



Українська Католицька Парафія
Покрова Пресвятої Богородиці

*Protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Ukrainian Catholic Parish*

*The No. 1 priority for ... the church is evangelization:
preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ in today's world.*

23 Грудень, 2012

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Служби Божі/Divine Liturgies

В Неділю/Sunday

8:30 am recited – Bilingual

10:30 am sung – Ukrainian

У Свята/Holy Day of Obligation

10:00 am and 7:00 pm

Щодня/Daily Scheduled

8:25 am in church

First Friday - 8:25 am Divine Liturgy followed by
Moleben to the Sacred Heart of Jesus or
Mother of God

Сповіді починаючи десять хвилин перед
Службою Божою

Confessions begin ten minutes before the Divine
Liturgy or by appointment

Baptism by appointment - membership in Parish is
required

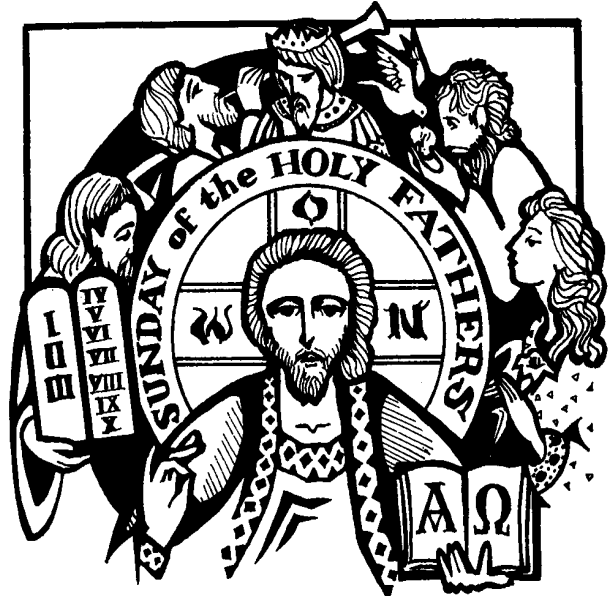
Marriages by appointment made at least six
months in advance. Membership in Parish is
required

Funerals by arrangement in the Parish Office

оо. Василяни/Basilian Fathers
serving this Parish

Father Josaphat Tyrkalo, OSBM, Pastor
Most Rev. Severian Yakymyshyn, OSBM
Bishop Emeritus

Неділя перед Різдом Христовим
Неділя Святих Отців
Матей 1:1-25



Sunday Before the Nativity of Our Lord
Sunday of the Holy Fathers
Matthew 1:1-25

**SPECIAL NOTICE – Do not park in the
RESERVED stalls in front of St. Mary's
Gardens when you come for the Sunday
Divine Liturgy. Your car will be towed.**

23 Грудень, 2012

Неділя перед Різдом Христовим

Парафія Покрова Пресвятої Богородиці вітає всіх гостей, приятелів та рідних які зедналися сьогодні разом брати участь в цій Службі Божі. Нехай наш Господь через заступництво Покрова Пресвятої Богородиці благословить Вас і Вашу родину.

Місячний намір Святішого Отця Папи Римського – на Грудень

Загальний намір: "Щоб імігранти в світі були прийняті із щедрістю любов'ю, особливо серед християнських спільнот."

Місійний намір: "Щоб Христос сам об'явився усьому людству світлом, яке сяє з Вифлеєму і відблискується в обличчі Церкви."

- **Тропарі і читання в синій книжці на стор. 6 і 7.**

- *Кава і солодке Сьогодні після Служби Божої о год 8:30 і 10:30 рано у вітальні під церквою.*

Спеціалне прохання: після закінчення Служби Божої просимо замкнути молитвенники і співаники і поставити їх на відповідне місце. Рівнож просимо не залишайте бюлетенів і других матеріалів в лавках. Будьмо господарними в нашій церкві і допоможемо, щоби наші лавки були чисті й акуратні.

Сьогодні, Неділя, 23 Грудень:

- 10:30 рано – Парафіяльна Катехитична програма зараз по Євангелії під час Служби Божої.

Понеділок, 24 Грудень: НАВЕЧІР'Я РІЗДВА (піст)

- 8:25 рано – Служба Божа.

- 9:15 вечора – Навечір'я і зараз потім ТОРЖЕСТВЕННА СЛУЖБА БОЖА, і мирування.

Вівторок, 25 Грудень: РІЗДВО ХРИСТОВЕ (Обов'язкове Свято)

- 10:30 рано – Служба Божа.

Середа, 26 Грудень: Собор Пресвятої Богородиці і Св. Йосифа Обручника

- 10:30 рано – Служба Божа.

Четвер, 27 Грудень: Первомученика й Архидиякона Стефана

- 10:30 рано – Служба Божа.

Неділя, 30 Грудень:

- 10:30 рано – Парафіяльна Катехитична програма **НЕ БУДЕ.**

Понеділок, 31 Грудня: Закінчення Року

- 10:30 ранку – Благодарна Служба Божа й "Тебе Бога Хвалим".

Вівторок, 1 Січень: Свято Обрізання Господа Ісуса Христа і Святого Василя

- 10:30 рано – Служба Божа.

Субота, 5 Січень: Навечір'я БОГОЯВЛІННЯ (піст)

Неділя, 6 Січень: БОГОЯВЛІННЯ – ЙОРДАН (Обов'язкове Свято)

- 8:30 рано – Служба Божа й Водосвяття.

- 10:30 рано – Служба Божа й Водосвяття.

- 10:30 рано – Парафіяльна Катехитична програма зараз по Євангелії під час Служби Божої.

Неділя, 13 Січень:

-12:00 в полудне – Парафіяльний Різдв'яний обід. Всі є запрошенні!

December 23, 2012

Sunday Before the Nativity of Our Lord

The Protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish welcomes all our guests, friends, visiting relatives and Parishioners in celebrating this Divine Liturgy together. May our Lord, through the intercession of the Protectress, the Blessed Mother of God, bless you and your family!

Papal General Prayer Intention for December: *“That migrants throughout the world may be welcomed with generosity and authentic love, especially by Christian communities”.*

Mission Intention for December: *“That Christ may reveal himself to all humanity with the light that shines forth from Bethlehem and us reflected in the face of his Church”.*

- Tropar, Kondak & readings for today in the BLUE booklet pages: 6 & 7.

- Coffee and sweets are available today following the 8:30 am and 10:30 am Divine Liturgy in the Fellowship Room. All guests and parishioners are invited.

A SPECIAL Request: *At the conclusion of each Divine Liturgy, please close all Liturgy and/or hymnbooks and return them to their proper place. Also, please do not leave any church bulletins or any other material in the pews. Let each of us do our part to be true stewards of our parish church by helping to keep the church pews clean and neat. Thank you.*

TODAY, Sunday, December 23:

- Panachyda following both Divine Liturgies for the ++ victims of Newtown, Ct.
- 10:30 am – **Parish Catechism Program for Pre-Schoolers** following the reading of the Gospel during the Divine Liturgy.

Monday, December 24: Eve of Nativity of our Lord, (Abstain from meats)

- 8:25 am – daily Divine Liturgy.
- 9:15 pm – Nativity Vigil Service followed by **SOLEMN DIVINE LITURGY and Myrovannia.**

Tuesday, December 25: Nativity of our Lord (Holy Day of Obligation)

- 10:30 am – Divine Liturgy

Wednesday, December 26: Synaxis of the Blessed Mother of God and St. Joseph

- 10:30 am – Divine Liturgy

Thursday, December 27: The Holy First Martyr and Archdeacon Stephen

- 10:30 am – Divine Liturgy

Sunday, December 30: NO Catechism Program for Pre-Schoolers.

Monday, December 31: New Year’s Eve “End of Year Celebration”

- 10:30 am – Divine Liturgy of Thanksgiving and “We praise you, O God”

Tuesday, January 1: Feasts of Circumcision of our Lord Jesus Christ & Saint Basil

- 10:30 am – Divine Liturgy

Saturday, January 5: Eve of the Feast of THEOPHANY (Day of Abstinence)

Sunday, January 6: Feast of THEOPHANY (Holy Day of Obligation)

- 8:30 am – Divine Liturgy and Blessing of Water
- 10:30 am – Divine Liturgy, sung and Blessing of Water
- 10:30 am – **Parish Catechism Program for Pre-Schoolers** following the reading of the Gospel during the Divine Liturgy.

Sunday, January 13: Sunday after THEOPHANY

- 12:00 noon – **Parish Christmas Dinner** – you are invited!

Четвер, 17 Січень:

– 7:00 вечора – **Біблійні Студії:** Програма охоплює "Одкровення".

Thursday, January 17:

– 7 pm – **BIBLE STUDIES:** We are studying "**Revelations**" in the Fellowship Room.

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS - Almighty and Merciful God, Inspire those You have chosen To hear and answer Your call to the Priesthood and Religious Life. Give them the courage to be the prophets for our times. Give them the wisdom and openness to live their personal call. Give them the strength to be ready witnesses of Your love and care for the world. May they find support and encouragement in our words and in our prayers. Through the intercession of Mary, the Mother of God and all the Saints. Amen.

Prayer for the Beatification of the Servant of God Metropolitan



Andrey: Our Lord Jesus Christ, You always reward Your faithful servants, not only with special gifts of Your love, but also with the eternal reward of the saints in heaven, and in many cases You grant them the recognition of sanctity by Your Church here on earth. We humbly pray: grant that Your faithful servant Metropolitan Andrey be numbered among the saints. Throughout his just life, "full of suffering and trials," he was a good shepherd for his flock and a great labourer for Christian unity. And through his beatification and intercession, grant our entire people the great gift of unity and love. Amen.

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PRAYER FOR A VIBRANT PARISH – O God, Creator of Heaven and Earth! Because of your indescribable love for us, you sent your Only-Begotten Son, Our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ – The Way, The Truth, and The Life – and our Salvation. In His name, we turn to You. Strengthen our hearts and minds in Christian love and in unity of purpose as we strive to build a Vibrant Parish. Give us the grace to model our lives according to the Word of God. Instill in us the desire to pray and to celebrate the Holy Mysteries as one Christian Family in our Parish Community. Inspire us to follow Your great command to be a servant to the less fortunate among us! Grant this, O Lord, through the mercies and love for mankind of Your Only-Begotten Son with whom You are blessed, together with Your All-Holy, Good and Live-Giving Spirit, now and for ever and ever. Amen!

PRAYER OF JOHN PAUL II when he visited the Greek Catholic Church of St. Nicholas – TO OUR LADY OF ZARVANIZA – Saturday, 23 June 2001

O Blessed Virgin Mary, Our Lady of Zarvaniza, I thank you for the gift of my visit to the 'Kyivan Rus'. From where the light of the Gospel spread through this whole region. Here before your miraculous icon, kept in this church of Saint Nicholas, I entrust to you, Mother of God and

Mother of the Church, my apostolic journey to Ukraine.

Holy Mother of God, spread your maternal mantle over all Christians and over all people of good will who live in this great nation.

Lead them to your Son, Jesus, who is for everyone the way, the truth and the life.

Request for Prayers: for you, your family, or friend – please submit the name to the Parish Office or submit a note and place on the collection plate.

Пам'ятайте помолитися: за Вашу родину, за членів Парафії, а особливо за тих які знаходяться в лікарнях, або тих що очікують Божої відповіді на їхні молитви, або радіють Божою відповіддю, або за тих які відзначають уродини, або роковини, або за тих що покликані до їхньої вічної винагороди, або за родину яку вони залишили.

REMEMBER TO PRAY FOR: your family; your fellow parishioners; the shut-ins or those in hospital; those seeking God's guidance or rejoicing with God's favour; or for those celebrating a birthday or anniversary; or have been called to their eternal reward or for the family they leave behind; as well as any other need.

Please remember in your prayers especially: Bishop Severian Yakymyshyn, OSBM, Fr. Steven Basarab, Mary Balsevicius, Joseph Bayduza, Frances Bethune, Mary Earl, Catherine Hladij, Alice Humenick, Bohdan Karpinski, Brian Kluchkowsky, Karlo Kozy, Emily Kuzyk, Bodzie and Shirley Lawryshyn, Oscar Lyseyko, Ben Marchinkow, Jason Obuck, Orest Obuck, John Pura, Mary Scott, Wasył Saik, Kaiya Williams, Leon Woznow.

PLEASE VISIT our Parishioners or those confined to their homes. They need your visits, your phone calls, as well as your prayers.

If there are people you visit requesting our prayers, please call the Parish office.

Please remember to pray daily for vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

HIS BEATITUDE SVIATOSLAV HAS INVITED YOU TO KYIV IN 2013!

His Beatitude, our Patriarch Sviatoslav, has invited the faithful of the Ukrainian Catholic Church to make a pilgrimage to Kyiv in 2013 to celebrate the 1,025th anniversary of the baptism of Kyivian-Rus, Ukraine! The major celebration will be a special Divine Liturgy on Sunday August 18 at the Holy Resurrection Sobor in Kyiv. Join Metropolitan Lawrence Huculak, OSBM of Winnipeg and Bishops David Motiuk of Edmonton, Ken Nowakowski of New Westminster and Bryan Bayda, C.Ss.R. of Saskatoon on an official pilgrimage to Ukraine 7-21 August. The Pilgrimage will begin in Western Ukraine visiting Lviv, Zarvanytsia, and Ternopil before proceeding to Kyiv for the major celebrations. In the next few weeks more details will be announced as soon as the program is finalized. Solaway Travel has been commissioned to assist our Church in arranging for our travel plans and accommodations on this pilgrimage. To express your interest in being part of this very exciting pilgrimage with our Bishops please contact:

Myrna Arychuk of Solaway Travel: 3819 Sunset Street, Burnaby, BC V5G 1T4
Tel: 604.430.6789 Fax: 604.430.2244. Myrna – myrna@solawaytravel.com, or Solaway Travel www.solawaytravel.com/

Food Bank Donations: We encourage all parishioners to contribute to the Food Bank on the first and third Sundays of every month. PLEASE ADD YOUR SUPPORT.

Просимо всіх Парафіян приносити продукти для потребуючих, які не псуються (non-perishable) в першу і третю неділю кожного місяця. Просимо допомагати!

SPECIAL ENVELOPES FOR “FLOWERS and other Church Decorations”. Before Christmas and before Easter, a collection is taken up for Flowers and other decorations needed for the season. Your offering is greatly appreciated. Please use a special envelope to designate your donation.

PRAYER FOR EVANGELIZATION ‘YEAR OF FAITH’ – O God, who wills that all should be saved and come to the knowledge of truth, pour out Your Spirit upon us and grant that we may respond zealously to Your urgent call to lead back to the Church those who have strayed. Prepare their hearts and minds to be receptive to the saving Gospel of Your Son. Send us workers to gather in Your abundant harvest, so that all Your people, obedient to the Word and sustained by the power of the Sacraments, may advance in the way of Salvation and love. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

DO YOU LIVE IN GREATER VANCOUVER?

HAVE YOU MOVED INTO GREATER VANCOUVER RECENTLY?

We encourage you to register your name and address and e-mail with the parish. People come to arrange for baptisms, marriages, funerals, or special blessings. Only then do the fathers discover that they have been participating in the Liturgical Services for years but have not registered as Parishioners. We may recognize you, we may see you in church but we do not know your name or address. **Please print your name, address, telephone number, e-mail and postal code** on your donation envelope, or contact the Parish Office.

REMEMBER: To be considered a member of this Parish one must be registered in the Parish, attend the Divine Liturgy regularly and make regular contributions to maintain the Parish.

REQUEST from the HISTORY and PICTORAL COMMITTEE: To all Parishioners

- **We are looking for pictures of any priest who served at St. Mary's Ukrainian Catholic Church before the year 2000.** Please provide Orest Kernycky with any pictures, he will copy them and return them to you the following week. You can also put them into the collection basket, in an envelope with your name, phone number, the name of the priest, and the year the picture was taken. Thank you for your assistance.
- **YOU ARE ENCOURAGED TO** submit a short biography of individual persons and/or families who have contributed to the life and growth of the Parish. This can be your own family or of other members who may not be in the Parish today. These will be compiled into a book as a history of our Parish. **PLEASE SUBMIT ALL INFORMATION to the parish office.**
- **Do you have old Ukrainian embroidery?** If so, please donate it to the Church by passing it on to Orest Kernycky.

The children of Holy Eucharist Ukrainian Heritage School have decided to begin an annual appeal to help children in need in Ukraine. The school has decided to take part in a global fundraising program sponsored by "Caritas" in Ukraine, and entitled. **"Christmas Candle" or "Різдвяна свічка"**. In Ukraine, the Christmas Candles are handmade by people with special needs, and distributed at the start of the Christmas Fast (or Pylipivka) through Parishes in Ukraine with the hope that the candles will be a part of the Christmas celebrations. The Funds collected by the regional Lviv Caritas branch, which we are working with, are used to help needy, disadvantaged, disabled and orphaned children.

As a show of support the children of our school will have these special Christmas Candles available starting in early December at all of the lower mainland parishes in the New Westminster Eparchy. Please consider supporting them with a minimum donation of \$5 per candle and lighting them as part of your Christmas Eve celebrations. 100% of the proceeds go to Caritas Ukraine, which is an organization that is supported and approved by His Beatitude Sviatoslav Shevchuk and His Excellency Bishop Ken Nowakowski.

Please help our children in their mission to help disadvantaged children in Ukraine. For more information, please contact Fr. Yuriy Vyshnevsky 604.526.1261 or Dana Lupynis 604.274.8631 or email holyeucharistschool@gmail.com

Учні Української Школи Пресвятої Євхаристії вирішили розпочати щорічний заклик на допомогу потребуючим дітям в Україні. Школа бере участь у міжнародній програмі збору коштів, яка спонсорується організацією "Карітас" в Україні і носить назву "Різдвяна свічка". В Україні свічки вручну виготовляють люди з особливими потребами і на початку Різдвяного посту (Пилипівки) їх розповсюджують по парафіях в Україні з надією, що свічки стануть частиною святкування Різдва. Кошти, зібрані львівським відділом Карітасу, з яким ми співпрацюємо, використовуються для допомоги потребуючим, бідним, дітям з особливими потребами та сиротам.

Як вияв підтримки, діти з нашої школи будуть продавати ці особливі Різдвяні Свічки від початку грудня у парафіях Нью-Вестмінстера, Ванкувера, Річмонда та Суррі. Просимо розглянути можливість підтримки пожертвою не менше \$5 за свічку і засвітити ці свічки вдома на Святвечір. Усі зібрані кошти будуть передані в Карітас України, організацію, яку підтримує та схвалює Блаженніший Святослав Шевчук та Преосвященний Владика Кен Новаківський.

Допоможіть нашим дітям у їхній місії для потребуючих дітей в Україні. За додатковою інформацією просимо звертатися до о. Юрія Вишневського [604.526.1261](tel:604.526.1261), Дани Лупиніс [604.274.8631](tel:604.274.8631), або на email holyeucharistschool@gmail.com

PYLYPIWKA/ST. PHILIP'S FAST During this lent, we prepare spiritually for Christ's Death and resurrection, and now during Advent we prepare for his Nativity or Birth. Just like Easter, it also runs for 40 days, beginning on Nov.15 and ending Dec. 24. Originally this pre-Christmas fast was quite strict, but in our present age, the Holy Church for various and just reasons has done away with the once very strict fasts, and left them to the free choice of the faithful. This does not mean that we are not obliged to practice the spirit of Sacrifice. We should at least, besides the regular Friday fast, refrain from parties and dancing during this season.

Is your child ready to receive Holy Communion – age 7 or older? Please fill out the form below and present it to Fr. Josaphat or place it on the collection Plate. OR: Are you interested in strengthening your faith?



*Protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary
(St. Mary's)*

Ukrainian Catholic Parish

Basilian Fathers

550 West 14 Avenue, Vancouver, B.C. V5Z 1P6

Telephone: 604-879-5830

e-mail: office@stmarysbc.com

We will be offering a **Parish Catechism Program** for children in preparation for Holy Communion and for adults interested in strengthening their faith will begin early in the new year- 2013 and conclude in May.

Please fill out this form and hand to Father Josaphat, or place it on the collection plate or bring in to the Parish office

=====

I would like to register my child (Children) for the Preparation for Holy Communion Program.

I would like to register for the strengthening my faith program.

Name of Child _____ age _____

Name of Child _____ age _____

Name of Child _____ age _____

Name of Parents (guardian) _____

Address _____

City _____

Phone _____

Postal Code _____

Це пригадка для всіх вірних. Просимо приходити вчасно на Службу Божу. Будьмо готові разом заспівати початковий гімн. Зрозумійте, якщо Ви прийдете до Церкви після Великого Входу, Ви пропустили більшу частину Служби Божої, і дійсно не вислухали приписаної Служби Божої на неділю.

Церковна Етика: Будьмо свідомі, що беручи участь у Св. Літургії ми мусимо одержати кінцеве Благословення перед тим як ми залишимо Службу Божу. Ми рівнож просимо не виходити з Церкви перед закінченням Служби Божої. Ми просимо Вас не спілкуватися в Церкві перед, під час і після Служби Божої. Прошу це робити в притворі Церкви або у Вітальні під церквою. Залишім наву (Nave) церкви для вірних які моляться.

A SPECIAL NOTE to ALL PARISHIONERS: Please come on time for the Divine Liturgy. Realize that when you come into the Church proper after the Great Entrance, you have missed most of the Divine Liturgy and have not really attended the prescribed service for a Sunday.

Church Etiquette: Just a reminder that to have attended the entire Divine Liturgy one must be in Church and have heard the reading of the Gospel as well as the homily, participated in the responses for the consecration and received the final Blessing before leaving the church. We also ask that you do not visit in the main part of the Church (the Nave) before during or after the Service. Please use the Vestibule or the Fellowship room to conduct your conversations - leave the Church proper for those that want to pray.

Bulletin Announcements must be in the office by Wednesday noon. It is your responsibility to notify the office, do not think that 'well they know', Father or the Secretary may know but do not always remember to put it in the bulletin!

Monthly Calendar Announcements for the next two months must be in the office by the 20th day of this month.

MARY IMMACULATE: THE CERTAINTY THAT GOD DOES NOT FAIL

Vatican City, 8 December 2012 (VIS) - In the Angelus of the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, Benedict XVI emphasized that Mary is Immaculate "by a gratuitous gift of the Grace of God, which she accepted, however, with perfect willingness and cooperation. In this respect she is 'blessed' because she 'believed', because of her firm faith in God".

The Holy Father continued, "Mary represents that 'remnant of Israel', the holy root announced by the prophets. The promises of the Old Covenant are welcomed in her. In Mary the Word of God is listened to, and finds acceptance, a response; the Word finds the 'yes' that allows it to take on flesh and to dwell among us. In Mary humanity and history are truly open to God and accept his Grace, in readiness to serve his will. Mary is the genuine expression of Grace. She is the new Israel that the Scriptures of the Old Testament describe with the symbol of the bride. ... The Fathers of the Church developed this image and so the doctrine of the Immaculate was born, first with reference to the Church as virgin-mother, and then to Mary".

"The light that emanates from the figure of Mary helps us also to understand the true meaning of original sin. Indeed, in Mary, the relationship with God, that may be destroyed by sin, is completely alive and active. There is no opposition within her between God and her being; rather, there is full communion, full understanding. There is a reciprocal 'yes', from God to her and from her to God. ... She is full of His Grace and His love.

"In conclusion, the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of Mary expresses the certainty of faith that the promises of God are realized: that His covenant does not fail, but has produced a holy root, from which has grown the Fruit most blessed of all the universe, Jesus the Saviour. Mary Immaculate demonstrates that Grace is able to bring about a response, that God's fidelity can generate a true and good faith".

Following the recitation of the Angelus the Holy Father assured his closeness to the people of the

Philippines, recently struck by a violent hurricane. "I pray for the victims, for their families and for the many displaced persons. May faith and charity provide the strength to face this difficult trial".

Finally, the Holy Father greeted the members of the Movement of Christian Workers, and in particular the prayer group of the Dermopathic Institute of the Immaculate (IDI-IRCCS) in Rome, which currently faces significant challenges. "I hope that a solution can be found to the difficulties experienced by many Catholic institutions in the health sector", he concluded.

ANGELUS: THE ESSENTIAL NATURE OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

Vatican City, 9 December 2012 (VIS) - At midday today, Benedict XVI appeared at the window of his study in the Vatican Apostolic Palace to pray the Angelus with the faithful and pilgrims gathered below in St. Peter's Square. The Pope, in the Gospel of this second Sunday of Advent, commented on the figure of St. John the Baptist, who is presented by all four Gospels at the beginning of Jesus' ministry, as his precursor, while St. Luke offers us a posterior reading.

"John, as the son of Zechariah and Elizabeth, both of priestly families, is not only the last of the prophets, but also represents the whole priesthood of the Old Covenant and therefore prepares mankind for the spiritual worship of the New Covenant inaugurated by Jesus", explained the Pope. "John the Baptist is defined as the 'voice of one crying in the desert: Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths'. The voice proclaims the word, but in this case the Word of God precedes, as it comes to John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness".

"Thus he plays an important role, but always in relation to Christ", said the Pope, recalling the words of St. Augustine: 'John is the voice that passes away, Christ is the eternal Word'. Our task today is to listen to that voice, to give space to Jesus and to welcome Him, the Word that saves us, into our hearts. In this time of Advent, let us prepare to see, through the eyes of faith, God's salvation in the humble stable in Bethlehem. In our consumerist society, where we seek joy in material things, the Baptist teaches us to live in an essential way, so that Christmas is not only experienced externally as a superficial holiday, but rather as the feast of the Son of God who came to bring peace, life and true joy to mankind".

In response to an invitation earlier this year by the Canadian Catholic Aboriginal Council, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops offers the following message for the 12 December 2012 Day of Prayer in Solidarity with Indigenous People:

Saint Kateri Tekakwitha: A model for loving and following Jesus

This year, through the miracles of God and the prayers of the Church, we are celebrating the solemn declaration that Kateri Tekakwitha is a saint and model for all Christians. What meaning does her life and death have today? Her message is the same that Jesus the Christ proclaimed 2000 years ago, and which he continues to teach us today.

The heart of Our Lord's teaching is found in the Beatitudes (Matthew 5.3-11; Luke 6.20-23). Their light shines brightly in the Blessed Virgin Mary and the saints. It is this light that the Church also recognizes in Kateri. This message of Jesus is daily and eternal, inviting us to decide how to respond to the deepest desire for happiness, which God has placed in our heart.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Kateri lived simply and austere, searching how to love Jesus and at the same time be faithful to the traditions of her people. *Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted.* All her life, she was weak, scarred and partially blind because of the smallpox, which had killed her parents and a younger brother when she was between four and six years old.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Already as a young girl, Kateri learned to carry firewood and fetch water, to make soup and bread. Later, she used sticks to make crosses, a sign of Christ's mercy, and placed these in the woods. Her prayer at death was as simple as her life itself: "Jesus, I love you." *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.* Kateri participated in the winter hunts, and worshipped God in the woods and forest. She is recorded as saying, "My body is served most luxuriously in the forest, but the soul languishes there, and is not able to satisfy its hunger."

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Kateri taught the young, and assisted the sick and elderly. She refused to speak ill of others. Although infirm, she was always the first to work. *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.* She insisted on making a promise of perpetual virginity, and wanted to form a community of Sisters who would all be Aboriginal women. “I have consecrated myself entirely to Jesus, son of Mary,” she said.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Kateri is described as joyful, patient and always wanting to help others. She would ask, “Who can tell me what is most pleasing to God that I may do it?” *Blessed are they are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.* After her baptism, she was derided for becoming a Christian, outcast from her native village, and so ended her years at a mission. *Blessed are you when people 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.* Ridiculed because of her baptism, she sought refuge over 300 kilometres away, walking through woods, rivers and swamps.

When she was beatified in 1980, Blessed John Paul II described Kateri as “a kind, gentle and hardworking person, spending her time working, praying, and meditating”. In the last months of her life, he said, we continue to see a woman of “solid faith, straight-forward humility, calm resignation and radiant joy, even in the midst of terrible sufferings.”

This past October, when Kateri was canonized, Pope Benedict XVI said she had led a simple life, remaining faithful to her love for Jesus, to prayer and to daily Mass. “Her greatest wish was to know and to do what pleased God,” the Pope continued. “She lived a life radiant with faith and purity. Kateri impresses us by the action of grace in her life, in spite of the absence of external help, and by the courage of her vocation.”

Pope Benedict has entrusted the renewal of faith in the First Nations and of all North America to Saint Kateri Tekakwitha, “Protectress of Canada”. In the words of the Holy Father, may she, with all the saints, be a witness to us of lives “generously spent for love of Christ,” strengthening and sustaining the whole Church and each of us in our mission of proclaiming the Gospel. For, as Jesus said when concluding his teaching on the Beatitudes (Matthew 5.13,14), we are called to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world.

For further information and reflection

The following homilies and newspaper article from earlier this year (listed in chronological order) offer further information and reflection on Saint Kateri Tekakwitha. She was born in 1656 in what is now the Diocese of Albany in New York State, and died on 17 April 1680 at the Jesuit mission village of Kahnawake, south of Montreal in New France, in what is now the Diocese of Saint-Jean-Longueuil.

1. Father Thomas Rosica, C.S.B. “Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha: Mohawk Mystic of North America, Model of the First Evangelization and New Evangelization”, published originally in *L’Osservatore Romano*, English-language edition, 7 March 2012.
{http://www.cccb.ca/site/images/stories/KateriTekakwitha_Rosica_EN.pdf}
2. Pope Benedict XVI, Homily at the Mass of Canonization, Saint Peter’s Square, Rome, 21 October 2012. {http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/homilies/2012/documents/hf_ben-xvi_hom_20121021_canonizzazioni_en.html}
3. Archbishop Richard Smith, President of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, Homily at the Mass of Thanksgiving, Basilica of Saint John Lateran, Rome, 22 October 2012.
{http://www.cccb.ca/site/images/stories/pdf/Mass_of_Thanksgiving_-_Kateri_-_English_final.pdf}
4. Bishop Lionel Gendron, P.S.S., from the Diocese of Saint-Jean-Longueuil where Saint Kateri is buried, Homily at the Mass of Thanksgiving, Saint Joseph Oratory, Montreal, 4 November 2012.
{http://www.cccb.ca/site/images/stories/pdf/Homlie_pour_la_messe_dAction_de_grace_de_sainte_Kateri_Tekakwitha.pdf}

CHRISTMAS IS MORE THAN A PARTY!

Vatican December 9, 2012; The Pope asked Catholics to prepare for Christmas amid a consumerist society by listening to the voice of John the Baptist, who teaches us to celebrate Christmas as more than a party.

"Our aim today is listening to that voice to give space and welcome to the heart of Jesus, the word that saves us," said Pope Benedict XVI from his apartment window to pilgrims gathered below in St. Peter's Square.

The Pope asked Catholics to "prepare to see with the eyes of faith the humble stable of Bethlehem, God's salvation, in this time of Advent."

"In the consumer society, in which we seek joy in things, John the Baptist teaches us to live in an essential way, so Christmas is experienced not only as an outward party outside, but as the feast of the Son of God who came to bring peace, life and true joy to people."

"John plays a great role, but always in relation to Christ," said the Pope on Dec. 9, following the feast of Mary's Immaculate Conception.

He explained that the four Gospels place the figure of John the Baptist at the beginning of Jesus' ministry, presenting him as his precursor.

Quoting from his new book on Jesus' infancy, Pope Benedict pointed out, that "St. Luke has further moved the connection between the two figures and their respective missions ... Already in their conception and birth, Jesus and John are brought into relation with each other."

He noted that this helps understand that John "not only is the last of the prophets, but also represents the whole priesthood of the Old Covenant and therefore prepares men for the worship of the spiritual New Covenant inaugurated by Jesus."

"Luke also dispels any mythic reading that is often made of the Gospels and the life of the historical places," said Pope Benedict, recalling the Gospel writer's explicit mention of John the Baptist being born 'In the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar, when Pontius Pilate was governor ... during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas.'

He spoke of Saint Augustine, who said that Christ is the eternal word since the beginning, while John is the voice that passed by.

Perhaps building off the theme of John the Baptist in the wilderness, the Pope also spoke of migrants, saying they often encounter little understanding among those they meet in foreign lands.

"In preparation for Christmas," he urged people to have "a joyous and fraternal solidarity to come to the aid of their needs and support their hope."

He called on Catholics to "not forget that every Christian is 'en route' to his true home, which is heaven," before greeting pilgrims in several languages.

Pope Benedict finished his reflections by entrusting everyone to the "maternal intercession of Mary, Virgin of Advent, so we may be ready to welcome, into our hearts and life, Emmanuel, God-with-us."