

МАЯК - BEACON

December 2006

ISSUE 3



У країньська Православна Громада Св. Володимира



St. Vladimir's Ukrainian Orthodox Congregation

**Українська Православна Громада
Св. Володимира**

**St. Vladimir's
Ukrainian Orthodox Congregation**

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**МАЯК
BEACON**

DECEMBER 2006

FALL /WINTER EDITION

**St. Vladimir's Ukrainian Orthodox Congregation
2007 Parish Council**

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Word Processing and Editing: Joan Popowich

From Fr. Taras

And He was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became man. (The Creed)

We once again find ourselves on the threshold of that great and glorious Feast which proclaims the Good News that our eternal salvation is at hand – the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord, God, and Saviour Jesus Christ. The music “*of the season*” is heard wherever we go. Christmas trees and decorations are everywhere. People run from store to store doing their Christmas shopping, not having time to stop and chat with people

they know because of the importance of the task that is at hand. Many others eat, drink and make merry as they immerse themselves in the consumer atmosphere of this time of year.

Yet, there are also those that go without any of this merry-making, without any of this overindulgence of food and drink simply because of poverty or homelessness. These people experience a loneliness that knows no bounds. Yet in Christ there is no loneliness, no walls that separate one human being from another as we are all equal before Him, especially when we will stand before Him at His second and glorious coming when He will demand an account of how we lived our lives in this materialistic world.

In the midst of all the presents and food of the holiday season, let us never lose sight of its great spiritual meaning. The Nativity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is commemorated as one of the most joyful feast days of the Orthodox Church year. It is surpassed in joy and solemnity only by the Feast of Pascha.

Let us therefore use the time that leads us to the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord to our utmost spiritual benefit. Let us remember that the time of St. Philip’s Fast is meant to draw our attention to why the Son of God became incarnate and chose to



live among us. Because of its emphasis on repentance, St. Philip’s Fast is a season of great seriousness, not a time for festivities and merry-making, much less of partying and secular concerns. The Fast is not part of the Christmas holidays, and Christians of earlier times would be shocked at the current habit of treating this as a period of jolly good times and “*Christmas cheer*”. All of these festive things belong to the celebration of

Christmas itself, which lasts for 12 days from December 25 / January 7 to January 6 / 19.

The various seasons of the Liturgical Year involve more than a variety of Liturgical services. The Liturgical seasons are meant to govern the lives of the Orthodox Christian. For this reason, taking part in all of these Christmas activities during St. Philip’s Fast considerably lessens the chance of our being properly prepared for the arrival of the Feast Day itself.

As we draw ever closer to the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord, let us use this as a time of reflection, repentance and spiritual preparation. In doing so, we will be able to greet this important Feast with deep felt spiritual joy and love of the New-born Christ Child. Let us look forward to its arrival, but let us not pre-celebrate it.

Let us keep these things in mind, lest we forget that what we are celebrating is the very beginning of our salvation and entry into God’s eternal kingdom!

May each and every one of you have a blessed and joyous Feast of the Nativity of Christ and may its joy be with you throughout the New Year!

Christ is Born! – Let us Glorify Him!

Христос Рождается! – Славимо Його!

A Message From The Chair



Glory To Christ!

On the occasion of our upcoming Nativity celebration, I take this opportunity, on behalf of the Parish Council, to extend the very best of wishes to our Priest, our congregation members, our youth and our many adherents.

Our newly elected Parish Council and all committee members, thank you for your vote of confidence. Throughout the coming year, it is the intention of the Parish Council to maintain the dogmas, teaching, Traditions, Holy Canons, order of Divine services and moral principles of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada as well as the charter, discipline and constitution of our church.

This past year has been difficult in that our congregation has made many decisions with impact on the short term. In our new mandate, I hope to focus on strengthening our membership base by attracting new members, and by opening communications with members who have left our parish. I would like to thank my outgoing board members: for their years of hard work and dedication to our church

and the board during their time on our parish council. I would like to welcome the new members of the board, and look forward to their contributions to St. Vladimir's Ukrainian Orthodox Congregation.

Since the annual general meeting in December we have been fortunate to have Walter Semkuley a chartered accountant come forward to fill the position of treasurer. Bob Yanicki has also come forward to fill the role of financial data entry and he will assume a number of duties and responsibilities that were filled by our former hall administrator.

To close, it is my hope that during this Christmas season all of our church members are surrounded with peace, love and a spirit of giving for those less fortunate than ourselves.

Michael Zubkow, President

St. Vladimir's Ukrainian Orthodox Congregation
at Calgary



ST. VLADIMIR'S UKRAINIAN ORTHODOX CONGREGATION

Christ Is Born!

Let Us Glorify Him!

On the joyous occasion of the bright feast of the Nativity of Our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ, the New Year 2007, and the feast of Theophany, we extend sincerest greetings to: His Eminence, Metropolitan John and His Eminence, Archbishop Yuriy; the Consistory of the UOCC along with the chairman of its Presidium, the Rev. Fr. Bohdan Hladio; all Reverend Clergy and faithful of the UOCC; the Members and Adherents of St. Vladimir's Ukrainian Orthodox Congregation in Calgary; all Ukrainian Orthodox families and Youth; all congregation organizations and all people of good will. We wish all of you joyous and peaceful Holy Days, good health and continued spiritual contentment!

From St. Vladimir's Congregation Parish Council:

V. Rev. Fr. Taras Krochak

Michael Zubkow, President

Ihor Triska, Secretary



NATIVITY SERVICE TIMES:

Saturday, January 6 - NATIVITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST - Grand Complines & Litia - 10:00 p.m. - Nativity Divine Liturgy - 12:00 Midnight

Sunday, January 6 - NATIVITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST - Divine Liturgy 9:30 a.m.

Monday, January 8 - SYNAXIS OF THE MOST HOLY THEOTOKOS - Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Tuesday, January 9 - STEPHEN THE FIRST & GREAT MARTYR - Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Saturday, January 13 - CIRCUMCISION OF OUR LORD - ST. BASIL THE GREAT - Julian New Year's Day - Vespers & Litia & Holy Confession - 6:30 p.m.

Sunday, January 14 - CIRCUMCISION OF OUR LORD - ST. BASIL THE GREAT - Julian New Year's Day - Divine Liturgy - 9:30 a.m.

Thursday, January 18 - THEOPHANY EVE - JORDAN FEAST - Great Blessing of Water - 5:00 p.m. - Jordan Feast Supper - 6:30 p.m.

Friday, January 19 - THEOPHANY - BAPTISM OF OUR LORD - Divine Liturgy & Great Blessing of Water 9:30 a.m.



Ukrainian Self Reliance Association (TYC)

Annual Report 2006 – Prepared by Dan Zukiwsky

TYC, Calgary Branch has 23 active members who meet on the 3rd Monday of each month, September to June. Our meetings are dinner meetings where a member cooks a gourmet meal, while others assist the cook and clean up. The Annual General Meeting is held in January. The December meeting is a combination business and social event whereby the wives get a chance to share the fellowship of the group. Other high lights of the year are the family day skating party held at Bowness Park in mid February and the Mother's Day Brunch held in the Cultural Centre after Divine Liturgy on Mother' day.

A TYC member has a regular seat on St. Vladimir's parish council. He reports on the parish council proceedings as well as expresses TYC's concerns.

Our main fund raising effort comes from our participation in the Alberta Gaming's Casino program, in which we are scheduled for every 18 to 24 months. From these proceeds we support:

St Vladimir's Cultural Centre

St. Vladimir's Library and Archives

St. Vladimir's Sadochok (Ukrainian Preschool)

St. Andrew's College

St. Andrew's College Calgary Bursary

Bursary program for local students who attend Ukrainian language and/or cultural oriented summer camps.

Camp Kiev's K Hi

Mustard Seed Ministry



If

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Is represented as:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26.

Then

H-A-R-D-W-O-R-K

$8+1+18+4+23+15+18+11 = 98\%$

And

K-N-O-W-L-E-D-G-E

$11+14+15+23+12+5+4+7+5 = 96\%$

But

A-T-T-I-T-U-D-E

$1+20+20+9+20+21+4+5 = 100\%$

AND, look how far the love of God will take you

L-O-V-E-O-F-G-O-D

$12+15+22+5+15+6+7+15+4 = 101\%$



Therefore, one can conclude with mathematical certainty that: While Hard Work and Knowledge will get you close, and Attitude will get you there, it's the Love of God that will put you over the top!

SENIOR CYMK
IVAN BOHUN BRANCH
Submitted by: Julianna Michayluk

Another year is under way for Calgary's Senior CYMK, Ukrainian Orthodox Youth Group. This year, to date, we have fifteen (15) paid members, ranging in age from twelve (12) to twenty-one (21). The newly elected executive is as follows: President - Toma Lebedovich; Vice President - Larissa Syrnick; Treasurer - Nichola Belsheim; and Secretary - Katrina Michayluk. Our Advisors this year are Marla Belsheim, Audrey Michayluk and Tim Michayluk and our Spiritual Advisor is Fr. Taras Krochak.

Our year began on Saturday, 23 September 2006 with the Annual General Meeting. Following the meeting all CYMKivtsi headed off to Bowness Park for a *"Welcome Back and Kick-off Bar-b-que"*. It was a beautiful fall day enjoyed by all that attended.

Ten (10) members attended the Alberta CYC convention in Edmonton in October 2006. The theme for the convention was *"Celebrating Our Youth"*, which was very fitting, as this is the 75th Anniversary of CYMK. The convention consisted of a Jam Session and Sing-a-long Social / Registration night on Friday evening. Saturday started with a moleben at St. John's Cathedral, which all CYMKivtsi attended. This was followed by a *"leadership"* session facilitated by Tanya Strus, National CYMK Treasurer. During this session, our CYMK advisors met with advisors from other CYMK branches in Alberta, as well as interested parents, to brainstorm some ideas as to the direction CYMK should be going in as we head into the next seventy-five (75) years. During lunch, the Alberta CYMK business meeting took place. At the conclusion of the meeting, CYMKivtsi headed off to the Edmonton Eskimo football game - a great time was had by all. Saturday evening was the formal banquet and dance, during which CYMK sang two (2) songs that we had been taught earlier in the day by Tim Michayluk. Sunday liturgy was attended by all CYMKivtsi - they greeted Metropolitan John, joined the Church Choir and all Alberta CYMKivtsi sang the Lord's Prayer. We all headed back to Calgary after the delicious Thanksgiving luncheon served at St. John's.

This year we will be continuing with Youth Sundays where CYMKivtsi will be greeters, candle holders, Epistle Readers and assist with collection on the first Sunday of each month. Many of the Sr. CYMK members actively participate in the Divine Liturgy whenever possible, by singing in the Church Choir, reading the Epistle and holding candles.

Members participated in the annual Remembrance Day Memorial Service held at church - representatives held the CYMK flag in church and laid a wreath during the ceremony. CYMK members were also involved with the fall "Western" Puschenia - hosting the Coat Check and organizing the children's games. CYMK was represented at the Ukrainian Famine Genocide service - a wreath was laid in honour of the Ukrainians who perished.

Sr. CYMK will be participating in carolling at church member's homes in the month of January. In February we will be holding our annual Valentine's Day bake sale as well as hosting an Alberta CYMK weekend. The February weekend will be the kick-off for organizing what Alberta CYMK will be presenting at the bi-annual USRL Convention and 75th Anniversary of CYMK celebrations in Winnipeg in August 2007. We will also be making pasky and pysanky for the Easter Baskets for those not able to attend the Pascha Service. Zustrich, at Camp Bar-v-Nok, in May is always an event that we look forward to. We will also continue to sponsor our World Vision Child in Romania and will continue to be involved with Project Lubov - Love.

We would like to invite any Ukrainian Orthodox youth, currently enrolled in Grade 7 and up to join Calgary Senior CYMK. It is going to be a great year!!!!



Baba's Hands



Baba, some ninety plus years, sat feebly on the patio bench. She didn't move, just sat with her head down staring at her hands. When I sat down beside her she didn't acknowledge my presence and the longer I sat I wondered if she was OK. Finally, not really wanting to disturb her but wanting to check on her at the same time, I asked her if she was OK. She raised her head and looked at me and smiled. "Yes, I'm fine, thank you for asking", she said in a clear strong voice.

"I didn't mean to disturb you, Baba, but you were just sitting here staring at your hands and I wanted to make sure you were OK", I explained to her. "Have you ever looked at your hands", she asked. "I mean really looked at your hands"? I slowly opened my hands and stared down at them. I turned them over, palms up and then palms down. No, I guess I had never really looked at my hands as I tried to figure out the point she was making.

Baba smiled and related this story...

"Stop and think for a moment about the hands you have, how they have served you well throughout your years. These hands, though wrinkled, shrivelled and weak have been the tools I have used all my life to reach out and grab and embrace life. They braced and caught my fall when as a toddler I crashed upon the floor. They put food in my mouth and clothes on my back. As a child my mother taught me to fold them in prayer. They tied my shoes and pulled on my boots. They held my husband and wiped my tears when he went off to war. They have been dirty, scraped and raw, swollen and bent. They were uneasy and clumsy when I tried to hold my newborn son. Decorated with my wedding band they showed the world that I was married and loved someone special. They wrote my letters to him and trembled and shook when I buried my parents and spouse. They have held my children and grandchildren, consoled neighbours, and shook in fists of anger when I didn't understand. They have covered my face, combed my hair, and washed and cleansed the rest of my body. They have been sticky and wet, bent and broken, dried and raw.

And to this day when not much of anything else of me works real well these hands hold me up, lay me down, and again continue to fold in prayer. These hands are the mark of where I've been and the ruggedness of life.

2006 Orthodox Men's Retreat

The 2006 Orthodox Men's Retreat featured guest speaker Fr. Michael Gillis from the Antiochian Orthodox Church in British Columbia. Father Michael presented a theme of "Why We Suffer", giving all retreatants an Orthodox understanding of suffering, its importance in our spiritual journey, and misconceptions of suffering's link to punishment. Fifteen men attended the retreat from the congregations of St. Mary's Romanian Orthodox Church of Calgary, Antiochian Orthodox Church of the Annunciation of Calgary, St. Andrew's Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Edmonton and St. Vladimir's Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Calgary. The third annual Men's Retreat was held March 10th to 12th at Sanctum Retreat Centre in Caroline, Alberta. The retreat provided an excellent opportunity to reorient our spiritual thinking, rejuvenate ourselves physically, and enjoy fellowship with other Orthodox men. The newly constructed Sanctum Retreat Centre provides humble accommodations, outstanding lecture facilities, and a beautiful backdrop for our weekend. Our wonderful cooks and retreat staff developed a splendid Lenten menu for our meals, and were always helpful in fulfilling all of requests and suggesting nature walks for our retreatants. Our weekend included four conference sessions, time for reflection and enjoying the facility and surroundings, and Divine Liturgy, morning prayers and Vesper services at the Centre's chapel. All retreatants left the weekend rejuvenated and in anticipation of the fourth annual retreat scheduled for March 23 – 25, 2007 at Sanctum Retreat Centre.



But more importantly it will be these hands that God will reach out and take when He leads me home. And with my hands He will lift me to His side and there I will use these hands to touch the face of Christ".

I will never look at my hands the same again. But, I remember God reached out and took my Baba's hands and led her home.

When my hands are hurt or sore or when I stroke the face of my children and husband I think of Baba. I know she has been stroked and caressed and held by the Hands of God. I too, want to touch the face of God and feel His hands upon my face".



The Didache

The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles

Chapter 4

4:1 My child, thou shalt remember both night and day him that speaketh unto thee the Word of God; thou shalt honour him as thou dost the Lord, for where the teaching of the Lord is given, there is the Lord.

4:2 thou shalt seek out day by day the favour of the saints, that thou mayest rest in their words;

4:3 thou shalt not desire schism, but shalt set at peace them that contend; thou shalt judge righteously; thou shalt not accept the person of any one to convict him of transgression;

4:4 thou shalt not doubt whether a thing shall be or not.

4:5 Be not a stretcher out of thy hand to receive, and a drawer of it back in giving.

4:6 If thou hast, give by means of thy hands a redemption for thy sins.

4:7 Thou shalt not doubt to give, neither shalt thou murmur when giving; for thou shouldest know who is the fair recompenser of the reward.

4:8 Thou shalt not turn away from him that is in need, but shalt share with thy brother in all things, and shalt not say that things are thine own; for if ye are partners in what is immortal, how much more in what is mortal?

4:9 Thou shalt not remove thine heart from the son or from thy daughter, but from their youth shalt teach them the fear of God.

4:10 Thou shalt not command with bitterness thy servant or thy handmaid, who hope in the same God as thyself, lest they fear not in consequence the God who is over both; for he cometh not to call with respect of persons, but those whom the Spirit hath prepared.

4:11 And do ye servants submit yourselves to your masters with reverence and fear, as being the type of God.

4:12 Thou shalt hate all hypocrisy and everything that is not pleasing to God;

4:13 thou shalt not abandon the commandment of the Lord, but shalt guard that which thou hast received, neither adding thereto nor taking therefrom;

4:14 thou shalt confess thy transgressions in the Church, and shalt not come unto prayer with an evil conscience. This is the path of life.

.....to be continued

Membership Development Committee

Christ is Born! – Let us Glorify Him!

Христос Рождается! – Славимо Його!



Committee Members:

**V. Rev. Fr. Taras Krochak, Joanna Calkins,
Lorne Calkins, Lori Chomik, Shirley Din,
Don Popowich, Joan Popowich**

Our year started with the co-ordination of publishing and distributing the 2006 St. Vladimir's Pocket Calendar. We were again successful in raising, from commercial sponsors outside of our congregation, \$1,000 to help offset a significant portion of the cost.

Care Notes that are available in our foyer continued to be supplied for the information and care of those in need of some counsel.

In answer to the Christmas Charity Appeal, members of our Congregation responded generously with finances allowing us to provide aid to the needy by financially sponsoring three meals at the Calgary Mustard Seed, thereby providing a home-cooked meal to approximately 1500 of Calgary's needy. Each meal was prepared and served by twenty of St. Vladimir's willing volunteers.

We facilitated the 2006 Spring Orthodox Weekend which featured the theme "The Sowing of Good Seeds". Approximately 65 participants heard our three speakers talk on how Spiritual Growth and Almsgiving apply during Holy Great Lent. A hands-on session of incense-making followed. In the month of November, this committee facilitated a second spiritual workshop – Frederica Mathewes-Green. A renowned author and speaker, Kh. Frederica challenged us with her knowledge of Orthodoxy. Feedback confirmed these workshops as most enlightening and successful. Plans for a Spring Lenten Weekend have been initiated. Watch for details to come.

As part of our mission to provide assistance to the needy, members of St. Vladimir's Congregation again gave generously during the Paschal Charity Appeal to make the lives of many orphans in our ancestral home-land Ukraine a little better. Your overwhelming contributions enabled us to direct a cheque of \$5700 to Help Us Help the Children, an orphanage relief program, who will arrange along with the orphanage that these funds be used to provide necessities for the orphans. We as a committee are very gratified of your overwhelming response to this program which we firmly believe should remain a part of our ongoing growth as Ukrainian Orthodox Christians.

In recognition of new members and also our many individuals who succeeded in achieving academic milestones during this year, the Membership Development Committee facilitated the annual Membership Appreciation and Graduate Recognition BBQ in May. To commemorate their achievements, graduates were presented with an Orthodox Study Bible from the congregation. This popular event continues to be well attended by our parishioners.

The month of September marks the start of our new liturgical year. The Membership Development Committee marks this spiritual beginning with a pancake breakfast - this year held on Sept. 17th. This event was enjoyed by all for the food and Christian fellowship.

Throughout 2006, the Membership Development Committee sent greeting cards to extend congratulations, get well or condolences to our parishioners on behalf of the congregation.

Memorial cards, a new initiative, have been designed, approved and gone to print and will shortly be available to those who wish to designate a donation in memory of a loved one.

Two issues of the Beacon were published by the Committee during this year, and steps have been proceeding to bring to publication a new Membership Pictorial Directory.

I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of The Membership Development Committee to extend our gratitude and appreciation to the members of St. Vladimir's for supporting our initiatives during this past year. Your participation and generous support is very encouraging!

To the members of the Membership Development Committee, I would like to extend my appreciation of their efforts, commitment and support throughout this past year.



Joan Popowich

Chair, Membership Development Committee



SAYINGS OF THE FATHERS



God seeks nothing else from us men except that we do not sin; this alone. But this is not a work of the law; it is rather a careful guarding of the image and dignity from above. In these things, and affirmed in our nature and bearing the radiant garment of the Spirit, we shall abide in God and He in us. We shall be called good, and sons of God by adoption, marked in the light of our knowledge of God.

St. Symeon the New Theologian
The Practical and Theological Chapters

The Christian ought not to grudge another's reputation, nor rejoice over any man's faults; he ought in Christ's love to grieve and be afflicted at his brother's faults, and rejoice over his brother's good deeds. He ought not to be indifferent or silent before sinners. He who shows another to be wrong ought to do so with all tenderness, in the fear of God, and with the object of converting the sinner. He who is proved wrong or rebuked ought to take it willingly, recognizing his own gain in being set right.

St. Basil the Great, Letters

If Moses had not received from God the rod of power, he would not have become god to pharaoh and would not have punished both him and Egypt. In the same way the mind, if it does not wield in its hand the power of prayer, will be unable to conquer sin and the powers of the enemy.

*St. Gregory of Sinai
in Writings from the Philokalia
on Prayer of the Heart*

From St. Seraphim of Sarov

(1759-Jan. 2, 1833):

"Prayer, fasting, vigil and all other Christian practices, however good they may be in themselves, do not constitute the aim of our Christian life, although they serve as an indispensable means of reaching this end. The true aim of our Christian life consists in the acquisition of the Holy Spirit. As for fasts, and vigils, and prayer, and almsgiving, and every good deed done for Christ's sake, they are only means of acquiring the Holy Spirit of God."



Is it possible that Halloween is not celebrated world-wide??? The entire North American continent, some mere weeks ago, was influenced by the celebration of Halloween. **But, it was noticed** that the advertising for Christmas did not wait this year until November 1st as it had in the past (seemingly gracefully giving Halloween its fair share of time and money). After reading the article below, does it give you some small satisfaction knowing that maybe in some symbolic way, "Halloween" was pushed aside for the coming of Christmas, even if it was only in the realm of the advertising world?

IS "HALLOWEEN" JUST HARMLESS FUN?

(From discussions on the Orthodox Email List Greek Orthodox Church, Australia)

The "feast of Halloween", celebrated in other parts of the world, is finding its way to our Australian shores. It is portrayed as harmless fun for children. This could not be any further from the truth! Halloween is normally regarded as one more occasion for a party, one more opportunity for a good time without the least inquiry as to its meaning or origins. It is hardly a surprise when we consider that the greatest feasts of Christianity such as Pascha and the Nativity of Christ, for which our ancestors prepared with fasting, prayers and tears, are now to so many, simply dates for eating, drinking and the exchanging of gifts. Be warned: **Halloween is not what it appears to be!** Its seemingly innocent manifestations represent a memory of an ancient celebration deeply rooted in paganism and demonology and continues to be a form of idolatry in which Satan, the angel of death is worshipped.

Known also as All Hallows Eve, the feast of Halloween began in pre-Christian times. It was originally a Celtic festival celebrated widely among the peoples of the British Isles and northern France. These pagan peoples believed that life was born from death. On this night a certain deity whom they called Samhain, their lord of Death, was honoured at their New Year's festival (end of October). On that night Samhain was believed to lead hosts of evil spirits into the world. Samhain is also identified as the Grim Reaper, the leader of the ghosts. On the evening of the festival, a huge bonfire built from oak branches, which they believed to be sacred, was ignited in a high place. Upon this fire sacrifices of crops, animals and even human beings were burned as an offering in order to appease their demon lord. It was also believed that Samhain, being pleased by their faithful offerings, allowed the souls of the dead to return to their homes for a festal visit on this day. Thus they believed that cold, dark

creatures filled the night, wandering and begging amongst the living. It is from this belief that the practice of wandering about in the dark dressed up in costumes imitating ghosts, fairies, leprechauns, elves, smurfs, (a German nature spirit) and other assorted demons, grew up. It is important to note that the 'souls of the dead', or ghosts, are in fact demons cunningly mimicking the attributes of departed loved ones as much as is necessary to delude the observer. Any attention paid to such illusions is destructive! The dialogue of "*trick and treat*" is also an integral part of this system of beliefs and practices. It was believed that the souls of the dead who had entered into the world of darkness, decay and death, and therefore into total communion with and submission to the demon Samhain, bore the affliction of great hunger on their festal visit. Out of this grew the practice of begging for "*treats*" (offerings). If these "*treats*" were not forthcoming, then the wrath and anger of Samhain would be unleashed through a system of "*tricks*" (curses).

From an Orthodox Christian viewpoint, participation in these practices **at any level** is idolatrous, and a genuine betrayal of our God and our Holy Faith. To do so by dressing up and going out would be **to wilfully seek fellowship with the 'dead' whose Lord is also known as Satan**, the Evil One, who stands against God. Or, to participate by submission to the dialogue of "*trick or treat*" is to make offering, not to innocent little children, but to the lord of Death, whom they unknowingly serve as proxy for the "dead".

In the days of the early Celtic Church, which was strictly Orthodox, the Holy Fathers attempted to counteract this pagan New Year festival by establishing the Feast of All Saints on the same day (in the East the

Feast of All Saints is celebrated on the Sunday following Pentecost). As is the custom of the Church, the faithful Christians attended a Vigil Service in the evening and in the morning a celebration of the Holy Eucharist. It is from this that the term Halloween developed. The word has its roots in the Old English of All Hallow E'en, i.e. the Eve commemorating all those who were hallowed (sanctified). The people who remained pagan and therefore anti-Christian and whose paganism had become deeply intertwined with the occult, satanism and magic reacted to the Church's attempt to supplant their festival by increased fervour on this evening. In the early middle ages Halloween became the supreme and central feast of the occult, a night and day upon which acts of witchcraft, demonism, sorcery and satanism of all kinds were practiced. Many of these practices involved desecration and mockery of Christian practices and beliefs. Costumes of skeletons developed as a mockery of the Church's reverence for Holy Relics; Holy things were stolen, and used in perverse and sacrilegious ways. The old practice of begging became a system of persecution designed to harass Christians who were, by their beliefs, unable to participate by making offerings to those who served the lord of Death.

As Orthodox Christians, it is important to be aware of how these anti-Christian, pagan and demonic practices have crept into our society and our very lives as innocent, fun, and playful diversions. Our Lord Jesus Christ calls us to the *"narrow path"*, to the bearing of our own Cross, to the difficult road of rejecting sin and embracing righteousness. By refraining from this hidden demon worship, we set ourselves apart from the world, perhaps even are mocked and laughed at for such stupidity and simple mindedness. *"How can children having fun be related to demonic activity"*, they may ask. In the face of all this we must also remember that Satan is the *"father of lies"*, the great deceiver and he will go to any lengths to trap us into choosing to follow him rather than our Lord, even if we do so unwittingly and in ignorance. Know this: **the devil exists; evil spirits exist!** Our Lord Jesus Christ came into the world in order to destroy *"him that had the dominion of death, that is, the devil"* (Heb 2:14). **Remember that many martyrs were tortured and killed rather than allow themselves to be coerced into tossing a little incense on a pagan altar.** When we willingly participate in the sacrifice to the lord of death as a *"harmless"* social custom, **we ourselves make a mockery of the witness of those martyrs.** Instead, as Orthodox Christians, we are given the opportunity on this night to remember the feast of the Holy Unmercenaries, Saints Cosmas and Damianos, celebrated on 1st November. God has provided us with His Saints as a powerful weapon against the snares of

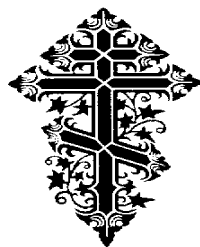
Satan, even in the midst of such a deception. We should take full advantage of this weapon and turn our hearts and minds away from the celebration of death and onto the remembrance of God, Who is *"wonderful in His saints"*. Another weapon given to us by Christ is the power of Prayer and Fasting. In Christ's own words, *"by prayer and fasting"* (Matt. 17:21) we can overcome evil.

We take great pains to protect our children and ourselves from disease and harm. We teach them good nutrition, hygiene and personal safety. We discourage them from engaging in fornication, substance abuse and other immoral and dangerous acts. **Why do we allow them to dabble in darkness?** Even if Halloween was good, clean, innocent fun, to what benefit-spiritual, intellectual or otherwise - is this for a Christian? Let's teach our children to surround themselves with what is good and to *"walk as children of light"* (Eph. 5:8). Let's show them that the hope of the Christian life is to be delivered from death into life with God for eternity! We are Orthodox Christians. We are called to be not of this world. We were instructed by our Saviour to pray: *"deliver us from the evil one"*. Halloween is the celebration of the evil one. Who could possibly support it?

What do the Holy Scriptures and Holy Fathers say on the subject ?

- *"Abstain from all appearance of evil".* (1 Thessalonians 5:22)
- *"Care should be taken to see that the children of Priests shall not give any mundane spectacles, nor witness any. This, in fact, has ever been preached to all Christians, to the effect that wherever there are blasphemies they ought not to approach".* (Canon XVII of Carthage)
- *"That one must not join the heathen in celebration of holidays and festivals, and share in their Godlessness".* (Canon XXXIX of Laodicea)
- *"But whoever causes one of these little ones who believes in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea."* (Matthew 18:6)

If participating in Halloween causes one of our children to be confused, led astray, or doubt God, are we ready to take on that responsibility?"



WORSHIP AND RHYTHM OF LIFE

Fr. Bohdan Hladio

Chancellor of the UOCC

Orthodox Net.com 05-Mar-06

Whether we speak of our jobs and schooling, or "extracurricular" activities such as folk-dancing or sports, one thing which is very important to all our supervisors, teachers, co-workers and team members is attendance. Attendance is one of the most basic yardsticks of everything we do, because if we are not in attendance at work or school or practice it's virtually impossible for us to learn, work, or play constructively. When we speak of our commitment to Christ, attendance plays no less important a role.

Sad to say, most of the holy services in most of our churches are probably under attended. It's interesting to wonder how lively and active our parishes would be if the faithful treated church attendance with the same seriousness they treat attendance at their job, school, sports team or folk-dance group?

We often hear or read about well-intentioned people calling for "spiritual renewal", and offering suggestions as to how it can be achieved. It's important to remember that our Lord described the Christian life as a "narrow path", a journey requiring much discipline, sacrifice and courage. There is no easy or painless way to achieve spiritual renewal or growth either in our Church or in our personal life - but attending the services is the first step if we're truly interested in seeing this growth.

The first Christian feast day was and still is Sunday. Before there were any other feast days Sunday was celebrated as the commemoration of the Resurrection. Sunday morning is still the day when the Christian community gathers together to celebrate the "breaking of the bread". Some sects and denominations have in the recent past fallen away from this apostolic practice. The Seventh-day Adventists, for example, worship on Saturday, saying (correctly) that this is the Old Testament Sabbath. They forget, however, that we are Christians, not Jews, and we celebrate the new Passover - the Resurrection - and not the Passover nor the Sabbath of the Jews.

Since the second Vatican Council Roman Catholics have begun celebrating Saturday evening Masses - so that members who have "more important" things to do on Sunday morning can fulfill their "Sunday obligation" and not miss these commitments. Again, this is an innovation, not a part of the authentic Christian tradition. Many of the "mainline" protestant sects are in fact philosophically bereft of any reason for going to Church on Sunday morning. If it's true that all you have to do to be saved is to "accept Jesus as your personal Saviour" this very nicely does away with both the "Sunday obligation" and any other type of obligation as well!

While we don't judge others, and know that only God sees the soul, we can say with absolute assurance that in contrast to the western denominations Orthodox Christianity possesses the fullness of the apostolic

Christian teaching and practice. . The participation of the faithful in the Liturgy is not regarded by us as a "holy obligation", but as a great privilege which is constitutive of the Church. This is what the apostles taught, and this is what we believe. If we wish to have a truly healthy Church the first step that each and every member of the faithful must take is cultivating within themselves an attitude of gratitude and joy, discipline and desire towards Church attendance.

As we are aware, in the Orthodox Church we observe days and seasons of feasting and fasting. Some feast days (Pascha and Pentecost, for example) always fall on Sundays. Others (the "immovable" feasts) always fall on the same date, the best known being Christmas and Theophany. Among these feasts are fasts - periods of intensive prayer and worship. The life of a pious Orthodox Christian revolves around this Church calendar. **If we're approaching things correctly, we fit our life into the calendar, we don't struggle to "shoe-horn" the Church calendar into our life.**

The Orthodox Calendar is a glorious treasure, a gift which cannot be taken for granted. Most other Christian denominations either do not celebrate, or do not even admit the existence of these traditional and historic feast days and fasting periods. Even those who retain the traditional calendar of feasts and fasts, such as the Roman Catholic Church, have in most cases given them a strictly symbolic recognition. In the Roman Catholic Church, for example, almost all feast days are "transferred" to the nearest Sunday. I was greatly amused a few years ago when, in a conversation with a devout Roman Catholic, I was told "we'll be celebrating Ascension Thursday next Sunday"!

As is obvious, the original meaning of holiday is "Holy day" - a day set aside for God. Besides attendance at divine services one of the traditional ways of marking a holy day is to refrain from work. If we look at the current celebration of "civil" holidays we see that they are generally regarded simply as a day off of work - a Christian hand-me-down to our secular society, because we don't work on a holiday. Due to the fact that the festal calendar of the Church has been to a greater or lesser degree suppressed or ignored by the western denominations, we live in a society which has almost totally divested itself of any authentic Christian consciousness regarding church holidays.

The Orthodox Church has retained the original, apostolic understanding of "Holidays", some of which - the commemoration of the death of martyrs, or the feast of the Resurrection for example - date from the first century, and others, such as the feast of the Protection of the Most Holy Theotokos - which are of later origin. The development of the Church Calendar, just like the reception of Holy Scripture, is witnessed to in the life, history and practice of the Orthodox Church - we know what we celebrate, when we celebrate, and why we celebrate. And most importantly, the Orthodox Church has never seen fit to ignore or suppress feast days, but sees the celebration of a feast in the same light She sees the blessing of water or oil or the faithful - as the the sanctification of that which God has created for us, in this case the sanctification of time.

Understanding this, the celebration of feast days by

participation in the Divine Liturgy is for the Orthodox a very important sign of our faith, especially in our North American social context. Even more so than attendance at Sunday Liturgy, attendance at Feast-day Liturgies is a sign of a real commitment not to some kind of indistinct, amorphous "Christianity", but to the True, historical Orthodox Christian Faith. Just as we give of our money and talents for the good of God's Church, we give of our time and our gratitude and our worship. **We are called upon to be a worshipping people** - and this we do first and foremost in Church on Sundays and Holy days - i.e., on the days God has set aside for us to do so.

There are those who might be thinking "yes, father, but in this day and age it isn't practical to take a day off of work or school to attend services". I remember a conversation I had a few years ago with a mother of school-aged children who was a teacher. I had suggested that it might be nice if parents occasionally booked the morning off from work to attend festal or lenten services with their children. She dismissed this as impractical. I asked her if she took off time for vacations, for doctor's appointments, or just "mental health days". The answer to every question was "yes". I then repeated the thought that it would be nice for parents to take off one morning, even if only once a year, to attend feast-day services on a weekday with their children. She looked at me as if I were from Mars! She could understand taking a month off for herself or her family, but could not understand taking even 4 hours, once a year, to worship God with her children.

Others might say that "In the old country people didn't have anything better to do than attend Church services"! I find the argument that our ancestors had "nothing better to do" than go to Church extremely amusing. Those wishing to make such amusing comments should first spend a year living and working on a farm with no electricity, no running water, no gasoline engines nor social "safety net", being dependent upon what they can harvest from the earth for their very life. Try carrying all your water from a well half-a-mile away, or baking all your bread every day in a wood-fired oven from grain you have sown, harvested, threshed, and probably ground yourself. The fact of the matter is that our ancestors had much less "personal" time than we have at our disposal, and certainly no paid vacations. Perhaps they simply had more love for God?

Any priest or pious layman can offer good theological and practical reasons why we should attend festal and Lenten liturgies if at all possible. One of the reasons often overlooked is that attendance at these liturgies permits us to understand our Faith from another perspective. Attending Liturgy on Holy days permits us to enter into the rhythm of the life of the Church.

The rhythm of Church life has three components - the daily, weekly and yearly cycles. The daily cycle for an average Orthodox Christian in the world usually consists of prayers upon arising, before sleep, before and after meals, and (please God!) scripture reading. The weekly cycle consists of being in Church every Sunday morning, and at vespers or vigil on Saturday night if we're lucky enough to belong to a parish where they are served. The yearly cycle consists of the Lenten and festal Liturgies of the Church.

These weekly and yearly cycles demand a liturgical participation to experience them. While we can speak of "personal" prayer or devotion, it is impossible to speak of a "personal" liturgical experience - the very concept is nonsensical. If the Divine Services truly are important for our salvation then we must take part in them. This participation is different for everyone - only the monk or nun will be able to participate fully in the daily cycle of services, but the weekly and yearly cycle of worship is accessible to all the faithful who live within reasonable driving distance of a Church.

This is why it's important to serve Great Vespers on the evening before a feast. While it's probably unrealistic to expect the majority of parishioners to take days off work to attend morning Liturgies (though it's a lot easier for us to do than we often care to admit), a Vigil service gives all the faithful the opportunity to experience the rhythm of the Church year in their lives by attending services the evening before a feast day when they can't attend Liturgy.

As we know, music has three basic parts: melody, harmony and rhythm. Rhythm is the foundation upon which melody and harmony are built. Likewise the life of the Church - which we understand to be a foretaste of life in paradise - is built on a concrete rhythm, the rhythm of the Church calendar. Beginning with attendance at worship every Sunday, and building up to attendance at festal and Lenten services throughout the year, we are given a chance to take our lives out of the rhythm of this world - the mundane - and enter into the rhythm of Paradise.

Making time to attend festal and Lenten services as a family and as a community will strengthen our faith, our families and our parishes more than we can imagine. The Jews have lived their religious life according to a different calendar for millennia. This simple fact exerts an immense influence on their existence - especially in the "Diaspora". When our parish churches are as full every Sunday as they are on Pascha, and when they are as full on Holy days as they are now on Sunday, we will see a spiritual revival in our church, a revival the scale of which we cannot even imagine right now.

As any builder knows, the most important part of the house is the foundation. Our Lord Himself spoke of this, saying that the one who follows His commandments is like the one who builds their house on a rock (Matthew 7:24 - 8:4). If the Church truly is Christ's body, as St. Paul says (Colossians 1:18, Romans 12:4, 1 Corinthians 12:12, etc.), then **Her commandments are the commandments of Christ**. And if we wish to build our lives on a firm foundation, what foundation can be more solid than the mystical life of the Church?

By making the rhythm of the Church the rhythm of our own personal life we will certainly experience spiritual growth in our lives and communities, and upon this spiritual foundation we will be able to more deeply experience the melody of prayer and the harmony of true Christian community.

A merry heart doeth good like a medicine..... Proverbs 17:22

A new bishop came to town. A local news gal contacted him to request an interview for her newspaper's "religion" section. She wanted an appointment for the next day. The bishop said that was impossible because that was his day off, and he planned to go fishing. She persisted and asked if she could interview him while he fished.

So, the next day they boarded his little boat and rowed out into the middle of a little lake. So, while he fished, she asked questions and carefully noted all his thoughtful answers. When it was time to return to shore, she closed her notebook and -- alas -- dropped it into the lake where it floated away. The bishop got out of the boat, walked on top of the waves, retrieved her notebook, and walked on water back to the boat.

The next day the bishop opened his newspaper, and, to his surprise, found this large-print, front page headline: NEW BISHOP CANNOT SWIM.

When you get to your wit's end you'll find God lives there.



Pardon my driving, I'm Reloading!

I just got lost in thought. It was unfamiliar territory.

Change is inevitable- except from a vending machine.

Everyone has a Photographic memory. Some don't have a

OUT OF THE MOUTH OF BABES....

(and big people, too)

* Dear God, my Grandpa says you were around when he was a little boy. How far back do you go?

Love, Dennis

* Dear God, please send Dennis Clark to a different summer camp this year.

Peter

* Dear God, maybe Cain and Abel would not kill each other so much if they each had their own rooms. It works out OK with me and my brother.

Larry



GOD
ANSWERS
kneemail !

God's Provision

Abraham wants to upgrade his PC to Windows 95. Isaac is incredulous.

"Pop," he says, "you can't run Windows 95 on your old, slow 386. Everyone knows that you need at least a 486 with a minimum of 16 megs of memory in order to multitask effectively with Windows 95."

But Abraham, the man of faith, gazed calmly at his son and replied, "My son, God will provide the RAM."

Daffy Definitions....

Flashlight: A case for holding dead batteries.

>>>>> >>>

The shin bone is a device for finding furniture.

>>>>> >>>

A fine is a tax for doing wrong.

>>>>> >>>

A tax is a fine for doing well

Don't let your worries get the best of you, remember, Moses started out as a basket case.

If you would like to receive your Beacon sent electronically please call Joan at 932-7724

CHILDREN'S CORNER

Legend of the Christmas Spider

(A Ukrainian and German Legend)

Once upon a time a gentle mother was busily cleaning the house for the most wonderful day of the year. Not a speck of dust was left. Even the spiders had left their cozy corner in the ceiling and had fled to the attic to avoid the housewife's busy cleaning.

At last, it was Christmas Eve. The tree was decorated and waiting for the children to see it. The poor spiders were frantic, for they could not see the tree, nor the presents that waited for dawn. The oldest and wisest spider suggested that perhaps they could peep through the crack in the door to see this glorious sight. Silently, they crept out of their attic, down the stairs and across the floor to wait in the crack in the threshold. Suddenly, the door opened a wee bit and quickly the spiders scurried into the room. The tree was breathtaking and certainly more than their eyes were accustomed to seeing. So, they crept all over the tree, up and down, over every branch and twig and saw every one of the pretty things. At last they were satisfied with the Christmas tree's beauty.

But alas! Everywhere they went they had left their webs. Now seeing what they had done, they became very afraid that they would be killed; so they prayed for mercy. Suddenly, an angel appeared and said, "I'll save you, but I will need some help. One of you must stay to save the rest." It was agreed who would stay, and then the angel touched the spider and turned it to ice, and the webs became shimmering silver and gold.

Since that time, we have hung tinsel on our Christmas trees to remind us of the sacrifice of one to save many. According to the legend, it has become a custom to include the spider among the decorations on the tree.



Materials:

- 4 gold pipecleaners
- 1 small gold glass ornament (remove hanger)
- 1 - 1/2" - 3/4" wood bead
- 2 black beads (jewelry size)
- 1/4" gold ribbon
- gold cord
- glue gun

- Glue wood bead to the stem of the glass ornament.
- Fold the pipecleaners in half, and wrap center around the neck of glass ornament one time. Glue at the bottom to secure.
- Glue a length of gold cord to the top of the neck to make the hanger.
- Tie a piece of the 1/4" gold ribbon to the neck of the spider, concealing your glue points. Tie in a bow.
- Carefully glue a small black bead to each side of the spider's head.
- Trim legs to desired length.



THE QUESTION OF LITURGICAL LANGUAGE

by Fr. Bohdan Hladio,
Ukrainian Orthodox Sobor of St. Volodymyr, Hamilton, Ontario

One of the most controversial and potentially divisive questions for any "ethnic" parish, Orthodox or not, is the question of language. Parishes (and families) have split, harsh words have been exchanged, and whole ideologies have arisen over the question of liturgical language.

In our Canadian environment we have been lucky in that it has been much more acceptable to use the Ukrainian language in everyday life, to teach it to our children and to be proud of our heritage, than was possible in the "melting pot" of the United States. But it would not be an overstatement to say that the question of liturgical language is one of the pressing issues of the day in our Church. Specifically, the use of English is increasing and will continue to increase among our faithful.

How should we approach this issue in our parishes and Church to ensure that it will not divide us, but rather work for the Glory of God?

We often hear members of our faithful or the clergy express the idea that our Church must be a "Mission Church": While this phrase truly describes what any true Christian Church should be, what does this phrase mean for us in practical terms? As Ukrainian Orthodox in Canada how do we live out this reality? The answer to these questions is intimately tied up with the question of language.

The whole idea of being a "Mission Church" is based on sound Christian doctrine. We are called to "missionize" first of all ourselves, that is, to live out truly Christian personal lives -- praying, fasting, helping the poor, visiting the sick, attending the Divine Services, supporting the Church, etc. Without this basic Christian life we dare not speak of teaching, or "missionizing" others.

The second step of our missionary activities consists of living a truly Christian communal life -- in other words, having a truly Christian parish, where the faithful help, respect, support and love one another, no matter how good or bad things are materially.

The third level of our missionary work is based entirely on the first two, and consists of our outreach to:

a). those who have fallen away from the Orthodox Church (our sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, fathers and mothers, grandchildren,

etc.); and

b). those who have not yet heard the good news of Orthodox Christianity.

Inevitably, the time comes when every Christian and every parish must live out Jesus' injunction to go forth and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. This year (1998) we are celebrating the 80th anniversary of the founding of our Church here in Canada -- and, as we all know, we have much work to do in fulfilling this Biblical injunction. The question is not when, but how?

First of all, we have the example of the Apostles. Jesus taught and preached in Aramaic, a Semitic language related to Hebrew. The Apostles and Evangelists, however, used the Greek language (the "lingua franca" of the day) to write and preach of the Risen Lord. If any language can claim to be "Holy" we can all certainly agree that the Aramaic language should be first in line -- for it is the language Our Lord used to preach the Gospel. Yet, the Apostles used the Greek language. Why? Because they knew the difference between the medium and the message.

Given the fact that the "lingua franca" of our children is English (or perhaps French in Quebec), and that, statistically, **only one of every six children of Ukrainian-speaking parents in Canada will pass the language on to their own children**, we all understand very well the necessity of using English or French in addition to Ukrainian in our parishes.

It's not a question of "accommodating converts" (although this should be an important aspect of our ministry if we truly are a "Mission Church"). Practically speaking, if we don't use either English or French in our parishes **we often drive our own children and grandchildren out of the Church** -- an extremely grave sin. Even though there still are parishes and individual members of our Church who would like to see a totally Ukrainian-language approach to our ministry, the fact of the matter is that in virtually every parish the necessity of using the English or French languages is absolute. We cannot do our "mission work" without them.

At the same time it must be underlined and understood that the language question is one which is critically central to the history of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. If the Russian Orthodox Church had not absolutely refused to permit any use of the Ukrainian language in their parishes in Ukraine at the beginning of this century it is probable that a

separate Ukrainian Orthodox Church would not have developed as it did. The memory of the very brave and difficult fight to be able to pray in their native language (something we take for granted) is still very real for many of our pioneers. Thus, to see the Ukrainian language give way to English or French in two or three generations is very disheartening for them.

How do we reconcile the fact that our Church is (and for the foreseeable future will continue to be) very Ukrainian, with a strong Ukrainian language and cultural component, with the fact that we need to use non- Ukrainian languages, both during and outside the Services? In the final analysis the answer to this question will be decided in our parishes, by our clergy, bishops and faithful. But perhaps there are a few "guideposts" we can follow.

1. We must always work together, with great respect for one another. **Nothing good will come of belittling bishops, or priests, or elderly parishioners who disagree with our opinions, nor with saying that the "anglicizers" want to destroy our Church.** If we approach this difficult question in a truly Christian manner it will become a source of strength for our individual parishes and our Church.

2. The English language will not save our Church. Were we to begin to serve the Liturgy in English (or French) throughout Canada, attendance numbers would in all likelihood go down, not up. The Ukrainian Catholics have had English language Services for decades, and their numbers have been steadily falling. We must keep in mind the fact that those who most often say, *"I'd come to Church if there was more in English"* are simply making an excuse -- **they don't come to Church because they don't want to.** After all, if our eternal salvation is dependent on being a dedicated member of the Church, it shouldn't matter if the Liturgy is in Swahili! The problem of Church attendance is a problem of faith, not of language.

3. We must not be apologetic for using the Ukrainian language. After all, if we are the Church, if we do offer eternal salvation, the fact that Services are in Ukrainian is only a minor inconvenience on the eternal scale of things.

4. We must not fear the English or French languages. God kept the Ukrainian language and culture alive in circumstances which were much more difficult than our current Canadian

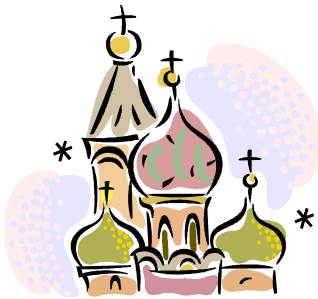
circumstances -- if we don't forget about what's important to God He won't forget about what's important to us.

5. The *"raison d'être"* of the Church, Her *"reason to be"* is Salvation. If the Church, the Holy Mysteries, and the Christian life were not necessary for our eternal salvation Jesus wouldn't have taught us about them. We must never forget that God gives us everything -- our beautiful Ukrainian language and culture, our peaceful and tolerant country of Canada, our children and grandchildren, and even the English and French languages -- so that we in turn may glorify God with them. **If we put any of God's gifts -- whether they are material wealth, family, or language -- ahead of the Gospel, we create an idol -- and this is a sin.**

We must always remember that God wishes everyone to be saved. We, more than any other Orthodox Church in Canada, have the opportunity to work towards the salvation of all our Canadian brothers and sisters; those who've married into our families, the converts in our parishes and all those outside the Church. The day may come when they will approach our Holy Bishops to bless the founding of English or French-language parishes, which they will build with their own hands as our Ukrainian pioneers did. How will we respond? What would God desire?



Let us put a LIGHTED candle in our window AS AN INVITATION TO A LOST STRANGER, a FAMILY MEMBER, TO JOIN THE FAMILY IN CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF Christ!



Salvation Is Only in the Church of Christ

by Fr. Bazyl Zawierucha
(Ukrainian Orthodox Word – December 2006)

The Lord Founded but One Church: Her beginning - the Descent of the Holy Spirit (Mt. 16:18) Expansion of the Church: *"The Lord added to the Church daily those who were being saved"* (Acts 2:47).

No one preached Christ without preaching the Church, all who believed joined the Church, for whosoever is not in the Church, does not possess Christ: Christ is the Head of the Church, He is the Saviour of the Body (*"which is the Church"* Col. 1:24). Whosoever is not in the Body, is without the Head – Christ the Saviour (Eph. 5:23).

Without the Church, there is no Saviour, no grace, no good works: *"Abide in Me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I AM the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they burn"* (Jn. 15:4-6).

Analysis of Sectarian Objections

Sectarians say: We are saved without the Orthodox Faith by only believing in Christ as found in Jn. 6:40, 47; & Eph. 2:8-9.

Orthodox response: The Orthodox do not abandon faith in Christ, but this does not mean that the Church is not needed. Faith is necessary in order to enter and abide in the Church. The sectarians speak of faith in order to avert their eyes from Christ's command to acknowledge and obey the Church.

Sectarians say: We are born from the Word of God and received the Holy Spirit like Cornelius the Centurion. We do not need the Orthodox Church.

Orthodox response: Cornelius the Centurion, although a worthy man, could not have been saved without the Church and although he miraculously received the Holy Spirit to be united to the Church (v. 40), nevertheless the Apostle Peter commanded him and his household to be united to the Church through Baptism. (Acts 10:1-6, 46-47)

Sectarians say: The Lord called us forth from a life of death, as when He called Saul the persecutor. Now we preach God's mercy to us.

Orthodox response: Acts 9:1-18; 22, 12-16. Although the Apostle Paul was miraculously called by the Lord, nevertheless, the Saviour commanded him to go to His Church (9:9), and there Ananias united Paul to the Church through Baptism. (Acts 9:18, 22, 16)

Sectarians say: We believe the Lord grants the Holy Spirit to those who request Him. (Lk. 11:9-13)

Orthodox response: The Lord will not grant the Grace of the Holy Spirit to the sects - opponents of the Holy Church of God, for He said: *"He who is not with me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me, scatters"* (Mt. 12:30).

Sectarians say: We save ourselves like the thief - through repentance and faith. (Lk. 23:42-43)

Orthodox response: We should not be thieves and then only at the last minutes of our life say: Remember me, Lord. We must remember that the Thief did not witness the birth of the Church, he was saved with all of the righteousness of the Old Testament.

Sectarians say: You reject all preachers who are not with you, but the Lord does not reject, nor prohibit. (Mk. 9:38-39)

Orthodox response: 1) The sectarians do not perform miracles like the man who was not with the Apostles.

2) That person was not against the Apostles, and "who is not against you is with you" (v. 40). But the sectarians are against the Church, they do not gather people into the Church, but scatter them: *"He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters"* (Lk. 11:23).

Sectarians say: The sectarians can preach, believe and be saved, in their own fashion, and Apostles will rejoice. (Phil. 1:15-19)

Orthodox response: No, the Apostles do not rejoice, and the sects may not teach apart. The Apostle Paul speaks of those *"Untaught and unstable people who twist . . . the Scriptures"* (2 Pt. 3:15-17).

Sectarians say: We do not need an official Church, because we believe in Christ our Saviour, according to the words of the Apostle: *"by Grace you have been saved . . . for by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast"* (Eph. 2:5,8-9).

Orthodox response: These words were spoken to the Christians of Ephesus, who belonged to the one true Church, not to heretics who had abandoned the Church. The Lord granted the means of salvation to those believers who are in the Church (2 Pt. 1:3-4). But, this does not mean that all will be saved, just as he who receives a large inheritance will not necessarily hold on to it for the rest of his life.

St. Paul writes that we are saved through the Gospel only if we remain faithful to the way it was preached by the Apostles (1 Cor. 15:1-2), and not as imagined by the heretics.

Sectarians say: We do not need the laws of the Church because: *"by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified . . . therefore, we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law"* (Rm. 3:20, 28).

Orthodox response: Those words refer to the Law of Moses. We Orthodox acknowledge that *"the deeds of the Law"* circumcision, Old Testament feasts and observances will not save us. (Gal. 5:2; 4:8-10)

Sectarians refer to: Gal. 2:16 and state that they will be saved by their own faith and not by means of Church law.

Orthodox response: Even the demons believe (Js. 2:19) and reject all laws, but they shall not be saved. Whenever the necessity of obeying the Church law is pointed out to the Sectarians, they respond by quoting the following passages: Rm. 3:20,28; 4:4-6; 5:1; Gal. 3:16. In response, we should point out further passages which can explain their errant interpretations: Rm. 7:12; 2 Cor. 3:7-9; and Js. 2:8-9; 4:11.

Sectarians say: We have received justification freely. (Rm. 3:23-24)

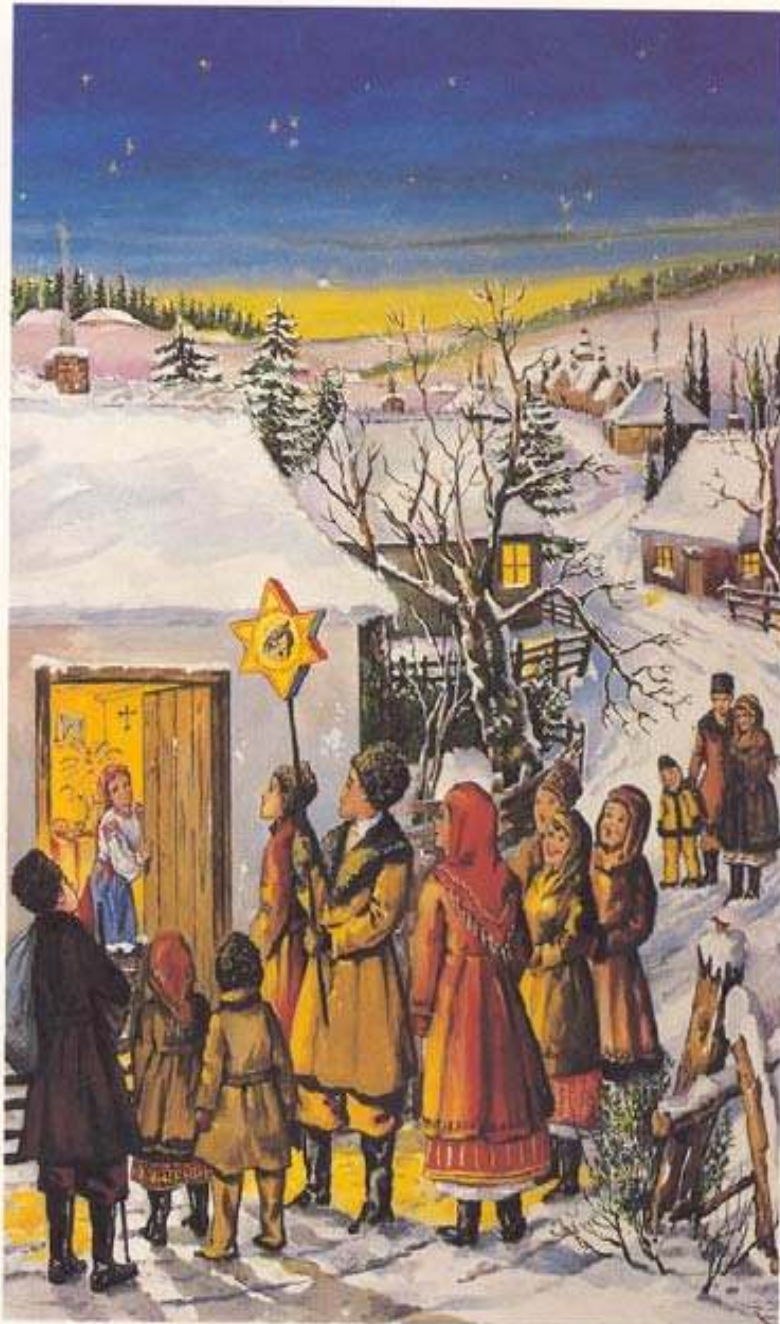
Orthodox response: No, all things that *"pertain to life and godliness"* (2 Pt. 1:3) are in the Church which the Saviour purchased with His own blood. (Acts 20:28).

Sectarians say: *"He Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sin, might live for righteousness - by whose stripes you were healed"* (I Pt. 2:24). We were saved this way.

Orthodox response: No, you were not saved, because you do not live for truth, *"you are like sheep going astray"* (v. 25), you are separated from Christ's flock - God's Church, torn from His Body, the Church, broken from the Vine of Grace. (Jn. 10:15; Col. 1:24; Eph. 5:23)

Carol of the Bells

Carol of the Bells is an adaptation of an ancient Ukrainian Folk song called a "shchedrivka". An arrangement by Mykola Leontovych (1877-1921) was popularized in the 1930's by Oleksander Koshyts (1875-1944), a Ukrainian choir director who worked in the US and Canada. It has since become an American Christmas classic.



Hark how the bells,
sweet silver bells,
all seem to say,
throw cares away

Christmas is here,
bringing good cheer,
to young and old,
meek and the bold,

ding dong ding
that is their song
with joyful ring
all caroling

one seems to hear
words of good cheer
from everywhere
filling the air

Oh how they pound,
raising the sound,
o'er hill and dale,
telling their tale,

Gaily they ring
while people sing
songs of good cheer,
Christmas is here,

Merry, merry, merry, merry Christmas,
Merry, merry, merry, merry Christmas,
On on they send ,
on without end,
their joyful tone to every home
Dong Ding dong ding, dong Bong

Віншуємо вас цими святами,
щоби ви щастю і здоров'ю їх перепровадили,
До Гового Поку дочекали;
Від Нового Року до Богоявлення,
Від Богоявлення до Воскресення,
Від Воскресення до сто літ,
Поки вам Господь призначив вік.

**Щиро вітаємо вас Веселих Свят
І щасливого Нового Року!**



*For unto us a child is born,
Unto us a Son is given;
And the government will be upon His shoulder.
And His name will be called
Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
Of the increase of His government and peace
There will be no end,...*

Isaiah 9:6-7

*May the Lord bless you all in the New Year with Health,
Happiness & Prosperity !*