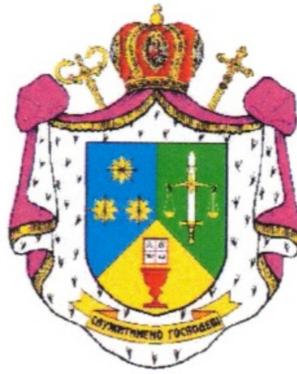


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Holodomor - a Wound That Still Bleeds in the Heart of Humanity

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

It is that time of the year - the fourth Saturday of November – when we gather to remember the horrible genocide visited upon humanity less than a century ago. We remember the millions of Ukrainians – children, youth, men and women, the elderly *people exactly like us* - forced to die, and watch family members and neighbours die - a slow, heartless, terrifying death by starvation. The victims of the **Holodomor** were ordinary people - families, hardworking people, fathers and mothers trying to etch out a living, grandparents, fiancés, young people learning and looking toward the future, little children mesmerized by the wonders of life. Then, as happens from time to time, some who rose to power by deception, calumny and brute force, promised a better life... a life that all must accept or be eliminated. They promoted their position, not by convincing with truth and logic and example, but by forcing their ideological convictions with laws and brutal enforcement.

A harsh revenge was taken against those who did not accept their version of politics. They started to segregate and marginalize groups in society. They began with attempts to scare the masses into submission, then to eliminate them by starvation in an attempt to snuff out any traces of their Ukrainian identity and memory of existence. The result was the horrific death of millions upon millions of innocent lives.

Today, above all, we **pray** for the millions of innocent people — who could have been our brothers and sisters, children and adults, grandfathers and grandmothers — who perished in the famine, a tragedy conceived by human cruelty and malice.

The Holodomor of 1932–33 was not only a tragedy for Ukraine. It was a monstrous catastrophe that scarred the soul of humanity.

We have no right to forget. To forget would be a second death for them and spiritual death for us. Recalling this period, we not only continue the memory of those who were destroyed, we defend truth from falsehood. In remembering, we raise the cry of “**never again**”!

This is so important, because the same force that orchestrated the Holodomor has now returned in an attempt to complete their genocidal intentions. This is so important as we see attempts to repeat similar horrors throughout history. The perpetrators and their logic may vary, as the intended victims will also vary over

time. But the method always the same! The hatred and calumny of the perpetrating force is often unexpected and subtle. The victims are also taken by surprise as the intended goal is too unthinkable. It is important for us to remember and remind ourselves of the Holodomor, to never let it happen again and to remind ourselves that it can happen and, if we are not vigilant, it will happen. We must also not delude ourselves into thinking that it was only one evil man and his armed forces that brings about the horror --- a Holodomor or a Holocaust or an Armenia Genocide or one in Rwanda. It is also the complacency and fear and lack of moral fortitude on the part of the wider population that does not challenge the illogical and fallacious argumentation and does not denounce the initial bullying and censoring.

So today, let us bow our heads in a common prayer for the repose of the tortured souls of the Holodomor and of countless other victims. Let us pray for the end of the horrible war now being waged against Ukraine and for the healing of the people, and for the victory of the fullness of truth. And may our prayerful remembrance, in some small, incremental way, contribute to toward the healing of the deep wound still left festering from the Holodomor and toward the mending of the broken trust that should exist between God's children.

Lord, receive our pain into Your mercy, and may the light of Your truth shine upon Ukraine and upon all lands and may all people be granted the grace to see the Your light and embrace it.

Eternal memory to all the victims of the Holodomor.



✠ **Michael**
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Issued at Holy Eucharist Cathedral
New Westminster, B.C.
this 22nd day of November 2025 A.D.