

St. Mary's Newsletter

St Mary's Ukrainian Catholic Parish
550 West 14th Ave Vancouver BC V5Z 1P6
www.stmarysbc.com 604-879-5830



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Newsletter email: orestbohdan@outlook.com editor: Orest Kernycky

Divine Liturgies

Sundays: 8:30am English (spoken)

10:30am Ukrainian (sung)

Mon-Sat: 7:30am (Chapel)

Holy Days: 10:00am

Fr Joseph Pidskalny OSBM (Admin)

The Sign of the Cross

POWERFUL PRAYER: THE SIGN OF THE CROSS

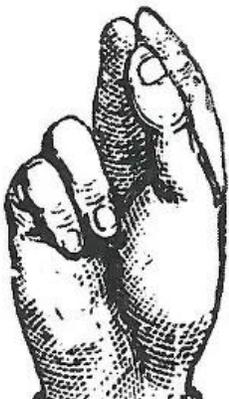
As Catholics, the Sign of the Cross is more than Ukrainians make the sign of the cross with three Holy Trinity) and two fingers folded physically profess the mystery of our faith. those we pray for into the presence of God, and salvation"— Christ's saving work in the world.

Here are five sacred moments to make the Sign personal prayer – to invoke the Most Holy

Trinity and begin with reverence.

1. In personal Prayer
2. When passing a church – as an act of Blessed Sacrament.
3. When you hear a siren – as a prayer for the first responders
4. When passing a cemetery – to offer a prayer
5. When you see an accident – to ask for divine protection for all those in danger.

Let this simple act become a daily habit of love, the joy of the Resurrection. Through every cross we trace we proclaim: Christ is Risen!



The Butterfly and the Girl

A girl found a cocoon and watched a butterfly struggle to emerge. After hours, it stopped moving, so she cut the cocoon open to help. The butterfly escaped easily—but its body was swollen and its wings were weak. It never flew, only crawled for the rest of its life.

Though the girl meant well, she didn't realize the struggle was necessary. The pressure of the cocoon helps push fluid into the wings, preparing the butterfly to fly.

Moral:

Struggles are essential for growth. Challenges build strength and resilience.

If we avoid hardship or rely too much on others, we miss the chance to develop.

True happiness comes not from pushing others aside, but from helping and growing together.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Ukrainian TV Network

Ukrainian Kontakt on OMNI TV:
SUN 7:00 AM (new) SUN 9:00 pm
TUE 9:00 am THUR 2:00 pm

Ukrainian Food Sales

Friday September 19 supper 4-630pm

Saturdays 10-2

Ivan Franko Society Richmond

Mozart-Concerto for Flute

Wednesday September 6 7-9pm

Holy Eucharist Cathedral New West

Hromada Student Night Ukrainian Party

Friday September 12 10pm

Bar None Night Club Vancouver BC

Ukrainian Golf Tournament

Sunday September 14

Ivan Franco Society Richmond

Malevich (Film)

Wednesday September 17 6:30 pm

Rio Theatre Vancouver

Ukrainian New West Fest

Saturday September 27 12-8pm

Holy Eucharist Cathedral New West

Kozak Siromaha Music

Saturday September 27

Ukrainian Newwestfest

Bez Obmezhen Music

Thursday October 23 7-10pm

Michael J Fox Theatre Burnaby BC

Ukrainian Christmas Fair

Saturday November 29 11-4pm

St Mary's Ukrainian Centre Vancouver

Check with the venue for details or updates

Obzhynky (Harvest Festival) A Dance Between Earth and Spirit

Harvest rituals (*врожайні обряди; vrozhaini obriady*) are among the most enchanting expressions of ancient Ukrainian folk tradition—ceremonies steeped in mysticism, gratitude, and reverence for nature’s rhythms. These rites didn’t merely mark the beginning and end of the harvest season; they were spiritual performances that sought harmony with the forces of the earth, sky, and ancestral spirits.

Zazhynky: The First Cut of Summer

As June waned and July dawned, the village stirred with anticipation. *Zazhynky*, the ceremonial start of the harvest, began at sunrise. Reapers gathered in the fields, their tools gleaming, their hearts aligned. The village elder or master removed his hat, turned solemnly to the sun, and spoke an incantation—an ancient plea for strength and abundance. In later years, this invocation evolved into a prayer, but the essence remained: a dialogue with the land.

Then came the *postadnytsia*—a woman believed to carry luck in her bones. She sliced the first sheaf of grain, known as the *voievoda*, a symbolic leader of the harvest. In a moment both earthy and sacred, women reapers rolled on the soil, absorbing its strength like a blessing. The first sheaf was gifted to the master, who responded with food and drink, a gesture of communal celebration. That evening, the *voievoda* was placed in the icon corner of the master’s home, where it stood as a guardian of the harvest to come.

Obzhynky: The Last Sheaf and the Spirits of the Field

By late July or early August, the fields were nearly bare, save for one sacred patch. *Obzhynky*, the ritual of closure, began with a solemn procession. A tuft of uncut wheat or rye was tied into a sheaf and given a name that echoed through generations—*Volos’s beard*, *Elijah’s beard*, *Grandfather’s beard*, or simply *the beard*. This was no ordinary bundle; it was an offering to the gods of the field, a vessel for ancestral spirits believed to protect the land.

With songs echoing like lullabies of the soil, the reapers carried the final sheaf (*ostalets*) to the master’s house. It was presented with wishes for joy and prosperity, then placed beside the *voievoda* in the icon corner. What followed was a feast that rivaled weddings—tables laden with food, cups brimming with drink, and laughter spilling into the night. The air pulsed with music, dance, and games, as if the earth itself were celebrating.



These harvest rituals weren’t just agricultural milestones—they were acts of devotion, community, and cosmic connection. They remind us that to reap is not only to gather, but to honor the unseen forces that make growth possible....