

**PASTORAL LETTER OF THE
UKRAINIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS OF CANADA
ON THE OCCASION OF THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD, 2010**

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

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Christ is Risen! Indeed He is Risen!

“Let us purify our senses that we may see the risen Christ in the glory of his resurrection and clearly hear Him greeting us: Rejoice! As we sing the hymn of victory.” (Paschal Matins).

The *stychyra* of Paschal Matins echoes the episode of St. Luke’s Gospel, when the disciples, on the way to Emmaus, met the Risen Lord but did not recognize Him. “Now behold, two of them were travelling that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles from Jerusalem. And they talked together of all these things which had happened. So it was, while they were talking and discussing Jesus Himself drew near and went to them. But their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him. And He said to them, What are you discussing with each other while you walk along and are sad?” (Lk. 24,13-16).

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ! We who are making our Christian journey – pilgrimage at the beginning of this twenty- first century, are overcome by sadness and worry, as were the disciples on the road to Emmaus. These moments of sadness and discouragement are changed by the Risen Christ into spiritual joy and hope, when we receive Him in the Holy Eucharist. Negative feelings, thoughts, conversations and fears that we encounter on the path of our Christian pilgrimage are transformed through faith, prayer, and repentance during the Great Lent into a renewed loving trust in Our Lord. It is then, having received Holy Communion, that we feel how our heart burns within us. (Lk. 24, 32).

“Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight.” (Lk. 24, 30-31). The great joy that we Christians draw from the feast of the Resurrection is explained by the fact that we do not focus our attention on ourselves, and that we are not consumed by selfishness, but that our attention is centered on Christ, who is present among us through the mystery of faith and in the Holy Eucharist. The Risen Christ is present in the Eucharist and He opens our eyes of faith towards others. Our Paschal faith is a Eucharistic faith through which we proclaim our Lord's death on the cross and his glorious Resurrection. Each Christian lives this Eucharistic faith by every thought, constantly turning their attention to Christ, the author and perfecter of our faith (Heb. 12,2).

The Paschal mystery invites us to come to Christ. The Church invites all the faithful to receive Our Lord Jesus Christ in Holy Communion, especially at this holy paschal time. The Church asks us to walk along the path which Christ, our Light has shown us. The Church invites us to “purify our senses that we may see the risen Christ in the glory of His resurrection” (Paschal Matins). The prayer of the Divine Liturgy invites us to sing with joy the praises of Christ whom we have received in the Eucharist: “We have seen the true light. We have received the heavenly Spirit. We have found the true faith. We worship the undivided Trinity for having saved us.” (Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom).

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ! We are surrounded by a secularized society, some even speak of a post-Christian era. The glorious Feast of the Resurrection reminds us of our calling as Christians, who have "put on" the Risen Christ in Holy Baptism, to be Jesus for others. Strengthened and renewed by the Eucharist, we are invited to witness our faith. We are called to live our faith through simple everyday circumstances in our family life, where we work, where we spend our time in leisure, where we are involved with different cultural, social and church organizations. It is through regular every day interaction and contact with others, that we can become Jesus for many, who fail to see Him. Every day is a new opportunity given to us by God to evangelize through example. The Paschal Mystery – Christ's Resurrection - renews our spiritual stamina so that we may fulfill our Christian vocation with joy and hope.

May the blessings of the Risen Lord be with you,

- + Lawrence Huculak, OSBM, Metropolitan Archbishop of Winnipeg
- + Michael Bzdel, CSsR, Archbishop Emeritus of Winnipeg
- + Michael Wiwchar, CSsR, Bishop Emeritus of Saskatoon
- + Severian Yakymyshyn OSBM, Bishop Emeritus of New Westminster
- + Cornelius Pasichny, OSBM, Bishop 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