any form (altruistic and commercial) and to assure to newborn children proper protection and the possibility to be adopted into families.

We reinforce this appeal by condemning a number of international institutions for this shameful phenomenon, which we present in the appendix to this letter.

We also demand that the state authority finally pays attention to family policy in Ukraine: that it creates an appropriate government body that could take care of Ukrainian families; that it ensures that Ukrainian mothers do not have to trade their bodies and the children they carry within for their own survival and that of their families.

In the name of the Synod of the Hierarchy of the Major Archbishopric of Kyiv-Halych
of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church,

His Beatitude Sviatoslav,
Major Archbishop of Kyiv-Halych,
Head of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church

In the name of the Episcopal Conference of the Roman Catholic Church in Ukraine,

Archbishop Mieczysław Mokrzycki
Metropolitan of Lviv
Interim Head of the Episcopal Conference of the Roman Catholic Church in Ukraine

APPENDIX:

The European Parliament unanimously condemned the practice of surrogate motherhood, not distinguishing between its "altruistic" and "commercial" aspects. On 5 April 2011 the European Parliament approved the resolution asking for "member-states to recognize the serious problem of surrogacy, which manifests itself as the exploitation of a woman's body and of her reproductive organs." (European Parliament resolution of 5 April 2011 on priorities and outline of a new EU policy framework to fight violence against women. This resolution also emphasizes that surrogate motherhood also leads to trafficking of human beings: « women and children are subject to the same forms of exploitation and both can be regarded as commodities on the international reproductive market, and that these new reproductive arrangements, such as surrogacy, augment the trafficking of women and children and illegal adoption across national borders" (European Parliament resolution of 5 April 2011 on priorities and outline of a new EU policy framework to fight violence against women.

The 2014 Annual report on human rights and democracy in the world and the EU policy on the matter), adopted at the plenary session of the European Parliament on 30 November 2015, "Condemns the practice of surrogacy, which undermines the human dignity of the woman since her body and its reproductive functions are used as a commodity: (European Parliament resolution of 30 November 2015 on the Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World 2014 and the European Union's policy on the matter.

The practice of surrogacy violates international and European law, in particular the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, Art. 1 and 3, (2000), the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Art. 7 and 3 (1989), and the Protocol on Trafficking in Children, Art. 2 (2000), Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, Art. 6 (1979), On the adoption of children, Art. 4c (3) (1967 and 1993), On human trafficking, Art. 4; (2005), Human Rights and Biomedicine Art. 21 (1997).

In the report of the special referent on the Sale and Sexual Exploitation of Children, including Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Other Materials of Sexual Violence against Children (2018), we find warnings against abuse and practices of all forms of surrogacy, and our Country is criticized there as one of the international centers of commercial surrogacy motherhood.

His Beatitude Sviatoslav: *The Coronavirus Pandemic Is a Radical Call from God to People: Stop Waging Wars Against Each Other*

You can hear a lot if you listen to God and try to understand how a person can build a new culture and civilization in a new way. The key to building a “new world” is the commandment of love, which renews those who practice it and who live by it.

This observation was made by Father and Head of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church His Beatitude Sviatoslav during the *Open Church* program on Zhyve TV. Sonia Koshkina, editor-in-chief of the online publication *Livyy Bereh*, took part in the conversation.

Speaking about the reasons why and for what God allowed the situation with the pandemic, the Primate of the UGCC admitted that he does not have an answer to this question. However, he urged everyone to ask God about this every day, listen to His voice, and try to understand what He wants to tell us.

“If we analyze the situation with the virus,” says the leader of the Church, “we begin to see that we are living in a period of fundamental and global cataclysms and changes. The ecological crisis in the world is the basis for the mutation of this virus. We don't know if there will be another pandemic in the world after we overcome the coronavirus.”

“Today we feel a deep shock in nature. There is a feeling that nature is beginning to defend itself against man. That is why it is

important for us to rethink our attitude about the environment very seriously,” he said.

He also added: “Perhaps this will also help us today to rethink global relations between different political centers and, finally, to stop fighting each other. Stop investing in weapons.”

His Beatitude drew attention to the fact that to this day Ukraine is at the epicenter of a new geopolitical game and is suffering from war.

He also drew attention to the global consequence of the pandemic - the economic crisis. “We see that the sanitary crisis is creating an economic crisis. There is a lot of talk about the recession of the world economy, which may be worse than in the early twentieth century. We need to build a more harmonious economic system in the world. It is important for us to understand how to distribute our resources equitably,” he said.

“I was very concerned about the statement of one of the UN spokesmen, who spoke about the dangers of world hunger. It says that there may be a famine on a biblical scale. We must hear not only those suffering from coronavirus, but also those who suffer from the unfair distribution of resources in the world,” he stressed.

The UGCC Department for Information.



Why?/Why:

by Fr Denny Molyty

Is there a difference between religious art and iconography? I ask because last Sunday while watching a streamed liturgy, a neighbor phoned. She heard the singing and I told her how she could find it. She later remarked at “all the artwork” and thought it was distracting. I never got that impression, but didn’t know exactly how to explain it.

My first thought was to use the lazy-man’s “go to expert”—*Wikipedia*—for a quick, succinct reply. It is often at least adequate, but I found this on *iconography*: “A meaning (based on a non-standard translation of Greek and Russian equivalent terms) is ‘the production or study of the religious images, called ‘icons’, in Byzantine and Orthodox

Christian tradition. This usage, which many consider simply incorrect, is mostly found in works translated from languages such as Greek or Russian, with the correct term being ‘icon painting’”

We’ll see later why that answer itself is incorrect.

First, on the surface “religious art” and

“iconography” appear to be almost interchangeable terms. Icons are colorful. Icons are in church. Icons depict Christ, His Mother—saints and significant events related to the history of salvation, whether recorded in the Bible, or in the two millennia of history of the Church. People have icons at home. For all these uses icons present a visible, yet somewhat intangible reaction that goes beyond the “image” we see in varied hues and stylized techniques that allow the essence of the icon to portray more than what meets the eye. These are not meant to be museum pieces, although some icons have been mishandled and abused by being on display in a venue for which it was





not intended. Precisely it is not considered “artwork” in the meaning of mere visual depiction. “Iconography” as a term contains two Greek words: one for “image” and another for “writing” [*icon* and *graph*]. As much as the written word conveys the gospel, iconography as a communication genre “writes” the gospel in a form using lines, colors and visible elements to convey the message. The use of pigments is like the ink of a writer.

Together, and using another sense—sight—the truths of the faith are completing the process of evangelizing. Often the term “theology in color” is used to describe iconography. Being in the presence of these images and hearing the verbal proclamation of the gospel simultaneously, we have a broader sense of what it is we have to hear, learn and know about what the Church teaches. Icons aid in worship.

Writing icons requires an ability to accurately depict the truth. There are strict guidelines that affect the outcome of the icon itself—as you well know it is not merely a reference to a biblical event or person—but a carefully executed presentation that contains subtle signs we sometimes need to rely upon words to understand all that is contained. Details of dogma or theology are present in hues.

“Religious art” is not a term that is used to describe “iconography”. That name is more applicable to what we see quite often in popular


depictions of the very same persons and events important to Church life and its doctrines. These forms utilize a different manner that tend to imitate the natural “life-like” features of the physical world. It performs a different task in relating the same truths, and has its value on a different plane, whether at home, in church or a museum.

Many people are drawn to this form of depiction, which is often a result of a painter’s talent and personal concept of what a saint or biblical event might have looked like. Museums are filled with these, as well, and maybe rightfully so, as they do not represent an attempt to portray an underlying scope of a meaning more than some exterior surface quality guided by strict rules.

Practitioners of this art form are not usually restricted by the very specific “laws” that iconography follows. Iconography has a long history of use in the Church. Students of the history of art notice that most “religious art” of the first twelve centuries has a notable similarity to icons produced even today.

Examples of some similarities and differences in the two styles are in an article in this *New Star* on St John the Baptist that uses both.

Send your questions to Fr Denny Molitvy: newstarwhywhy@aol.com include your name and parish, which will not be published.



In Lviv, the Permanent Synod of the UGCC Discusses Pastoral Care in Times of Pandemic

On May 25, 2020, the working sessions of the Permanent Synod of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church started at the Patriarchal House in Lviv. This is reported by the UGCC Information Department.

The working sessions of the permanent Synod of the UGCC are chaired by the Head of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, His Beatitude Sviatoslav. Participating in its work are the Synod member Bishop Theodore Martynyuk, auxiliary Bishop of the Ternopil-Zboriv Archdiocese, and two Deputy Members of the Permanent Synod: Bishop Igor Voznyak, Archbishop and Metropolitan of Lviv, and Bishop Yaroslav Pryriz, Eparch of Sambir-Drohobych. The participation of deputies is due to quarantine restrictions imposed to curb the spread of the pandemic and is also due to the inability of members of the Permanent Synod to cross national borders because of the lockdown.

The Secretary of the Synod of Bishops of the UGCC, Bishop Bohdan Dzyurakh, also takes part in the meetings.

On the first day of their work, the bishops familiarized themselves with the current state of monasticism of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, which was reported by the Patriarchal Commis-

sion on Monasticism of the UGCC, led by Bishop Mykhailo Bubniy, Exarch of Odessa.

Bishop Kenneth Novakovsky, Eparch of London, presented the activities of the Council for Spiritual Care, and Bishop Bohdan Danylo, Eparch of Parma, together with the Patriarchal Commission for Clergy, reported on the state of the clergy in modern pastoral conditions, and especially on the development of vocations to the priesthood. At the end of the working day, a presentation was made on the life and activities of the Social Department of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, headed by Bishop Vasyl Tuchapets.

Also, the Synodal fathers were to consider proposals for holding a Synod of Bishops of the UGCC in 2020 and the current state of the Church’s pastoral care in the context of quarantine, the spread of the pandemic and its consequences.

The session of the Permanent Synod of the UGCC were held until May 27.

It should be noted that the Permanent Synod assists the Head of the UGCC in matters of ordinary administration or in solving urgent matters of the Church.



Looking closely you might see five prelates keeping “social distance.”

Nativity of John the Forerunner and Other Factors of Salvation History

Somewhat overlooked—or maybe overshadowed by other events—is a long-observed commemoration on our liturgical calendar. It may seem inconsequential, or even unimportant, but in reality it reflects a pivotal point in our development as a Church.

June 24 has been on the Church calendar since early times as the Nativity of John the Baptist. Who knew? It is not just a fine point that liturgists pore over, when time is taken to see how or why this date was decided upon, or how and why it overlaps with other aspects of our annual celebrations we consider “feasts”.

One particularly interesting point is that as the Church calendar evolved, most saints’ feast days are observed on the date of death. In other words, when they were born into eternity. This is, after all, the impetus for our existence in the first place. There are three exceptions to this general principle. We celebrate the Nativity of Christ. We celebrate the Nativity of the Mother of God. And, as we see, the Nativity of John the Baptist gives evidence of the intertwining of these lives that affect our faith experience.

These births have special meaning.

Mary’s nativity is on our calendar on September 8, just as the liturgical calendar begins. It is a subtle message that as the new year begins, this event ushers in the era of fulfillment of the promise of a Messiah—for from her was born Jesus, the Christ, Son of God.

Jesus’ nativity was originally celebrated together with Theophany, January 6, but—as no one needs to be told—is currently on December 25. This date was decided upon to counteract a pagan festival introduced in the Roman Empire to honor the victory of the sun over the waning days of darkness. As a tactic to emphasize the enlightenment that comes to us through Christ, the now-lengthening daylight hours were given the simile of our own growth in enlightenment. Tropari of that change-of-life event refer to Jesus as the Sun of Justice (or “truth” or “righteousness”). Christ increases, and effects our lives,

John’s nativity—as elsewhere described in this issue of *New Star*—is at the opposite end of the sun’s cyclic appearance on Earth. Some relate this as emphasizing the scriptural reference to the end of his preaching in the wilderness’ decreasing importance and the increasing influence of Christ’s message following His Baptism.

Interestingly, each of these nativities is pre-



“Among those born of women there has been none greater than John the Baptist.”

(Mt 11:11)

The presence of a table (altar?), the act of signifying the name are biblical elements.



The angels in the sky are hints of some sort, but the absence of the detail of naming seems to miss the importance of the special circumstances in the bible.



ceded by a liturgical commemoration of the conception that occurred. As the usual gestation time of humans is nine months, we can look to the calendar to see just when they are observed.

Mary's conception is December 9—her corresponding special birth was one day short of the full nine-month time frame; John's special conception is September 23—one day longer than the "exact" full term. And, as we celebrate Christ's conception on March 25, December 25 is a "perfect" example of expectancy. [March 25 corresponds to the 14 of Nisan of the Jewish calendar—the day of Christ's crucifixion. Some even speculate the creation of the world coincides with the date—on which God said "let there be light"].

Just as these conceptions and births are at astronomically-related times, the subsequent deaths also have a relationship to our concept of time.

As the liturgical calendar ends in August—the Dormition (or Falling Asleep) of Mary on the 15th and the Beheading of John on the 29th, are signals that the old way of life is giving way to a new epoch for humanity.

Each year as we grow we have the opportunity to add to our understanding and appreciation of all that unfolds for us. Each cycle can reveal to us more than what we have already come to know. And we continue on to eternity.



Another "Artist's rendition"

Special for Children (of all ages)

John the Forerunner and Baptizer of Christ

and activity pages for his birth and mission to prepare for the birth of the Messiah

Every year on June 24, we celebrate the Nativity of St. John the Baptist. We all know that babies are a gift from God, but John was a very special baby. John was so special that unlike other saints who we celebrate their death, for John we celebrate both his birth and his death.

John's parents were Elizabeth and Zechariah, who was a priest. They had been married for a long time and were very old, but never had children. They always prayed that God would bless them with a child. One day when Zechariah was serving in the Temple, he saw the Archangel Gabriel standing by the altar. He was scared at the sight of the angel, but Gabriel told him not to be afraid for he had come to tell him that God heard his prayers and his wife Elizabeth would give birth to a son. He also told him to name the child John. The angel went on to say that he will be great before the Lord and his greatness would be because God had a special job for John. Well, Zechariah didn't believe the angel, first because he thought his wife was too old to have a baby. Second because, if the angel were real, he would know that in those days, first-born sons were named after their father and the name John was strange to him. Zechariah doubted what the angel said was true, so, to test the angel, he asked for a sign and the angel gave him one. Zechariah wouldn't be able to speak until the baby was born and named.

When Elizabeth realized she was with child, she thought it impossible because of her age, so she kept it a secret. One day her cousin Mary came to visit her to tell her she was with child, too, and he would be named Jesus. When they embraced, the baby John started moving around in his mother's womb.

Not long after their meeting, Elizabeth gave birth to her son. In keeping with tradition, on the eighth day after his birth he was

named John. Everyone was surprised since no one in the family had this unusual name. When Zechariah wrote his name, John, Zechariah could once again be able to speak and said, "And you, child, will be called the Prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare His way..."

When John grew up, he became a Prophet just as his father said he would. He told everybody about the coming of Jesus. He told people to seek forgiveness of their sins and be baptized with water. John promised that one day the Messiah would come and baptize all with the Holy Spirit and not just water.

On the day that John baptized Jesus in the River Jordan, the Holy Spirit descended on him in the form of a dove. This day marked the beginning of Jesus' ministry and John would now fade into the background. Knowing that his role was slowly diminishing he said, "Christ must increase and I must decrease" (Jn 3:30). He forgot himself and lived only for Jesus.

Jesus said, "Among those born of women there has been none greater than John the Baptist." (Mt 11:11) for he dedicated his life to directing people toward following Jesus.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

1. Who was St. John?
2. What was Zechariah's job?
3. What message did the Archangel Gabriel give to Zechariah?
4. When the baby was born, what did everybody think his name should be?
5. What did his parents name him?
6. What was God's plan for John?
7. What do you think God's plan is for you?

BULLETIN BOARD

UNDER CONSTRUCTION COMING SOON

On temporary hold, due to coronavirus.

“Bulletin Board” has offered suggestions on how to have a **Vibrant Parish**, an initiative of His Beatitude as a process to rejuvenate parish life by the year 2020. A new ten-year project is about to be undertaken to project a view of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church worldwide by the year 2030.

Maybe, Maybe not...
This photo, too, has “gone viral”...



Making a Difference

Humanity May never again Get a Chance Like this—Let’s Not Squander it!

While to a certain degree returning to “business as usual” will not likely happen, that does not mean the vast majority of those who hold most of the world’s wealth and power will not use every advantage at their disposal in trying to hold onto broken, corrupt, unjust systems—what St. Pope John Paul II called “structures of sin”—which feed their greed while starving the morally just aspirations of the world’s poor and vulnerable.

And so, what should each follower of Jesus do?

We should sincerely pray for the spiritual conversion of the rich and powerful. And we should oppose them!

We need to put on the nonviolent fight of our lives to ensure that we don’t sleepwalk ourselves right back into a morally sick “normal.”

Old habits die hard – both individually and structurally. After the coronavirus pandemic, the sinful structures of raw profit-centered capitalism and death-dealing militarism will surely continue marching on – crushing underfoot the poor, vulnerable and the planet itself – unless we humbly admit our significant personal indifference, repent, and strive to transform ourselves and these structures of sin.

Pope Francis, in a recent homily warned

that as the world looks forward to the eventual recovery from the pandemic, “there is a danger that we will forget those who are left behind. The risk is that we may then be struck by an even worse virus, that of *selfish indifference*. A virus spread by the thought that life is better if it is better for me. It begins there and ends up selecting one person over another, discarding the poor, and sacrificing those left behind on the altar of progress.”

The Holy Father continued, “The present pandemic, however, reminds us that there are no differences or borders between those who suffer. We are all frail, all equal, all precious. May we be profoundly shaken by what is happening all around us: the time has come to eliminate inequalities, to heal the injustice that is undermining the health of the entire human family”.

In every parish, diocese, civic, academic, business, labor and social forum we need to start dialoging, planning and organizing ways to build structures and systems that work for everyone—from the moment of conception to natural death—where no one gets left behind and everyone has a seat at the table!

And we need to develop strategies on how best to influence and pressure government and corporate leaders (e.g. boycotts, divest-

ment) to put the common good and the care of the planet as their top priorities—not power and profit.

All of this can easily tempt each of us to feel overwhelmed.

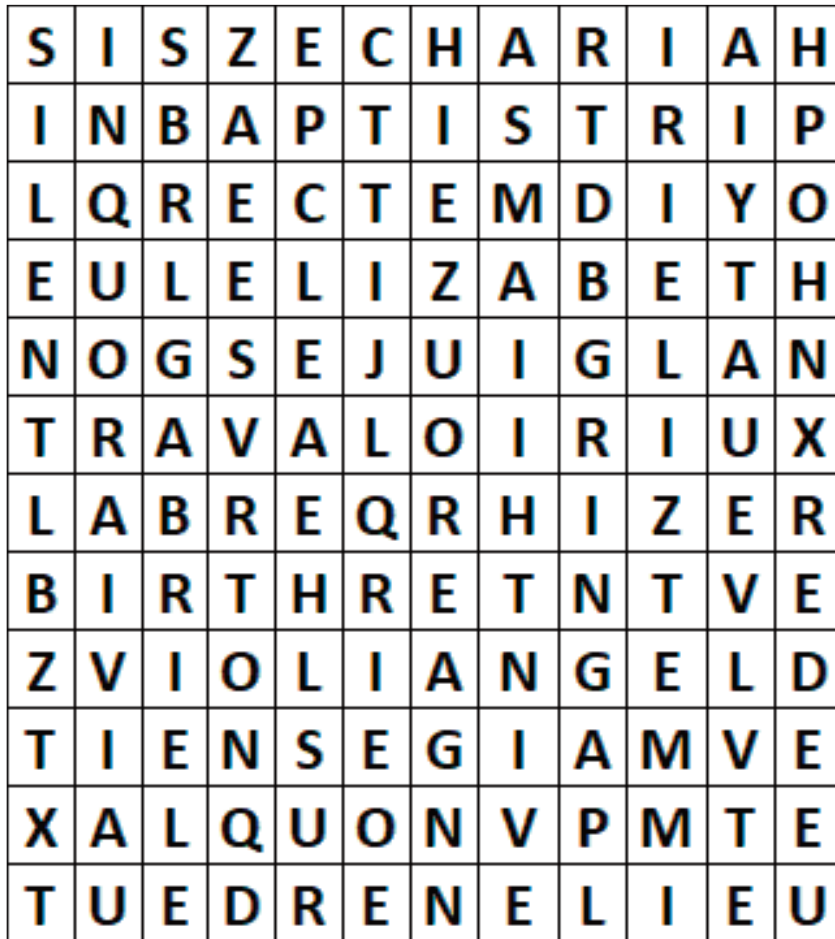
But it is essential not to allow ourselves to become overwhelmed. It’s not all up to you and me. The Holy Spirit is with us! Each of us in our own personal sphere of influence (e.g. family, friends, parish, workplace, social media, lobbying) can make a difference.

In their courageous 1983 pastoral letter on war and peace titled, “The Challenge of Peace: God’s Promise and Our Response,” the U. S. Catholic bishops wrote: “Let us have the courage to believe in the bright future and in a God who wills it for us - not a perfect world, but a better one. The perfect world, we Christians believe, is beyond the horizon, in an endless eternity where God will be all in all. But a better world is here for human hands and hearts and minds to make.”

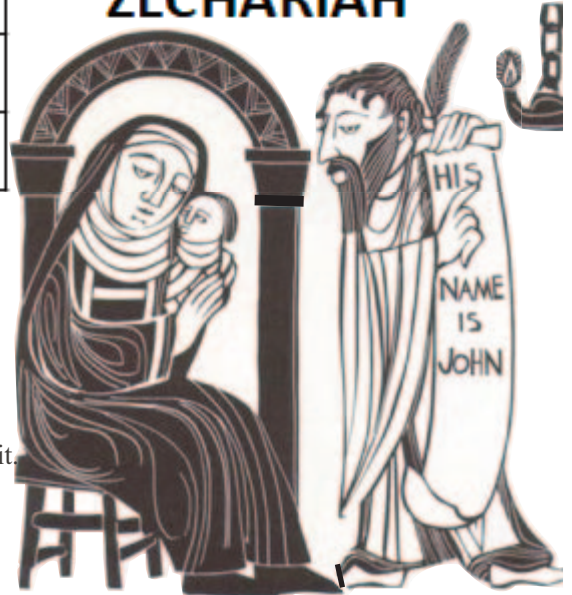
Tony Magliano



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ANGEL
BIRTH
BAPTIST
ELIZABETH
GABRIEL
JOHN
NAME
SILENT
SON
ZECHARIAH



WORD SEARCH

In the puzzle above, there are ten words hidden that refer to St John the Baptist.

Each word is written once—straight across, top-to-bottom, or on a diagonal line. None is backwards.

Use the list on the right to find the words. Cross off the word as you find it.

A clue is on page 18, if you need it.

Why was this drawing used? Who are the people in it?

Bishop's Chancery

OFFICE HOURS: Monday-Friday 9:00 am-4:00 pm

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**Deadline for the July issue
of *New Star* is June 15.**



Published monthly with the permission and authority of His Grace, Bishop BENEDICT (Aleksiychuk), by St Nicholas Publications, official publisher of the:

St Nicholas Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy
2245 W. Rice St Chicago, IL 60622

Address manuscripts to: **Editor, For New Star**
2245 W. Rice St.
Chicago, IL 60622-6848

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Published by: **FOR NEW STAR, A CONSORTIUM**
with the assistance of:

Fr James Karepin, OP; Fr Denny Molitvy;
Fr Jonathan Morse; Henry Peresie, PhD;
Phyllis Muryu Zaparaniuk.
Fr Roman Bobesiuk, Ukrainian Editor

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