



Welcome



## St. Josaphat Ukrainian Catholic Church in Vernon, BC

2210 – 40<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Vernon, BC V1T 8Z9

**Liturgies:** Tuesday to Friday – 9:00 a.m.  
Holy Days - 10:00 a.m.



Sundays – 9:30 a.m. – Rosary  
10:00 a.m. - Divine Liturgy

## Saints Peter and Paul Ukrainian Catholic Church in Grindrod, BC



Carlin Street and 3rd Avenue,  
Grindrod, BC  
Sundays Divine Liturgy:

Dec. 27<sup>th</sup> – 2:00 p.m.  
Jan. 10<sup>th</sup> – 3:00 p.m.  
Jan. 24<sup>th</sup> – 2:00 p.m.

Jan. 3<sup>rd</sup> – 2:00 p.m.  
Jan. 17<sup>th</sup> – 3:00 p.m.  
Jan. 31<sup>st</sup> – 3:00 p.m.

Pastor: Rev. Volodymyr Dmyterko  
P.O. Box 20064 Vernon, BC V1T 9L4  
Phone: 250-549-1327;

Email: o.volodymyr@yahoo.ca

Parish website: <http://vernon.nweparchy.ca/bulletins/>  
Eparchy: [www.nweparchy.ca](http://www.nweparchy.ca)



*“The Vibrant Parish – a place  
to encounter the living Christ”*

*Patriarch Sviatoslav*

### Welcome! *Бітваємо!*

We extend a warm welcome to our parishioners, your families and friends. We are glad that you have come to worship with us today and pray that your participation in our parish will be enriching to you. Following every Sunday Divine Liturgy, Fellowship Coffee is served! We invite everyone to join us.

#### PASTORAL MINISTRY AND SACRAMENTS:

SACRAMENT of CONFESSIONS: on Sundays and Holy Days: 30 min before Divine Liturgy and other days, by appointment.

HOLY COMMUNION: for the sick, by appointment, any time.

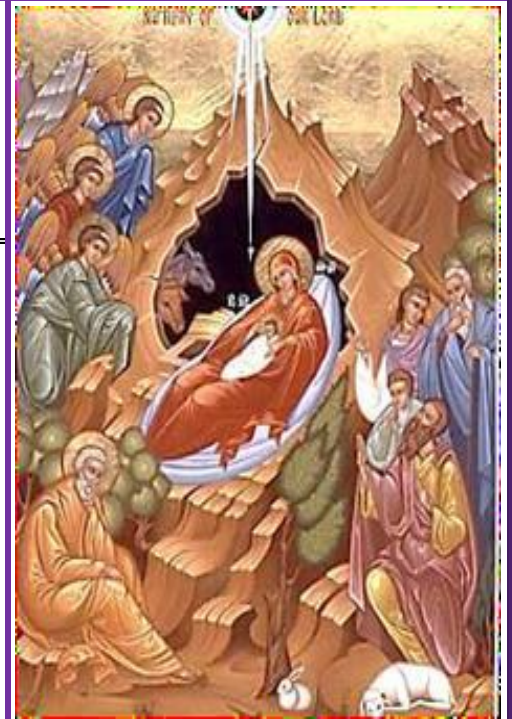
BAPTISMS - by appointment.

MARRIAGES - by appointment, at least 6 month in advance.

FUNERALS - by appointment.

ANOINTING of the sick, hospital visits - by appointment, any time

**Please note:** parish members requesting the celebration of a Divine Liturgy for a special intention (such as: Thanksgiving, the Infirm, General Intentions, the Deceased, Help of the Holy Spirit, for the Travelers, etc.), please see Fr. Volodymyr to arrange for it.



Our parish community extends a welcome to visitors who wish to pray and worship with us and who would like to participate in the life of our parish in all aspects. We assure you that visitors to St. Josaphat Ukrainian Catholic Church in Vernon meet with the warmest hospitality. Although we are a small community, we pride ourselves in being a family which centers itself on faith, prayer and a shared love of our Traditions. Although we are proud to belong to the Ukrainian Catholic Church, a number of ethnic backgrounds are represented in our parish community.

Divine Services are celebrated according to the Byzantine Catholic Rite of Ukrainian usage. Whether you are familiar with our Liturgy and Traditions from your own faith formation or would like to learn more about them, we extend a heartfelt welcome to you to join us for Divine Liturgy. Whether you are Roman Catholic or a member of another Church or Religious Tradition, you are most welcome to join us for worship. The Liturgy is celebrated using a mix of English and Ukrainian. The readings from the Holy Gospel and Epistles, as well as homilies are in English.

## NATIVITY OF OUR LORD – РІЗДВО ГОСПОДА НАШОГО ІСУСА ХРИСТА

DIVINE LITURGY PROPERS

**First Antiphon:** I will confess You, Lord with all my heart, \* I will declare all Your wondrous deeds.  
Through the prayers of the Mother of God, \* O Savior, save us.

In the counsels of the just and the congregation, \* great are the works of the Lord, conforming to His will in every way.

Through the prayers of the Mother of God, \* O Savior, save us.

His work is filled with praise and majesty, \* and His righteousness endures forever.

Through the prayers of the Mother of God, \* O Savior, save us.

Glory be...now and forever...: Only Begotten Son...

**Third Antiphon: Verse:** The Lord said to my Lord: \* Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies the footstool of your feet.

**Christmas Troparion, tone 4:** Your Nativity, O Christ our God, \* made the light of knowledge dawn on the world: \* through it, those who worshipped the stars were taught by a star \* to worship You, the Sun of Righteousness, \* and to know You, the Dawn from on high. \* Glory to You, O Lord!

**Verse:** The Lord will send you a scepter of power out of Sion; \* reign in the midst of your enemies.

**Christmas Troparion, tone 4:** Your Nativity, O Christ ...

**Verse:** Yours is dominion on the day you are given power in the splendor of your holy ones.

**Christmas Troparion, tone 4:** Your Nativity, O Christ ...

At the "Small Entrance", after: "Wisdom! Stand aright!":

**Verse:** From the womb before the daystar I begot you. The Lord has sworn an oath and will not go back on His word: You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

**Christmas Troparion, tone 4:** Your Nativity, O Christ our God, \* made the light of knowledge dawn on the world: \* through it, those who worshipped the stars were taught by a star \* to worship You, the Sun of Righteousness, \* and to know You, the Dawn from on high. \* Glory to You, O Lord!

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, \* Now and forever and ever. Amen.**

**Kontakion of Christmas, tone 3:** The Virgin today gives birth to Him who is above all being; \* the earth offers the cave to Him whom no one can approach; \* Angels with shepherds give Him glory while Magi make their way with a star, \* for to us is born a little Child, the pre-eternal God.

**Instead of "Holy God..":** All you, who have been baptized into Christ, you have put on Christ, Alleluia!

**Prokimen, (8):** Let all the earth worship You and sing to You; \* let it sing to Your Name, O Most High.

**Verse:** Shout to the Lord, all the earth, sing now to His name; \* give glory to His praise.



**Epistle:** Reading from St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians: 4:4-7

When the designed time had come, God sent forth his Son born of a woman, born under the law, to deliver from the law those who were subjected to it, so that we might receive our status as adopted sons. The proof that you are sons is the fact that God has sent forth into our hearts the Spirit of his Son which cries out "Abba!" ("Father!") You are no longer a slave but a son! And the fact that you are a son makes you an heir, by God's design.

**Alleluia Verse:** The heavens tell the glory of God, \*and the firmament declares the work of His hands.

**Verse:** Day announces its message unto day \* and night proclaims its knowledge unto night.

## **Gospel: Matthew 2:1-12**

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the time of King Herod, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, 'Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.' When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, 'In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: "And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel." 'Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, 'Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.' When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure-chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

**Instead of "It is truly right...":** O my soul, magnify Christ the King \* born in a manger.\*

**Irmos, (Tone 1):** A strange and glorious mystery do I behold:\* the cave is heaven; \* the Virgin, the throne of the Cherubim; \* the manger, a dwelling place \* in which is laid Christ, the God Whom nothing can contain. \* Singing His praises, we magnify Him.

**Communion Hymn:** The Lord has sent deliverance \* to his people. Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Where it is the custom: **Instead of** "Blessed is He..," "We have seen...," "May our mouths...," Blessed be the name...": we sing **All creation is filled with rejoicing today, for Christ is born of a Virgin.**



## **Prayer for a Vibrant Parish Prayer**

O Lord Jesus Christ, our Good Shepherd, as you once gathered lost sheep that they might hear Your voice and be your flock, so also today graciously look down from heaven upon our parish community, and send down on it your Holy Spirit, that it might be a place to receive the joy of Your Good News. Strengthen us with your presence, and always gather us together in prayer. Grant us the spirit of serving others, so that in our parish all might encounter You, the merciful God. Bless our spiritual leaders with Your wisdom, and inspire us to generously give of our time, talents and treasure for the building up of Your Kingdom. Unite us in peace and harmony, as befits Your community of love. Instill in us a missionary spirit, and let our parish community shine with the light of the Gospel, with prayer and good works, inviting all to share in the divine life, so that Your Name, O Savior, may be praised, together with Your eternal Father, and your most-holy, good and life-giving Spirit. Amen.

**SPECIAL PETITION DURING THE DIVINE LITURGY:** — We also pray to be blessed with generous hearts to contribute to our Bishop's initiatives and programmes, such as: the support of parishes, the education of parishioners, and the formation of seminarians, Lord hear us and have mercy



**For peace in Ukraine,** let us pray: Our Father ... Hail Mary ... Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and forever and ever. Amen.

We also pray for the people of Ukraine, that with the help of the Holy Spirit, they may obtain social peace, political harmony and economic stability: Lord, hear us and have mercy.



**pray for  
peace**

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

**Greetings from the pastor** - On the holy Feast of the Birth in the Flesh of Our Lord, and God and Savior Jesus Christ, we pray to Almighty God and ask for many blessings for all of you, and your families, for all our friends and guests. May Jesus Christ be born in your heart today, and may He fill your soul with His Holy Spirit. God's Love and God's peace be with you at this Christmas and always!  
**Christ is born! Glorify Him!**

**Thank You** – to all who decorated our church and hall so beautifully: also to those who changed all linens on the altar, around the church and in church hall. May God bless them for their thoughtfulness!

**Big thanks** to all our parishioners, guests, visitors and all people of the good will who by their kindness, time, generous donations, look after and support our parish. May God bless you and your dear ones always!

**SINCEREST THANKS** – To our local UCWLC branch and everyone for your warm greetings and good wishes, Christmas cards and various very kind & generous gifts. God bless all of you! Fr. Volodymyr and Vira.

**THANKS TO EVERYONE**, who shared to the food bank, donated for poinsettia and helped to decorate our church for Christmas celebrations. Your time, thoughtfulness and care are greatly appreciated!

**Parish Christmas Dinner** – will take place on **Sunday, January 10<sup>th</sup> 2016** after the **Divine Liturgy at 10:00 a.m.**

**ZAHALNYTSIA**– Due to the festive Christmas season, the Friday after Christmas is *not* a fasting day. Let us feast & rejoice!

**SAVE THE DATE:** - **Pyrohy making** is scheduled for Monday, **December 28<sup>th</sup>**. We need your help and your presence! Please mark your calendar, so you don't forget!

**“Save-on- Foods” gift cards** – are available for sale. Anyone wishing to buy the cards, please contact Miss. Teresa Huculak or Fr. Volodymyr.

**Happy Birthday** – May the Almighty God bless in good health and salvation in Many Happy and Blessed Years of Life to those who celebrated their birthday in month of December: Mrs. Debbie Luchkanych (Dec. 4); Mr. Nick Petrykiw (Dec. 6); Mrs. Rose Shawchuk (Dec. 7); Mrs. Bonnie Chaychuk (Dec. 16); Mrs. Wanda March (Dec. 28); **Many happy healthy years! Mnohaya i Blahaya Lita!**

**Happy Anniversary!** May Our Lord Jesus Christ bless you in abundance with His love, joy and peace. Many God's blessings of good health, joy, peace and happiness to Mr. and Mrs. Bob and Pat Holowenko (Dec. 1) on the occasion of their Wedding Anniversary! **Mnohaya i Blahaya Lita!**

**Gifts to God: Sunday, December 6<sup>th</sup>** - Vernon \$ 425.85; Grindrod \$ 225.00 God bless all of you for your kindness and generous financial support of our parish community!

**Grace.** If for any of these or other reasons you cannot receive Holy Communion, you are welcome to come for a blessing. Please indicate to the priest that you would like to receive his blessing.

**Parishioner's news section:** As a Parish, it would be wonderful if we could share in our fellow brothers and sisters journey- their joys and sorrows. If you have an upcoming event (birth announcement, big anniversary, graduation, etc) or updates such as medical news, prayer requests, etc., please send us an email or tell to the priest, so it can be included in the newsletter. As well, if you wish to

celebrate a special occasion with us, you are more than welcome to bring a contribution to add to the coffee social.

**Parish Family Calendar:** If you would like to be included in our Parish Family Calendar of Birthdays, Celebrations, Name-Days and Anniversaries please put your birth date in the calendar at the table near the front door of the church. Let's celebrate these happy occasions together!

**REMEMBER TO PRAY FOR:** your family, your fellow parishioners, those who seeking God's answer to their prayers or those rejoicing with God's answer, those celebrating a birthday or anniversary, those called to their eternal reward and for the family they leave behind, those shut-in or in the hospital, and you wish to have a priest visit, please be sure to have someone call the rectory to make this request or notify Fr. Volodymyr Dmyterko directly. Your pastor may have no other way of knowing that you are in hospital, as privacy legislation restricts the information that can be given to him by the hospital.

**Please Pray for health of ...** Tatianna O'Donnell, Rose Shawchuk, Anthony Mulik, John Maiwka, Yanko Anna, Szadiak Victor and Gloria, Sophie Caskey, Walter Kociuba, Nick Roman, Kalyna Kociuba, Terry Konopada, Jesse Kosick, Marion McAreavy, Mary Ferguson, Nicholas Adam Laniel Cryss O'Donnell, Rose Ostopowich, Beverly Brodoway and all other parishioners and family members who need our support and God's healing at the present time. Let us also remember our sisters and brothers in Ukraine in our prayers!

Please let Fr. Volodymyr know if you would like to add new names to the prayer list and also notify him about any sick and/or hospitalized parishioners and family members.



**EMAIL BULLETIN** - If you would like to have the Bulletin emailed to you please send your request to: [o.volodymyr@yahoo.ca](mailto:o.volodymyr@yahoo.ca)

**PARISH WEBSITE** - <http://vernon.nweparchy.ca/bulletins/>

### **Meetings Church Councils and Organizations:**

**St. Josaphat's Parish Council Meeting will take place, January 17<sup>th</sup> - After the Divine Liturgy at 10:00 a.m.**

**St. Josaphat's Parish AGM will take place, January 31<sup>st</sup> - After the Divine Liturgy at 10:00 a.m.**

**Knights of Columbus Executive Meeting will take place on Tuesday, December 29<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm. at OLOV RC church.**

**Eparchial Candle Appeal: "Christmas Candle" / "Різдвяна свічка" Appeal:** Since 2012 our Eparchy of New Westminster has been collecting funds to help disadvantaged and orphaned children in Ukraine through our Christmas Candle appeal. Our fundraising program is part of a larger global appeal sponsored by Caritas Ukraine. We have had great momentum over the last few years raising over \$19,000 with support from our BC Parishes as well as Parishes in other Provinces and parts of the United States. This appeal will again take place in December 2015 and we encourage everyone to remember these Children during our Christmas season with a voluntary donation. Please place your donation in an envelope marked Christmas Candle, with your name and address and include it with the Sunday Collection at any Ukrainian Catholic Church in BC or mail it to the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of New Westminster. All donations over \$20.00 will receive a tax receipt and cheques can be made out to Eparchy of New Westminster with Christmas Candle Project in the memo. Candles will also be available for purchase at all the Ukrainian Catholic Parishes in BC for a minimum donation of \$5.00 per candle. We Thank You for your past support and ask that you again consider supporting this ongoing Eparchial appeal and lighting these candles as part of your Christmas Eve celebrations. Caritas is an organization that is supported and approved by His Beatitude Sviatoslav Shevchuk and His Excellency Bishop Ken Nowakowski. 100% of the proceeds go to Caritas Ukraine. For more information, please contact Dana Koren Lupynis at [nweparchy.christmascandle@gmail.com](mailto:nweparchy.christmascandle@gmail.com)



**Christ is Born!      Glorify Him!**

*The unapproachable God, out of mercy, wished to become visible for us. He comes in the flesh, to be born as a human being of the most pure Virgin, in the city of Bethlehem. Therefore, let us hasten with devotion to receive him.*  
*[Sessional hymn, prefeast of the Nativity]*

**Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ!**

As we prepare to celebrate the birth of the Lord Jesus during this Christmas season, we find ourselves at the beginning of the Extraordinary Holy Jubilee Year of Mercy initiated by Pope Francis this past December 8<sup>th</sup>. The purpose of the Holy Jubilee Year, according to Pope Francis, is to encounter the mercy of God. And the primary way we encounter God is through Jesus Christ, the face of the Father's mercy. [Cf. *Misericordiae Vultus* 1]

Our rich and meaningful Ukrainian Christmas traditions call our attention to the birth in Bethlehem of the Son of God. The liturgical texts, the carols and greetings, the special foods and decorations help remind us that "God is with us!" With the coming of Jesus Christ onto this earth with a human body, we have been given tangible proof of the love and mercy of our God.

One of the important symbols used during the Holy Jubilee Year is that of the "Holy Door". In our Eparchy we will designate three churches where our faithful are invited to enter the church: Holy Eucharist Cathedral parish in New Westminster, St. Nicholas the Wonderworker parish in Victoria and The Holy Dormition of the Mother of God parish in Kelowna. If you are unable to make a pilgrimage to one of these three Holy Doors during the Holy Jubilee Year of Mercy, then I would invite you to go to the nearest Roman Catholic Church in your area that has designated Holy Doors. The Holy Doors stands as a symbol of the extraordinary pathway towards salvation that is offered to the believers, through prayer, penitence, and works of mercy. The Holy Doors become doors of mercy through which anyone who enters will experience the love of God who consoles, pardons and instills hope.

At Christmas time the Holy Doors reminds us of the doorway into the stable at Bethlehem whereby the shepherds and magi entered to find the Christ Child, the long awaited Messiah. All were welcome to enter through the doorway into the stable: the poor and the rich, peasant and lord, saint and sinner. And so we are challenged by our faith in Jesus Christ to respond to those who stand at the threshold of our homes and of our lives and who seek our mercy and love. Our Christian faith calls upon us to open the doors of our homes and of our lives and welcome them just as Mary and Joseph did in the stable of Bethlehem.

This Christmas season, in the spirit of the Holy Jubilee Year of Mercy, let us reach out to the strangers and to those in need, be they from Ukraine or from Syria, be they in prisons or homeless on the streets, be they sick or jobless, be they alone and near death. Let us show by our good deeds and by our love that we share with them the mercy of our Heavenly Father who shares with us his love and goodness. And let us repeat the praise of the angels as they sang at the birth of Christ: ***Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.*** [Lk. 2:14]

**Christ is Born!      Glorify Him!**

With assurance of my prayerful best wishes and blessings to you and your family, I remain,  
Sincerely yours in the Lord,

+Ken Nowakowski

Bishop of New Westminster

# CHRISTMAS MESSAGE OF HIS BEATITUDE SVIATOSLAV

(unofficial translation)

*To the Most Reverend Archbishops and Metropolitans, God-loving bishops, honourable clergy, reverend religious, and beloved brothers and sisters in Ukraine and throughout the diaspora.*

*Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased  
(Luke 2:14)*

## **Christ is born! Let us glorify Him!**

The evangelist Luke proclaims the words spoken by the angel who appeared to the shepherds: "Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people; for to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord." (Luke 2: 10-11) The joy of the Nativity of Christ, the good news of the birth in human flesh of the Son of God Himself, is like a powerful beam of eternal sunlight that descends today from heaven to earth.

*Christ is born!* These are the words with which the heavenly powers gladdened the hearts of the shepherds who stood watch over their sheep. *Christ is born!* These tidings transformed night into day, sadness into consolation, waiting into the fulfilment of hope. *Christ is born!* This joy, which comes down from Heaven, inspires a person to act: to seek the Eternal God in a new-born babe, to serve Him as a neighbour, and to share this joy with others.

*Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased.*

These are words from the Heavenly Liturgy, in which the angelic choirs praise God for His love towards His people. As participants and witnesses of this supernatural reality, the shepherds learn the true reason for the joy of Christmas. The Saviour has been born; in Him is disclosed the very core of our faith – faith in God's merciful love towards His creation, which makes us people upon whom His favour rests.

So it is that this heavenly hymn relates to each one of us! The angels glorify God on high for the simple reason that He eternally bestows His good will upon His people, that is, He desires for them what is good. He is our highest benefactor. The eternal active love of God the Father flows throughout the history of the whole world and is incarnated in the person of His beloved Son, who is born today in Bethlehem. The Evangelist John teaches us about the good will of God in these words: "the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the expiation for our sins." (1 John 4: 9-10)

*Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace...*

Peace is one of the essential expressions of God's love for His people. No wonder the Old Testament prophets foretold that the coming of the Messiah on earth would bring peace on earth, grant people the gifts of love and justice, eliminate all evil and hatred, and restore harmony throughout the world. And so today we hear that Christ, the Prince of Peace, the Eternal King, upon whose shoulders rests all authority and honour, is the very same One of whom Isaiah spoke, now born at last. The peace, which the Lord brings, does not mean a temporary truce or a simple absence of war. A person obtains true peace only by reconciling with God and personally uniting with Him. The new-born Jesus unites and reconciles within Himself both God and mankind. As a result of this union and reconciliation, Christ becomes the source of peace in the whole world. The Apostle Saint Paul teaches us this about Christ – "For he is our peace, who has made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility" (Ephesians 2:14)

How long God's people awaited this peace, which Christ brought with His Nativity! With what eagerness the shepherds hastened to Bethlehem, and with what persistence the wise men from the East journeyed to the place of His birth. But how they must have been awed by the fact that they found that long-awaited peace, not in an earthly ruler, not in the cleverness of a skilled diplomat, not in the power of a well-formed army, but in a fragile new-born homeless infant. And what's more, the foretold Prince of Peace, upon the moment of His birth, was forced to become a displaced person, a fugitive fleeing to escape the persecution of King Herod. This Wondrous Divine Wisdom, through the Mystery of the Nativity, teaches us that God's love, heavenly peace and glory come only when we humble ourselves before the least one among us, and that only in serving the needy will we meet God.

*Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours!* With God's help, we have lived through yet one more year – one more year of war. The suffering of our people has not ended; our trials have not come to an end. But we have survived and we carry on. To the surprise of the whole world, we have survived in the midst of immeasurable pain, loss of blood, and tears. In a war situation we've had to rethink the value and meaning of the words "peace" and "mercy", "courage" and "humanity", "allegiance" and

"responsibility." We have learned that such zeal is found in prayer. By releasing the power of prayer, together with the whole world, we sincerely and persistently continue to entreat God for peace.

The road to peace has become for us the road to our neighbour. We are learning to be in solidarity. We are learning to recognize the needs of our soldiers at the front as our needs. We are learning to be concerned about the pain of those who have lost family members and friends, and the pain of the wounded and imprisoned, as if it were our own pain. In the midst of ever greater needs, economic hardships, corruption still present everywhere and lack of effective political management, we have not lost compassion for our neighbour, but have become more responsible and bolder in defending dignity. We continue to share with those in need: what we have, what we know and can do, what we believe in – and what we are. The way to our victory in Christ is that which unites, reconciles and makes us community. Solidarity, compassion and trust give us hope in God and reveal to us the true road to peace.

It is in this nationwide solidarity in faith, hope and love that we feel the active presence of God among us and His real birth in our homeland. The path to our neighbour has become for millions of Ukrainians the path to God's love. We might say that in this wondrous good will of God for us, in this solidarity, we have discovered the key to victory, for, as the Apostle Paul teaches us: "When God is with us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31)

Let us celebrate this Christmas together with those who have become displaced, those who have lost their loved ones, their possessions and their homes. In this Holy Year of the Mercy of God, may the doors of our homes, open to the needy, be, in the words of Pope Francis, the doors of the mercy of God. Hence whoever walks through them may experience the flow of God's merciful love, love which forgives our sins, heals the wounds of our souls and bodies, transforms sadness into joy, and makes all that is weak strong and invincible.

By welcoming the refugees, the poor and the suffering, we welcome into our homes, into our families and into our communities the Son of God Himself- the Font of God's peace. Let us not ask what language they speak, what church they attend, or what beliefs they hold. Rather let us be interested in what hurts them, where their loved ones are, and how we may help them. With our prayers and acts of mercy let us approach together with them the manger in which Christ is resting. It is in them, precisely, that we will be able to welcome the new-born Saviour. And it is precisely in this way that we will enter into reconciliation with God and with our brothers and sisters, and bring God's peace to our greatly suffering Ukrainian land.

On this joyful bright feast of the Nativity of Christ, I wish to express to all of you, dearly beloved in Christ, heartfelt greetings. I desire to convey this joy to every home, to the dugouts at the front, to the hospitals where the wounded are recovering, to the dwelling places of hundreds of thousands of displaced brothers and sisters, to those in Ukraine, and those in the diaspora- to all I desire today to send a word of comfort and hope, the source of which is the birth of the Saviour.

With the good news of the Nativity of Jesus Christ, I wish to visit those of you who have opened the doors of your hearts to God and neighbour, and I wish to pass through the Doors of Mercy together with you in this Holy Year. While sharing the joyful news of the birth of Christ-God, I long to shake the hands of our brave soldiers who safeguard our Christmas, to comfort the sorrowful, to wipe the tears of those who are weeping, to strengthen the faith of those who doubt that good will triumph over evil.

Standing today before the altar of God, I sense an extraordinary solidarity with the vast family of our particular Church, which has gathered together around the Lord's Table here on earth and in God's glory on high. May the newborn Saviour hear all our prayers, keep our nation and our leaders in peace and wellbeing and bestow upon them His heavenly blessing.

Wishing you a blessed Feast of the Nativity of our Lord, a tasty kutia and a happy new year!

**Christ is born! Let us glorify Him!**

† SVIATOSLAV

*Issued in Kyiv, at the Patriarchal Cathedral of the Resurrection of Christ, on the feast of the praiseworthy First-Called Apostle, Saint Andrew, and the beginning of the Jubilee Year of Divine Mercy, December 13, 2015*