

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

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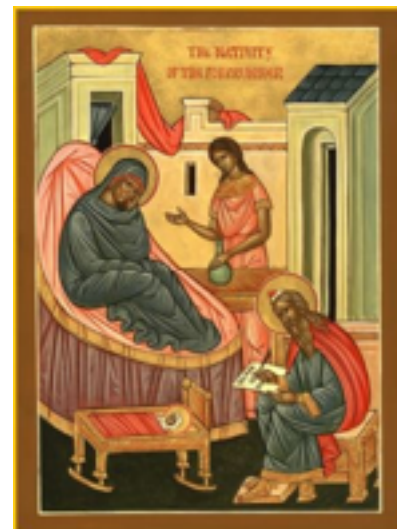
Tue-Fri DL - 9am; Sun DL - 10am

*The Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of New Westminster
Bishop: Most Rev. Ken Nowakowski
www.nweparchy.ca*

**FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
П'ЯТА НЕДІЛЯ ПІСЛЯ П'ЯТИДЕСЯТНИЦІ**

Today the great Forerunner appears, born from the barren womb of Elizabeth. He is a prophet greater than all prophets; there is no other like him, nor has there ever been. For the most wondrous Light followed the lamp of the Forerunner; the Word followed the Voice, and the Bridegroom followed the bridegroom's friend. He prepares a special people for the Lord, cleansing them with water until the coming of the Spirit. He is the offspring of Zechariah and the noble dweller of the desert, the preacher of repentance, and the purification of sins. He announced the good news of the Resurrection from the dead to those in Hades, and he prays for our souls.

O John, the Baptizer of Christ, you manifested yourself to be a prophet and forerunner from the time you were in the womb. When you saw the queen coming to her servant, you leaped for joy in the womb of your mother, you, the one conceived of a barren woman, according to the promise made to the elder Zechariah. You knew she was bearing the eternal One who was from the Father without a mother. Now implore God to have mercy on our souls.



Nativity of John the Baptist

PLEASE JOIN US FOR COFFEE & FELLOWSHIP AFTER DIVINE LITURGY!

SUNDAY HYMNS			
OPENING HYMN	В Страсі і Покорі / We Are Gathered Here To Worship pg. 234-235		
COMMUNION HYMN	Вірую Господи / I Do Believe pg. 246-24		
CLOSING HYMN	Вже Відходим / As We Leave This Place of Worship pg. 268-269		
<i>Please join us today in singing our Sunday hymns!</i>			
SUNDAY & DAILY SCHEDULE			
SUNDAY, June 24	Divine Liturgy - for the Parishioners of St Nicholas Parish		10:00 AM
MONDAY, June 25	NO SERVICE		
TUESDAY, June 26	Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom		9:00 AM
WEDNESDAY, June 27	Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom		9:00 AM
THURSDAY, June 28	Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom		9:00 AM
FRIDAY, June 29	Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom		9:00 AM
SATURDAY, June 30	NO SERVICE		
SUNDAY, July 1	Divine Liturgy - for the Parishioners of St Nicholas Parish		10:00 AM
<i>Please Note: to request a Divine Liturgy for a special intention, please see Fr. Yuriy to arrange for it!</i>			
SUNDAY EPISTLE READERS			
DATE	READING	UKRAINIAN	ENGLISH
SUNDAY, June 24	Rm. 10: 1-10	Andrij Pelekhaty	Marian Chalifoux
SUNDAY, July 1	Rm. 12: 6-14	Motria Koropecy	Robert Herchak
SUNDAY, July 8	Rm. 15: 1-7	Yuliya Pelekhata	Bryan Melnyk
SUNDAY, July 15	1 Cor 1:10-18	Dmytro Maksymiv	Carol Chapman
<i>Thank you, Epistle readers, for your service in proclaiming God's Word!</i>			
2018 PARISH COUNCIL EXECUTIVE		PASTORAL MINISTRY & HOLY MYSTERIES	
CHAIRPERSON..... Alec Rossa - 250.472.3374		CONFESSIONS..... 1/2 hour before Liturgy	
SECRETARY..... Richard DeMerchant - 250.893.3484		EUCCHARIST..... for the sick - any time	
TREASURER..... William Vanderven - 250.478.1458		BAPTISMS..... by appointment	
FINANCIAL SECRETARY..... David Newberry - 250.598.8197		MARRIAGES..... six months notice should be given to the parish priest, and he should be contacted before any other arrangements are made	
FUNDRAISING/HALL RENTAL..... Robert Herchak - 250.386.7872		FUNERALS..... by appointment	
MAINTENANCE..... Murray Chapman - 250.658.4769		ANOINTING..... any time	
LITURGICAL COMMITTEE... Motria Koropecy - 250.658.3051		HOSPITAL VISITS..... any time	
MEMBER AT LARGE..... Cindy Lazaruk - 778.677.9072			
<p>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."</p>			

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 євангельського 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 - An Anthology for Worship: Liturgy - pg. 270-318; propers - pg. 341

The Liturgy prescribed for today is that of St. John Chrysostom.

Troparion, Tone 4: When the disciples of the Lord learned from the angel* the glorious news of the resurrection* and cast off the ancestral condemnation,* they proudly told the apostles:* “Death has been plundered!* Christ our God is risen,* granting to the world great mercy.”

Glory: Kontakion, Tone 4: My Saviour and Deliverer from the grave* as God raised out of bondage the children of the earth* and shattered the gates of Hades;* and as Master, He rose on the third day.

Now: Theotokion, Tone 4: By your birth, O immaculate one,* Joachim and Anna were freed from the reproach of childlessness,* and Adam and Eve* from the corruption of death.* And your people, redeemed from the guilt of their sins,* celebrate as they cry out to you:* “The barren one gives birth to the Mother of God* and nourisher of our life.”

Prokeimenon, Tone 4: How great are Your works, O Lord* You have made all things in wisdom. *Verse:* Bless the Lord, O my soul: O Lord my God, You are exceedingly great.

Epistle - Romans 10:1-10 - A reading from the letter of St. Paul to the Romans: Brothers and Sisters, my heart's desire and prayer to God on their behalf is for salvation. I testify with regard to them that they have zeal for God, but it is not discerning. For, in their unawareness of the righteousness that comes from God and their attempt to establish their own (righteousness), they did not submit to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for the justification of everyone who has faith. Moses writes about the righteousness that comes from (the) law, "The one who does these things will live by them." But the righteousness that comes from faith says, "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will go up into heaven?' (that is, to bring Christ down) or 'Who will go down into the abyss?' (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead)." But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith that we preach), for, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved.

Alleluia, Tone 4: *Verse:* Poise yourself and advance in triumph and reign in the cause of truth, and meekness, and justice. *Verse:* You have loved justice and hated iniquity.

Gospel - Matthew 8:28-9:1 - At that time Jesus came to the other side, to the territory of the Gadarenes, two demoniacs who were coming from the tombs met him. They were so savage that no one could travel by that road. They cried out, "What have you to do with us, Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the appointed time?" Some distance away a herd of many swine was feeding. The demons pleaded with him, "If you drive us out, send us into the herd of swine." And he said to them, "Go then!" They came out and entered the swine, and the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea where they drowned. The swineherds ran away, and when they came to the town they reported everything, including what had happened to the demoniacs. Thereupon the whole town came out to meet Jesus, and when they saw him they begged him to leave their district. He entered a boat, made the crossing, and came into his own town.

Communion Hymn: 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 4: Світлу про воскресіння розповідь від ангела почувши* і від прадідного засуду звільнившись,* Господні учениці, радіючи, казали апостолам:* Здолано смерть, воскрес Христос Бог,* що дає світові велику милість.

Слава: Кондак, глас 4: Спас і мій визволитель,* як Бог, із гробу воскресив землян від узів* і розбив брами адові* та воскрес на третій день, як Владика.

І нині: Богородичний, глас 4: Йоаким і Анна народженням Твоїм, Пречиста, з неслави бездітності,* Адам же і Єва від тління смерті, визволилися.* Звільнений від вини за гріхи, Твій народ святкує, взиваючи: Неплідна народжує Богородицю і кормительку Життя нашого.

Прокімен, глас 4: Які величні діла Твої, Господи! Все премудрістю сотворив Ти. Стих: Благослови, душе моя, Господа! Господи, Боже мій, Ти вельми великий.

Апостол - 10:1-10 - До Римлян послання Св. Ап. Павла читання: Браття і сестри, бажання мого серця й молитва до Бога за Ізраїля на спасіння. Бо я свідчу їм, що вони мають ревність про Бога, але не за розумом. Вони бо, не розуміючи праведности Божої, і силкуючись поставити власну праведність, не покорились праведності Божій. Бо кінець Закону Христос на праведність кожному, хто вірує. Мойсей бо пише про праведність, що від Закону, що людина, яка його виконує, буде ним жити. А про праведність, що від віри, говорить так: Не кажи в своїм серці: Хто вийде на небо? цебто звести додолу Христа, або: Хто зійде в безодню? цебто вивести з мертвих Христа. Але що каже ще? Близько тебе слово, в устах твоїх і в серці твоїм, цебто слово віри, що його проповідуємо. Бо коли ти устами своїми визнаватимеш Ісуса за Господа, і будеш вірувати в своїм серці, що Бог воскресив Його з мертвих, то спасешся, бо серцем віруємо для праведности, а устами ісповідуємо для спасіння.

Алилуя, глас 4: Стих: Натягни лук і наступай, і пануй істини ради, лагідности і справедливости. Стих: Ти полюбив правду і зненавидів беззаконня.

Євангеліє - Матея 8:28-9:1 - У той час, коли Ісус прибув на той бік, у край гадаринський, зустріли його два біснуваті, що вийшли з гробниць, але такі люті, що ніхто не міг перейти тією дорогою. І почали кричати: “Що нам і тобі, Сину Божий? Прийшов еси сюди, щоб нас мучити перед часом?” Оподаль же від них паслося велике стадо свиней. Біси попросили його: “Як ти нас виганяєш, пошли нас в оте стадо свиней.” “Ідіть” – сказав їм. І вийшли з

них, і ввійшли у свиней. Тоді то все стадо кинулося з кручі в море й утопилося в хвилях. А пастухи повтікали й, прибігши в місто, все розповіли, а й про біснுவатих. Тоді все місто вийшло Ісусові назустріч і, побачивши його, попросили, щоб відійшов з їхніх околиць. Сівши у човен, він переплив назад і прибув у своє місто.

Причасний: Хваліте Господа з небес, хваліте Його на висотах. Аلیلія, аلیلія, аلیلія!

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 MATTEA HUCULAK 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!
 - ◆ **PRAYER REQUEST:** Please keep in your prayers GORD HRYHORYSHEN, CORNELL BABIE 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**.
 - ◆ **TRAVELING ICON:** Anyone interested in gracing their home with Christ The Teacher Icon can call Darlene DeMerchant at 250.727.3837.
 - ◆ **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 Koropecy for details at 250.658.3051.
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- ◆ **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.
- ◆ **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 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.*
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◆**JUNE 17, SUNDAY DONATIONS** - Coffee: \$27.50; Vigil lights: \$15.15; Loose collection: \$45.00; Envelope collection: \$312.00; Pre-authorized donations June 11 to June 17: \$120.00;
Total: \$519.65

CAMP ST. VOLODYMYR - August 19-26, 2018

Start planning your summer holidays now! Come join us to celebrate our 34th year of camp for children in our Eparchy! Camp St. Volodymyr is a great place to be physically active, build self-confidence and self-esteem, develop life-long skills while reconnecting with nature and building friendships. Our camp is also a wonderful opportunity to experience God through nature and the companionship of others.

Campers will learn about the Ukrainian language and culture along with games, hiking, sports, arts and crafts, camp fires, water activities and much more!

If you are between the ages of 7-15 this is a summer must do! Registration is \$380. Book by July 4 to save \$50. Bus transportation is also available to and from New Westminster. Register online using Eventbrite. Search "Camp St. Volodymyr BC 2018." For more information contact Jennifer Caldwell @ 604.220.0584 or jennsawka@hotmail.com.

WAYS TO SUPPORT OUR CAMP: Camp St. Volodymyr is a nonprofit camp, run on a volunteer basis. Please contact Jennifer if you are interested in helping.

VOLUNTEER as a Camp Counsellor: We are seeking between 8-10 individuals to help plan and organize our camp activities. Apply online using Eventbrite. Search "Camp St. Volodymyr BC 2018." Applications due May 15, 2018. All volunteers will be subject to a criminal record check and must sign the camp code of conduct.

VOLUNTEER as a Camp Chef: We are seeking between 4-6 individuals to help us each day in the kitchen. It is your opportunity to get creative and be a part of the campers top 5 things at camp; The Food!

VOLUNTEER as our Camp Nurse: We are looking for an individual to be our camp nurse. This is a wonderful opportunity to get to know the children in our Eparchy. This position would require valid first aid and nursing certification. Responsibilities would include administering medications brought by campers/staff as well as recording all incidents and treatments. Supplies and medications are provided by the camp.

DONATE Food: We are always happy to accept food donations of fresh fruits and vegetables, breakfast items; cereal, syrup, pancake mix, jam, Nutella, lunch items; chicken soup,

Kraft dinner, cheese, drinks; juice boxes, powdered drinks, brownie/cake mixes, Jello, snack bars, cookies or treats. Gift certificates to Superstore and Costco are also welcomed.

DONATE Monetarily: Each year the Eparchy sponsors several children to attend. You can help send a deserving child to camp through your donations. Donation can be made through the Eparchy or online at our Eventbrite page. Tax receipts can be issued for donations of \$25 or more.

Visit our website www.nweparchy.ca

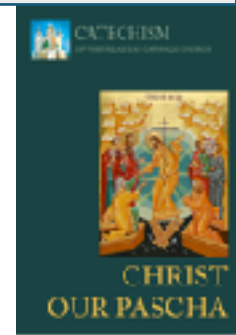
READING THE CATECHISM “CHRIST - OUR PASCHA”



6) *The Baptism of Children*

#418 The Church baptizes both adults and children in order to lead them into the new life of Christ. The Church baptizes children, bearers of the image of God, so that they can receive the grace of divine likeness. Together with the gift of life, the most precious gift that parents can give is to bring their child

to the Mystery of Baptism. When children are baptized, the Church community, represented by the Godparents, expresses faith in Christ on their behalf. Together with the father and mother they accept responsibility before God and the Church for the Christian upbringing of the child. The child is to grow within the Church community in faith, as well as with a Christian lifestyle and in knowledge of God. To become a Godparent, whether of children or adults, it is necessary to be a believer, so that the person’s faith and way of life become models for the future Godchild. The spiritual relationship between Godparents and Godchildren endures throughout their lives. The Baptism of a child cannot be considered a violation of its rights or freedom, because just as parents or guardians feed a child and teach it for its own good, so also believing parents, in bringing their child to the Mystery of Baptism, open them to life in God.



7) *The Rite of Baptism*

#419 The Rite of Baptism begins with the Making of a Catechumen - the preparation of the person for Baptism. In an introductory prayer the priest lays his hand on the catechumen. The Church thus takes the catechumen under her care so that he or she may be “found worthy to flee to [God’s] holy name and find shelter under [his] wings.” Then, through prayers and exorcisms, the Church safeguards the catechumen from the influence of Satan. Subsequently the catechumen, either personally or through the Godparents, renounces Satan and his works and joins to Christ the Saviour. As a sign of this joining to Christ, the catechumen passes from the narthex of the church (symbol of the world) to the centre of the nave (symbol of Christ’s Church).

#420 Immediately before the immersion (or the pouring) the priest anoints the catechumen with holy oil. This anointing is a sign of the power of the Holy Spirit received in Baptism. It is given to the catechumen as a “weapon of justice” against “all the action of the devil” and for the “restoration of body and soul.” The priest anoints the forehead, the breast, the shoulders, the ears, and the hands and feet. He anoints the forehead so that “the mind might be opened to understand and receive the mysteries of faith.” He anoints the breast so that the baptized “would love the Lord with all his/her heart.” The shoulders are anointed so that he/she “would accept Christ’s yoke.” The ears are anointed “for the reception of the voice of the divine Gospel.” Finally, the baptizand’s hands and feet are anointed so that he/she would “raise his/her hands towards the holy place and always act justly,” and “walk in the ways of Christ’s commandments.” The anointing of the body indicates that in Baptism the entire nature of the person is renewed, along with all its senses.

#421 Baptism is performed with water, which is a symbol of life but also of death (“the waters of the flood,” see Gn 6-9). The passing through the waters of the Red Sea symbolizes salvation (see Ex 14), while the washing with water is a symbol of healing (e.g., the curing of Naaman of leprosy; see 2 Kgs 5:10-14). Immersing the person three times into the water, or pouring water three times over the forehead, the priest declares: “The servant of God, (name), is baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.” Baptism is the death of the “old person” and the birth of the “new person,” united with the three Divine Persons - the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit (see Mt 28:19). This occurs through union with Christ’s Death and Resurrection (see Rom 6). As a sign of the new birth, the baptized person is given a Christian name, by which the Church introduces the neophyte into a spiritual relationship with their heavenly patron.

#422 The newborn in Christ is given a white garment, the baptismal robe (kryzhmo). It is the garment of righteousness and symbolizes the “putting on” of the Risen Christ: “As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ” (Gal 3:27). To put on Christ means that the newly baptized became new persons: clothed in the raiment of light, they proclaim before others that Christ lives and acts in them. Handing the newly baptized a candle, the priest says: “Take this burning candle and throughout your life strive to be illumined with the brightness of faith and good works, so that when the Lord comes you may go out in radiance to meet him with all the saints.” As Christ is “the light that shines in the darkness” (see Jn 1:5), so also the one who was illumined by Christ in Baptism is called to be a “light of the world” (Mt 5:14).

**PATRIARCH SVIATOSLAV: Russian invasion of Ukraine is a
'silent war'**

Speaking at the end of a closed-door meeting on religious freedom at the US Embassy to the Holy See, Major Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk, head of the Greek Catholic Ukrainian Church, stressed that “it is a matter of fact that the war in Ukraine has become a silent war.”

The meeting took place June 14, and was the first in a series of meetings dedicated to religious freedom hosted by the US Embassy to the Holy See.

In her initial remarks, Callista Gingrich, US Ambassador to the Holy See, strongly condemned Russian aggression on the Ukrainian territory.

“The facts,” she said, “are truly astonishing. Today, Russia ranks among the worst violators of religious freedom and human rights. There is no sign that its persecution of religious minorities and foreign missionaries is coming to an end. And what is perhaps most troubling is that this repression is not limited to its own borders.”

Ambassador Gingrich noted that “it has been four years since Russia invaded eastern Ukraine, and occupied and attempted to annex Crimea,” and stressed that “these unjust actions, launched under the pretense of ‘defending Russian-speaking people’, have in reality been disastrous for the people living in these regions.”

The head of the biggest Eastern Catholic, or *sui iuris*, Church in the world, Major Archbishop Shevchuk said at the meeting: “my mission is to convey to the top leaders of the world today the voice of suffering people of Ukraine.”

Shevchuk mentioned current problems in Ukraine, among them the fact that there are thousands of children in direct exposure to explosive material, a constant risk of being targeted for airstrikes, and the pollution of water supplies stemming from underground nuclear explosions during the Soviet era.

“Very often,” he said “the future of our nation is discussed without us. I think that is a big mistake, and I think it is important to make us partners of such a process.”

Major Archbishop Shevchuk saw in the Holy See’s diplomatic presence in the world “a special possibility to share our stories, to speak out on behalf of our people.”

The head of Greek Catholic Ukrainian Church also spoke about the need for religious reconciliation in Ukraine.

“We do not just need to pray for reconciliation. We need to do effective acts of reconciliation. This is crucial,” Shevchuk said.

He added that “reconciliation does not mean to be reconciled with the aggressor, reconciliation does not mean to be reconciled with lying or fake news.”

Shevchuk also noted that “chaplains are in the frontline to help soldiers to be converted to love, not to hatred,” and stressed that “the process of justice and reconciliation should start. We try to foster that process, we preach forgiveness even for our enemy, and we try to share the experience of other countries. We are convinced that dialogue can heal the wounds.”

The archbishop emphasized the need for ecumenical dialogue in Ukraine, especially with Orthodox Christians, who are deeply divided in the country, especially after a disagreement over the relationship between Ukrainian and Russian Orthodox Churches. That disagreement has become a contentious debate involving the Orthodox Patriarch of Moscow, Ukrainian president Petro Poroshenko, and the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I.

“Ecumenical dialogue,” Shevchuk underscored “is crucial for Ukraine, because Ukraine is a multiethnic and multi-religious country and there is also a painful situation of an internal division between the Orthodox.”

Shevchuk said that “of course there is some sort of competition between Churches, especially those who would call themselves as Orthodox; of course, there is a sound risk of the instrumentalization of the Church for geopolitical proposals; of course there are some facts that even Orthodox priests took up arms against Ukraine’s army; but nevertheless I think that the consciousness that religious peace is a common good of all of us is prevailing right now.”

The head of Greek Catholics of Ukraine discussed the roots of the current disagreement: a request from some Ukrainian Orthodox Churches for independence from affiliation with the Russian Orthodox Churches.

“Of course,” he said, “Ukrainian Orthodox Churches which are not in communion with the Moscow patriarchate are trying to come out of isolation within worldwide Orthodoxy; of course, they would look toward the mother Church, the Church of Constantinople.”

“There are some inner tensions in each Church as well, but thanks to be to God until now we have religious peace among us,” he added.

The archbishop expressed regret that “there is no bilateral dialogue” among the Churches, as “there is no alternative to dialogue. With no dialogue, there is just confrontation.”

He then praised a Ukrainian NGO, the “Council of the Churches and Religious Organizations” that “can help us to meet and to cooperate together for the common good of the Ukrainian society.”

He added that, despite Ukraine’s struggles, he has hope.

“We are Christians, we trust in God’s providence. Only God is the master of peace, and there is no peace without justice,” he concluded.

The US Embassy to the Holy See will co-sponsor a June 25 conference on religious freedom, which will take place at the Pontifical Holy Cross University in Rome.

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