

St. Mary's Ukrainian Catholic Newsletter



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

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Issue 41

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)
Fr. Dionysiy Zavedyuk OSBM (Assistant)

What those Letters Mean

In our Ukrainian Catholic tradition, icons are not just pictures — they are windows into heaven. Because icons show holy persons and divine mysteries, the Church adds short sacred inscriptions to identify who is being shown and to proclaim the faith.

These letters are almost always written in Greek, the earliest language of the Christian Church. They are abbreviations, marked with a small line above them, and they help us understand the meaning of the icon at a glance.

MP ΘΥ — *Mother of God* (Greek: **Mētēr Theou**) appears beside Theotokos (Mary).

IC XC — *Jesus Christ* (Greek: **iēsous Christos**) Found on every icon of Christ.

Ο ΩΝ — *"The One Who Is"* Written inside Christ's halo, proclaiming His divinity. God's name revealed to Moses: *"I AM."*

Α – Ω — *Alpha and Omega* Christ is the beginning and the end of all things.

NIKA — *"Conquers"* Often written as **IC XC NIKA** — *"Jesus Christ conquers."*



Every May, I'm reminded that renewal doesn't always arrive with noise — sometimes it comes softly, the way Mary does. One year, during a season when everything in my life felt uncertain, I wandered into church early on a weekday morning. The sun was just beginning to spill through the windows, and someone had placed a single white rose at Mary's feet.

I don't know why it moved me so deeply. Maybe it was the simplicity. Maybe it was the trust behind that small offering. But in that moment, I felt something shift — a calm I hadn't felt in months.

It wasn't a miracle or a sudden answer. It was a quiet assurance: *You're not alone. Keep going.*

Since then, May has become my reminder that hope often begins in silence. Mary doesn't shout or demand; she simply stands with us, steady and patient, pointing us toward her Son. And somehow, that's enough to start again.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Homin XOP (music)
Thursday May 7 7pm
Massey Theatre New West

BC Ukrainian Cultural Festival
Saturday May 9 8:30am – 5:30pm
Mission BC info@bcucf.ca

All You Can Eat Ukrainian Fest
Sunday May 10 5:30pm
Mr Moms World Catering Delta

Second Wind (Ukrainian Film)
Sunday May 10 5:15pm
Rio Theatre Vancouver

The Merry Marching Band (kids)
Saturday May 23 12:30pm
Surrey Arts Centre Surrey

Vyshyvanka Day 20th Anniversary
Saturday May 23 1pm
Anvil Centre New West

Perogies for Peace
Saturday May 30 4pm
Holy Eucharist cathedral New West

Василь Байдак -comedy
Tuesday June 9 7-9pm
Ivan Franko Society Richmond

Nanaimo UkrFest 2026
Sunday June 14 1pm
Nanaimo BC

Camp St. Volodymyr-(ages 7-15)
August 2026 pre register at:
[St. Volodymyr 2026 – Interest Form](#)
BC

Check with the venue for details or updates

Ukrainian Catholic Symbolism

Ukrainian Catholic church symbolism centers on three pillars: the *architecture*, the *iconography*, and the *liturgical objects*, all of which express the theology of the Byzantine tradition. Below is a structured, detailed guide grounded in authoritative sources.

Architectural Symbolism -Ukrainian Catholic churches are intentionally designed as **architectural icons**—physical representations of heavenly reality.

- **Three-part structure** — *narthex, nave, sanctuary* — mirrors the Old Testament Temple:
 - **Narthex** = temple courtyard, a threshold space for preparation.
 - **Nave** = holy place where the faithful gather in reverence and prayer.
 - **Sanctuary (Altar)** = Holy of Holies, containing the altar and separated by the iconostasis.
- **The church as cosmos** — entering the church symbolizes stepping into the heavenly realm.

Iconography and Its Meaning—Icons are not decoration—they are **windows into the divine** and central to Ukrainian Catholic spirituality. Icons are **venerated**, not worshiped; honour passes to the person depicted.

- **Christ Pantocrator** (often in the dome or iconostasis) symbolizes Christ ruling over creation.
- **Deisis** (Christ flanked by Mary and John the Baptist) expresses intercession.
- **Colours carry theology:**
 - **Blue over red** on Christ = divine nature clothing His humanity.
- **Origins of iconography** — rooted in the Incarnation; early icons include the “Saviour Not-Made-by-Hands” and icons attributed to St. Luke.

The Iconostasis (Icon Screen) The iconostasis is the most recognizable feature of a Ukrainian Catholic church.

- Separates the **sanctuary** from the **nave**, symbolizing the meeting of heaven and earth.
- Contains ordered tiers of icons: Christ, Theotokos, patron saint, feast icons, apostles, prophets.
- The **Royal Doors** represent the gateway to the mysteries of God.

Crosses and Sacred Symbols

- The **Ukrainian three-bar cross** is widely used; the slanted lower bar recalls the two thieves crucified with Christ.
- **Sacred Heart of Jesus** appears in some churches, symbolizing Christ’s love for humanity.

Liturgical Symbolism **Candles and incense** express prayer rising to God and the presence of the Holy Spirit.

- **Vestments** (often gold, red, green) reflect feast days and theological themes.
- **Processions** symbolize the pilgrim journey of the Church.

Catechetical Foundation - The official catechism *Christ – Our Pascha* explains the theological meaning behind these symbols and practices. details: [Archeparchy of Philadelphia: Catechism of the Ukrainian Catholic Church](#)

