

**WELCOME TO ALL PARISHIONERS & GUESTS WHO HAVE JOINED US TODAY!**



**ST. NICHOLAS THE WONDERWORKER PARISH  
ПАРАФІЯ СВ. МИКОЛАЯ ЧУДОТВОРЦЯ**



**Pastor: Fr. Yuriy Vyshnevskyy**

Emergency: 250.891.4507

Church: 250.384.2292 Hall: 250.384.2255

Facebook: [facebook.com/stnicholasvictoria](https://www.facebook.com/stnicholasvictoria)

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[www.stnicholasparish.org](http://www.stnicholasparish.org) / [st.nicholas.victoria@gmail.com](mailto:st.nicholas.victoria@gmail.com)

**Tue-Fri DL - 9am; Sun DL - 10am**

*The Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of New Westminster  
Bishop: Most Rev. Ken Nowakowski ([www.nweparchy.ca](http://www.nweparchy.ca))*

**FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST  
П'ЯТНАДЦЯТА НЕДІЛЯ ПІСЛЯ П'ЯТИДЕСЯТНИЦІ**

**Hieromartyr Phocas** was born in the city of Sinope. From youth he led a virtuous Christian life, and in his adult years he became Bishop of Sinope. Saint Phocas converted many pagans to faith in Christ. At the time of a persecution against Christians under the emperor Trajan (98-117), the governor demanded that the saint renounce Christ. After fierce torture they enclosed Saint Phocas in a hot bath, where he died a martyr's death in the year 117.

In the year 404, the relics of the saint were transferred to Constantinople.

The Hieromartyr Phocas is especially venerated as a defender against fires, and also as a helper of the drowning.



***Hieromartyr Phocas,  
Bishop of Sinope***

**PLEASE JOIN US FOR COFFEE & FELLOWSHIP AFTER DIVINE LITURGY!**

<b>SUNDAY HYMNS</b>	
OPENING HYMN	Увійди Єрею / Come My Friends pg. 238-239
COMMUNION HYMN	Вірую Господи / I Do Believe pg. 246-247
CLOSING HYMN	О Спомагай Нас / Always Protect Us pg. 364-366

*Please join us today in singing our Sunday hymns!*

<b>SUNDAY &amp; DAILY SCHEDULE</b>		
SUNDAY, September 22	Divine Liturgy - for the Parishioners of St Nicholas Parish	10:00 AM
MONDAY, September 23	NO SERVICES	
TUESDAY, September 24	Divine Liturgy	9:00 AM
WEDNESDAY, September 25	Divine Liturgy	9:00 AM
THURSDAY, September 26	Divine Liturgy	9:00 AM
FRIDAY, September 27	Divine Liturgy	9:00 AM
SATURDAY, September 28	NO SERVICES	
SUNDAY, September 29	Divine Liturgy - for the Parishioners of St Nicholas Parish	10:00 AM

*Please Note: to request a Divine Liturgy for a special intention, please see Fr. Yuriy to arrange for it!*

<b>SUNDAY EPISTLE READERS</b>			
DATE	READING	UKRAINIAN	ENGLISH
SUNDAY, September 22	2 Cor. 4: 6-15	Lillia Palyvoda	Carol Chapman
SUNDAY, September 29	2 Cor. 6: 1-10	Glikeria Iwanuck	Peter Iwanuck
SUNDAY, October 6	2 Cor. 6: 16-17:1	Motria Koropecy	Darryl Huculak
SUNDAY, October 13	Heb. 13:7-16	Yuliya Pelekhata	Graciela Spaciuk-Schwarz

*Thank you, Epistle readers, for your service in proclaiming God's Word!*

<b>2019 PARISH COUNCIL EXECUTIVE</b>	<b>PASTORAL MINISTRY &amp; HOLY MYSTERIES</b>
CHAIRPERSON..... Alec Rossa - 250.472.3374	CONFESSIONS..... 1/2 hour before Liturgy
VICE-CHAIRPERSON..... Richard DeMerchant - 250.893.3484	EUCARIST..... for the sick - any time
SECRETARY..... Luba Kucharyshyn - 780.476.4260	BAPTISMS..... by appointment
TREASURER..... William Vanderven - 250.478.1458	MARRIAGES..... six months notice should be given to the parish priest, and he should be contacted before any other arrangements are made
FINANCIAL SECRETARY..... David Newberry - 250.598.8197	FUNERALS..... by appointment
FUNDRAISING/HALL RENTAL..... Robert Herchak - 250.386.7872	ANOINTING..... any time
LITURGICAL COMMITTEE... Motria Koropecy - 250.658.3051	HOSPITAL VISITS..... any time
MEMBER AT LARGE..... Wayne Saunders - 780.710.2027	

**Bequests & Wills:** Leaving a bequeath is a process of giving a donation through your will. It is simply a distribution from your estate to a charitable organization through your last will and testament. It can be as small or as large a donation as you wish. It is important that you talk to your lawyer about the process. In your kindness please remember St Nicholas the Wonderworker Ukrainian Catholic Church in your bequeath and will. If anyone wishes to make such a bequeath in their will, the following clause may be included or added to a will: "I give, devise, and bequeath to St Nicholas the Wonderworker Ukrainian Catholic Parish - 1112 Caledonia Avenue, Victoria BC, V8T 1G1, the sum of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (or \_\_\_\_\_ % of my estate), to be used for the benefit of the parish and it's pastoral activities."

### Vibrant Parish Prayer

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 Life-Giving Spirit, now and forever and ever. Amen!



#### ST. NICHOLAS PARISH

#### A PLACE TO ENCOUNTER THE LIVING CHRIST

Through the word, the Holy Mysteries & Prayer,  
Serving One's Neighbor, Leadership  
Fostering & Serving Unity and Missionary Spirit  
(His Beatitude Sviatoslav)



### Молитва Живої Парафії

Господи Ісусе Христе, Пастирю Добрий, як колись Ти пригорнув заблуканих овечок, щоб вони пізнали Твій голос і були Твоїм стадом, так і сьогодні глянь ласкаво з небесних висот на нашу парафію та зішли на неї Твого Святого Духа, щоб вона була місцем пізнання радості Доброї Новини. Скріплюй нас Твоєю присутністю та єднай нас кожночасно в молитві. Даруй нам духа служіння ближньому, щоб у нашій парафії кожний міг зустріти Тебе, милостивого Бога. Благослови наш духовний провід Твоєю мудрістю і дай, щоб ніхто з нас не шкодував ні часу, ні талантів, ні матеріальних дібр для розбудови Твого царства. Єднай нас у мирі та злагоді, щоб ми були Твоєю спільнотою любові. Всели в нас місійного духа, щоб ми стали тим світилом евангельського слова, молитви і добрих діл, що кличе кожного до участі в Божественному житті, щоб славилось, Спасе, Твоє Ім'я з безначальним Твоїм Отцем та пресвятим, благим і животворящим Твоїм Духом нині, і повсякчас, і на віки віків. Амінь.

### DIVINE LITURGY PROPERS

*The Divine Liturgy of our Father among the Saints John Chrysostom  
An Anthology for Worship: Liturgy - pg. 270-318; propers - pg. 349*

**Troparion, Tone 6:** Angelic powers were upon Your tomb\* and the guards became like dead men;\* Mary stood before Your tomb\* seeking Your most pure body.\* You captured Hades without being overcome by it.\* You met the Virgin and granted life.\* O Lord, risen from the dead,\* glory be to You.

**Glory: Kontakion, Tone 6:** With his life-giving hand\* Christ our God, the Giver of life,\* raised all the dead from the murky abyss\* and bestowed resurrection upon humanity.\* He is for all the Saviour,\* the resurrection and the life, and the God of all.

**Now: Theotokion, Tone 6:** Undaunted patroness of Christians,\* O steadfast intermediary with the Creator,\* turn not away from the suppliant voices of sinners,\* but in Your kindness come to help us who cry out to You in faith.\* Be quick to intercede, make haste to plead,\* for You are ever the patroness of those who honour You, O Mother of God.

**Prokimenon, Tone 6:** Save Your people, O Lord,\* and bless Your inheritance. *Verse:* Unto You I will cry, O Lord my God, lest you turn from me in silence.

**Epistle - 2 Cor. 4:6-15 - A Reading from the 2nd Letter of Saint Apostle Paul to Corinthians:** Brothers and Sisters, For it is the God who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness', who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies. For while we live, we are always being given up to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may be made visible in our mortal flesh. So death is at work in us, but life in you. But just as we have the same spirit of faith that is in accordance with scripture—'I believed, and so I spoke'—we also believe, and so we speak, because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus, and will bring us with you into his presence. Yes, everything is for your sake, so that grace, as it extends to more and more people, may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God.

**Alleluia, Tone 6:** *Verse:* He who lives in the aid of the Most High, shall dwell under the protection of the God of heaven. *Verse:* He says to the Lord: You are my protector and my refuge, my God, in Whom I hope.

**Gospel - Matthew 22:35-46 -** At that time one of them [a scholar of the law] tested him by asking, "Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?" He said to him, "You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments." While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus questioned them, saying, "What is your opinion about the Messiah? Whose son is he?" They replied, "David's." He said to them, "How, then, does David, inspired by the Spirit, call him 'lord,' saying: 'The Lord said to my lord, "Sit at my right hand until I place your enemies under your feet"'? If David calls him 'lord,' how can he be his son?" No one was able to answer him a word, nor from that day on did anyone dare to ask him any more questions.

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**Communion Verse:** Praise the Lord from the heavens;\* praise Him in the highest. Alleluia, alleluia,\* alleluia!

**Prayer After Holy Communion:** Having been made worthy to partake in a mystical way of Your immaculate Body and precious Blood, O Christ our God, I acclaim and bless, worship and glorify You, and proclaim the greatness of Your saving acts, now and for ever and ever. Amen. *(more Prayers After Holy Communion on pg. 324-326 in the Anthology book).*



**Тропар, глас 6:** Ангельські сили на гробі Твоім\* і сторожі омертвіли;\* Марія ж стояла при гробі,\* шукаючи пречистого тіла Твого.\* Полонив Ти ад і, не переможений від нього,\* зустрів Ти Діву, даруючи життя.\* Воскреслий з мертвих, Господи, слава Тобі!

**Слава: Кондак, глас 6:** Животворною рукою Життєдавець, Христос Бог,\* воскресив з темних безодень всіх померлих\* і подав воскресіння людському роду.\* Він бо усіх Спаситель,\* воскресіння, життя і Бог усіх.

**І нині: Богородичний, глас 6:** Заступнице християн бездоганна,\* Посереднице до Творця незамінна,\* не погорди молінням грішних,\* але випередь, як Блага, з поміччю нам, що вірно Тобі співаємо.\* Поспішиш на молитву і скоро прийди на моління,\* заступаючи повсякчас, Богородице, тих, що Тебе почитають.

**Прокімен, глас 6:** Спаси, Господи, \* людей Твоїх \* і благослови спадкоємство Твоє. Стих: До Тебе, Господи, взиватиму; Боже мій, не відвертайсь мовчки від мене.

**Апостол - 2 Кор. 4:6-15 - До Коринтян 2-е Послання Святого Апостола Павла**  
**Читання:** Браття і сестри, Бог, який сказав: «Нехай із темряви світло засяє», – він освітлив серця наші, щоб у них сяяло знання Божої слави, що на обличчі Ісуса Христа. А маємо цей скарб у глиняних посудинах, щоб було видно, що велич сили є від Бога, а не від нас. Нас тиснуть звідусіль, але ми не пригноблені; ми в труднощах, та ми не втрачаємо надії; нас гонять, та ми не покинуті; ми повалені, та не знищені. Увесь час носимо в тілі мертвоту Ісуса, щоб і життя Ісуса в нашій житті було явним. Нас бо весь час живими віддають на смерть із-за Ісуса, щоб і життя Ісуса було явним у нашій смертній тілі. І так смерть діє в нас, а життя у вас. Та мавши той самий дух віри, про який написано: «Я вірував, тому й говорив», – то й ми віримо, тому й говоримо; бо знаємо, що той, хто воскресив Господа Ісуса, – воскресить і нас з Ісусом і поставить з вами. Бо все це ради вас, щоб розмножена благодать через багатьох збагатила подяку на славу Божу.

**Алилуя, глас 6:** Стих: Хто живе під охороною Всевишнього, під покровом Бога небесного оселиться. Стих: Скаже він Господеві: Ти заступник мій і пристановище моє, Бог мій, на котрого я надіюся.

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**Євангеліє - Мт 22:35-46** - У той час один із них, законоучитель, спитав його, спокушаючи: “Учителю, котра найбільша заповідь у законі?” Він же сказав до нього: “Люби Господа, Бога твого, всім твоїм серцем, усією твоєю душею і всією думкою твоєю: це найбільша й найперша заповідь. А друга подібна до неї: Люби ближнього твого, як себе самого. На ці дві заповіді ввесь закон і пророки спираються.” Коли фарисеї були вкупі, Ісус спитав їх: “Що ви думаєте про Христа? Чий він син?” Кажуть йому: “Давидів.” Він до них мовить: “Як же Давид у надхненні називає його Господом, кажучи: Господь промовив Владиці моему: Сідай праворуч мене, доки не покладу твоїх ворогів тобі під ноги. Коли, отже, Давид його Господом називає, то як він може бути його сином?” І ніхто не міг йому відповісти й слова, і від того дня ніхто не важився більше його запитувати.

**Причасний:** Хваліте Господа з небес,\* хваліте Його на висотах. Аلیلуя, аلیلуя, аلیلуя!

**Молитва По Святім Причастю:** Таїнственно удостоївшись бути причасником Твого пречистого тіла і чесної крові, Христе Боже, оспівую і благословлю, поклоняюся, і славлю, і величаю спасіння Твої, Господи, нині і повсякчас, і на віки вічні. Амінь. *(більше Молитов По Святім Причастю на ст. 80-87 в маленькій книжечці “Божественна Літургія”).*

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

◆**HAPPY BIRTHDAY** to ROBERT KNEZACEK, LORRAINE HERCHAK and all those who celebrated their birthdays this past week. May the Lord Our God continue to bless you abundantly and the Holy Mother of God protects you at all times. Многая Літа!

◆**INVITATION:** Our Bishop, Most Rev. Ken (Nowakowski) celebrated his 30th anniversary of Ordination to the Priesthood on 19 August and we want to continue the celebrations! You are cordially invited to thank God for Bishop Ken's vocation and priestly life at the Vespers service on **Saturday, 5 October** at our Cathedral parish at **6:00 pm**. There is no charge for the reception meal following the Vespers, however there is limited seating available thus in order to make sure we are prepared to host you please RSVP no later than 28 September to: Fr. Mykhailo Ozorovych Tel: 604.704.5889, [mykhailo.oz@gmail.com](mailto:mykhailo.oz@gmail.com). In lieu of a gift, Bishop Ken has requested donations be made to Holy Eucharist Cathedral for further beautification of the church.

◆**PRAYER REQUEST:** Please keep in your prayers SYLVIA KELLY, EVE BRUCE-LOCKHART and other members of our parish, our family and friends who are ailing, in hospitals, nursing homes and those who are not able to join actively in their community.

◆**ST. NICHOLAS BOOK STORE:** The Divine Liturgy An Anthology of Worship - **\$25**; “Christ Our Pascha” Catechism of the Ukrainian Catholic Church/“Христос Наша Пасха” Катехизм Української Католицької Церкви - **\$25**; “Sing to Our God” hymn book - **\$15**;

Молитовник “Прийдіте Поклонімся” - **\$10**; “The Rosary - The Prayer Rule of the Mother of God in the Ukrainian Catholic Church” - **\$10**.

◆**PARISH CALENDAR OF BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES:** If you would like to be included in our Parish Calendar of Birthday and Anniversary celebrations, please put date in our calendar located at the church vestibule. Each week, we will list the names in our parish bulletin so we can celebrate these happy occasions together!

◆**JOIN OUR CHOIR:** Do you enjoy singing? Please consider joining our St Nicholas Parish Choir and remember that we ALWAYS looking for new members! Contact Motria Koropecky for details at [250.658.3051](tel:250.658.3051).

◆**CATECHISM ANNOUNCEMENT:** *"And they were bringing to Him also the infants, in order that He may be touching them; but after the disciples saw it, they rebuked them. But Jesus called them to Himself and said, Let alone the little children to come to Me, and cease hindering them; for of such is the kingdom of God."* We are happy to welcome all children to our St. Nicholas The Wonderworker catechism program. Weekly classes are scheduled Sunday morning during Divine Liturgy. We want your children to learn more about their Catholic faith, sacred scripture, feast days, and religious practices and customs of the Ukrainian Catholic church. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Marian Chalifoux at [250.507.1005](tel:250.507.1005).

◆**THRIFTY'S PRE-PAID FOOD CARDS** - We all have to buy groceries. Why not have 6% of it returned back to the church at no extra charge! Cards are available in \$100, \$200, and \$500 denominations. Talk to Alec after today's liturgy to pre- order your cards. We need to sell A LOT of them! We encourage you to consider purchasing them for yourselves as gifts too.

◆**BE A STEWARD:** Have you ever wondered what more can you do to help our parish? Here are some suggestions: **Steward of property security**; **Steward of grounds cleaning**; **Steward of cleaning church**; **Steward of church linen**; **Steward of outreach**; **Steward of caring**; **Steward of prayer**; **Steward of service**. Quite often, our homebound or senior members, once active in their younger years, want to find purpose in their senior years. It's not only about doing but about "BEING" present to others. Contact Fr. Yuriy **OR** Darlene DeMerchant for more information. You will be amazed how "BEING" can make a difference.

◆**PARISH LIBRARY:** please visit our parish library and browse through the books on spirituality, church history, iconography, history of the Ukrainians in Canada, children's books and more... The library is located in the church vestibule. Please use a library book sign out form when borrowing a book.

◆**SUNDAY COFFEE VOLUNTEERS** act as hosts and serve light refreshments following the Sunday morning Divine Liturgy, providing an opportunity for the faithful to socialize with friends and visitors following their shared worship experience. We thank all of our parishioners

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who kind volunteer to serve refreshments. Whether you are new to the Parish, or are a long-time members, please join us for coffee. Please speak with Robert if you would like to volunteer.

◆**WE SHARE THE AIR:** Please keep it healthy and fragrant free. Someone in this area is scent-sitive. The chemicals used in scented products can make some people sick, especially those with fragrance sensitivities, asthma, allergies and other respiratory ailments. PLEASE DO NOT \*wear perfume, cologne, lotion, aftershave and other fragrances; \*USE unscented personal care products. Be Sensitive to Others. Thank you for your understanding. *St. Nicholas parish.*

◆**SEPTEMBER 15 DONATIONS** - Coffee: \$36.25; Vigil lights: \$24.65; Loose collection: \$40.00; Envelope collection: \$377.00; Pre-authorized donations Sept 9 to Sept 15: \$120.00 **TOTAL: \$597.90.** May God bless and reward you abundantly for your generosity!

## **POPE OFFERS PAT-ON-THE-BACK FOR UKRAINIAN, RUSSIAN PRISONER EXCHANGE**

On Sunday Pope Francis gave a shout-out to Ukraine and Russia for their recent exchange of 70 prisoners, voicing not only happiness for those set free but hope that the gesture will help bring an end to the ongoing conflict between the two nations.

“Last week a long-awaited exchange of prisoners between the Russian Federation and Ukraine took place,” the pope said during his Sept. 15 Angelus address, adding that he is happy for those who have been freed, “and who have been able to embrace their loved ones again.”

“I continue to pray for a rapid end to the conflict and for lasting peace in eastern Ukraine,” he said.

On Sept. 7, Ukraine and Russia exchanged some 70 prisoners in a bid to ease tensions between the two nations sparked by Russia’s 2014 annexation of Crimea. Conflict immediately broke out between Ukrainian soldiers and Russian separatists. To date, roughly 13,000 people have died and 17 million have been displaced as a result of the lingering war.

As part of last Saturday’s exchange, some 35 Ukrainian prisoners were released, including 24 sailors captured by the Russian navy while attempting to sail through the Kerch Strait near Crimea last November, an incident which caused international backlash. Ukraine also set free 35 Russian prisoners they had detained.

During a Sept. 11 press briefing at the close of the Sept. 2-10 annual synod of bishops for the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, this year held in Rome, Major Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk said his church lended a hand in negotiating the deal.



“We collaborated at all levels to free the prisoners,” he said, but lamented that an exchange was necessary, saying, “human life cannot be used as a bargaining chip.”

Speaking of the 24 sailors who were imprisoned, Shevchuk noted that they had been declared innocent, promoting the United States to increase sanctions against Russia over their continued detainment.

“They should have simply been released, not exchanged,” he said, but voiced his joy that they and several other prisoners were finally released.

“We have suffered with all those who are prisoners of war or hostages of this persecution, which unfortunately is lived daily in the current political context of Russia,” Shevchuk told journalists.

He voiced his hope that more, similar, arrangements can be made in the future, noting that there are still more than 100 people waiting to be freed.

“We all want peace, but a just peace. Not an imitation of peace,” he said, insisting that various levels of politics often suffer from the “great sickness of imitating processes” which in reality don’t exist.

As negotiations continue, Shevchuk cautioned that the value of human life must be placed above political interests, saying that to use a person, prisoner or not, as a pawn in a political game “is not human, it is not Christian.”

“Human life cannot be a bargaining chip to exchange,” he said, adding that if economic interests such as avoiding sanctions, and diplomatic “games” become more important than human life, “then the world, democracy, Europe, are in grave danger.”

“We are very happy that these people were freed,” he said, adding that the Greek Catholic Church in Ukraine “will do everything in our power” to help facilitate the release of those who remain in detention.

[cruxnow.com](http://cruxnow.com)

## **UKRAINIAN CATHOLICS WRAP UP SYNOD AND LEAVE ROME WITH A MISSION**

When 12 Greek Catholic bishops from Ukraine met with the Emeritus Pope Benedict XVI on Sept. 10, the retired pontiff invited them to be a force for unity in today's "increasingly fractured and divided world."

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Benedict, and other Vatican leaders, had a particular part of the world in mind.

Located on the fault line between East and West, Ukraine is the epicenter of tensions that have not spared the region's Catholic and Orthodox Christian churches.

But, strengthened by the ties forged in Rome in the past week, in which 47 bishops of the largest Eastern Catholic church met in Rome, including 10 from the U.S. and Canada, Ukraine's Greek Catholics are poised to become the Vatican's voice in Eastern Europe.

"He made a crown out of all the experiences we have lived in these days," said Sviatoslav Shevchuk, archbishop of the Greek Catholic Church in Ukraine, of Benedict during a press conference at the Vatican the following day.

"The Emeritus Pope voiced his deep concern for the militarization of the Eastern Front," Shevchuk said. "It awakens in him the bad memories of the time preceding the First and Second World Wars."

The political situation in Ukraine escalated sharply in 2014 after Russia annexed Crimea and sent troops to support a rebellion in the eastern part of the country. Since then, a surge of violence, coupled with rising poverty levels and the ecological consequences of the 1986 Chernobyl disaster, have contributed to a brewing humanitarian crisis in Ukraine.

Despite lingering resentments from persecution under the Soviets, the Catholic community in Ukraine has already been influential in cooling tensions between Ukrainian nationalists and separatists loyal to Moscow.

On Sept. 7, Kyiv and the Kremlin exchanged 35 war prisoners, a deal that, Shevchuk maintains, would not have been possible without the intervention of the Catholic Ukrainian community.

"We collaborated at all levels to free the prisoners," he said, while adding that "human life cannot be used as a bargaining chip."

Ukraine's Greek Catholics could also act as a valuable mediator for Europe's increasingly fragmented Orthodox Christian churches.

Over the summer, the Orthodox Church in Ukraine formalized its divorce from the Russian Patriarchate by declaring itself independent. It has been defined as one of the most important schisms in the Orthodox world in history, with major repercussions in Orthodox communities all over the world. More recently, the European Russian Orthodox, an independent archdiocese originally made up of exiles from Communism, voted on Sept. 7 in favor of aligning themselves with Russia.

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As a Byzantine Rite church — a liturgical tradition they share with Orthodox Christianity — that is in communion with Rome, the Ukrainian Greek Catholics are well positioned to navigate these clashing loyalties.

"While we have fraternal ties with the Orthodox churches and can't be indifferent to their internal wounds, Shevchuk said, "we've never intruded on these painful Orthodox divisions."

If the Greek Catholics can help make peace between the Orthodox churches, they may help realize a long-hoped-for dream of the secretariat of state: an invitation for a papal visit to Moscow from the Kremlin.

Francis has used synods of bishops from various Catholic communities to inject shots of adrenaline into the gatherings — or, as he would more likely call it, a shot of the Holy Spirit. This means promoting a lively debate, not being afraid to touch on hot-button issues and even argue, as Francis told the Greek Catholic bishops of Ukraine during an audience on Sept. 2.

The Greek Catholic bishops seem to have absorbed this spirit in their sojourn in Rome, but it remains to be seen if they can overcome the Eastern Catholic churches' tendency in recent years toward rigidity and immovability, rather than dialogue and creativity. They will also be required to reach out as peacemakers to those who once oppressed them.

Meanwhile, the Greek Catholics are awaiting their own papal visit. Appeals have been steadily growing for Francis to recognize the thousands who have already lost their lives in the Ukrainian and Russian conflict. Such a visit, however, would risk angering Moscow and ruining hopes of a Kremlin-Vatican appeasement.

"Today the whole world is trying to find a diplomatic solution to the war; the papal visit could really lead to a cease fire today in Ukraine," said Shevchuk, adding, "Every time we meet the Holy Father we remind him that Ukraine is waiting for him."