The Twelve Days of Christmas

These 12 days that comprise the “12 days of Christmas” include other observances on various levels. The first level are events that are directly associated to Christ’s birth - January 7 (December 25) in the flesh, including the murder of the 14,000 baby boys that Herod ordered when Jesus was born January 11 (December 29) and the 8-day naming/circumcision of Jesus January 14 (January 1).

A second level of observances during these 12 days are commemorations of people from the earliest decades of the spread of the Christian faith after the death and resurrection of Christ and Pentecost, such as St. Stephen (one of the first of the 7 deacons) who became the first martyr in Christianity January 9 (December 27); and the “seventy” as they are known, these being the 70 apostles that the 12 apostles trained and sent off to travel and preach January 17 (January 4).

The third level of commemorations of these 12 days are for those who in later centuries lived and honored Christ in marvelous ways and became saints of the church, such as St. Melania the Younger, of Rome from the 5th century January 13 (December 31), and St. Basil the Great from the 4th century era January 14 (January 1).

In its development over many centuries, the twelve days of Christmas that we celebrate today have become a theological and historical cornucopia of both the life of Christ and the life of the Church through its Christian Witness.
GRACE, MERCY AND PEACE
FROM THE SAVIOR CHRIST BORN IN BETHLEHEM

Most venerable brothers in Christ and beloved children,

As we journey with the All-Holy Virgin, who comes "to give birth ineffably" to the pre-eternal Word, and as we gaze upon Bethlehem, which prepares itself to receive the holy infant, behold we have once more reached Christmas filled with sentiments of gratitude to the God of love. The journey to this great feast of the nativity in the flesh of the world's Savior was different this year with regard to the outward conditions, resulting from the current pandemic. Our church life and the participation of our faithful in the sacred services, as well as the church's pastoral care and spiritual life in the world were all affected by the repercussions of the related health restrictions. However, all this does not affect the innermost relationship of the faithful with Christ or of our faith in His providence and our devotion to "the one thing that is necessary."

In secularized societies, Christmas has lost its original identity and has been reduced to a celebration of ostentatious consumption and worldliness, without any suspicion that on this holy day we commemorate the "eternal mystery" of the divine incarnation. Today, the proper Christian celebration of Christmas is an act of resistance to the secularization of life and to the dilution or demise of the sense of mystery.

The incarnation of the Word reveals the content, direction, and purpose of human existence. The all-perfect God subsists as perfect man, so that we may be able to exist "in the manner of God." "For God became human in order that we might become deified." In the profound formulation of St. Gregory the Theologian, man is "commanded to become God," "a divinized being." Such is the supreme dignity afforded to humankind, which renders our existence an insurmountable honor. In Christ, all people are called to salvation. Before God, "there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor free man, neither male nor female; for everyone is one in Christ Jesus," according to the divinely inspired theology of the Apostle Paul. This is a decisive reversal in the field of anthropology, the hierarchy of values, and the perception of ethos. Since this time, whosoever insults humankind also deifies God. "For there is nothing as sacred as man, in whose nature God participated."

Christmas constitutes the entire divine-human life of the Church, where Christ is constantly experienced as the One who was, is and will come. The One "in His Mother's embrace" is the One "in the bosom of the Father," the child Jesus is the One who was crucified, resurrected and ascended in glory into the heaven, the righteous judge and the King of glory. It is this inexpressible mystery that we glorify with psalms and hymns, unto which we minister.

The perilous pandemic has shattered much of what we have taken for granted, revealing the limits of the "titanism" of the contemporary "man-god" and demonstrating the power of solidarity. Alongside the indisputable truth that our world comprises a whole, that our problems are common, and that their solution demands a joint action and agenda, what was supremely manifested was the value of the personal contribution, the love of the Good Samaritan, which surpasses every human standard. The Church actively supports – in deed and in word – our suffering brothers and sisters, while praying for them, their relatives and all those responsible for their care, and at the same time proclaiming that the healing of the sick – as a temporary victory over death – pertains to transcendence and to the ultimate abolition of death in Christ.

In this spirit, concelebrating Christmas and the other feasts of the sacred Twelvetide in a God-pleasing manner expresses surrender from what is "mine" for the sake of my brother, seeking the interests of the other and the complete commitment to the suffering one. For this "white cassock" – just as for the clergyman's cassock, since both are symbols of a spirit of sacrifice and service – the inspiration and driving force is love, which is always a gift of divine grace and never exclusively our own achievement.

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In this spirit, concelebrating Christmas and the other feasts of the sacred Twelvetide in a God-pleasing manner with all of you, we pray from our sacred Center of the Phanar that the Savior, who condescended to the human race, may grant you health, love for one another, progress in every good thing, and every blessing from above, on the occasion of the new year that dawns and in all the days of your life. Let it be so!

Christmas 2020

+ Bartholomew of Constantinople
Fervent supplicant for all before God
Всі повноти Церкви, Благодать, міст і мир Від Христа Спасителя надає всій повноті Церкви, Благодать, милість і мир Від Христа Спасителя народженого у Віфлеємі.

Відомо, що Господь, на чиїй ім'я було створено світ, істотно, є Одним. Істинно, він є Всевідомим, його суть існує в безмірності і безмежності. Відомо, що Господь, на чиїй ім'я було створено світ, істотно, є Одним. Істинно, він є Всевідомим, його суть існує в безмірності і безмежності. Відомо, що Господь, на чиїй ім'я було створено світ, істотно, є Одним. Істинно, він є Всевідомим, його суть існує в безмірності і безмежності. Відомо, що Господь, на чиїй ім'я було створено світ, істотно, є Одним. Істинно, він є Всевідомим, його суть існує в безмірності і безмежності. Відомо, що Господь, на чиїй ім'я було створено світ, істотно, є Одним. Істинно, він є Всевідомим, його суть існує в безмірності і безмежності. Відомо, що Господь, на чиїй ім'я було створено світ, істотно, є Одним. Істинно, він є Всевідомим, його суть існує в безмірності і безмежності. Відомо, що Господь, на чиїй ім'я було створено світ, істотно, є Одним. Істинно, він є Всевідомим, його суть існує в безмірності і безмежності. Відомо, що Господь, на чиїй ім'я було створено світ, істотно, є Одним. Істинно, він є Всевідомим, його суть існує в безмірності і безмежності. Відомо, що Господь, на чиїй ім'я було створено світ, істотно, є Одним. Істинно, він є Всевідомим, його суть існує в безмірності і безмежності. Відомо, що Господь, на чиїй ім'я було створено світ, істотно, є Одним. Істинно, він є Всевідомим, його суть існує в безмірності і безмежності. Відомо, що Господь, на чиїй ім'я було створено світ, істотно, є Одним. Істинно, він є Всевідомим, його суть існує в безмірності і безмежності. Відомо, що Господь, на чиїй ім'я було створено світ, істотно, є Одним. Істинно, він є Всевідомим, його суть існує в безмірності і безмежності. Відомо, що Господь, на чиїй ім'я було створено світ, істотно, є Одним. Істинно, він є Всевідомим, його суть існує в безмірності і безмежності. Відомо, що Господь, на чиїй ім'я було створено світ, істотно, є Одним. Істинно, він є Всевідомим, його суть існує в безмірності і безмежності. Відомо, що Господь, на чиїй ім'я було створено світ, істотно, є Одним. Істинно, він є Всевідомим, його суть існує в безмірності і безмежності. Відомо, що Господь, на чиїй ім'я було створено світ, істотно, є Одним. Істинно, він є Всевідомим, його суть існує в безмірності і безмежності. Відомо, що Господь, на чиїй ім'я було створено світ, істотно, є Одним. Істинно, він є Всевідомим, його суть існує в безмірності і безмежності. Відомо, що Господь, на чиїй ім'я було створено світ, істотно, є Одним. Істинно, він є Всевідомим, його суть існує в безмірності і безмежності.
It is a great sorrow to us all, that this year during the celebration of the Nativity holidays we experience a great trial as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. Today our temples are affected by particular restrictions which prevent our faithful from receiving necessary pastoral care. But the great feast which we celebrate, the Nativity of Christ, reminds us of God’s immeasurable love for the human person. “God so loved the World, that He gave His Only-begotten Son, that all who believe in Him should not perish, but have eternal life” (Jn. 3:16).

Out of His great love for His creation, He made this world beautiful. But people often break their unity with God through their sinful life and bring misfortune, sickness, and evil into the world. This pandemic, which has shaken the entire world, calls us as Christians to meditate upon our own personal lives. God would not have permitted this pandemic to attain such world-wide development if it were not a reminder to all the people of the earth.

It is precisely the feast of the Nativity of Christ which witnesses to the fact that God does not leave us without His care. God not only looks after the world as a whole, but after each person individually.

And so may the One born in Bethlehem, the Lord resting in the manger, spur each of us on to consider why we live and what path we are following - the straight path of God, or the crooked path of sin. Faith in God calls all of us to battle with all manner of evil and before anything else with our own personal sin.

During these holy days of the Nativity season let us prayerfully call upon the God-child Christ - our Savior - so that He might protect all of us from this terrible sickness.

We greet all of you with a sincere heart, dear brothers and sisters, with the great and salvific feasts of the Nativity of Christ, the New Year, and the Holy Theophany. We especially greet our youth and children, and all of you God-beloved Christians in the diaspora and in Ukraine.

May the coming new year be for all of us a year of spiritual growth, peace, good health, familial good fortune, and a God-blessed year of good fortune for all people throughout the world.

CHRIST IS BORN! GLORIFY HIM!

With Archpastoral Blessings,

+YURIJ, Metropolitan of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada
+ANTONY, Metropolitan of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA and in the Diaspora
+JEREMIAH, Archbishop of the Ukrainian Orthodox Eparchy of Brazil and South America
+DANIEL, Archbishop of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in the USA and Western Europe
+ILARIO, Bishop of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada
+ANDRIY, Bishop of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada
"Днес вісточервень в світ приєднається Слава Іого!
Майбутнє приєднається Слава Іого!
"Слава, Слава вічна Богу і на землі мир між людьми благоговіння" (Лк. 2,14).

Сьогодні у наших храмах діють певні обмеження, які позбавляють наших вірних належної духовної спілки. Але величе свято, Різдво Христове, яке ми святкуємо наведе нам про безмежну любов Бога до людини. "Бог так полюбив світ, що віддав свого Сина Свого Єдинородного, щоб усій хто вірує в Нього не залюбувся, а має життя ввечері" (Ін. 3,16).

Бог з великою любові до свого творення створив цей світ прекрасним. Але сама людина дуже часто своїм гріховним життям розриває зв'язки з Богом і приносить у світ нещась, хвороби і зло. Саме це епідемія, яка сколихнула усьо світ, заставила нас християн задуматися над своїм освітленням життя. Звинувато Господь не дозволив би ції пандемії отримати такий весівний розвиток, якби вона не мала Божого наполяглення для всіх людей Землі.

І Саме свято Різдво Христове свідчить нам про те, що Бог не залишає нас без свого дотліку. Бог піклується не тільки про весь світ в цілому, але й про кожну людину зокрема.
Тому нейх Народжений у Вифлемі і спочив у яслах Господь, спонукає кожного із нас задуматися, для чого ми живемо і якими дорогами ходимо - прямиким Божими, чи кривими гріховними. Віра в Бога закликає нас боротись зі всілям злом і насамперед з гріхом у самому собі.
У ці свята Різдвяне дні молитовно звертаємося до Богоматері Христія - Спасителька нашого, щоб він оберігав кожного із нас від цілі страшної хвороби.
Від цього серця відповім всім Вас дорогі брати і сестри з великих і Спасенних святіх Різдва Христового, Новому Року і Святим Богоматері, а особливо нашу молодь і дітей, і всіх вас Боголюбивих християн у Діаспорі і в Україні.

Нейх наступаючий Новий Рік буде для всіх нас Роком духовного зростання, спокою, міцного здоров'я, родинного щастя і Богом-благословенним Роком добрій долі для всіх людей у цілому світі.

**Христос Рождається! Славімо Іого!**

З архипастырським благословенням,

† ЮРІЙ, Митрополит Української Православної Церкви Канади
† АНТОНІЙ, Митрополит Української Православної Церкви США і Діаспорі
† СРЄМІЯ, Архієпископ Української Православної Церкви США і Південної Америки
† ДАНИЛІЙ, Архієпископ Української Православної Церкви Ізраїлю
† ПАРДІЮН, Єпископ Української Православної Церкви Канади
Beloved in Christ:

It gives me great pleasure to reach out to all clergy and faithful of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA via Internet and offer prayers and best wishes for a Happy and Blessed New 2021 Year of our Lord!

The celebration of the New Year is a joyous opportunity for all of us in our communities to gather with loved ones and to celebrate the accomplishments of the past year, while prayerfully looking forward into the New Year of blessings and opportunities.

During this Sacred Season of the celebration of the Nativity of our Lord, let us cast our eyes upon Christ our light – the God of glory and light, the God who constantly lightens our way. As we celebrate the great light of Christ among us, let us also give thanks for the other lights that have touched, lit up, and enlightened our own lives. We are blessed to be illuminated by the light of other people: those who give us joy, challenge us, and sometimes call us to conversion. Each person who has touched our heart is a point of light for which we are grateful.

Among all the lights, the light of Christ remains the light of the world. It is because of his light that all the other smaller lights can glow and give us hope.

I pray that God will shower abundant blessings on you and your loved ones at this special time as well as throughout the coming year.

With cordial greetings and the assurance of my prayers, I remain.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ Antony,
By the Grace of God, Metropolitan of the UOC of the USA
My beloved brothers and sisters in Christ:

HAPPY NEW YEAR! З НОВИМ РОКОМ!

We stand at the gateway to a brand New 2021 Year of our Lord. It’s time to look back, look forward, and mostly to live in the present moment.

I hope that you are all filled with optimism for the future, while being content with the present. If you renew your faith in the guiding hand of the Lord’s Divine Providence, and trust Him, then you will find that all your concerns will fade away and angelic peace will take its place.

On behalf of His Eminence Metropolitan Antony, Members of the Council of Metropolia and Consistory, I wish you health, love, and happiness in this New Year and beyond. God bless you always!

+Daniel, by the Grace of God Archbishop and brother in the Lord

As the wise magi had once packed their camels and traveled a long distance to greet the newly born King, so, on Monday, January 4th, His Eminence Archbishop Daniel, Ruling Hierarch of the Western Eparchy of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA, also packed up his supplies, and joined by seven seminarians of the St. Sophia Ukrainian Orthodox Theological Seminary, set out on a thousand-mile journey to greet the Christ Child.

The journey would take them through six states as they made their way with anticipation across the Midwest, traversing mountains, descending into valleys, crossing rivers, driving along toll roads, avenues, and byways, spreading joy everywhere they went. Squeezed into the white seminary van were seminarians Subdeacon Yaroslav Bilohan, Subdeacon Pavlo Vysotskyi, Reader Andrii Vatrich, Mykola Stefanyk, Andriy Akulenko, Bohdan Motychak and Matvii Blyzniuk. For some this was their first time traveling across the United States and they eagerly gazed out the windows enjoying the beautiful vistas, cities, and complexes they passed.

Nearing the western end of Pennsylvania, His Eminence turned right at the Emlenton exit, and after driving a few miles along a twisting picturesque road, he stopped the van at the gates to All Saints Camp. The camp has always been the hub of young Orthodoxy, as generations of faithful attended various summer camps, training sessions, and long holiday weekends at the campsite. However, this year, due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the camp had been idled over the summer.

Getting out of the van to stretch their legs, Archbishop Daniel led the seminarians to the wooden church of St Thomas. To many of the young men, the church’s structure reminded them of many of the churches they had seen in Ukraine. They paused for a moment before the locked doors, bowing their heads in prayer of gratitude and for a safe journey, before continuing along the path to take in the beauty of the grounds. Below them, through the now bare trees, they could see the Allegheny River, cold and gray in the cool winter mist. Walking the path through the woods, everyone stopped before the various icons that have been posted along the way, to pause in prayer. The three new seminarians listened intently as the others told them stories of spending their summers volunteering at the camp. With their cheeks red from the cold breeze, everyone was happy to climb back into the waiting van, and continue on their journey westward, leaving mountainous Pennsylvania, and entering the farm country of...
Ohio. Driving past wide expanses of barren fields, awaiting to burst forth with new crops in a few short months, they might as well have been driving across the vast expense of Ukrainian farmland.

As darkness overtook daylight, the van once again turned off of Interstate 80, and made its way through the brightly lit city of Parma, Ohio, pulling up at the Cathedral of St. Volodymyr. Eagerly awaiting their arrival was Very Rev. Fr. Michael Horbanuk – assistant pastor of the cathedral. Before entering the church, the seminarians paused outside to admire the mosaic of the “Baptism of Ukraine” above the entry doors. As Archbishop Daniel went inside the Altar to pray, the seminarians walked around and admired the iconography and architectural details of the cathedral. To Vladyka Daniel the cathedral holds many memories, as it was at this Altar Table where he was consecrated a bishop on May 10, 2008.

Joining the seminarians, he took a few moments to share his memories of that day with them, recalling how after Vespers, as the faithful who had traveled from across the nation to share in the event, had left for the evening, he spent the night locked inside the church, deep in prayer and contemplation.

Early Tuesday morning, January 5th, before continuing their journey, His Eminence met with Protodeacon Ihor Mahlay, President of the St. Andrew Society. During the meeting they discussed the various charitable projects the Church would undertake in 2021. With the new agenda solidified, Archbishop Daniel and the seminarians bid farewell to Parma, Ohio, and continued westward.

January 6th, the Eve of the Nativity, found the intrepid travelers pulling into Bensenville, Illinois, at the Holy Trinity Ukrainian Orthodox Church. Entering the church, Archbishop Daniel was warmly greeted by parish priest Very Rev. Fr. Bohdan Kalnychytn, and assistant pastor, Very Rev. Fr. Andrii Shelvakht.

Great Compline began with Fr. Bohdan standing before the Royal Gates, in the darkened name, as the “Six Psalms” were read. “I lie down in peace and sleep comes at once, for you alone, Lord, make me dwell in safety.” (Psalm 4) These six Psalms are grouped together and are significant, for Tradition teaches us that these will be the Psalms that will be sung by the angels during the Last Judgment. As the words of the Psalms echoed off the cavernous walls, the faithful stood silently and listened keenly to the words, contemplating their own mortality and eternal salvation.

With the completion of the Six Psalms, the choir sang, “God is with us! Understand, all ye nations, and submit yourselves, For God is with us.” With this the Royal Gates opened and His Eminence Archbishop Daniel, along with the clergy, seminarians, and servers, proceeded to the narthex. From the back of the church, His Eminence prayed not only for those present within the church, but, for the entire world.

As the solemn service came to an end, the clergy made their way to the front of the nave, where the Troparian of the feast was sung, and bread, wheat, wine, and oil were blessed, signifying the blessing of all the world’s goods: “Lord Jesus Christ our God, you blessed the five loaves in the wilderness and fed the five thousand. Likewise bless these loaves, wheat, wine, and oil, and multiply them in this city and through your whole world. Sanctify your faithful who will partake of them, for you yourself bless and sanctify all things, O Christ our God, and we give glory to you with your eternal Father and your all-holy, good, and life-creating Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.”

At the conclusion of the service, His Eminence came down to stand in the middle of the nave, to address the faithful. Whether they wore masks, or were maskless, His Eminence stated that it is important that these masks work to keep the wearer safe from viral infection, and yet we must be watchful of spiritual infection that might be caused by the pandemic, as well. People are losing their humanity, becoming more focused on themselves, and oblivious of others around them. We need conquer our fear, and with joy greet each other, reach out to others, and spread the Good News of Christ's birth.

Having completed his sermon, His Eminence stepped back to the ambo, from where he greeted each individual who came up, anointing them with holy oil. With smiles and happy hearts, the faithful hurried to their homes, so they could enjoy the Christmas Eve Lenten meal (Svyata Vecherya).

They had one more stop to make before resting that evening. Climbing back into the van, the group traveled to Palos Park, Illinois, where they arrived at Sts. Peter & Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church, just as their Christmas Eve service was concluding. His Eminence entered the beautifully decorated church and spent some time with the faithful there.

Hosting His Eminence and the seminarians for the Holy Christmas Supper in their home was Fr. Vasyl Sendeha and Dobrodijka Olenka along with their children Antony, David and Amilia. Following Ukrainian tradition, the guests enjoyed 12 lenten dishes lovingly prepared by the family, starting with Kutia, and ending with Uzvar. The evening concluded with everyone joyously singing kolyadyk (Christmas Carols) before retiring for a good night’s sleep.

Christmas morning found the sun shining brightly despite the chill breezes. Walking down the sidewalk of Chicago on their way to the St. Volodymyr Ukrainian Orthodox Cathedral, His Eminence Archbishop Daniel was serenaded by birds who oblivious to the cold chirped happily in the trees. Ascending the steps to the church, Archbishop Daniel was warmly greeted at the door by parish pastor, Very Rev. Fr. Ivan Lymar, and assistant pastor Very Rev. Fr. Mykola Lymar, along with Protodeacon Andrii Fronchak.

His Vestments shining brightly in the sun’s rays that poured through the stained-glass windows. His Eminence Archbishop Daniel stepped to the center of the Nave voice resonating through the cavernous cathedral, “Blessed
is our God, now and always, and onto the ages of ages!” The Divine Liturgy ebbed and flowed, as the choir sang, and the faithful prayed. The interior of the cathedral sparkled and glowed, the lights twinkling merrily upon the decorated Christmas trees. As the service continued, the church filled as people flocked to celebrate the incarnation of the Lord.

Having read the Gospel, His Eminence descended the steps of the solea and stood once again in the midst of the faithful. Archbishop Daniel explained that the Magi had traveled to greet the newborn King, and gave Him three gifts – Gold, Frankincense, and Myrrh. The Gold represents eternity, for Christ is the Eternal King. The Myrrh represents the suffering and sacrifice, and eventual death Christ will endure. The Frankincense represented Christ’s priestly status.

While we are not the wise men, we nonetheless also have three gifts to give the Child. We are to offer Him our own suffering/sacrifice, prayers and our desire to touch each other’s hearts during this pandemic. For when we help someone in need, we gift them Christ, and we gift our kindness to Christ.

Vladyka Daniel commented that the angels told the shepherds of the new joy that has occurred. We need to stay faithful to this Joy. The word itself, JOY, tells us what is required of us. “J” – instructs us to put “Jesus” first, followed by O – putting “Others” next, ending with “Y” – putting ourselves (you) last.

Archbishop Daniel asked that even though we are living in unprecedented times of a pandemic, that we not forget who we are, and that as we celebrate the Nativity, that we put others ahead of ourselves. Many people are lonelier than ever these days, shut away in their homes, with little to no social interaction. Therefore, it is crucial that we reach out to them. We need to call, write, livestream, facetime, text, use whatever means necessary to touch the lives of others, letting them know they are not forgotten.

Today, the Christ Child, who is celebrating His Birthday, does not ask for a gift of electronics, or toys, or gadgets… but, for the gift of our hearts. Today, the Child embraces us all from the manger, and asks that we embrace each other.

Before concluding his sermon, Archbishop Daniel took a moment to greet those who had joined the Divine Liturgy via the LIVESTREAM, including people throughout the U.S.A, Ukraine, South America, Australia, etc. Assuring everyone of his continued prayers, that the Lord keep everyone safe for all harm, he expressed his gratitude to all who were joining in these prayers, and wished them all happiness and joy, asking once again that they proudly and loudly proclaim to all the world that Christ is Born!

The Liturgy continued, as the faithful approached to partake of the Holy Eucharist. First in line where the squirming and giggling children, who with wide smiles opened wide to happily receive the Body and Blood of Christ, followed by the adults.

As the service concluded, the choir sang Christmas Carols, as the faithful lines up to get anointed by His Eminence. Having partaken of the Eucharist, after fasting throughout the St. Philip Fast, it was now time to break the fast. Everyone filed into the parish hall to enjoy a tasty lunch. During the luncheon the guests were entertained by a Vertep and short program put on the parish children. Soon everyone was laughing and singing, as tears of joy flowed down their cheeks.

All too soon the festivities concluded. However, the faithful were re-energized. Ready to go back out into the cold world, and warmly proclaim the Birth of Christ, the Birth of Salvation.

January 8th is the celebration of the Most Holy Mother-of-God, the Synaxis of the Virgin Mary. The Synaxis encompasses all the celebrations dedicated to her. Wearing blue vestments in honor of the Theotokos, His Eminence along with the Seminarians were greeted by Fr. Vasyl Sendeha, of Sts. Peter & Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church, where they would celebrate this day together. Seeing her beloved bishop, the youngest of the Sendeha family, little Amilia, came running to His Eminence and gave him a warm hug, squealing happily as he tickled her. That is the joy the world needs. The innocent joy of a child.

During his sermon this day, Vladyka explained the significance the Virgin Mary plays in our salvation story. Had she lost courage and said “no”, we would not be standing here today. But, the young woman that she was at the time, had enough faith in God, to speak a resounding “yes” to Archangel Gabriel, accepting the responsibility the Lord was offering her.

Our spiritual history is rife with heroism that we hardly give a second thought to. The young Mary agreed to be impregnated of the Holy Spirit, which could have been disastrous for a single woman in those times. The elderly widowed Joseph realizing this young woman was pregnant, may have ignored the vision the angel gave him in his dreams, and put her aside, exposing her to societal judgment, but, he did not. He had faith. So many people had faith, and acted upon it, so that we could be here today, with the hope of salvation.

His Eminence, holding an iPad referenced the modern Christmas Carol, “Mary Did You Know”, by Pentatonix. This song, in its lyrics, explains the touching reality of the young Mary’s acceptance of the Will of God.

Mary, did you know that your baby boy - Would one day walk on water?
Mary, did you know that your baby boy - Would save our sons and daughters?
Did you know that your baby boy - Has come to make you new?
This child that you delivered, will soon deliver you.
Mary, did you know that your baby boy - Would give sight to a blind man?
Mary, did you know that your baby boy - Would calm the storm with his hand?
Did you know that your baby boy -
Has walked where angels trod?

When you kiss your little baby -
You kiss the face of God

Mary, did you know? The blind will see, the deaf will hear, The dead will live again

The lame will leap, the dumb will speak, The praises of the Lamb

Mary, did you know that your baby boy - Is Lord of all creation?

Mary, did you know that your baby boy - Would one day rule the nations?

Did you know that your baby boy - Is heaven’s perfect Lamb?

That sleeping child you’re -
Holding
is the great, I AM

Archbishop asked that we all have such faith. It was not “easy” for her, and life, especially in a pandemic, is not easy for us. However, with faith in God, we must move forward, and live our lives, and with our lives proclaim the love of Christ.

As the Divine Liturgy continued, the sounds of children’s soft voices could be heard, as they cooed and giggled, tumbling over to the colorful Christmas trees that decorated the Nave. The church verily shown with joy, as the candlelight bounced off all the baubles and decorations. The wreaths decorating the doors and windows, hung heavy with red ornaments that glowed in the morning sunshine. The entire interior appeared otherworldly, as the faithful contemplated His Eminence’s words, realizing the strong faith and sacrifice the Virgin Mary had made.

At the conclusion of the service, His Eminence once again took a moment to speak to the faithful, assuring them that today, as we celebrate the Holy Mother-of-God, we give ourselves over to her protection, her intervention, her preoccupation with our well-being and salvation. With final words, His Eminence blessed the crowd, and prayed that the Holy Theotokos keep everyone safe beneath her Holy Veil.

Saturday morning, January 9th, found the occupants of the white seminary van back on the road, this time heading east, as the Magi who had found and worshipped the Christ Child, had embarked on their long journey home. Just as the wisemen had taken a different route home, so did the van. Even though they were tired, they were still singing Christmas Carols as they crossed the border out of Illinois and turned northward, into the State of Michigan, heading to the Cathedral of the Protection of the Mother-of-God, in Southfield which last year celebrated their 70th jubilee.

Taking advantage of the earlier pandemic lockdown, and the restrictions placed on occupancy, the parish board decided this was the perfect opportunity to work on some long overdue renovations. The Cathedral, which had been suffering a leaky roof for several years, was getting a facelift. In addition to fixing the ceiling, the walls were newly painted, new floors were laid, and now was the time to add some iconography to the
baren walls. This required the input of an expert, and the parish pastor, Very Rev. Paul Bodnarchuk, along with parish board president, Iryna Smyk-Bickerstaff, eagerly awaited the arrival of Archbishop Daniel, so that they could make plans for the second part of the parish renewal.

Being warmly greeted at the door, His Eminence walked into the cavernous interior of the cathedral, admiring the marble flooring and heavenly blue walls. His Eminence met with Fr. Paul and discussed various ideas with the parish board members. With everyone on the same page, and eager to begin the iconography of the cathedral, Archbishop Daniel and the seminarians stopped by the parish hall to do that which they do best – inspire through example.

No stranger to the poverty in Detroit, His Eminence had seen first-hand during a previous visit to the parish how the homeless shelter beneath a local bridge, over the famous 8 Mile Road. Wishing to once again visit the same page, and eager to begin the second part of the parish renewal.

CHRISTMAS AT THE SEMINARY

As night fell on the chilly winter day, as the world celebrated St. Nicholas Day, fluffy white snowflakes danced on a cool breeze as the first stars of the evening began to twinkle in the heavens. The darkening landscape of the Metropolia Center of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA was a beacon of light in the growing darkness, as the deep blues of the evening were illuminated by a warm and welcoming glow of lights from the St. Sophia Ukrainian Orthodox Theological Seminary building. Among the softly glowing colored lights that cheerfully decorated the outside of the building, the windows glowed with a warm and welcoming brightness, as sounds of joy and laughter could be heard emanating from inside.

Making their grand entrance, Pavlo and Andrii, dressed in their embroidered Ukrainian shirts looked around and gestured for the young men to remove their cassocks and relax as they sang more casual Christmas tunes. Heeding their advice, the young men removed their formal black cassocks, and stood resplendent in their colorful vyshyvanky, representing not only their Faith, but pride in their heritage, as they loudly belted out a traditional Ukrainian tune – “Dobrij Vechir Tobi, Pane Hospodaru” (Good Evening to you, Lord of the house). This carol is customarily the first one sung upon entering someone’s home at Christmastime, as the lyrics greet the homeowner with the Nativity of Christ and foretell the preparation for the upcoming seasonal festivities and celebrations – Feast Day of St. Basil and Theophany.

“Dear brothers and sisters, as the brightest and most joyous holiday approaches, the birth of Christ, a holiday when the world overflows with love, we know that the Star of Bethlehem’s light will illuminate our souls, renew our hope, strengthen our faith, igniting the rays of love within our hearts. On this glorious occasion,” continued Subdeacon Yaroslav Bilohan, “we...
wish everyone to fill their lives with positive thoughts and the realization that Christ is born!"

As he wished everyone good health, the choir broke out in a joyous rendition of “Oy, Khto, Khto, Mykolya Lyubit” (Oh, Who, Who, Likes Saint Nicholas).

Andriy Akulenko proclaimed that the star in the heavens glowed brightly, greeting everyone with the birth of Christ. He stated that faith and hope were renewed in everyone’s hearts, and that as the shepherds prayed that night, the Christ Child this evening visits everyone’s homes.

As the hymn “Heaven and Earth” was sung, reminding us that both the angels and all creation rejoice as the Lord incarnates for the salvation of man, voices were heard throughout the building as they sang “Dnieper Music” for doing such a fine job.

With the conclusion of the introductions, Mykola Stefanyk, recited a Christmas poem, expressing good tidings of the Birth of Christ, which was followed by a moving carol – “U Viflyemi Novyna” (There is news in Bethlehem). The seminarians then sang, “Glory in the highest” - all singing out. Andriy Vatrych expressed his heartfelt welcome, expressing good tidings of the Birth of Christ, which was followed by a moving carol – “U Viflyemi Novyna” (There is news in Bethlehem).

Subdeacon Myrosław Mykytyuk recited a Christmas poem:

*Bright Christmas star shines on high*  
*Golden stars in the winter sky*  
*Christmas candles, In windows bright*  
*Send warm greetings into the night…*

His Eminence expressed gratitude to everyone for finding the time to join the Seminary Concert, especially the over 100 individuals who were currently watching over the Facebook LIVESTREAM. He also expressed his gratitude for the Lewytskyj Scholarship Fund, named for Very Rev. Volodymyr and Dobry Halyna Lewytskyj, administered by Luba Lewytskyj. This fund offers scholarships and permits many of the young men to follow their calling to become clergy in Christ’s Holy Church.

The seminarians then sang, “Starij Reek Mynaye” (The Old Year Passes) as Pavlo Vysotskyi recited a Christmas poem, expressing good tidings of the Birth of Christ, which was followed by a moving carol – “U Viflyemi Novyna” (There is news in Bethlehem).

Matvii Blyzniukread a heartfelt poem on doing good deeds in the coming year, as the seminarians finished the evening with the words “and with these words, remain healthy, Oh Rejoice! Rejoice Oh Earth, for the Son of God is born!”

Before concluding the program, His Eminence Archbishop Daniel gestured to the numerous packages and boxes that were stacked in the building as they sang “Dnieper Music” for doing such a fine job.

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His Eminence explained that the Seminary currently has 30 students, the 8 resident students from Ukraine that everyone just met, plus another 22 Distance Learning students from various parts of the U.S.

Archbishop Daniel held up the newly produced Seminary Christmas Carol CD, explaining that all the songs heard this night, plus many more, are available for purchase via the website. While all the American Christmas Carols are nice, there is something special to sing the ages old, traditional Ukrainian melodies, sung by our ancestors.

As the camera panned out, the seminarians voices softly sang “Nova Radiat Stala” (A New Joy). Softly their voices faded, as the camera focused on the twinkling star shining brightly above the Christmas Tree.

As the program concluded, the songs remained in the air... being sung by all the listeners for the rest of that evening, and playing again in their heads as they drifted peacefully off to sleep, dreaming of peace on earth, and good will towards men.

CD may be purchased online: www.uocfulsa.org/stophia

Watch the taped performance on YouTube
On Saint Nicholas Day, feeling uplifted after the Divine Liturgy, His Eminence Archbishop Daniel entered the atrium of the Consistory Office building and was met by a stately green Christmas tree standing in the center of the room. While beautiful in its majesty, decked in colored lights, the tree was lacking color and sparkle. The situation was soon remedied, as His Eminence reached over and began rifling through the box of ornaments that had been lovingly created and sent to him over the previous many weeks. Next to the box of ornaments from previous years, this year’s creations submitted by Mrs. Irene Mizuk from Port Orange, Florida, as well as the Pavlykivsky, and Pasakas families, twinkled and glimmered, as gems, jewels and glitter reflected the light from the tree.

As Archbishop Daniel pulled out one, and then another, ornament and stood admiring the handiwork, the hushed silence was soon broken by the giggles, squeals, and laughter of little children as they came tumbling through the door. Invited to help decorate the tree were the families of the Metropolia Center:

- Vasyl, Dobrodijka Oksana, Jacob, Emilia and Taissa Pasakas
- Vasyl, Dobrodijka Olena, Roman, and Victoria Shak
- Sviatoslav, Dobrodijka Victoria, Arsenii Hot

In no time at all the tree looked resplendent, dazzling, dripping with colorful and bright ornaments. As the baubles and decorations were hung, the atrium echoed with song, as everyone joyously sang Christmas Carols. With smiles and laughter, everyone took a step back to admire the beauty before them. His Eminence called to the children...
to get their attention, and asked them if they knew the song sung for Saint Nicholas “Ой хто, хто, Миколая Люби ти!” “Oh who, who, loves Nicholas!”. All the kids began jumping up and down waving their hands and screaming “I do! I do! I know it!”.

With a grin, Archbishop Daniel quieted them down, and asked them together to sing the song. As the sweet high-pitched voices began to sing the verses, the littlest ones just stood with eyes shining… when suddenly the door opened, and to everyone’s surprise Saint Nicholas himself entered the building.

He proclaimed loudly “Glory to Jesus Christ!” and then turning quickly to the children, asked them if they had been nice this year. Did they listen to their parents? Did they clean their rooms? What about vegetables, had they eaten their vegetables? Most importantly, had they said their prayers each day?

As the children squirmed under his gaze, St. Nick burst out in loud laughter as he motioned for the kids to come forward for a big hug. With the kids crowding around him, Svyatij Mykolaj reached deep into the bag he had brought with him, and slowly pulled out gifts for each child present. Soon the tidy atrium was littered with wrapping paper and boxes, and Christmas Carols were replaced with laughter and the happy sound of children playing.

Before leaving them, Saint Nicholas gave them advice for the future year – to be good boys and girls, to pray daily, and to obey their parents, and then he asked them to join him at a table which was set up in the adjoining room, where they could enjoy a warm pizza with their parents.

As the sun set that evening, and the atrium darkened, the tree stood proudly, twinkling brightly, as if the heavens themselves had descended upon the building. As the children’s voices waned in the distance, and echoes of the carols continued to swirl in the air, the decorated tree was ready and waiting to celebrate the upcoming Nativity of the Lord, and to hear the proclamation that “Christ is Born!”

Photos by Subdeacon Yaroslav Bilohan

On Monday, January 5, 2021 His Eminence Archbishop Daniel met with the President of St. Andrew Ukrainian Orthodox Society (Central Organization of the UOC of the USA) and the director of the Consistory Office of Christian Charity – Protodeacon Ihor Mahlay. The meeting took place in Independence, OH, as Archbishop Daniel traveled to Chicago, IL for the celebration of the Glorious Feast of the Nativity of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

During the morning meeting, Protodeacon Ihor and Vladyka Daniel reviewed various charitable projects of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA that were successfully completed in 2020. Among those are: The assistance efforts to Znamyanka Children’s Orphanage, where the Church continues to sponsor several Special Education teachers who work closely with the handicapped children; Food assistance to those in need during COVID-19 pandemic at the Metropolia Center and across the US; Aid to Soup Kitchens in Kyiv via cooperation with the Social Services of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine; Assistance to wounded soldiers of the ongoing Russian aggression in Eastern Ukraine; assistance to Mariupol (Eastern Ukraine) Elderly Care Center; aid to the Flood Victims in Western Ukraine, St. Sophia Seminary scholarships via Protopresbyter Wolodymyr and Pani-matka Halyna Lewytskyi, etc.

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During the lengthy discussion, a proposed plan was developed for the presentation and approval to the Consistory of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA. Most of the charitable projects that were completed in 2020 are being considered for the implementation in 2021, following the budgetary meeting of the Council of Metropolia of the Church.

In conclusion of the meeting, Vladyka Daniel, speaking on behalf of His Eminence Metropolitan Antony and the members of the Consistory of the UOC of the USA, offered gratitude to Protodeacon Ihor Mahlay and the entire membership of St. Andrew’s Society of the UOC of the USA for their devotion to the charitable mission of the Church.
In his most recent post on Facebook, His Eminence Archbishop Daniel reflected upon the ministry of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA with the following statement:

"Time flies so fast... years go by... but the LOVE we share with the children of Znamyanka Orphanage is ETERNAL... I am grateful for the opportunity to deliver financial assistance on behalf of the faithful and the clergy of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA to Znamyanka Orphanage in Ukraine, under the leadership of Tatyana Ivanivna Valko..."

For the past twenty-four years, the UOC of the USA continues to offer spiritual and financial assistance to Znamyanka Children's Orphanage in Kirovohrad region in Ukraine. The Church has offered assistance to various orphanages in the past, providing the most necessary medical equipment, toys and closing, etc. Out of five orphanages that the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA ministered to in the past, Znamyanka orphanage was the first institution that the Church worked through the facilitation of the Children of Chornobyl Relief and Development Fund (cared for by Dr. Zenon and Pani Nadia Matkivskys).

During his most recent trip to Ukraine, December 21-23, 2020 – Archbishop Daniel delivered financial assistance from the faithful of the Church for the most necessary repairs of the heating pipes in the orphanage. Moreover, the Church continues to provide financial assistance to several Special Needs Instructors at the facility, by providing their salaries for the entire year of work.

If you would like to make a donation to the Orphanage Fund of the UOC of the USA, please do so via Donations page on the web site or by mailing your donation to:

UOC of the USA
PO Box 495
South Bound Brook, NJ
In the freezing subzero temperatures, the gaily decorated trees, their lights twinkling, flanked the wide avenues of Kyiv, giving a sense of joy and Christmas merriment in the capital city of Ukraine.

Yet, first impressions are often misleading. Underneath the façade of holiday cheer, as people around the world were making their shopping lists, purchasing gifts for their loved ones, planning exquisite meals... the people in Kyiv were also gathering. However, they were not gathering to sing Christmas Carols, or to watch a light show... they were not united in frivolity, but, in hunger, anguish, worry, and great need. The elderly, the disenfranchised, the unemployed... all came together in search of a meal to temporarily quiet their hunger pangs and sustain them for one more day upon this earth.

The elderly wrinkled faces, eyes that had once softly gazed upon loved ones, now shown with tears of desperation. Trembling hands that had once tenderly caressed the cheeks of infants, that had strained and worked hard to feed their families, now timidly reached out for a slice of bread. Shuffling feet that had once raced to hug a crying child, had walked miles in the snow to get to work, now stood...
in shabby torn boots, waiting upon the mercy of others.

The need is great, and therefore, representing His Eminence Metropolitan Antony, Prime Hierarch of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA, His Eminence Archbishop Daniel, Ruling Hierarch of the Western Eparch of the UOC of the USA, had traveled halfway across the globe to help alleviate the abject misery of these people.

The UOC of the USA, often working through the St. Andrew Society which just recently provided aid to the elderly in Mariupol, diligently cares for people in need, whether they are near or far. This time the outcry came for the historic city of Kyiv, and the Church did not ignore it.

With the blessing of Metropolitan Antony of the UOC of the USA, and Metropolitan Epiphany, Prime Hierarch of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine, this common Social Service project of both Churches, works tirelessly to assist the hungry, to give them hope once more, and to not only nourish their souls, but, also their bodies.

Working under the coordination of Roman Kholodov, along with the students of the Kyiv Theological Academy of the OCU, meals are offered biweekly – each Tuesday and Thursday. This Tuesday, Archbishop Daniel, joined the humanitarian workers to assist and alleviate the worries of these people, if only for a moment. Putting on a brave face, he passed out cups of milk, warm soup, tea, waffles, and cheesecake. High caloric items are not a luxury, but a need in order to ward off the cold, and keep the bodies from freezing.

Standing patiently in line, people tried not to make eye contact. They were embarrassed, not used to asking for assistance. Seeing that the crowd was feeling utterly disheartened, Archbishop Daniel, walked up to them and began speaking with each person, giving them value, and assuring them that they were not invisible, but, were seen, were important, and were loved. While not able to touch or hug the people, being respective of social distancing due to the pandemic, His Eminence nonetheless was able to touch the hearts and warm the souls of those who eagerly came closer to him, to hear him speak.

His voice brought the people out of their gloom, as they lifted their eyes in wonder. His Eminence had a kind word for the elderly gentleman who having gratefully accepted the food, opted to hide it away in his pockets to take home and share with his family. Archbishop Daniel joked with the elderly grandmother, whose fingers poked out of the holes in her worn mittens, as she took a tentative bite of cheesecake, her eyes crinkling in a smile, as she explained to His Eminence how she had often baked cheesecake for her husband.

Ivan, a grandfather of five, flashed a toothless smile, as he took a sip of hot tea, hugging it close to his chest in an attempt to warm himself, while two elderly ladies, arms locked together for warmth and safety, each graciously accepted the food items, wishing God’s blessings upon those who served them.

Archbishop Daniel seemed to endlessly be handing out warm cups of tea, wrapped waffles, and bread, with each item of food, giving an encouraging word to the recipient, and quietly uttering a prayer for their wellbeing. The line of shivering individuals ebbed and flowed until finally everyone was fed.

Himself shivering, with a heavy heart having seen such hunger in the people of his ancestral homeland, Archbishop Daniel walked through the plaza, stopping here and there to speak with individuals who had wondered off to sip their hot tea. This once great and struggling land, that had survived a tragic history, genocidal famines, and wars, was once again facing hardship. However, hope existed, as the true worth of any nation is measured by how they care for the least of their citizens.

Having distributed 250 meals that evening, the humanitarian effort was not yet over. In the freezing wind, many people seek shelter in the underground subways and railroad stations, trying to find respite from the blistering cold outside. At midnight, additional food distributions begin in these very locations.

The Church does not wait for the people to come to her for help, but, goes to the people. As Christ went among the most derelict and needy of society, so the Church goes as well, to aid those in need.

A huge “Thank You” to the people of God – the people of the UOC of the USA, for generously donating, praying, and caring for the needy around the world.

A giving hand is a blessing hand. Let us continue to bless and thereby ourselves be the recipients of the GRACE of the Holy Spirit.

Photos by Rev. Deacon Andriy Sydor - Архієпископ Андрій Сидор
ARCHBISHOP DANIEL AND SEMINARIANS OF ST. SOPHIA SEMINARY OFFER ASSISTANCE TO THE HOMELESS POPULATION OF DETROIT METROPOLITAN AREA

“I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit... By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.” (John 15:5-8)

Today, the Lord’s words were manifested as His branches bore much fruit.

It is easy to get lost and discouraged in this world. We are living through unprecedented times. The COVID-19 Pandemic has brought added stress to already fragile lives. People for the first time are experiencing isolation due to the lockdown. They are lonely, scared, and crave the human touch. Political upheaval, civil unrest, and unemployment only add to the burden people bare.

However, no matter how dark are the clouds that roll in, there is always light above them. While we cannot fix all the world’s woes, cannot stop wars, douse the flames of hatred, quiet the spiritual storm that overtakes the nation... we can bring peace, solace, and comfort to those within our reach. If we all made an effort, the Vine would be heavy laden with fruit, which would nourish the world.

Leading by example, was His Eminence Archbishop Daniel, Ruling Hierarch of the Western Eparchy of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA. Traveling through the Midwest as he made his way back to New Jersey having celebrated the Nativity of Christ with the Chicago Deanery, His Eminence made a quick detour to visit the Southfield parish of The Protection of the Mother-of-God (Pokrova). While there he filled backpacks with the most basic of necessities, which most take for granted. Aided by the Seminarians of the Saint Sophia Ukrainian Orthodox Theological Seminary - Subdeacon Yaroslav Bilohan, Subdeacon Pavlo Vysotskyi, Reader Andrii Vatrich, Mykola Stefanyk, Andriy Akulenko, Bohdan Motschak, Matvii Blyzniuk and Elizabeth Symonenko, Archbishop Daniel carefully packed each bag with the items. Socks to keep the cold feet of the homeless warm, caps to keep their heads safe from the cold, gloves and handwarmers, chapstick, hand sanitizers, protein bars, chocolate bars, cups of cereal, Kleenex, sanitary wipes, and flashlights to keep them safe in the darkness of inner Detroit.

Loading up the Seminary Van, the group headed south towards Detroit, stopping at various locations where the homeless tend to gather. Sadly, those in need can usually be found haunting the cavernous expanses beneath tall concrete bridges, the pylons offering a windbreak and a place to pitch their tents, erect makeshift shelters, and gather with others in the same situation for safety.

Spotting a lone figure huddle against the cold, Archbishop Daniel stopped the van beneath one such bridge, jumped out of the van, and assisted by the seminarians, grabbed the colorful sacks of kindness, and began to pass them out to the men who were congregating there. The disheveled figures, like specters began to emerge from the shadows, drawn to the light that emanated from the kind gesture. Someone actually cared enough to gift them care packages. These seeming specters, where not ghosts, but were humans, each with their own history, and story of woe that brought them to this cold, dark place.

Disregarding their less than stellar appearance, His Eminence handed out the packages to everyone, pausing to share a kind word of encouragement with each. Some of the men immediately opened the packages and began to rummage through them. One man spied the flashlight, looked up with tears in his eyes and stated, “My prayers have been answered. I have been waiting for months for someone to give me a flashlight.” We cannot imagine the horrors of walking the dangerous, cold streets at night, the streetlights being blown out, in complete darkness, not knowing if danger lurks around the next corner.

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As the cold wind blew, Archbishop Daniel spotted a slight movement inside one of the tents. Walking up to it, he tapped on the entrance flap and called out to the occupant. Receiving no reply, he nonetheless, lovingly placed one of the care packages just outside the tent for the person inside to find when they emerged.

The final recipient was a woman named Kristin. She asked for a second parcel for her husband, Charlie, who was looking for charitable donations at the other corner. This woman who was in her thirties, but, looked like she was in her fifties, glorified God for the small kindness shown to her. She explained that both she and her husband had lost their jobs during the pandemic, and without an income they now lost their home and found themselves on the street. Then she gently patted her belly, and said she wished for a better world before her child was born. Kristin's child is due to be born in early June.

With final furtive glances in farewell, and promising to pray for them, Archbishop Daniel and the seminarians returned to the van, and slowly drove away. While they had helped a few people, it was less than even a drop in the bucket of need. There is such desperation in the world, so many people suffering.

Everyone in the van remained silent, contemplating what they had seen, and reassessing what is truly necessary in this world. Those people existed, but, were they living? They recalled the words of Christ, as He said that "the poor you will always have with you." (Matthew 26:11) Why is that? Why must there always be poor people?

Breaking the silence in the van, His Eminence explained that in the parable of the Rich Man and the Beggar, Christ explained how the poor man, Lazarus, lay at the gate of the rich man. The wealthy man passed by the beggar daily, and simply ignored his pleas. When both died, the rich man saw Lazarus resting on Abraham's loin, while he suffered in the incessant heat. This story only confirms that while the rich man did not actually do harm to the beggar, he also did no good to him. Therefore, the poor are an opportunity for those with means to work out their own salvation.

"Whoever is kind to the poor, lends to the Lord..." (Proverbs 19:17)

It is our Christian duty to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, etc. Archbishop Daniel did not miss the teaching opportunity, and instructed the young seminarians, to always keep this in mind. Christ came to serve others, and therefore as His followers, how can we do anything less?

We must keep our eyes open and search out the opportunities to do good in this world. If everyone took care of the people within a mile radius from them, then everyone would feel loved and more secure, and everyone would feel the embrace of Christ through the acts of kindness of His followers.

Therefore, fearlessly go out into the darkness, and be the beacon of light to all those around you. By alleviating humanities physical needs, you will fulfill their spiritual needs as well, and guide them towards salvation.

"Books and Blankets Sharing the Love of Christ with the Youngest Patients"

On a cold and gloomy winter’s day, filled with fear, uncertainty, and sadness, a chime of bells, and a spark of light dispelled the dark, if for a moment, bringing with it warmth, love, and Christ.

For weeks Lily Powers, the President of the JrUOL Chapter of the Protection of the Mother of God (Pokrova) Ukrainian Orthodox Cathedral in Southfield, Michigan, collected books and blankets for the young patients at Children's Hospital of Michigan-Detroit.

It is always difficult to be ill, in pain, and in a hospital. It is even harder during a pandemic, especially if you are a child whose family members are not permitted to visit, a child who cannot congregate with other children in the hospital, a child who cannot share toys, crayons, or puzzles, and a child who is forbidden from sharing books out of fear of spreading the COVID-19 virus.

Children's Hospital is no stranger to Lily’s family, as weeks after being born, her eldest brother’s life was saved by the doctors at the facility. Therefore, when she heard that the children who were found themselves as patients during the holiday season, had no distractions from their woes, nothing personal to comfort them, and little to cheer their lonely hearts, Lily jumped into action. This was something that could be remedied.

She immediately reached out to her parish, asking for donations of
children’s books, and blankets, that each child could call their own. A fuzzy, colorful, warm blanket for them to cuddle with. A story to take them away from the buzzing and beeping of machines, the aches and pains, to far away sunny shores, or to fly up to the heavens and explore the stars, or burrow with bunnies beneath the earth.

In addition to asking her parish for assistance in this project, she turned to Stoney Creek High school, in Rochester, Michigan, where she is a senior this year, soliciting donations from the KeyClubSCHS, and the SCHS National Honor Society, as well as reaching out to various business downtown which permitted her to leave collection boxes at their locations.

She went home and pulled clothing out of her closet to sell and make a few extra dollars to purchase crayons and coloring books, puzzles, books and blankets. One evening as she sat mesmerized by the twinkling lights upon the Christmas tree new ideas came to mind. Why not make this an event? Something that would bring them joy, and let them know they are not forgotten behind the metal and sterile doors.

As nobody was permitted entry to the hospital, Lily reached out to Derhun Sanders, director of “Dunamis Outreach Ministries”, who created a music video that would be piped to the monitors in the patient’s rooms. The short 10-minute video featured puppets, and families, dancing, singing, and bringing joy and laughter to the screen.

To add just a bit more sparkle to the event, Lieutenant James Harris of the Detroit Fire Department, was contacted to organize a drive-by. The sirens and flashing lights of the firetrucks would announce the start of the festivities. Carolers outside, moonbeams sparkling through the windows, joyous singing on the monitors, as gifts were delivered to the bedbound children.

As the weeks went by and the plans were solidified, Lily was just a bit concerned as the donations of books and blankets was sparse to say the least. Convincing herself that there was still time, and they would gather enough to cheer the almost 200 children, she nonetheless, kindly reminded people of the need and the joy that these items would bring.

Suddenly, one Sunday morning, her church collection box was filled with colorful blankets and a myriad of books, with additional cash donations allowing her to purchase even more items. People had not only opened their wallets, but had opened their hearts, filling the bin with adventure books, mystery books, number books, picture books, books for the young, as well as for the teenager. Cozy blankets, begging to be wrapped around a cold body, were decorated with stars and bows, firetrucks, and unicorns.

That afternoon, having dropped off the church donations at home, as the fluffy snow began to cover the streets, Lily made her rounds collecting the donated items from the various locations. It had become dark before she reached the school. Debating whether to brave the snow and stop by the school, or just go home, she decided to drive up to the school through the newly fallen unplowed snow in the parking lot. There to her amazement, and gratitude, she found that her huge bin overflowed with cute blankets featuring puppies and kittens, llamas, and giraffes. Additional boxes and bags were stacked all around. Books were neatly packed, and puzzles were wrapped. Soliciting the assistance of her siblings, Andy, Mikey and Lexi, all Stoney Creek HS graduates, and former JrUOL members, she managed to collect all the items and bring them home to sort and organize.

The students of Stoney Creek made a great gesture in helping other young people. There were dozens of hand-tied blankets, lovingly made with a personal touch. There were Sherpa blankets, fleece blankets, wooly fuzzy blankets in every color of the rainbow, all waiting to cuddle and warm a child’s heart. One
Genealogy is a popular pastime for many Americans today. There are numerous high-profile websites and even TV programs dedicated to helping people learn who they are. Many people begin their ancestry search hoping to find wealthy or noble predecessors, naively hoping to find someone who runs the Mayflower (little danger of that for us Ukrainian Orthodox)! Yet as any experienced genealogist will confirm, it’s not what you want to find, but what you really do find that you must be prepared to accept.

This Sunday, our reading is the beginning of St. Matthew’s Gospel, and it begins with a genealogy of Jesus Christ. Of the whole liturgical year, this was the favorite pericope of our late beloved Metropolitan Nazianzen: “what is not assumed is not saved. St. Matthew is reminding us that by accepting sinners as His ancestors, our Lord came to save sinners: A Savior for those who need to be saved.”

St. Matthew doesn’t hesitate to tell us the Messiah wasn’t a “pure-bred” Jew. Rahab the harlot was a Canaanite native of Jericho, and Ruth was a Moabite convert. The unshaken assumption of any devout first-century Jew was that the Messiah would be a Messiah for the Jews and Jews alone, but this genealogy teaches us otherwise – it reveals the universality of Christ.

And it is significant that while descent was usually traced through the father; St. Matthew does indeed mention Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and the wife of Uriah. Without reading modern feminism into the text, the Jews were well-versed in numbers, as well as letters of the alphabet were used to express numbers, as well. When an astute Jew would add up the numerical values of the consonants (vowels weren’t used) that spelled the name David, he would get 414. St. Matthew didn’t want to leave any doubts.

At one point during our Lord’s ministry, He paused and asked his disciples, “Who do people say that I am?” He then asked a more direct question: “Who do YOU say that I am?” This beautiful genealogy is St. Matthew’s gift to each of us, to help each of us come to the right conclusion.

Fr. Michael Kochis

Genealogy of Christ

St. Matthew is very careful to stress the alignment of fourteen generations: “from Abraham to David is fourteen generations; from David to the Babylonian exile is fourteen generations; from the Babylonian exile to the Messiah is fourteen generations”. Again, considering the Old Testament a bit more closely, we can see a pattern. The fourteen generations from Abraham to David cover the period when the Jewish people were ruled by Judges.

The fourteen generations from David to the Babylonian captivity cover the period when the Jewish people were ruled by Kings. The fourteen generations from the Babylonian captivity to the birth of Jesus Christ cover the period when the Jewish people were ruled by Priests. St. Matthew wants us to see that there was no Savior during each of these stages. Salvation was not possible through a Judge alone, or through a King alone, or even through a Priest alone, but Salvation comes only in the fullness of time through the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, who perfectly unites within Himself the offices of Judge, King, and Priest.

Furthermore, the Jews were quite fond of finding significance in numbers. Hebrew, like Slavonic, had no special characters for numerals; letters of the alphabet were used to express numbers, as well. When an astute Jew would add up the numerical values of the consonants (vowels weren’t used) that spelled the name David, he would get 414. St. Matthew didn’t want to leave any doubts.

Judah impregnated his own daughter-in-law. Would we be happy to uncover him as an ancestor? Rahab was a prostitute. How would you put that on your coat of arms? David himself, the great king, was guilty of adultery and murder – how many of us would be proud to claim such an ancestor? We need to apply the great axiom of St Gregory Nazianzen: what is not assumed is not saved. St. Matthew is reminding us that by accepting sinners as His ancestors, our Lord came to save sinners: A Savior for those who need to be saved.

Rhoda was a prostitute. How would you uncover him as an ancestor? Genealogy, women.

One would expect the pedigree of the Messiah to include only the most noble and pious figures of Jewish tradition. However, his ancestors include the most noble and pious figures of Jewish tradition.

It would be St Paul who would later demonstrate during his three-year ministry in Ephesus, that neither Jew nor Gentile, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all. “Who do people say that I am?” This beautiful genealogy is St. Matthew’s gift to each of us, to help each of us come to the right conclusion.

Fr. Michael Kochis
INGREDIENTS

SOAKED FRUIT MIXTURE:
• 1 and 1/4 cups (200 grams) dark raisins
• 1 and 1/4 cups (200 grams) golden raisins
• 2 cups (320 grams) mixed unsweetened dried fruit, chopped (peaches, apricots, pears, apples)
• 1 cup (160 grams) dried unsweetened black figs, chopped
• 1 cup (160 grams) dried unsweetened tart cherries, chopped
• 3/4 cup (120 grams) dried unsweetened prunes, chopped
• 3/4 cup (120 mL) dark rum

FRUIT CAKE INGREDIENTS:
• 1 and 1/2 cups (180 grams) unbleached all-purpose flour
• 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
• 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
• 1 teaspoon ground ginger
• 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
• 1 teaspoon Diamond Crystal kosher salt
• 1 stick (4 ounces; 113 grams) unsalted butter, softened
• 3/4 cup (160 grams) packed light brown sugar
• 5 large eggs, room temperature
• 1 tablespoon freshly grated lemon zest
• 1 tablespoon freshly grated orange zest
• 1/2 cup (120 mL) freshly squeezed orange juice
• 1 Granny Smith apple, peeled, and coarsely grated
• 3/4 cup (90 grams) slivered almonds (or chopped pecans or walnuts)
• 3/4 cup (36 grams) finely diced crystallized ginger
• one batch soaked fruit mixture (see above)
• optional add-in: 2/3 cup (100 grams) chopped bittersweet chocolate or dark chocolate chips

MIX:
The Day Before Baking: Combine the dried fruit in a large mixing bowl. Add the dark rum, cover, and allow the mixture to soak at room temperature for a minimum of 12 hours, or ideally 24 hours prior to preparing the fruit cake batter.

Prepare the Fruitcake: Preheat the oven to 300F (150C) with a rack in the center position. Set aside two 8x4-inch All Clad Pro-Release Bakeware Loaf Pans. If using these pans, you do not need to line or grease the pans prior to adding the batter.

In a medium mixing bowl, whisk together the all-purpose flour, baking powder, spices, and salt. Set aside.

In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, cream the softened butter and light brown sugar together over medium-high speed for 3 minutes, or until light and fluffy.

Reduce speed to medium and add the eggs one at a time, beating just until each egg is incorporated. The mixture will look slightly broken.

Over low speed slowly add the flour mixture until just absorbed. Remove the bowl from the stand mixer. Add the lemon zest, orange zest, fresh orange juice, grated apple, slivered almonds, diced candied ginger, soaked dried fruit mixture (with any liquid if it hasn’t already been absorbed), and chocolate (if using).

Stir mixture with a large spatula, scraping the edges and bottom of the bowl several times, until all the ingredients are evenly incorporated. It is a very thick, fruit heavy mixture.

Transfer and divide the batter evenly among the loaf pans. Use an offset spatula to smooth the batter into an even layer.

BAKE:
Set the loaf pans on the center rack, several inches apart from one another. Bake for 1 hour and 15 minutes to 1 hour and 30 minutes, rotating the pans halfway, or until the cakes have set. Remove from the oven and place on a rack to cool completely before removing from the pans.

STORING AND AGING:
Once the cake has cooled, carefully remove the cakes from the loaf pans and set upright. Soak two large pieces of cheesecloth in medium sherry or triple sec (*they should be lightly damp, not soaking wet when you wrap the cakes, so you may need to squeeze out any excess liquor). Wrap each cake tightly. Cover loafs with wax paper and foil before transferring to a large Ziploc bag. Store in the refrigerator for up to 6 to 8 weeks. You can serve this cake right after it has cooled, but the flavors improve greatly with time (a few days or up to a week, at the least, is my recommendation). Unwrap and re-soak the cheesecloth once a week.

FOR GARNISHING: Note: This is not recommended if you are planning to continue to wrap and age the fruitcake.
If desired, you can top the fruitcake with a light apricot glaze and whole pecans before serving.
Combine the apricot preserves and water in a small saucepan. Bring to a light simmer, stirring until the glaze is shiny and thin. If it is too thin for glazing, reduce to desired consistency. If it becomes too thick, add a teaspoon of water. Brush the tops of the fruitcakes with apricot glaze and garnish with whole pecans.

SERVING NOTES:
Slice fruit cake with a serrated knife. Serve on its own or spread with a small amount of salted butter.

#abeautifulplate
Create your own Nativity Scene

- Paint the inside of the cup black (let dry)
- Paint the outside brown/grey (let dry)
- Cut out the cave entrance in the cup
- Cut out the images below
- Glue the icon to the inside of the cup
- Glue the angels and star to separate toothpicks and poke them into the cup (as shown above)
Baptized and chrismated on October 10, 2020 in Holy Ascension Church, Maplewood, NJ. Child of Iaroslav Boichuk, Daniel
Celebrated by Rev. Vitaly Pavlykivskyi.

Baptized and chrismated on September 19, 2020 in Sts. Peter & Paul Parish, Palos Park, IL. Child of Oleksandr Gavryliuk, Melania

Baptized and chrismated on November 11, 2020 in St. Peter & Paul Parish, Palos Park, IL. Child of Oleksandr Sorokopud, Volodymyr Tymur
Celebrated by V. Rev. Harry Linsinbigler.

Baptized and chrismated on October 4, 2020 in Holy Trinity Church, New York, NY. Child of Oleksandr Sorokopud and Iryna Tkachenko.
Celebrated by Rev. Yuriy Bobko.

Baptized and chrismated on October 4, 2020 in Holy Trinity Mission Church, Sacramento, CA. Child of Andriy Kondryshyn, Artem
Celebrated by Fr. Michael Kochis.

Baptized and chrismated on October 10, 2020 in St. Volodymyr’s Cathedral Parish, Chicago, IL. Child of Oleh Bedrik and Olena Bedrik.
Celebrated by Rev. Volodymyr Maryanchak.


Isaac Kousari and Nataliya Baptist in St. Volodymyr’s Cathedral Parish, Chicago, IL, on October 10, 2020, witnessed by Adrian Kousari and Aleksander Baptist. Celebrante: Fr. Ivan Lyman.


His Eminence Metropolitan Antony 1/26/2013 - as Metropolitan

V. Rev. Myron Mykhaylyuk 1/2/1977

V. Rev. Pavlo Bodnarchuk 1/3/1993

Rev. Andriy Matlak 1/9/2013


V. Rev. Roman Yatskiv 1/14/1989

Rev. Yuri Bobko 1/18/2020

V. Rev. Ion Proteasa 1/19/1992

V. Rev. Harry Linsinbigler 1/25/2003

Rev. Svatoslav Hot 1/25/2020

V. Rev. Gerald Ozlanski 1/25/1987

V. Rev. Nicholas Klodnicky 1/28/1984

V. Rev. Stepan Bilogan 1/28/2001

V. Rev. Myroslav Schirta 1/30/1998

Hierarchs of the Diaspora also interred at St. Andrew Cemetery:
Archbishop Wolodymyr (Didowych) – January 20 1990

28th 1942 - PROTOPRIEST ISIDORE KOSTIUK
27th 1955 - PROTOPRIEST JOSEPH BODNAR
6th 1958 - PRIEST STEFAN VULCHYN
9th 1968 - PROTOPRESbyter JOHN SAWCHUK
9th 1968 - PROTOPRESbyter LEV WESOLOWSKY
26th 1974 - PROTOPRESbyter ALEXANDER DOWHAL
9th 1984 - PROTOPRIEST MYKOLA UHORCZAK
28th 1990 - PROTOPRESbyter JURI HULEY
17th 1996 - PROTOPRIEST TYT MELNYCHUK
13th 1996 - PRIEST GREGORY WOLKOWYNSKY
19th 1999 - PROTOPRIEST MYKOLA HODYNSKY
10th 2002 - PROTOPRESbyter PETRO BUDNY
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- сторінки тримаються на пружині для зручного перегортання сторінки
- Головні події 2020 року
- Список Українських та Американських свят
- Пасха на наступні десять років
- Контактна інформація парохій із фотографіями
- Контактна інформація духовенства із фотографіями
- Список імен святих на Укр. та Анг. мовах
- І багато іншого...

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FEBRUARY CELEBRATIONS

В ЛЮТУМУ СВЯТКУЄМО

7 St. Gregory the Theologian
Свт. Григорія Богослова

12 Synaxis of the Three Hierarchs: St. Basil the Great, St. Gregory the Theologian, and St. John Chrysostom
Собор Вселенських учителів і святих: Василія Великого, Григорія Богослова і Іоана Златоуста

14 Zacchaeus Sunday
Неділя Закхея

15 THE MEETING OF OUR LORD, GOD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST
СТРИТЕННЯ ГОСПОДА БОГА І СПАСА НАШОГО ІСУСА ХРИСТА

21 Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee
(Fast-free week)
Неділя про митря та фарисея
(Седмиця всьодня)

28 Sunday of Prodigal Son
Неділя про блудного сина
CALENDAR OF EVENTS
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St. Basil the Great
January 14

Meeting of our Lord in the Temple
Стрітення
February 15

Theophany
January 19

Sunday of Publican and Pharisee
(Fast-free week)
February 21

St. Antony the Great
(Metropolitan Antony’s Saint’s Day)
January 30

Sunday of Prodigal Son
February 28

Synaxis of the Three Holy Hierarchs
Seminary Chapel Patron Feast Day
February 12

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