

**PASTORAL LETTER OF THE  
UKRAINIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS OF CANADA  
ON THE OCCASION OF THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD 2009**

*“When peaceful silence lay over all, and night had run the half of her swift course, down from the heavens, from the royal throne, leapt your all-powerful Word; into the heart of a doomed land the stern warrior leapt” (Wisdom 18:14-15).*

To the Reverend Clergy, Monastics and Religious Sisters, Seminarians and Laity of the Ukrainian Catholic Church in Canada

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In the joy of the Nativity our great Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ, we, your Bishops and Spiritual Fathers greet you! We celebrate Christ who is the all-powerful Word who “leapt” into the womb of the Virgin Mary to take on our flesh. We celebrate His most glorious birth and the gathering of his people into His Church under the saving reign of His “royal throne.”

Once more we have arrived at that moment of “peaceful silence” in the Church’s liturgical year, the time to contemplate the great Mystery of the Divine Appearing of the “all-powerful Word” amongst us and in our own human nature. As we boldly sing *Z namy Boh! - God is with us!* at the service of Great Compline celebrating Christ’s Nativity in the Flesh, we behold in the Child of the Virgin Theotokos that God is indeed with us in a way that we cannot begin to imagine. He is so truly with us that He has become one of us!

As we ponder His leap “down from the heavens,” we see the glorious implications of His divine Incarnation. As St. Athanasius of Alexandria expressed it in words that will never lose their awesome grandeur, “God became human so that humanity might be made god!” Indeed, the coming of Christ has revealed not only God in the Flesh, but His very salvific plan for all humanity, that our flesh, our humanity might be made one with God!

Dearly beloved, our thoughts, illumined in this sacred season, inspire our earnest prayer for you that “the eyes of your heart may be enlightened” (Eph. 1:18) to see more clearly the great dignity and destiny you have been bestowed with in His Church. It is the place where Christ’s divine energies in the holy services, sacraments, prayers and teachings reach us today. It is also where His plan to gather all humanity, indeed each of us personally, into the divinizing communion of His liberating reign is fulfilled. Having yourselves experienced these marvelous blessings, may you also recognize your immense privilege and call to proclaim this Good News to our brothers and sisters.

In this age where darkness and uncertainty threaten to snuff the light of Christ which burns within each heart, let us consider those who find themselves lost in the shadows of doubt and despair. Let us announce the inviolable sanctity and inestimable worth of every person from the moment of conception till natural death to those who in blindness promote a culture of

abortion, euthanasia and death. Let us proclaim the beauty of human sexuality created by God and its divinely ordered purpose to unite in fidelity husband and wife and their children in the image of the Triune God to those tyrannized and disoriented by sexual passions. Let us rejoice in the human person who is of such worth that he or she can never be bought or sold or used, and that all creation is a gift entrusted to us as priestly stewards to develop, to share, to rejoice in and to pass on to the next generation. And let us pray for those who have lost a sacramental vision of life, for whom the earth, and even human beings, are but raw material to be manipulated for profit.

To those who have been seduced by consumerism, pessimism and skepticism, who have been paralyzed by addictions and fear and to those who have lost hope for living, we share our liberating message, that the secret to real fulfillment is found only in what one gives away in love, including one's self, just as Christ has given himself in love to us. We bear witness to a world that is divinely designed in truth and love and we confess the life-creating grace of Christ that, when called upon, works liberating and healing wonders. We herald the God of providence who is aware of every sparrow that falls from the sky. Alas, are we not worth much more than many sparrows in the eyes of God? (cf., Mt. 10:31).

Cherished faithful, as we gather this year at the traditional Holy Eve Supper that welcomes the coming of God in our Flesh, let us be thankful. As we gaze into "the heavens" toward His "royal throne" to behold the first star that proclaims His reign and as we light the customary candle that symbolizes His "loving leap" to liberate our "doomed land" and so wonderfully unite Himself with us and, in His Church, unite us with Himself, may our Christian lives be re-invigorated in the vision of the divinely bestowed dignity and destiny we have received in Christ's glorious Appearing.

Indeed, as we gather with family and friends at the Holy Festal Services and we intone the timeless carol *Boh Predvichnyj - God Eternal*, may our zeal to bear the Incarnate Christ witness in word and deed be increased so that those who have never heard such wonderful tidings may come to know, experience and join us in proclaiming, *Z namy Boh! - God is with us!*

The Blessing of the Lord be upon you!

Sincerely Yours in Christ,

- + Lawrence Huculak OSBM, Metropolitan Archbishop of Winnipeg
- + Michael Bzdel, CSSR, Metropolitan Emeritus
- + Michael Wiwchar, CSSR, Eparch Emeritus of Saskatoon
- + Severian Yakymyshyn, OSBM, Eparch Emeritus of New Westminster
- + Cornelius Pasichny, OSBM, Eparch Emeritus of Toronto
- + David Motiuk, Eparchial Bishop of Edmonton
- + Stephen Chmilar, Eparchial Bishop of Toronto
- + Ken Nowakowski, Eparchial Bishop of New Westminster
- + Bryan Bayda, CSSR, Eparchial Bishop of Saskatoon