



Українська Католицька Парафія
Покрова Пресвятої Богородиці

*Protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Ukrainian Catholic Parish*

550 West 14 Avenue
Vancouver, BC V5Z 1P6
E-Mail: office@stmarysbc.com

Phone: 604.879.5830
Fax: 604.874.2727
Website: www.stmarysbc.com

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

14 Квітня, 2013

Volume 58 No. 15

April 14, 2013

Служби Божі/Divine Liturgies

В Неділю/Sunday

8:30 am partially sung

10:30 am sung

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 - 30 хвилин перед Службою Божою
або наперед домовитися під час тижня

Confessions - 30 minutes before the Divine
Liturgy or by appointment during the week

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

oo. Василян/ Basilian Fathers serving this
Parish

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

**Неділя Мирносиць
Йоана 20:19-31**



**Sunday of the Myrrh-bearing Women
Mark 15:43-16:8**

**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.**

Парафія Покрова Пресвятої Богородиці вітає всіх гостей, приятелів та рідних які зєдналися 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 Квітень

Загальний намір: Віра визнавальна є джерелом життя. Щоб публічне і молитовне визнання віри стало віруючим джерелом життя.

Місійний намір: Церкви - знак воскресіння. Щоб місцеві Церкви місійних регіонів були знаком і знаряддям надії і воскресіння.

- Тропарі і читання в зеленій книжці на стор. 3 і 4

Люди не клякають під час освячення і перед і по Причастю від Воскресіння до Зіслання Святого Духа.

В цьому часі тільки один священик буде служити в парафії. Щоби вз'яти участь у Св. Сповіді перед Великоднем, заохочуємо Вас приходити до церкви в неділю на Св. Літургію, 30 хвилин скоріше. Ви можете також наперед домовитися і прийти до Каплиці в нашій резиденції під час тижня.

Сьогодні, 14 Квітень, Неділя:

- 8:30 рано Служба Божа і 10:30 рано Торжественна Служба Божа
- 2:00 попол. «Покоління Віри» – Відзначення 1025 ліття Християнства Хрещення Київської-Русі (України) – читайти оголошення

April 17, Wednesday: SPECIAL GENERAL PARISH MEETING at 7:00 pm in the Main Hall of the Catholic Centre concerning the direction the parish would like to take in developing the Property. This first meeting would be to look at the information we have gathered until now and to establish a very general direction of ALL POSSIBILITIES. A special committee will be formed.

18 Квітень, Четвер:

- 7:00 вечора – Поширення зрозуміння нашої віри у вітальні під церквою.

20 Квітень, Субота:

- 9:30 рано Сходина Л.У.К.Ж.К. пичнуться молебнем до Пречистої Діви Марії а відтак засідання у вітальні під церквою.

21 Квітень, Неділя: – 10:30 рано – Парафіяльна Катехитична програма зараз по Євангелії під час Служби Божої.

- Парастаси – Forest Lawn Cemetery at 2 pm

25 Квітень, Четвер:

- 7:00 вечора – Поширення зрозуміння нашої віри у вітальні під церквою.

27 Квітень, Субота: Парастаси – Forest Lawn Cemetery at 2 pm

The Protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish welcomes all 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!

Monthly Papal Intentions for APRIL

General Intention: - Liturgy, Source of Life - That the public, prayerful celebration of faith may give life to the faithful.

Missionary Intention: - Mission Churches - That mission churches may be signs and instruments of hope and resurrection.

- Tropar, Kondak & readings in the green booklet pages 3 & 4

WE DO NOT KNEEL during the consecration as well as before and after Holy Communion from Easter Sunday to Pentecost Sunday inclusive. **WE STAND WHILE EVERYONE COMES TO COMMUNION** – you sit only if you are elderly, weak or ill.

UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE - there will be only one priest serving the parish. To participate in the Mystery of Reconciliation, (Confession) before Easter, we are encouraging you to come earlier to church on Sundays, as confessions will be heard for approximately 20 - 30 minutes before the Liturgies. You may also make an appointment to come **during the week** to the chapel in the rectory.

TODAY: April 14, Sunday: – 8:30 am – 10:30 am – Divine Liturgy
– 2 to 3:30 pm **Generations of Faith Celebration of 1025 anniversary of the Baptism of Kyivan–Rus Empire (Ukraine)** (See poster)

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April 18, Thursday: “THE CREED” A STUDY OF OUR FAITH at 7 pm in the Fellowship Room. Workbook – \$29.00 each. Other material will be provided.

April 20, Saturday:

– UCWLC Meeting begins at 9:30 am with Moleben to the Mother of God in the Fellowship Room followed by the monthly meeting also in the same room.

April 21, Sunday: during 10:30 am Divine Liturgy – **Parish Catechism Program for Pre–Schoolers** following the reading of the Gospel.

April 25, Thursday: “THE CREED” A STUDY OF OUR FAITH at 7 pm in the Fellowship Room. Workbook – \$29.00 each. Other material will be provided.

April 27, Saturday: Graveside Services – Forest Lawn Cemetery 2 pm

FLEA MARKET – Saturday May 25: For rental of \$ 25 per table, call: Olga Kochan @ 604-274-9804 or Mary Scott @ 604-271-1131 or Marlayne @ 604-274-3164.

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.

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!

HIS BEATITUDE SVIATOSLAV HAS INVITED YOU TO KYIV for a special Divine Liturgy to celebrate the 1,025th anniversary of the baptism of Kyivan-Rus (Ukraine) on Sunday August 18 2013! Join the Bishops of Canada on an official pilgrimage to Ukraine 7-21 August. Beginning in Western Ukraine visiting Lviv, Zarvanytsia, and Ternopil before proceeding to Kyiv for the major celebrations. Solaway Travel has been commissioned to assist in arranging travel plans and accommodations. Please contact: Myrna Arychuk of Solaway Travel: 3819 Sunset Street, Burnaby, BC V5G 1T4 Tel: 604.430.6789 Fax: 604.430.2244. myrna@solawaytravel.com,

Special Petition for Vocations – *We also pray for those in the religious and monastic or consecrated life and for those in vocation discernment, we pray to the Lord.*

ATTENTION SPECIAL NOTICE TO ALL WOMEN AND MEN OF THE PARISH!
We will have a pyrohy making session on Wednesday, April 17 at 8 am. Proceeds from this session will go towards the Easter Bake Sale.

CANCER RELAY FOR LIFE - Our parish is once again participating in this annual fundraiser being held on Saturday June 8 at Mahon Park in North Vancouver from 10am-10pm. This is an excellent opportunity to support our church team by giving a donation and even coming out to walk a lap in honour of someone who is battling cancer. We do need your support and need at least 2 more members on our team. Contact Barbara Ballhorn (604-732-3166) for further details.

Неможливо бути свідком воскреслого чуда Любови, як тільки в безперервному пошуці живої людини. Свідчення здійснюється не у втраченому спогаді, але усміхається літургійною пам'яттю серця: хто втрачає своє життя – зберігає любов. Сьогодні – свято віри, несподіванка надії, дарування любови. Сьогодні – нетлінна краса родинної молитви. Сьогодні – бажання жити чудом радості. Сьогодні – весна серця. Сьогодні – Ви та Наша родина!

YOU ARE INVITED TO PARTICIPATE

“THE CREED” A NEW STUDY DURING THIS YEAR OF THE FAITH” on Thursday evening beginning at 7pm
This twelve (12) part series - “The Creed - is A Journey through the Catechism”

The Catechism of the Catholic Church comes alive, showing you how your personal faith journey fits into the amazing story of salvation. **The Catechism** is far more than a list of “faith facts” it provides a map for you to easily navigate and enrich your life.

In this Series - “THE CREED” - you will:

- 1. Learn why the Catechism should be treated less like a fact book and more like a **roadmap for our faith journey.****
- 2. Learn what **God’s innermost secret** is and how we are called to participate in it.**
- 3. See that our journey of faith is a journey from *Blessing to Blessing*, that the God who made us **wills that we return to Him.****
- 4. Discover how the Catechism can be seen as a new Catechesis for the **New Evangelization.****
- 5. Learn how **what we believe** emerges from the **living story** of salvation history.**
- 6. Discover the role the angels play in aiding our salvation, and how they are truly present to us.**
..... and much more

Workbooks are available for the program - \$ 29.00/each - contact Susan Lazaruk or come to the Parish office.

To Request Prayers for: yourself, your family, or a friend - please submit the name to the Parish Office or place a note and 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; fellow parishioners; those confined to their hospital beds or their homes; 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: Bishop Severian Yakymyshyn, OSBM, Fr. Josaphat Tyrkalo, OSBM, Fr. Steven Basarab, Mary Balsevicius, Joseph Bayduza, Frances Bethune, Elizabeth Duda, Mary Earl, Quenten Fabiano, Catherine Hladij, Alice Humenick, Bohdan Karpinski, Emily Kuzyk, Bodzie and Shirley Lawryshyn, Ben Marchinkow, Joseph Nadelko, Orest Obuck, John Pura, Mary Scott, Dave Shelast, Kaiya Williams, Leon Woznow, Tiny Zarski.

Please Visit: our Parishioners in their homes or in the hospital. They need your visit, your phone call, as well as your prayers.

Please remember in your Prayers our newest member of our Parish, Thea Jessica Labaj - Cochrane. Baptised on April 6, 2013.

Please pray for vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

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

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.

CAMP ST. VOLODYMYR August 18 – 25th, 2013 Camp St. Volodymyr will be celebrating its 30th anniversary. We have been enriching campers in their Ukrainian Catholic Faith and Culture since 1983. Located in Kelowna campers spend a week participating in age tailored activities such as Ukrainian dancing, arts & crafts, singing, catechesis, sports and water activities. Camper fees: \$260 before July 4, \$310 after July 5. 3rd/4th child from same family is \$150 each. Bus transportation is available from New Westminster. Registration forms can be downloaded from the eparchial website at www.nweparchy.ca/. For more information contact Jennifer Sawka @ 604.876.5691 jennsawka@hotmail.com. Register early. Space is limited!

VOLUNTEER STAFF Camp St. Volodymyr is again looking for counsellors to help with the planning, teaching, coordinating, and carrying out activities and guiding campers in their personal growth, and daily living skills. These positions are ideally suited for outgoing individuals who enjoy working with children and enjoy being outdoors. Counsellor application forms can be downloaded from the website and are due May 15, 2013. **This year we are looking for a volunteer to help us out with singing. Please contact us asap if you are interested.**

Support our Camp! Donations are always greatly appreciated. We are always happy to accept food donations of vegetables, fruits, cereals, and treats for children, as well as monetary donations. Tax receipts can be issued with donations of \$25 or more.

You may purchase a DVD of Major Archbishop Sviatoslav's September 1 visit. The cost of this commemorative DVD is \$10. This DVD contains the complete Divine Liturgy celebrating Bishop Budka's hundredth anniversary of arrival to Canada. Please indicate how many copies you would like.

A quiet, studious parishioner in 4th year University student is looking for room and board close to or along a bus route to UBC for September. Please inform the parish office .

CONVERSION OF THE HEART – ‘The Way of Repentance’

By Irma Zaleski, 2003 Novalis, St. Paul University, Ottawa, ON

Read slowly, reflect and meditate

Daily Struggle

It is not to an easy way of life, a comfortable kind of spirituality, that the Gospel calls us to live daily. Rather, it calls us to a daily struggle with our greatest fear: our fear of suffering, extinction and death. It tells us what, deep down in our hearts, we already know: that fullness of life is always preceded by a death; that to become something new, the old must die; that to become united with God – to live the life of Christ – we must first let go of ourselves. It tells us that there is no other way of being one with Christ, no other way of becoming like Him.

We would all like to be “converted” once and for all: to be free from guilt, self-doubt and the fear of death for the rest of our lives and never have to repent again. It is difficult for many of us not to resent those who insist that It cannot be so: that in this life it is only through daily experience of God’s infinite mercy and forgiveness in repentance that we can begin to realize the immensity of His love. It may be easier for us to forget that, as Christ said to the Pharisee, it is those who are much forgiven who love most. (Luke 7:47) In order to learn how to love, we must learn to be forgiven. That means we must learn to repent.

Repentance is a sure way in which we can share in this life in Christ’s death and resurrection. When we were baptized we were, as the Church has taught from the beginning, “buried with Christ” – made dead to sin – so that we could rise with Him and live with Him His risen life. But, as long as we are on earth, we still carry the consequences of our first parents’ sin. We are self-centered and weak; we are still easily tempted, still subject to the pressures of life in the flesh.

Awareness of this truth may make us sad, but we do not need to despair. We have already learned that repentance is the means by which the grace of baptism is restored to us, by which we “bury” our sins – not in the sense of denying them, but in the sense of surrendering them all to Christ. When we repent, we place our sins in His Tomb, we die to them and thus we rise from them, again and again. We rise with Christ to a new life, we are united with Him and transformed into Him – divinized, * in the language of the Eastern Fathers – and we return with him today to Paradise.

Thus our failures, our weaknesses, even our sins, through ceaseless repentance may become for us moments of grace and conversion. They become not obstacles but “stepping stones” to perfection, our discipline of love. We look at the face of Christ and in the light of His mercy our sins disappear like mist. Repentance is the death of sin – the death of the old – and the birth of the new. It is the one sure way in which we can, while still in this world, experience the fruits of our salvation; because when we repent we place all our trust not in any “goodness” of our own, but in the mercy of God that can never fail us.

*(Divinization – ‘theosis’ in Greek is a process by which a person becomes so closely united with Christ that we may dare to say that he or she has become ‘divinized’ or ‘deified’. This, of course, does not mean that a human being can

become divine, can assume the divine nature of Christ. Such an idea would be totally unacceptable to the Eastern Church as it is in the West. It only means that by joining ourselves to Christ, we become “adopted” as children by God. (Romans 8:14–15) The Western Church prefers to use the word ‘union’ to signify the same radical reality.)

CONVERSION OF THE HEART – ‘The Way of Repentance’

By Irma Zaleski, 2003 Novalis, St. Paul University, Ottawa, ON

Read slowly, reflect and meditate

A Heart Transformed

The “self” we must lose, to which we must die, is not our true self. It is, rather, our “false self”: the whole complex of self-centeredness and egotism from which we must free ourselves so that we can find our true self – our “original self” – that God breathed into us when He created us in His image and likeness.

When we say that we must lose our false self and find the true one, we do not mean that we must shed some part of ourselves in order to find another, better one. According to biblical understanding of the human person, we do not have any separate “disposable” parts. We are always one, indivisible: body, mind and soul, held together by that inner center of our being that, in the Christian Tradition, we call the heart.

Thus, when we speak of our “false self” we refer to our heart centered on ourselves, and our “earthly treasures” (Matthew 6:21): on our own desires and needs. The “true self” is our heart turned away from ourselves and focused only on God. In other words, it is our heart fully converted, fully transformed.

It is this inner reality, I think, that Jesus pointed to when he blessed the “pure of heart.” (Matthew 5:8) The pure of heart are those who, having turned away from themselves, seek only God – in themselves, in others, and in the whole of creation – and thus are able to love themselves and their neighbour “even in their sins.” The pure of heart are merciful and compassionate. They do not judge themselves or others; they have learned the meaning of love.

Our true heart already exists. Its seed is planted deep in our being. Only God knows what it must grow into, what it must, in the end, become. We cannot see it because most of our lives it is obscured by our sins and illusions, by our fear of the daily death we are called to undergo. We can only uncover it slowly – bit by bit – by weeding out the untruth, illusion and sin that always threaten its growth. We can only find it and live it by repentance.

When we repent, we surrender our false self into the hands of God. We die to it daily. We give up our illusions, our compulsions, our self-centeredness as soon as we notice them; we cry for mercy and we begin again and again. We do not expect any quick answers or ask for any special revelations. We look only to Christ our Lord and follow Him step by step. Then, perhaps, in a few years or in many – in God’s own good time – we may look around us and see, even if only for a moment, who we truly are: the heirs of the Kingdom, infinitely loved, forgiven and free.

CONVERSION OF THE HEART – ‘The Way of Repentance’

By Irma Zaleski, 2003 Novalis, St. Paul University, Ottawa, ON

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Holy Repentance

Conversion through repentance, then, is not an expression of fear, self-hate or a neurotic sense of guilt, but an ordinary, simple, natural way of loving God. It is a life in the presence of God who has loved us infinitely, whom we love and whose beauty and perfection we long to see, but from whom, we realize ever more clearly, we are separated by our egotism and sin.

True repentance, holy repentance, is the way of love. It is possible only when we stand before the face of God and are moved “out of our minds” beyond the confines of our little narrow selves – by our longing for Him. We long for Him and search for His presence, not because He can give us this or that, not because He can save us from disaster and death, not even because He can save us from hell, but because He is so incomparably good and beautiful that, sinners as we are, we must long for Him.

The secret of true repentance is humility: a spontaneous response of the human heart in the presence of God before whom we are as small as a grain of dust, whom we have offended again and again, and yet who has come to us and loved us unto death. Each time we call on the Lord to have mercy on us we surrender ourselves to Him, we accept His judgment and meet Him as we shall meet Him at the moment of our death. We let ourselves die every day, we face our fear of judgment and death, but we also begin to experience the “indefinable and glorious joy” of our resurrection. (1 Peter 1:3–9)

We do not know what it means to be transformed, to become like Christ. How could we know? The mystery of Christ, the mystery of the Incarnation is beyond the reach of our human minds and imaginations. It is only when we have arrived, when we are there in the presence of God and see ourselves through the eyes of His Infinite Love, that we shall finally understand who we really are and what it means to be truly ourselves. We shall know at last how infinitely we have been loved, how safe we have always been, how sure has been the way to lead us home. This is the true way of repentance and the source of all our joy.

The Third Paschal Sunday, – Sunday of the Myrrh-bearing Women

The Memory of the Righteous Joseph of Arimathea & Nicodemus

Exactly how serious is this Sunday obligation?

Mark 15:43–16:8.

From a purely historical point of view we know why these women go to the tomb: the Jewish burial ritual is a lengthy one: the body must be anointed with perfumed oils; but, since Jesus died in the afternoon, and the Sabbath was beginning, there was no time for this. So, on Sunday morning, at the crack of dawn, these three women, who had cared for our Lord’s simple needs in life, went to the tomb to provide just one more service for him in death.

There are, of course, implications both theological and spiritual to the fact that these women, and not the Apostles, are the first to see the Risen Lord; and we have talked about those in past years. There are other spiritual lessons as well which we can derive from the most arcane details: the miraculous rolling away of the stone; the angel dressed in white; the fact that the women do not come to the tomb empty-handed; the fact that they do not, at first, recognize our Lord. All of these have significance; but we focus today on only one: the fact that all of it happens on a Sunday.



Before our Lord's Passion, his followers kept the same Sabbath as all the other Jews around them: beginning Friday at sundown and ending Saturday at sundown. The tradition comes from God himself, as spoken to the Hebrew people through Moses: "Thou shalt remember the Sabbath and keep it holy." But almost immediately after our Lord's resurrection, the Christians began to keep another day; and this passage we just read is the reason. Jesus rises from the dead on a Sunday. His resurrection is witnessed by these three women at daybreak, just as the sun itself is rising in the East. And it was almost immediate that the Apostles and their disciples began to refer to Sunday as the "new Sabbath"; and, to this day, when a Christian examines his conscience, when he gets to the Third Commandment, he understands it to mean that he should keep

holy the "Lord's Day," meaning Sunday.

It is also important to note the parallel the early Christians made between the rising of Christ from the dead and the time of day at which it happened: just as the sun was rising in the East; hence, the earliest manuscripts we have which describe how the first Christians worshipped show them performing the Lord's Supper on an altar which faces the East, as they themselves faced the East; and they did this, as far as possible, just as the sun was rising; because they saw in the rising sun a symbol of our Lord's resurrection.

To this day, our churches, whenever possible, face the East; and, when it is not possible for a church to face East, we pretend that it does, with all of us, priest and congregation, facing the same way as well, as if to see, in the rising sun, our risen Lord. The spiritual implications are unmistakable: Jesus is the rising Sun that should light our day from its first moments. The whole day becomes different when it is illumined by the Lord.

Unfortunately, like all of the most ancient traditions of the Church, it is old and easily becomes passe in the minds of Christians. The "Sunday obligation," as it is

called, becomes nothing more than something we were taught in our catechism; just another rule that we are supposed to obey, and confess when we do not. And when something is viewed as nothing more than a rule to be followed for its own sake, the motivation for following it becomes pretty weak, as do the excuses we grant ourselves for ignoring it from time to time: “It is the first day of Spring.” “It is the last day of Summer.” “It is a long weekend and I have a chance to get away.

Sometimes it is helpful to remember what many of the early Christians went through in their efforts to keep the Lord’s Day: steeling away to underground caverns in cemeteries, or hidden away cellars in the homes of wealthy Christians, to celebrate the Lord’s Supper, the Divine Liturgy, as they began to call it, during times of violence against the Church, endangering, and sometimes giving, their lives for the privilege. For them, the motivation was not a rule they had to follow or an obligation they would have to confess if they did not; it was the promise of receiving into themselves the Body and Blood, the Soul and Divinity, of Jesus Christ in Holy Communion. They did not – and could not – see it as a burden.

If we have come to see it that way, as a burden, it is because, somewhere along the way, we have lost our connection with those earliest Christians who handed these traditions on to us down through the centuries. Reconnecting with them, and to the traditions of our faith, is something that can only be done by each one of us in our own hearts. And that, more than anything else, was my motive for choosing the theme for this summer’s preaching series.

As you know, most summers, beginning on the Sunday after Pentecost, I choose a particular theme for the homilies of the summer months. The last time we did a series on the Divine Liturgy was in 2005; and it is time to revisit that topic, not only because it has been so long, but also to help us reinforce and re-evaluate our relationship with the Lord’s Day. The Sunday Liturgy, whether it is on Sunday or Saturday evening, is not something we fit in when we have time; and, if it has become that – perhaps it is because we have not considered it carefully enough. When I turn around from the Holy Table to give a blessing, and see people making no attempt to sing, or making a cross in a perfunctory manner (or not making it at all), and no one at all making any attempt to bow at the required times, I know it is my own fault for not having instructed you often or well enough. But the main thing that concerns me is the possibility that we have simply forgotten the deep spiritual significance of the things we do in church. We cannot be here simply to fulfill an obligation. We have to be here because we want to be; and how can we want to be if we do not understand what we are doing or why?

Now, we have a few Sundays before Pentecost; so, our series on the Divine Liturgy will not begin for a while; but I wanted to let you know it was coming. In the mean time, at least we can contemplate the hidden significance of the visit of the holy women to the tomb of our Lord on the first day of the week, how that event shaped the life of the Church for generations, and how we can begin to reconnect with the ancient faith we have inherited from them.



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