



Office of the Bishop

**PASTORAL LETTER
TO THE FAITHFUL OF THE EPARCHY OF NEW WESTMINSTER
AND PEOPLE OF GOOD WILL
FOR THE FEAST OF THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD 2010**

Easter Message 2010

Dear Sisters and Brothers in the Lord,

Christ is Risen! Indeed He is Risen!

My first celebration of the Easter Liturgical Services as a priest was in Lviv, Ukraine in 1990. In those days, Ukraine was still part of the USSR. I was privileged to have been asked by His Beatitude Myroslav Ivan Cardinal Lubachivsky of blessed memory, head of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, living in exile in Rome, to accompany his press officer and about 30 western-based journalists to witness the first public Easter Celebration of our Church since it was forced into its clandestine existence in 1946 by the Soviet authorities.

I recall that Easter celebration as though it were yesterday and not 20 years ago! In addition to those innumerable faithful packed into the Church of the Holy Transfiguration, literally thousands lined the streets surrounding the church building on that Easter morning. The joy was immeasurable and uncontainable! It spread far and wide. Then a year later there was yet another joyful celebration of Easter in Lviv. The Head of the Church had returned to Ukraine and was leading his Church in celebrating the Feast of all Feasts. Joined by many of our bishops from North America, South America and Australia, Cardinal Lubachivsky presided over services that lasted five hours! This time the celebration was at the historic St. George Cathedral, recently returned into the hands of the Ukrainian Catholics. There were tens of thousands of faithful shouting out to each other: "CHRIST IS RISEN! INDEED HE IS RISEN!"

Those shouts of joy were all the more intense, given that for five previous decades the Clandestine Church in Ukraine had to muffle its joy and hide its celebration for fear of persecution by the Soviet authorities. How often it is that we truly appreciate something only when it is denied us. Here in Canada we do not have to muffle our celebration of the Resurrection out of fear! So let us be inspired by our brothers and sisters in Ukraine to be fearless and joyful witnesses to the Resurrection! Let us not be afraid to let our family, friends and neighbours know that Jesus' Resurrection holds profound meaning to us!

In the festal troparion we sing: "Christ is risen from the dead, trampling death by death, and to those in the tombs giving life." That is the source of our hope and the meaning of the feast. The Cross is overcome by the Empty Tomb, and Good Friday has been conquered by the Pascha of our Lord, who, having made us sharers of divine life, fills us with everlasting joy.

May Our Risen Lord bless you and your families as you call out to each other:

Christ is Risen! --Indeed He is Risen!

+Ken (Nowakowski)
Bishop of New Westminster