



Українська Католицька Парафія
Покрова Пресвятої Богородиці

*Protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Ukrainian Catholic Parish*

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

21 Квітня, 2013

Volume 58 No. 16

April 21, 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 Розслабленого
Йоана 5:1-15**



**Sunday of the Paralytic
John 5:1-15**

**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. 5 і 6

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

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

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

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

- Парастаси – Forest Lawn Cemetery at 2 pm

22 Квітень, Понеділок: Парастаси – Valley View Cemetery at 7 pm

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

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

3 Травень, П'ятниця: Перша П'ятниця

- 8:25 ранку – Служба Божа а від так Молебень до Пречистої Діви Марії.

5 Травень, Неділя:

- 9:50 ранку – Молебень до Пречистої Діви Марії.

- Парафіяльна Катехитична програма під час Служби Божої в 10:30 рано і буде продовжуватися кожної неділі.

9 Травень, Четвер: Свято ВОЗНЕСІННЯ

- **Обов'язкове Свято** – в ці дні, кожний католик є зобов'язаний бути присутнім на Службі Божій так як це робимо в неділю.

- Служби Божі – 10-ій рано і 7-ій вечора.

12 Травень, Неділя:

- 9:50 ранку – Молебень до Пречистої Діви Марії.

- Парафіяльна Катехитична програма під час Служби Божої в 10:30 рано і буде продовжуватися кожної неділі.

16 Травень, Четвер:

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

19 Травень, Неділя:

– 9:50 ранку – Молебень до Пречистої Діви Марії.

– Парафіяльна Катехитична програма під час Служби Божої в 10:30 рано і буде продовжуватися кожної неділі.

23 Травень, Четвер:

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

FLEA MARKET – Saturday May 25: Table rentals \$25. Call: Olga: 604-274-9804 or Mary: 604-271-1131 or Marlayne: 604-274-3164.

26 Травень, Неділя:

– 9:50 ранку – Молебень до Пречистої Діви Марії.

– Парафіяльна Катехитична програма під час Служби Божої в 10:30 рано і буде продовжуватися кожної неділі.

27 Травень, Понеділок:

– 7:00 вечора – Сходина Парафіяльної Ради у Борд Румі.

30 Травень, Четвер:

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

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,

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.

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 .

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 5 & 6

- **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.

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)**, we are encouraging you to come **30 minutes before the Divine Liturgies**. You may also make an appointment to come during the week to the chapel in the rectory.

TODAY: Sunday, April 21:

- **Parish Catechism Program for Pre-Schoolers** during 10:30 am Divine Liturgy following the reading of the Gospel.

- **Graveside Services – Forest Lawn Cemetery 2 pm**

Monday, April 22: Graveside Services – Valley View Cemetery at 7 pm

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

Sunday, April 28: Parish Catechism Program for Pre-Schoolers during 10:30 am Divine Liturgy following the reading of the Gospel.

Friday, May 3: First Friday

- 8:25 am Divine Liturgy followed by Moleben to the Mother of God.

Sunday, May 5: – 9:50 am Moleben to the Mother of God.

- **Parish Catechism Program for Pre-Schoolers** during 10:30 am Divine Liturgy following the reading of the Gospel.

Thursday, May 9 – FEAST OF THE ASCENSION OF OUR LORD

- **This is a HOLY DAY OF OBLIGATION** – which means that we have the obligation to attend a Church Service on this day just as on Sundays. Yes, it is a serious (mortal) sin if we intentionally miss.

- **Divine Liturgy in Church 10 am and 7 pm.**

Sunday, May 12: – 9:50 am Moleben to the Mother of God.

- **Parish Catechism Program for Pre-Schoolers** during 10:30 am Divine Liturgy following the reading of the Gospel.

Thursday, May 16: "THE CREED" A STUDY OF OUR FAITH at 7 pm in the Fellowship Room. Workbook – \$29.00 each. Other material will be provided.

Sunday, May 19:

- 9:50 am Moleben to the Mother of God.
- Parish Catechism Program for Pre-Schoolers during 10:30 am Divine Liturgy following the reading of the Gospel.

Thursday, May 23: "THE CREED" A STUDY OF OUR FAITH at 7 pm in the Fellowship Room. Workbook – \$29.00 each. Other material will be provided.

FLEA MARKET – Saturday May 25: Table rentals \$25. Call: Olga @ 604-274-9804 or Mary @ 604-271-1131 or Marlayne @ 604-274-3164.

Sunday, May 26:

- 9:50 am Moleben to the Mother of God.
- Parish Catechism Program for Pre-Schoolers during 10:30 am Divine Liturgy following the reading of the Gospel.

Monday, May 27:

- Parish Council Meeting at 7 pm in the Board Room.

Thursday, May 30: "THE CREED" A STUDY OF OUR FAITH at 7 pm in the Fellowship Room. Workbook – \$29.00 each. Other material will be provided.

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!

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.*

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.

A quiet, Catholic female student from Mexico, fluent in Spanish, English, speaks intermediate French, and a little bit of German is looking for room and board in a Ukrainian Catholic family as soon as possible. If you can help please call the parish office .

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 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.

Special Petition for Evangelization – *Let us ask our Heavenly Father for His gifts of wisdom & courage in our efforts of spreading the Good News and building up God's kingdom on earth, let us pray to the Lord.*

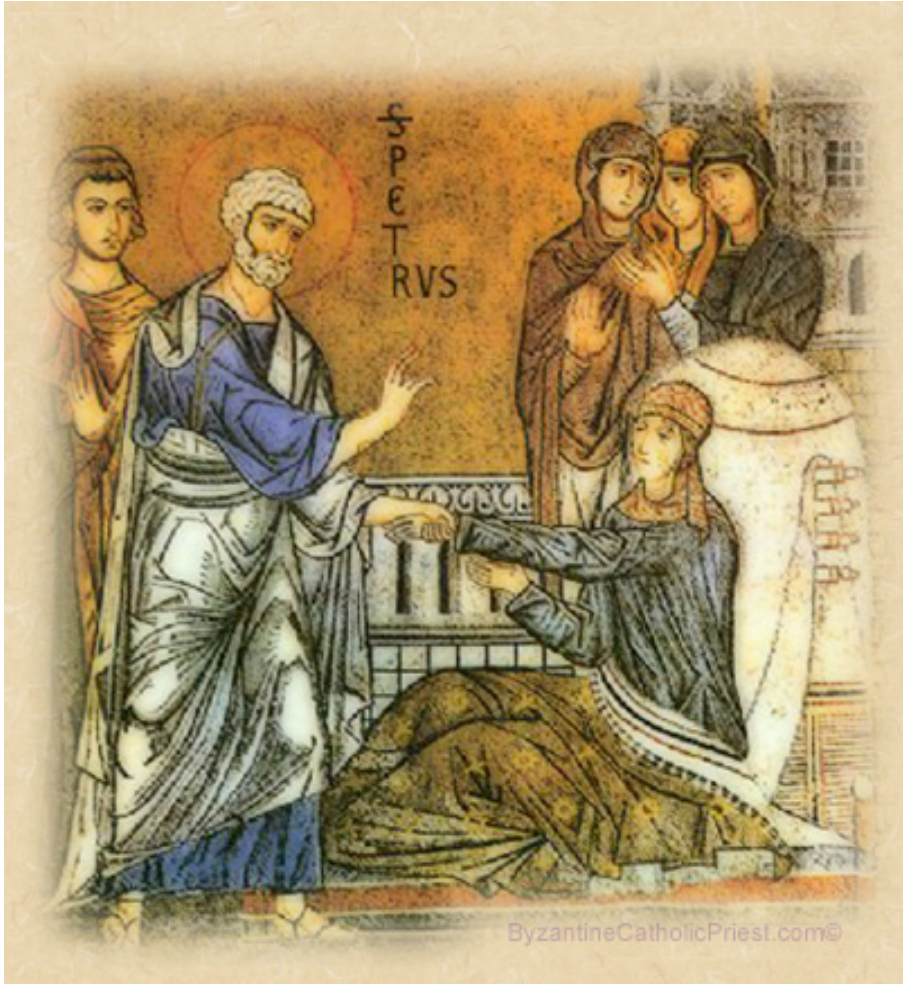
CAMP ST. VOLODYMYR August 18 – 25th, 2013 Camp St. Volodymyr will be celebrating its 30th anniversary. We have been enriching campers in their Ukrainian Catholic Faith and Culture since 1983. Located in Kelowna campers spend a week participating in age tailored activities such as Ukrainian dancing, arts & 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.

**The Fourth Paschal Sunday, known as The Sunday of the Paralytic Man.
To love the Church is to love Christ. To reject the Church is to reject Christ.**

Acts 9:32-42; John 5:1-15.



The Gospel lesson about how our Lord healed a man at the pool of Bethesda we have talked about before. It is, among other things, a lesson in patience, particularly with regard to the example of the crippled man at the pool who never gave up hope despite the fact that he had been waiting for thirty-eight years. My admonition to you the last time this Gospel was read was to emulate the crippled man in the exercise of patience, especially in our prayers; to recognize that God owes us nothing in exchange for our prayers and sacrifices, they are things we owe to God simply because he is God,

and to remember that our prayers and good works are not payment for services rendered or to be rendered. How long must we wait for an answer to our many prayers to God? The man in the Gospel waited thirty-eight years. He never gave up hope, never presumed he had been abandoned by God, and was grateful for what he received when he finally received it.

What I wish to draw to your attention today is the reading from the Acts of the Apostles, frequently read after 'Pascha', in which our Lord's chief disciple, Peter, raises another disciple named Tabitha from the dead. This is extremely significant because, previously, this was something only God could do; and God did do it, on several occasions, in the person of Jesus. He raises his own friend Lazarus from the dead in that famous and dramatic passage which begins Great and Holy Week; he also raised up the dead son of a widow of Nain while he was being carried to his grave, a Gospel which we read at the doors of the church at the conclusion of a funeral; he also raised up the servant of a synagogue official; and, of course, he raised himself from the dead after first descending into the realm of the dead to free the souls held captive there. But there is a sense in which, apart, of course, from our Lord's own resurrection, this raising of Tabitha by Peter is the most

important of all, simply by reason of the fact that it is not done by our Lord. For the Fathers of the Church this act had tremendous significance: it is the first indication of our Lord transmitting his own divine power and authority over life and death to his Church in the person of Peter and the Apostles.

Consider that our risen Lord had just ascended into heaven, just sent the Holy Spirit as tongues of fire to enliven the Apostles; an event which many point to as the actual birth of the Church on earth, and already he has given to them his own divine authority over life and death. They are able, in his name, to raise the dead to life. And it is further significant that this authority over life and death is exercised first by Peter, the head of the Apostles, as a way of indicating that there will be order in the Church. The Church will not be a free-for-all, a loose assembly of believers doing as they please; it will have structure and order, and be guided by authority. Even at the very birth of the Church at Pentecost, her structure begins to take shape.

On the night before he died, during the Mystical Supper, our Lord gave to his Apostles the Blessed Eucharist for the first time, commanding them to do the same; he then breathed on them and gave them the power to forgive sin in confession; he sent his spirit to empower them to preach the Gospel to all nations; and, now, we see the extent of what he has given to his Church in the person of his chief Apostle; for what greater power does Christ possess than that over life and death? The lesson is clear: the Church is not simply a human institution preserving the traditions of a historical religion. What our Lord gave to Peter and his Apostles they, in turn, passed on to the priests and bishops of the Church in an unbroken line, for the sanctification of the faithful throughout the centuries until he, our Lord, should come again. To love the Church is to love Christ. To reject the Church is to reject Christ.

Of course, in this day and age, that truth can be a hard sell for some people. When someone is unable to make the distinction between the Divine nature of the Church as instituted by Christ and the less-than-divine people to whom the earthly Church has been entrusted, that person can easily become confused. And I am not talking only about people leaving the Church because of moral scandals among the clergy; in most cases it has nothing to do with a moral scandal: people rejecting the Church because someone in the Church treated them badly.

As a priest, I run into these people from time to time; and you may have, too. For me it happens mostly at funerals. I will be burying someone who will have children or nieces and nephews who do not practice their faith anymore; and I will ask them, "Why I do not ever see them in Church?" And quite often I will get a story about how Father So-and-so treated them badly; and it is usually a priest from another state that I have never heard of, so I cannot even know for sure if he exists. And I do not let them get away with it: I look them right in the eye and say, "What does the conduct of Father So-and-so have to do with the truth of the faith that is preached by the Church that Jesus Christ personally established on this earth?" Of course, they do not have an answer to that question, which exposes the fact that Father So-and-so, if there is such a person, had nothing to do with it; he

was just the excuse. They had, in fact, abandoned the faith in their hearts long before they met Father So-and-so; he simply provided them with a target to absorb the blame so they could stop coming to Church without feeling guilty about it.

I have a friend who is a priest in the Latin Church who grew up in a very troubled household with a very abusive father who also happened to be a devout Catholic; and even though he was able to process this difficult childhood and deal with it quite well, his brother did not. As soon as his father died, the brother stopped going to Church, made a point of marrying outside the Church, and flaunts the fact that he is not a practicing Catholic every chance he gets, as if putting this difficult childhood behind him requires that he reject everything his father stood for. I do not presume to judge him because I do not know what psychological baggage he is carrying; but logically it does not make sense: just because his father was a bad person does not mean what his father believed was wrong. Remember a few weeks ago when we were talking about Blessed John Henry Newman, and his distinction between a question and a doubt? A person who questions is looking for answers; a person who doubts is looking for an escape. If what we are looking for is an excuse to abandon Christ and his Church, we will find it; and we will find a way to make it everyone's fault but ours.

In the Divine Liturgy, Christ comes among us disguised as bread and wine; but this does not happen on its own. It happens through the instrument of the Church, to whose priests our Lord gave this power. Certainly we can pray to Christ on our own; but we can only do so because Christ is already among us; and Christ is among us only because his Church is among us. If we are separated from the Church, we are separated from Christ. Consequently, as long as we remain in the Church, we can never be separated from our Lord.

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.

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!

Ascension Thursday – *Understanding the feast through the icon* By Father Joseph Bertha, PhD



**ASCENSION OF THE
LORD JESUS**
Rabbula - 6th c.

The Scriptural descriptions which serve as a basis for the icon illustration of the feast of the Ascension of our Lord are rather sparse. The Gospel of Mark 16:19 tersely states that: “the Lord Jesus was taken up into heaven and took his seat at God’s right hand.” In the Gospel of **Luke 24:50** we learn that the Ascension took place in Bethany, that Christ has his hands upraised and blessing the disciples. Luke in **Acts of the Apostles 1:9-12** simply describes the Ascension of our Lord as taking place on the fortieth day after His Resurrection after appearing and speaking about the reign of God: “He was lifted up before their eyes in a cloud which took Him from their sight.”

Four psalms are associated with the feast of the Ascension and frequently quoted in the liturgical hymns, provide further features. **Psalm 18:11** describes the presence of an angel: “He mounted a cherub and flew, borne on the wings of the wind.”

Psalm 24: 7ff describes a portal or opening in heaven, and labels God the King of Glory: “Lift up, O gates your lintels; reach up you ancient portals, that the king of glory may come in! Who is this king of glory? The Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.”

Psalm 47:2,6ff mentions the throne and the acclaim of people for God: “All you peoples, clap your hands, shout to God with cries of gladness. God mounts his throne amid shouts of joy; the Lord, amid trumpet blasts.” is a hymn acknowledging God as the only true God as He enters His abode: “You have ascended on high, taken captives, received men as gifts-even rebels; the Lord God enters his dwelling.” Saint Paul in Ephesians 4:8 interprets the gifts to mean He gave gifts to men, and refers to Christ bestowing His charismatic graces on the Church after his Ascension into heaven.

In the entire Old Testament only two people ascend to heaven; Elijah in a fiery chariot and Moses whose grave was never found and is thought to have ascended to heaven. Significantly, these two prophets appear with our Lord on Mount Tabor at the Transfiguration in the cloud of heavenly glory. The two prophets and Christ show in a cloud of light their divine mission to those on earth.

Although she is curiously absent from the Scriptural accounts of the Ascension of Christ the Mother of God appears in virtually every Ascension icon. In the Syrian Rabula Gospel (586), an illuminated manuscript page illustrating the Ascension of our Lord, the Mother of God stands on the Mount of Olives in the center of the icon, arms uplifted in the orans position of prayer. To either side of her are haloed angels, and groups of disciples. Prophet Ezechiel's anthropomorphic chariot symbolizing the four evangelists as angel (Mathew), lion (Mark), ox (Luke), eagle (John); together with two angels support the mandorla (body halo) of Christ. In the upper two corners of the icon two tiny figures of Elijah and Moses glance from heaven at the event. As Christ ascends amid the clouds He blesses with His right hand and holds in His left hand an unraveled scroll. Two angels flying beneath carry crowns for the King of Glory. Many of these components are found in subsequent Ascension icons.

A vesper verse for the feast justifies the presence of the Virgin: "O Lord, most merciful, after fulfilling the mystery hidden from all eternity, You, the Creator and Master of all, went up to the Mount of Olives with Your disciples and Your Mother. For the one who, at the sight of Your Passion, had suffered more than anyone else in her motherly heart, had more than anyone else the right to share the joy that fills us as we witness Your ascending into heaven. We glorify Your infinite mercy overflowing upon us."

At San Marco in Venice (circa 1200) the Ascension mosaic is found in the preeminent location, in the central main dome. Our Lord is seated on a rainbow, and another rainbow serves as His footstool. The rainbow throne evokes the rainbow of Noah after the flood. God promises never to punish the earth by establishing a covenant. In Genesis 9:12 God says: "This is the sign that I am giving for all ages to come, of the covenant between me and you and every living creature with you: I set my bow in the clouds to serve as a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth, and the bow appears in the clouds, I will recall the covenant I have made between me and you and living beings, so that the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all mortal beings." Also the throne of God is described in Revelations 4:3 as surrounded by a rainbow as brilliant as emerald. From the thirteenth century onwards, in Ascension icons, our Lord is usually depicted enthroned.

The beautiful poetry of the Byzantine liturgical hymn sums up the feast: "You descended from heaven to the earth, O Christ, and by Your Ascension You wondrously raised up the race of Adam which had been lying in the depths of the prison of Hades. And having taken our nature back to heaven, You seated it with You on the Father's throne because of Your mercy and Your love for all." (Sessional Hymn from Matins)

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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.