

St. Mary's Ukrainian Catholic Newsletter



St Mary's Ukrainian Catholic Parish
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October 2026

Issue 46

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)

Incense in Worship



The Meaning of Incense in Worship: Incense in Orthodox and Eastern Catholic worship is far more than fragrance—it is prayer made visible. As smoke rises, it symbolizes our petitions ascending to God, echoing the Psalmist's words: "Let my prayer be set forth as incense before Thee." Its aroma sanctifies the space and purifies the senses, reminding worshippers that they stand in the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Historically rooted in Judaic temple worship, incense became a hallmark of Christian liturgy, signifying purification, reverence, and divine presence. The censer's rhythmic motion during the Divine Liturgy marks sacred transitions, blessing icons, clergy, and faithful alike.

Beyond ritual, incense transforms the church into a glimpse of heaven. It engages body, spirit, and senses in unified prayer, bridging the earthly and the divine. The fragrance evokes memory and emotion, drawing believers into contemplation and unity.

Through incense, worship becomes a multisensory act of devotion—an offering of the whole self to God. It purifies the heart, honors the saints, and envelops the faithful in the mystery of divine grace. **(St Josaphat Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral)**



There are moments in life when God invites us to step beyond the familiar—beyond our routines, our worries, and even our comfort. Sometimes that invitation comes quietly, without fanfare, without company, without a clear roadmap. It comes as a gentle nudge in the heart: *Go. Move. Begin.*

The image of a lone figure walking forward—hands in pockets, coat wrapped close, steady and unhurried—captures something deeply spiritual. It reminds us that faith is often lived in the small, unseen steps we take when no one is watching. Not dramatic leaps, not grand gestures, but simple movement toward the life God is calling us to.

We don't always walk with a crowd. We don't always walk with certainty. But we always walk with Christ.

Leaving the house, even when we feel alone, becomes an act of trust: trust that God meets us on the road, trust that grace is found in motion, trust that the Holy Spirit guides even the quietest steps.

Abraham set out "not knowing where he was going." Mary said yes without knowing how everything would unfold. The disciples followed Jesus long before they understood His mission. Their courage wasn't loud—it was faithful.

Sometimes the most important spiritual work happens when we choose not to remain stuck. When we open the door, breathe in the fresh air, and let God lead us into the day He has prepared.

So, step outside. Step into community. Step into prayer. Step into service. Step into hope. Even if you begin alone, you never walk alone. Christ walks with you, beside you, ahead of you, and within you.

And every step you take becomes a quiet testimony: **"Lord, I trust You enough to move."**

UPCOMING EVENTS

Ukrainian Radio in Canada
Vancouver 96.1 FM

Ukrainian TV Kontakt
[Kontakt Ukrainian TV - YouTube](#)

Gastro United Culinary Team of Ukraine
Sunday October 4 5pm
Vancouver BC

Farewell to Bishop Michael Gala
Wednesday October 14 6:30pm
Holy Eucharist Cathedral New West

Ukrainian Friday Night Supper
October 16, 4 - 6:30pm
Ivan Franko Society Richmond BC

Фільм «Родичі» | Film "Relatives"
Friday October 16 7pm
Alliance Francaise Vancouver BC

22nd Eparchial Convention (UCWL)
Saturday Oct 17, 2026
St May's Ukrainian Catholic Van

Maryna Krut -Ukrainian Folk Music
Thursday October 22 7:30pm
CAPU Centre North Vancouver

Ukrainian Halloween Party
Friday October 30 10pm
Bimini's Vancouver BC

Children's Ukrainian Book Reading
Saturdays Oct 31, Nov 28 3-4:30pm
New West Public Library

Ukrainian Christmas Fair
Saturday November 28 11am- 4pm
Ukrainian Catholic Centre Vancouver

Check with the venue for details or updates

Obzynky (Harvest Festival) A Dance Between Earth and Spirit

Harvest rituals (*впрожайні 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....