



**ST. NICHOLAS
THE WONDERWORKER**

СВ. МИКОЛАЯ ЧУДОТВОРЦЯ

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Church: 250.384.2255

Rectory: 250.384.2292

Emergency: 250.891.4507

www.stnicholasparish.org

st.nicholas.victoria@gmail.com

facebook.com/stnicholasvictoria

1112 Caledonia Ave.
Victoria, BC V8T 1G1

**Pastor:
Fr. Yuriy Vyshnevskyy**

~ 11 July 2021 ~
SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
СЬОМА НЕДІЛЯ ПІСЛЯ П'ЯТИДЕСЯТНИЦІ



The two blind men seek out Jesus; they follow Him, crying out to Him, “Son of David, have mercy on us!” These two men know the Source of mercy; they know that God alone can give such a mercy, such a miraculous healing. To test their faith further, Jesus asks them even after such a demonstration of faith, “Do you believe that I am able to do this?” And they say to Him, “Yes, Lord.” But note what Christ says in response, “According to your faith, let it be to you.” Do you see the involvement of their souls here, the relationship which Christ God develops between them and Him? Their volition, their will, was to be healed of their physical infirmity, their blindness, but it demanded great faith from them; it demanded the ‘eyes’ of faith and the strength of soul. When it comes to healing our eternal souls, we know that God desires this above all: He calls all to salvation from sin-sickness, spiritual sickness. The truth is that all of us are to one degree or another sin-sick, that is, we’re ‘works in progress;’ as St. Paul says, we must “work out our salvation with fear and trembling,” (Phil. 2:12) if we’re to grow in our relationship and communion with God, be deified, and find spiritual healing, that is, salvation in Christ.

SUNDAY HYMNS

OPENING HYMN	Увійди, Єрею / Come My Friends pg. 238-239
COMMUNION HYMN	Вірюю, Господи / I Do Believe pg. 246-247
CLOSING HYMN	Як Славен pg. 292

SUNDAY & DAILY SCHEDULE

SUNDAY, July 11	Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom - ONLINE	10 AM
MONDAY, July 12	NO SERVICES	
TUESDAY, July 13	Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom	9 AM
WEDNESDAY, July 4	Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom	9 AM
THURSDAY, July 15	Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom	9 AM
FRIDAY, July 16	Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom	9 AM
SATURDAY, July 17	NO SERVICES	
SUNDAY, July 18	Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom - ONLINE	10 AM

NOTE: to request a Divine Liturgy, please speak with Fr. Yuriy

SUNDAY EPISTLE

JULY 4 DONATIONS

DATE	READING	
SUNDAY, Jul 11	Rm 15:1-7	Envelope donations: \$610.00; Pre-authorized donations June 28 to July 4: \$500.00; Canada Helps online donations June 28 to July 4: \$24.13; In Memory of Julie Chupick: \$100.00 TOTAL: \$1,234.13 May God bless and reward you abundantly for your generosity!
SUNDAY, Jul 18	Heb 13:7-16	
SUNDAY, Jul 25	1 Cor 3:9-17	
SUNDAY, Aug 1	1 Cor 4:9-16	

DONATE ONLINE - www.canadahelps.org/en/dn/45460

PASTORAL MINISTRY & HOLY MYSTERIES

CONFESSIONS.....by appointment
 EUCHARIST.....by appointment
 BAPTISMS.....by appointment
 MARRIAGES.....six months notice should be given to the parish priest, and he should be contacted before any other arrangements are made
 FUNERALS.....by appointment
 ANOINTING.....by appointment
 HOSPITAL VISITS.....by appointment

Apostolic Administrator ~ Bishop David Motiuk ~ www.nweparchy.ca

ANNOUNCEMENTS

▶ **HAPPY BIRTHDAY** to LUBA KUCHARYSHYN 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!

▶ **CONFESSIONS** - if you would like to come to confession please contact Fr. Yuriy at [250.891.4507](tel:250.891.4507) or st.nicholas.victoria@gmail.com

▶ **PRAYER REQUEST** - Please keep in your prayers SYLVIA KELLY, CHARLOTTE & ED KRAKOWSKI, RICHARD NEWBERRY, LANCE DELVES, RICHARD MACEWKO, ANNE DRAPACK, PETER IWANUCK, LEO VANDERVEN 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.

▶ **EASTERN CHRISTIAN TRADITION** - learn more about Eastern Christian Tradition from the Newman Theological College. The program provides an introduction to the rich tradition of the Eastern Christian faith. Participants will explore their faith through the study of the Theology of Eastern Christianity, Worship and Spirituality of the Eastern Catholic Churches, Praying with Icons, and The Holy Mysteries, the terminology for what the West calls the Sacraments. For more information go to <https://newman.edu/ccs>

▶ **UNITY 2021** - Unity is a national gathering of Ukrainian Catholic young adults (1 to years of age) to further understand, embrace and celebrate the Ukrainian Catholic faith through prayer, education and fellowship. Unity promotes and strengthens Ukrainian Catholic religious life and social outreach through faith-based activities and workshops. Unity has been held across Canada since 1996, with hundreds of young adults from across the country being enriched by the experience. This meaningful weekend offers spiritual guidance, community service, and opportunities to deepen one's faith through catechetical enrichment. For information & registration go to unitytoronto2021@gmail.com

▶ **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."

DIVINE LITURGY PROPERS

*The Divine Liturgy of our Father among the Saints John Chrysostom.
Scripture readings from the New Testament are taken from the
New Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition.
Українською - у перекладі Івана Хоменка.*

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.

Prokeimenon, 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. (*Psalm 27:9,1*)

Epistle - Romans 15:1-7 - A reading from the Epistle of the Holy Apostle Paul to the Romans. Brothers and Sisters, we who are strong ought to put up with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Each of us must please our neighbor for the good purpose of building up the neighbor. For Christ did not please himself; but, as it is written, “The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me.” For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for 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. (*Psalm 90:1,2*)

Gospel - Matthew 9:27-35 - At that time, as Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed him, crying loudly, “Have mercy on us, Son of David!” When he entered the house, the blind men came to him; and Jesus said to them, “Do you believe that I am able to do this?” They said to him, “Yes, Lord.” Then he touched their eyes and said, “According to your faith let it be done

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to you.” And their eyes were opened. Then Jesus sternly ordered them, “See that no one knows of this.” But they went away and spread the news about him throughout that district. After they had gone away, a demoniac who was mute was brought to him. And when the demon had been cast out, the one who had been mute spoke; and the crowds were amazed and said, “Never has anything like this been seen in Israel.” But the Pharisees said, “By the ruler of the demons he casts out the demons.” Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness.

**Communion Hymn:** Praise the Lord from the heavens;\* praise Him in the highest.\* Alleluia, alleluia,\* alleluia. (*Psalms 148:1*)



**Тропар, глас 6:** Ангельські сили на гробі Твоїм\* 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 випреди, як Блага, з поміччю нам, що вірно Тобі співаємо.\* Поспішишь 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 - Рм. 15:1-7 - До Римлян послання Святого Апостола Павла читання:** Браття сестри, ми, сильні, мусимо нести немочі безсильних, а не собі догоджати. Кожний із нас нехай намагається догодити ближньому: на добро, для збудування. Бо й Христос не собі догоджав, а як написано: «Зневаги тих, що тебе зневажають, упали на мене.» Все бо, що було написано давніше, написано нам на науку, щоб ми мали надію через терпеливість й утіху, про які нас Письмо навчає. Бог же терпеливості й утіхи, за прикладом Христа Ісуса, нехай дасть вам, щоб ви між собою однаково думали за Христом Ісусом; щоб ви однодушно, одними устами славили Бога й Отця Господа нашого Ісуса Христа. Тому приймайте один одного, як і Христос прийняв вас у Божу славу.

**Аллилуя, 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 9:27-35** - У той час, як Ісус відходив звідти, слідом за ним пустилися два сліпці й кричали: “Помилуй нас, сину Давидів!” І коли він увійшов до хати, сліпці приступили до нього, а він спитав їх: “Чи віруєте, що я можу це зробити?” – “Так, Господи!” – кажуть йому ті. Тоді він доторкнувся до їхніх очей, мовивши: “Нехай вам станеться за вашою вірою!” І відкрились їхні очі. Ісус же суворо наказав їм: “Глядіть, щоб ніхто не знав про це.” Та ті, вийшовши, розголосили про нього чутку по всій країні. А як вони виходили, приведено до нього німого, що був біснуватий. Коли ж він вигнав біса, німий почав говорити, і люди дивувалися, кажучи: “Ніколи щось таке не об'являлося в Ізраїлі!” Фарисеї ж говорили: “Він виганяє бісів князем бісівським!” Ісус обходив усі міста і села, навчаючи в їхніх синагогах, проповідуючи Євангелію царства та вигоюючи всяку хворобу й недугу.

**Причасний:** Хваліте Господа з небес,\* хваліте Його на висотах. Алилуя, алилуя, алилуя!

**PRAYER DURING THE CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK**

UKRAINIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH OF  
**ST NICHOLAS** THE WONDERWORKER

**“DO TO OTHERS AS YOU WOULD HAVE THEM DO TO YOU.”**  
Matthew 7:12

Jesus Christ, you travelled through towns and villages “curing every disease and illness.” At your command, the sick were made well. Come to our aid now, in the midst of the global spread of the coronavirus, that we may experience your healing love.

Heal those who are sick with the virus. May they regain their strength and health through quality medical care.

Heal us from our fear, which prevents nations from working together and neighbours from helping one another.

Heal us from our pride, which can make us claim invulnerability to a disease that knows no borders.

Stay by our side in this time of uncertainty and sorrow. Be with those who have died from the virus. May they be at rest with you in your eternal peace. Be with the families of those who are sick or have died. As they worry and grieve, defend them from illness and despair. May they know your peace. Be with the doctors, nurses, researchers and all medical professionals who seek to heal and help those affected and who put themselves at risk in the process. May they know your protection and peace. Be with our priests and spiritual care givers. May they know that they are loved and cared for.

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Be with the leaders of all nations. Give them the foresight to act with charity and true concern for the well-being of the people they are meant to serve. Give them the wisdom to invest in long-term solutions that will help prepare for or prevent future outbreaks. May they know your peace, as they work together to achieve it on earth.

Whether we are home or abroad, surrounded by many people suffering from this illness or only a few, Jesus Christ, stay with us as we endure and mourn, persist and prepare. In place of our anxiety, give us your peace.

For You are a God of mercy, kindness, and love, and we glorify You, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and for ever and ever. Amen.



### **МОЛИТВА ПІД ЧАС СПАЛАХУ КОРОНАВІРУСУ**

Ісусе Христе, ти подорожував по містах і селах, оздоровлюючи від хвороб і немочей. За Твоїм повелінням хворі видужували. У час пандемії коронавірусу повели цій хворобі відступити, щоб ми відчули Твою оздоровлюючу любов.

Вилікуй тих, хто хворий вірусом. Нехай вони відновлять свої сили та здоров'я завдяки якісній медичній допомозі.

Вилікуй нас від нашого страху, який заважає націям спільно працювати та сусідам допомагати один одному.

Вилікуй нас від нашої гордості, яка може змусити нас претендувати на невразливість до захворювання, що не знає меж.

Залишайся поруч у цей час невизначеності та смутку. Будь з тими, хто помер від вірусу. Нехай вони спочивають з Тобою у вічному спокої. Будь з родинами тих, хто хворий або помер, коли вони турбуються і сумують, захищай їх від хвороб і відчаю. Нехай вони знають Твій спокій.

Будь з лікарями, медсестрами, дослідниками та всіма медичними працівниками, котрі прагнуть вилікувати та допомогти постраждалим та, котрі піддають себе ризику в своїй праці. Нехай вони знають Твій захист і спокій.

Будь з нашими священиками та духовними опікунами. Нехай вони знають, що їх люблять і піклуються про них.

Будь з лідерами всіх націй. Дай їм передбачення діяти милосердно та зі справжньою турботою про добробут людей, котрим вони призначені служити. Надай їм мудрості

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інвестувати у довгострокові рішення, які допоможуть підготуватися або запобігти майбутнім спалахам. Нехай вони пізнають Твій мир, коли разом працюють над досягненням його на землі.

Будь ми вдома чи за кордоном, в оточенні багатьох людей, які страждають цією хворобою, або наодинці, Ісусе Христе, залишайтеся з нами, коли ми терпимо і сумуємо. Замість нашої тривоги дай нам спокій.

Бо Ти - Бог милосердя, доброта та любов, і ми прославляємо Тебе, Отця, і Сина, і Святого Духа, нині, і повсякчас, і на віки вічні. Амінь.

## SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST - TRUE MESSIAH

The ninth chapter of St Matthew's Gospel records several miracles in succession: the healing of a paralytic, of the ruler's daughter, of a woman with a flow of blood, two blind men and a mute man. Only in the case of the two blind men do we find that the Lord Jesus "... *sternly warned them, saying, 'See that no one knows it'*" (Mt 9:30). Why did the Lord want these two to keep quiet while not demanding that the paralytic and the others do the same?

The key seems to be in the way the blind men approached Jesus. Unlike the others healed in this chapter, the blind men called out to Him, "*Son of David, have mercy on us!*" (v. 27) They accorded Him the messianic title "Son of David." But was Jesus ready to be acclaimed as Messiah at this stage of His life?

### **What Kind of Messiah?**

Many Jewish people at the time of Christ were looking for the Messiah, God's "Anointed One". Most looked for a royal warrior – another David – who would drive out the Romans from the Holy Land and restore the power of Israel in the region. This political Messiah would usher in a period of prosperity and power for the people of Israel.

Others in that period thought that the Messiah would restore the old priestly line and the temple rites used before the exile of the Israelites in Babylon. He would be a priestly Messiah, renewing the temple and restoring the original spirit of its liturgy.

The Lord Jesus had a very different view of His role. He was not to be an earthly king; He never urged political dissension or encouraged revolt against Roman rule. As He was to tell Pilate, "*My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here*" (Jn 18:36).

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Neither did the Lord Jesus attempt to restore the usages of Solomon's temple. He would fulfill the entire Old Covenant in Himself, becoming the new temple, the house of God on earth. It was with this in mind that the Lord told the Jews on driving away the money-changers, "*Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.*" Then the Jews said, *'It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?'* But He was speaking of the temple of His body. Therefore, when He had risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this to them; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said" (Jn 2:19-22).

The "Messianic Secret"

Beginning in the late nineteenth century, biblical commentators began using the term "Messianic secret" to describe Jesus' reluctance to be described as Messiah. Had Jesus allowed Himself to be proclaimed "Messiah" while not fulfilling His hearers' this-worldly expectations, He would have made it impossible for anyone to come to believe in Him. He would have given them the right word, but the wrong idea. He might also have come to the attention of the religious and political authorities before He had developed followers nurtured to any degree with His vision of the Kingdom of God.

Rather we see Jesus beginning a long process of choosing disciples and allowing them to discover for themselves that He was God's Anointed. Jesus never claimed the title of Messiah for Himself and only hinted at it among those most committed to the Kingdom of God. Thus we are told: "... when John had heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples and said to Him, *'Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?'*" Jesus answered and said to them, *'Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me'*" (Mt 11:2-6). Jesus leaves John and his followers to draw their own conclusions.

Some people perceived that Jesus was more than just a teacher. When two of John's disciples went after Jesus, He turned and asked "*What do you seek?*" The tongue-tied Andrew could only say, "*Where are you staying?*" But after spending the day with Jesus, Andrew would tell his brother Simon, "*We have found the Messiah*" (Jn 1:41).

The Gospels record the disciples' slow process of learning what the Lord Jesus' mission actually was. At times they seemed no more attuned to Jesus' teaching than were the crowds. When Jesus taught the importance of inner purity rather than the ritual purity of "clean" and "unclean" foods, the disciples found it hard to accept. "*Are you thus without understanding also?*" Jesus replied (Mk 7:18).

While the Gospels show how gradually the disciples grew to appreciate Jesus as the Messiah, they also note that others had no hesitation in proclaiming His true identity. The demons, as bodiless powers, understood from the start just who Jesus was. The spirit which Jesus

expelled in Capernaum affirmed, *“I know who You are – the Holy One of God”* (Mk 1:24). The Gerasene demoniacs protested, *“What have we to do with You, Jesus, Son of God?”* (Mt 8:29). Jesus silenced them all and *“... did not allow them to speak, for they knew that He was the Christ”* (Lk 4:41).

Neither Power Nor Glory

The disciples found it hard to think of God’s kingdom except in terms of power. When the Lord began preparing His disciples to see that the Messiah must suffer, *“Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, ‘Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!’ But He turned and said to Peter, ‘Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offence to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men’”* (Mt 16:22-23). Later in Jesus’ ministry – despite several previous warnings that the Messiah must suffer – the Lord reiterated His teaching (Lk 9:44-48): *“‘Let these words sink down into your ears, for the Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men.’ But they did not understand this saying, and it was hidden from them so that they did not perceive it; and they were afraid to ask Him about this saying.*

“Then a dispute arose among them as to which of them would be greatest. And Jesus, perceiving the thought of their heart, took a little child and set him by Him, and said to them, ‘Whoever receives this little child in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me receives Him who sent Me. For he who is least among you all will be great.’”

Despite all this, when Samaritans refuse to allow Jesus entry into their village, the disciples’ reaction still shows their lack of understanding. They had yet to comprehend the ways of God’s kingdom. *“And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, ‘Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?’ But He turned and rebuked them, and said, ‘You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men’s lives but to save them’”* (Lk 9:54-56).

Even the experience of the resurrection was not sufficient to turn the disciples from their pursuit of power. When they were all gathered in Jerusalem with the risen Christ, the Book of Acts relates, *“... they asked Him, saying, ‘Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?’ And He said to them, ‘It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth’”* (Acts 1:6-8). It would only be by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit that the first Church came to understand the real mission of the Messiah.

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**CCCB STATEMENT – DATE OF THE DELEGATION TO THE HOLY SEE**



Following the [10 June 2021 announcement](#) regarding the delegation of Indigenous people to meet with the Holy Father to foster meaningful encounters of dialogue and healing, the Catholic Bishops of Canada are pleased to announce that the delegation is scheduled to take place from 17–20 December 2021 in compliance with global travel restrictions.

Pope Francis is deeply committed to hearing directly from Indigenous Peoples, expressing his heartfelt closeness, addressing the impact of colonization and the role of the Church in the residential school system, in the hopes of responding to the suffering of Indigenous Peoples and the ongoing effects of intergenerational trauma. The Bishops of

Canada are deeply appreciative of the Holy Father’s spirit of openness in generously extending an invitation for personal encounters with each of the three distinct groups of delegates – First Nations, Métis and Inuit – as well as a final audience with all delegates together on 20 December 2021.

This pastoral visit will include the participation of a diverse group of Elders/Knowledge Keepers, residential school survivors and youth from across the country, accompanied by a small group of Bishops and Indigenous leaders. Planning for the delegation is ongoing and further details will be announced when they are available.

The Bishops of Canada reaffirm their sincere hope that these forthcoming encounters will lead to a shared future of peace and harmony between Indigenous Peoples and the Catholic Church in Canada.

**ST. OLHA, EQUAL OF THE APOSTLES, PRINCESS OF KYIVAN RUS’ (July 11)**



St. Olha, Equal of the Apostles, was the wife of Kyivan Great Prince Ihor. After Ihor’s death the burden of government fell upon Olha and her three-year-old son Svyatoslav. Olha entered into history as a great builder of the civil life and culture of Kyivan Rus. She extensively traveled throughout the land with the aim of the well- being and improvement of the civil and domestic manner of the life of her subjects.

Having consolidated the inner strengthening of the might of the Kyiv great-princely throne Olha centralized the whole of state rule with the help of the system of “pohosti” (administrative trade centres). Later, when Olha had become a Christian, they

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began to erect the first churches at the “pohosti”; from the time of the Baptism of Rus’ the “pohost” and church (parish) became inseparably associated.

But it was not only the strengthening of the civil realm and the improvement of domestic norms of the manner of life for people that attracted the attention of Princess Olha. Even more urgent for her was the fundamental transformation of the religious life of Rus’, the spiritual transfiguration of the nation.

In the summer of 954, having entrusted Kyiv to her son Svyatoslav, Princess Olha traveled to Constantinople. This was a peaceful “expedition”, combining the tasks of religious pilgrimage and diplomatic mission, but the political considerations demanded that it become simultaneously a display of the military might of Rus’ on the Black Sea.

The appearance of the Kyivan fleet in the Bosphorus created the necessary effect for the developing of Kyivan-Byzantine dialogue. A great impression was produced by the wealth of Christian churches and the holy things preserved in them throughout Constantinople. Princess Olha attended services in the finest churches of Constantinople: at Hagia Sophia, at Blachernae, and others.

Princess Olha she made the decision to become a Christian. The sacrament of Baptism was made over her by the Constantinople Patriarch Theophylactus, and her godfather was Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitos. At Baptism she was given the name Helen in honor of the holy Equal of the Apostles Helen, the mother of St. Constantine. In edifying words spoken at the conclusion of the rite, the Patriarch said, “Blessed are you among Kyivan women, for you have forsaken the darkness and have loved the Light. The Kyivan people shall bless you in all the future generations, from your grandson and great-grandson to your furthestmost descendants.” He instructed her in the truths of the Faith, the churchly rules and the rule of prayer, he explained the commands about fasting, chastity and charity. “She, however,” said the Monk Nestor, “bowed her head and stood, literally like a sponge absorbing water, listening to the teaching.” Bowing down to the Patriarch, she said, “By your prayers, O Master, let me be preserved from the wiles of enemies”.

After becoming a Christian, Olha zealously devoted herself to efforts of Christian evangelization among the pagans, and also church construction: “demanding the distressing of demons and the beginning of life for Christ Jesus”. She built the churches of St. Nicholas and the church of the Holy Wisdom at Kyiv, of the Annunciation of the Most Holy Theotokos at Vytebsk, and of the Holy Life-Creating Trinity at Pskov.

It was no mere coincidence that Olha received in Baptism the name of St. Helen, who found the Venerable Wood of the Cross. The foremost sacred item in the newly built Kyiv Sophia temple was a piece of the Holy Cross, brought by this new Helen from Constantinople, and received by her in blessing from the Patriarch of Constantinople. The Cross, by tradition, was hewn out from an entire piece of the Life-Creating Wood of the Lord.

After some years matters at Kyiv had twisted ultimately in favor of paganism, and Rus' having become neither Orthodox nor Catholic, had second thoughts about accepting Christianity. The pagan reaction was so strong that some of the Kyiv Christians who had been baptized with Olha at Constantinople began to suffer. By order of Svyatoslav, St. Olha's nephew Hlib was killed and some of the churches built by her were destroyed.

In the aftermath of these events Olha was obliged to accede to humiliation and withdraw into matters of personal piety, handing over the reigns of government to her pagan-son, Svyatoslav. When Svyatoslav was away from Kyiv on military campaigns and wars, the governance of the realm was again entrusted to his mother. But the question about the Baptism of Rus' was taken off the agenda, and this was ultimately bitter for St. Olha, who regarded the good news of the Gospel of Christ as the chief matter in her life.

On July 11, 969, St. Olha died. In her final years, amidst the triumph of paganism, she had to have a priest by her secretly. But before death, having found her former firmness and resolve, she forbid pagan celebrations of the dead, and gave final instructions to bury her openly in accord with the Christian ritual. Presbyter Gregory, who was with her at Constantinople in 957, fulfilled her request.

St. Olha lived, died, and was buried as a Christian. "And thus having lived and well having glorified God in Trinity, Father and Son and Holy Spirit, having worshipped in the blessed faith, she ended her life in the peace of Christ Jesus, our Lord." As her prophetic testament to succeeding generations, with deep Christian humility she confessed her faith concerning her nation: "God's will be done! If it pleases God to have mercy upon my native Kyivan Land, then they shall turn their hearts to God, just as I have received this gift."

St. Olha glorified God with good deeds in all things, and God glorified her. In 1007, under Prince Volodymyr, the relics of St. Olha were transferred to the Desyatynna Church of the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos and placed in a special sarcophagus.


