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EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS

September 27th (September 14th) is the second Feast Day of the Church Year – the Universal Exaltation of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross. This is a holy day of fasting and repentance. It is one of two strict fast days on the calendar, the other being the Beheading of St. John the Forerunner (September 11). On this day the faithful rededicate themselves to the Lord and pledge their faithfulness to Him by making prostrations at the Lord’s feet on the Life-Giving Cross.

St. Helen discovered the Cross in 326 A.D. along with the two crosses upon which the thieves were crucified. The True Cross was discovered by having a sick woman touch all three. Nothing happened until she touched the third, at which point she was healed of her illness. Passing along the road was a funeral procession. When the dead body was touched to the Cross, the person returned to life, and therefore the Cross is known as the “Life-Giving Cross”. Saint Helen and her court venerated the Precious and Life-Giving Cross along with many others who came to see this great instrument of Redemption. Patriarch mounted the ambo (pulpit) and lifted the Cross along with many others who came to see this great instrument of Redemption. Patriarch mounted the ambo (pulpit) and lifted the Cross along with many others who came to see this great instrument of Redemption. Patriarch mounted the ambo (pulpit) and lifted the Cross along with many others who came to see this great instrument of Redemption.

This became the occasion of the institution in all of the Churches of the Exaltation of the Precious Cross, not only in memory of the event of the finding of the Cross, but also to celebrate how an instrument of shame was used to overcome death and bring salvation and eternal life.

For the Feast, the Cross is placed on a tray surrounded by flowers or branches of basil, and placed in the center of the Church for veneration.

On the eve of the feast, Vespers is served and contains three Old Testament readings. The first, from Exodus 15:22-26:1, tells of the “tree” which made the bitter waters sweet, the symbol of the Tree of the Cross. The second reading is from Proverbs 3:11-18, which reminds us that the Lord chastens and corrects those whom He loves and that Divine Wisdom is “a Tree of life to those who lay hold upon her and trust in her, as in the Lord.” The third reading is from the Prophecy of Isaiah 60:11-16; it tells of the “city of the Lord” where both Jews and Gentiles will live together and shall prostrate themselves at the place of God’s feet and “shall know that I, the Lord, am your Savior and your Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob.”

During Matins, four directions of the universe are blessed with the Cross, while the faithful repeat the chant “Lord have mercy.” The Matins Gospel reading is from John 12:28-36. In it Christ says that when He is elevated on the Cross He will draw all men to Himself. Divine Liturgy Gospel reading taken from John 19:6-11, 13-20, 25-28, and 30-35 reliving the Lord’s Passion and Crucifixion upon the Cross.

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HELP NEEDED!
Your Prayers, Love and Support are Needed:
Metropolia Center of the Church is Flooded as a Consequence of the Hurricane

The joyful path, the memorial path, the path to salvation — the pathway to St. Andrew Ukrainian Orthodox Memorial Church is under water. Just a few days ago, this path reflected joy — in the unfurling of a 350-meter-long Ukrainian flag in commemoration of the 30th Anniversary of Ukrainian Independence. Just a few days ago, this path reflected prayerful sorrow — in the United States flag being hung at half mast, in mournful remembrance of the U.S. military personnel recently killed in Afghanistan.

Thousands have walked this path to participate in Divine Liturgy, to celebrate life, remember the dead, and rekindle their hope in the future.

Today, this path is under water. The remnants of Hurricane Ida swung through the State of New Jersey leaving flooding and devastation in its wake.

In addition to the flooded roads and damaged signage, several buildings of the Metropolia Center including the Fisher House, Pokrova Sisterhood Hall, St. Andrew Ukrainian Orthodox Memorial Cemetery Maintenance Building, and others, have all suffered severe damage, and many are still under water.

We prayerfully appeal to the parish bodies of administration, the clergy, and the faithful of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA for assistance. The damage is great, and there is much work that will need to be done. We cannot do it without your help.

Please lend us a helping hand in repairing the damage, and keep the Council of Bishops, Consistory staff, and Metropolia Center property in your prayers.

PROKHHANNIA PRO DOLOMHOU CHREZ NASSLIDKI URAHANU IDA

Шлях радісті, шлях пам'яті, шлях до спасіння - цей шлях до Української Православної Церкви Пам'ятника Святого Андрія знаходиться під водою. Буквально кілька днів тому цей шлях відображав радість, розгортаючи українського прапора завдовжки 350 метрів на честь 30-річчя Незалежності України. Буквально кілька днів тому цей шлях відображав молитовну скорботу - прапор Сполучених Штатів був опущений через жахливе знищення військовослужбовцями США, нещодавно вбитих в Афганістані.

Тисячі людей пройшли цей шлях, щоб взяти участь у Божественій Літургії, відзначати життя, згадати померлих і відновити надію на майбутнє.

Сьогодні цей шлях під водою. Ураган Іда не оминув і штат Нью Джерсі, залишивши за собою повені та руйнування.

Окрім затоплених доріг та пошкоджених пам'ятніків, кілька будівель Центру Митрополії, включаючи будинок Фішерів, залив, будівлю для обслуговування Українського Православного Цвинтаря Святого Андрія та інші будівлі та споруди, зазнали серйозних руйнувань, і багато із них все ще перебувають під водою. Ми з молитвою звертаємося до парафіяльних управ, духовенства та віруючих Української Православної Церкви США за допомогою.

Пошкодження великі, тому доведеться багато чого зробити. Ми не можемо обійтися без вашої допомоги.

My dear friends, I am truly grateful for all birthday greetings! Earlier this morning I stood in front of the altar of St. Sophia Seminary chapel and offered gratitude for all of you - for your friendship, love and assistance as we walk the path of life in Christ! May God bless you all!

-Archbishop Daniel

Мої улюблені друзі, я щиро вдячний за всі привітання з Днем Народження! Раніше сьогодні вранці я стояв перед престолом в архітекторії Софії і висловлював йому вдячність за Вашу дружбу, любов і допомогу нам, віруючим на шляху у Христову Божою благословення!

-Aрхієпископ Даниїл
Patriarchal Message for the Beginning of the Church Year and the Solemn Day of Prayers for Natural Environment

† B A R T H O L O M E W

By God’s Mercy Archbishop of Constantinople-New Rome and Ecumenical Patriarch

To the Plenitude of the Church

Grace, Peace and Mercy from the Maker of All Creation Our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ

Esteemed brethren and beloved children in the Lord,

The Feast of the Indiction, the solemn day of prayers for the natural environment, finds once again humanity confronted with intense weather conditions due to mounting climate change, with devastating floods and fires across the globe, as well as with the Coronavirus pandemic and its socioeconomic consequences.

The fact that the restrictive measures in transportation and the limits imposed on industrial production have resulted in a reduction of pollutants and emissions, offered an additional valuable lesson on global interconnection and on the interdependence of all dimensions of life. Moreover, it has been also revealed anew that the Ecumenical Patriarchate’s ecological initiatives, which comprise an extension of the Church’s theology and liturgical tradition, correspond with scientific findings and with experts’ recommendations calling for multifaceted mobilization in order to protect the integrity of the natural environment.

We thus pray for the swift overcoming of the consequences of the health crisis and for the illumination from above of governments throughout the world, so that they do not return to or persist upon economism, to those principles of organization of the economic life, of production and consumption, of exhaustive exploitation of natural resources, principles that prevailed prior to the pandemic. Further, it is our genuine desire that the dissemination of pseudoscientific opinions concerning the purported dangers of the Covid-19 vaccines, the slander aimed toward specialists of the medical field, and the unfounded degradation of the seriousness of the disease, be terminated. Unfortunately, similar opinions are propagated in regard to climate change as well, its cause and its disastrous effects. The reality is entirely different, and must be faced with responsibility, collaboration, joint actions, and common vision.

Inactivity is inconceivable when in full knowledge of the shared great contemporary challenges of humanity. Indifference toward our suffering brethren and toward the destruction of the “very good” creation, is an offence against God and a violation of His commandments. Wherein exist respect toward creation and tangible love toward man, the “beloved of God,” therein God is present.

After the Holy and Great Council (Crete, 2016), the Ecumenical Patriarchate, in accordance to its spirit and decisions, appointed an official commission, comprised of theologians, to draft a document on the social implications of our faith and on the social mission and witness of the Orthodox Church in the contemporary world. This text, which was approved for publication by the Holy and Sacred Synod and is entitled For the Life of the World: Toward a Social Ethos of the Orthodox Church, states the following: “The Church encourages the faithful to be grateful for—and to accept—the findings of the sciences, even those that might occasionally oblige them to revise their understandings of the history and frame of cosmic reality. The desire for scientific knowledge flows from the same wellspring as faith’s longing to enter ever more deeply into the mystery of God” (§ 71).

The Holy Great Church of Christ emphatically highlights the indivisibility of the natural environment’s protection and the philanthropic care for one’s neighbor. Both an eco-friendly stance and the recognition of the sacredness of the human person are a “liturgy after the Liturgy,” vital dimensions of the Eucharistic actualization of the Church. The life of the Church is a manifest respect for creation, as well as the place and the way of experiencing the culture of personhood and of solidarity.

Most honorable brothers and cherished children,

Throughout this difficult period, it is an essential pastoral duty of the Church to undertake initiatives for the containment of the pandemic. And it is also a categorical ethical mandate to support global access to the immunization against the coronavirus, especially in poorer nations, in accordance with the words of our Lord, “Inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, you have done it unto me” (Matt. 25:40). We ought to love one another “as Christ has loved us” (Eph. 5:2) and to show ourselves as “priests” of creation, safeguarding and cultivating it with care and affection, and, offering in thanksgiving this exceedingly precious gift of God’s Grace unto the Creator of all.

In closing, we wholeheartedly wish unto all a blessed, healthful and fruitful new ecclesiastical year, and we call upon you, through the intercessions of the Theotokos Pammakaristos, the grace and mercy of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, to Whom be the glory and the dominion unto the everlasting ages. Amen!

September 1, 2021

† Bartholomew of Constantinople
Fervent supplicant of all before God
Патріарше Звернення

Патріарше Звернення з нагоди початку Нового Церковного Року та Вшанування Дня Опіки Природного Середовища

+ Варфоломій

Милостиво Божою Архієпископ Константинопольський, Нового Риму і Вселенський Патріарх Всій повноті Церкви,

Благодать, мир і милість від Творця всього творіння Господа і Бога і Спаса нашого Ісуса Христа.

Найшановніші браття і возлюблені чада в Господі,

Свято Індикту, урочистий день молитов за природне середовище, знову зустрічає людство, що стикається з інтенсивними погодними умовами через зростаючу зміну клімату, з руйнівними повенями та пожежами по всьому світу, а також з пандемією коронавірусу та її соціально-економічними наслідками.

Той факт, що обмежувальні заходи щодо транспорту та обмеження, накладені на промислове виробництво, призвели до скорочення забруднюючих речовин та викидів, дали додатковий цінний урок про глобальні взаємозв'язки та про взаємозалежність усіх вимірів життя. Крім того, заново було виявлено, що екологічні ініціативи Вселенського патріархату, які включають розширення богослов'я Церкви та літургійної традиції, відповідають науковим висновкам та рекомендаціям експертів, які закликають до багатосторонньої мобілізації для захисту цілісності природного середовища.

Таким чином, ми молимось про швидке подолання наслідків кризи здоров'я та просвітлення з висоти урядів у всьому світі, щоб вони не повернулися до економізму і не продовжували його дотримуватися. Мова йде про ті принципи, які панували до пандемії, а саме принципи організації економічного життя, виробництва та споживання, вичерпної експлуатації природних ресурсів. Крім того, ми щиро прагнемо припинити розповсюдження псевдонукових думок щодо небезпеки вакцин проти Covid-19, – наклепу, спрямованого на спеціалістів у галузі медицини, та необґрунтоване погіршення ставлення до життя, необґрунтованої паніки.

На закінчення ми від усієї душі бажаємо всім благословенного, здорового та плідного нового церковного року і закликаємо на вас, заступництвом Пресвятої Богородиці «Паммакарістос», благодать і милосердя Господа і Спаса нашого Ісуса Христа, Якому належить слава і держава на віки вічні. Амінь!

† Константинопольський Варфоломій, папський молитовник перед Богом за всіх Вас
ELEVATION OF THE LIFE-GIVING CROSS

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit!

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ!

Today we celebrate Elevation of the Life Given Cross of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The Cross, the symbol of our victory, a protection that is always available to us in the struggles for salvation of our souls. The Cross of our Lord on which He manifests His absolute love to humankind thru the suffering that He willingly accepted for the salvation of many.

For us Orthodox Christians it is not just some subject of veneration but rather Divine light that enlightens our souls and all our lives. From the very beginning of our earthly journey, as we were baptized we receive a cross, as protection and symbol of belonging to People of God. In the course of our life, all our personal prayers and all sacraments that we receive in the Church, have that same symbol. After we will leave this militant church, the cross will be staying in our graves. Why is that? How come that this symbol is so important to us? Because this Divine light protects us during our life, and also after the death protected by the power of God. “For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.” (1Corinth.1:18)

The Holy Church established this day of celebration of the Holy and Life Given Cross in year 335, after construction of the Church of Resurrection in Jerusalem was complete and the cross of Savior was elevated inside of the church. But we commemorate on this day several events from history of the cross. The cross was elevated for the short period of time with the crucified Savior on it, changed the World and was buried, hidden from us.

St. Helen Equal to the Apostles and St. Makarious miraculously found the cross in the year 326, and so the cross was elevated to the people and Grace of God was reviled thru the miracles. The same cross was in Jerusalem and many people came to know a True God. We also commemorate the miraculous return of the Cross, after it was taken from us for fourteen years from the year 614 to 628. But by the Grace of God we would always get it back, so that we would continue to grow under the protection of it, and gather around it the flock of the Lord.

In our today's troparion we sing, “save the Lord Thy people and bless Thy inheritance.” What a blessing is given to us, what a privilege, are we really worthy to be called His people and inheritance? With that great power of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.” (1Corinth.1:18)

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Placing the Gospel back on the Altar Table, Archbishop Daniel delivered a short, but, moving sermon, stating that we are grieved when we listen and relive the crucifixion, however, each day we personally crucify the Lord. Even so, He gazes down upon us, as He did upon the people who stood before the Cross watching and asks the Father to forgive us. His Eminence reiterated that Christ is willing to forgive us if we realize our shortcomings, repent, and are determined to live as we should. He awaits us with open arms.

His Eminence continued as he gestured towards the Cross lying in the center of the Nave, stating that today we each have an opportunity to glorify Christ’s sacrifice, to thank Him, to spend a moment at His feet and ask for His forgiveness, for His help, and for His guidance. Archbishop Daniel told everyone to take a moment after Divine Liturgy, not to hurry, but to stop and retrospectively pray before the Cross of the Lord.

As the service continued, the faithful contemplated their hierarch’s words, each one in their own mind rethinking their lives, and rededicating themselves to Christ. As the Royal Gates swung open and the Eucharist was presented to the people, they quietly shuffled forward, realizing anew the value of the Gift being offered to them, and at what great price.

As the dismissal prayer was read, once again everyone gathered before the cross. Falling to his knees, His Eminence’s deep voice loudly sang,

**Before Thy Cross we bow down in worship, O Master, and Thy holy Resurrection we glorify. (Thrice)**

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, both now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.
And Thy holy Resurrection we glorify.

All the faithful fell humbly to their knees, glorifying the Lord. With the last words hanging in the air, Archbishop Daniel rose quietly to his feet and returned to the Altar.

The church was hushed, and in this silence, people were deep in thought and prayer as they fell in line to have their private moment with their Savior.

The first to approach and venerate the Cross, was His Eminence Metropolitan Antony, who reverently bowed, and with great humility and gratefulness kissed the Cross of the Lord, before returning to the Altar.

One by one the people approached. Nobody hurried. Nobody shoved. The children seemed to realize the solemnity of the moment, and even they were hushed and stood quietly next to their mothers.

As the seminarians sang in the corner of the church, the faithful, having spent a moment with their Creator, and getting anointed by Archbishop Daniel, felt energized and strengthened to return to the world, and carry His message to those beyond the walls of the church.

The Universal Exaltation of the Precious and Life-creating Cross, Troparion of the Cross in Tone I —

O Lord, save Thy people, and bless Thine inheritance./ Grant victory unto Orthodox Christians over their adversaries,/ and by virtue of Thy Cross,// preserve Thy habitation.

Kontakion in Tone IV —

O Thou Who wast lifted up willingly on the Cross,/ bestow Thy mercies upon the new community named after Thee, O Christ God./ Gladden by Thy power Orthodox Christians/ granting them victory over enemies./ May they have as Thy help the invincible trophy, the weapon of peace.

Photos: Subdeacon Yaroslav Bilohan
On Wednesday, September 1, 2021, His Eminence Archbishop Daniel joined the Hierarchs of the Ecumenical Throne from across the globe in order to co-preside with His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew at the Divine Liturgy in the Venerable Patriarchal Church of Saint George in commemoration of the feast of Indiction — the proclamation of the New Ecclesiastical Year.

At the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy the Service of the Indiction took place, during which the Patriarchal Prayer was offered with His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew.

In his Message, the Ecumenical Patriarch pointed out that in our time, “the natural environment is threatened more than ever in the history of mankind.”

His All Holiness emphasized that “…the Feast of the Indiction, the solemn day of prayers for the natural environment, finds once again humanity confronted with intense weather conditions due to mounting climate change, with devastating floods and fires across the globe, as well as with the Coronavirus pandemic and its socioeconomic consequences.

The fact that the restrictive measures in transportation and the limits imposed on industrial production have resulted in a reduction of pollutants and emissions, offered an additional valuable lesson on global interconnection and on the interdependence of all dimensions of life. Moreover, it has been also revealed anew that the Ecumenical Patriarchate’s ecological initiatives, which comprise an extension of the Church’s theology and liturgical tradition, correspond with scientific findings and with experts’ recommendations calling for multifaceted mobilization in order to protect the integrity of the natural environment.

We thus pray for the swift overcoming of the consequences of the health crisis and for the illumination from above of governments throughout the world, so that they do not return to or persist upon economism, to those principles of organization of the economic life, of production and consumption, of exhaustive exploitation of natural resources, principles that prevailed prior to the pandemic. Further, it is our genuine desire that the dissemination of pseudoscientific opinions concerning the purported dangers of the Covid-19 vaccines, the slander aimed toward specialists of the medical field, and the unfounded degradation of the seriousness of the disease, be terminated. Unfortunately, similar opinions are propagated in regard to climate change as well, its cause and its disastrous effects. The reality is entirely different, and must be faced with responsibility, collaboration, joint actions, and common vision…”

The Patriarch continued: “Throughout this difficult period, it is an essential pastoral duty of the Church to undertake initiatives for the containment of the pandemic. And it is also a categorical ethical mandate to support global access to the immunization against the coronavirus, especially in poorer nations, in accordance with the words of our Lord, “inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, you have done it unto me” (Matt. 25:40). We ought to love one another “as Christ has loved us” (Eph. 5:2) and to show ourselves as “priests of creation, safeguarding and cultivating it with care and affection, and, offering in thanksgiving this exceedingly precious gift of God’s Grace unto the Creator of all.”

This occasion also coincides with the triennial Synaxis of Hierarchs of the Ecumenical Throne, which takes place in Constantinople (Istanbul, Turkey) September 1-3, 2021, under the chairmanship of His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew.

On September 1/14 we celebrate the beginning of the Indiction, that is, the beginning of the new ecclesiastical year.

Before the Constantinopolitan Indiction was introduced by St. Constantine the Great in 312 and decreed by the Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council in Nicaea (325 A.D.), the day of Indiction varied based on local tradition.

The word Indiction is birthed from the Latin word meaning to proclaim. It established the annual land tax to support the needs of the empire and its armed forces and was issued for 15-year cycles. This is the Roman imperial decree, according to which the citizens of the Roman Empire had to pay a tax for the maintenance of the army on the first of September, the beginning of the financial year.

Due to the fact that the month of August the harvest of several kinds of fruits of the year is being
completed, the month of September is counted as the beginning of the new year. It was the month of September when the harvest was gathered and thanksgiving offered to God (see Exodus 23:16), a festival connected to the Savior’s entry into the synagogue in Nazareth whose passage from the Gospel of St. Luke (4:16-22) is read on September 1/14.

It was also the month of September when St. Constantine, through the power of the Holy Cross, defeated Maxentius and granted Christians freedom of confession.

Today, the month of September continues to be the time of harvest for farmers, in addition to ushering in the start of the school year.

The Biblical-based traditions and Church customs regarding the Ecclesiastical New Year continue to be honored, especially by the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople. Each year, on September 1st, members of the Holy and Sacred Synod, led by the Ecumenical Patriarch (currently His All-Holiness Bartholomew), gather at the Patriarchal Church of St. George the Great Martyr in the Phanar to concelebrate the Divine Liturgy, venerate the Holy Panagia Pammakaristos Icon and proclaim the New Year. They also sign the Patriarchal and Synodal Tome for the Indictus, an ancient practice dating back to the time of Constantine the Great (+337).

More recently, the entire Orthodox Church, led by the Ecumenical Patriarchate, has declared September 1st as a day of prayer for the preservation of God’s creation and the protection of the natural environment.

The ecclesiastical calendar, and in particular the Orthodox Church’s cycle of feasts, is rich and wondrous.

For starters, the liturgical books used are a treasure of hymns and prayers composed by the Fathers of the Church which sustain the annual cycle of feasts, as well as the daily liturgical services. Some of them are well known, like the Epistle and, of course, Gospel Book, but all of them, such as the Psalter, Horologion and Triodion, are sacred and without comparability in all of Christendom.

The Orthodox commemoration and celebration of saints is also without parallel.

To begin with, each day of the week has been assigned a special theme, beginning, naturally, with the Lord’s Day:

- **Sunday:** Glorious Resurrection of Christ
- **Monday:** Angelic Powers
- **Tuesday:** Holy and Glorious Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist John
- **Wednesday:** Holy Cross and the Mother of God
- **Thursday:** Holy Apostles and Saint Nicholas the Wonderworker, Archbishop of Myra
- **Friday:** Holy Cross
- **Saturday:** All the Saints and Souls of the Departed

The Church has also identified the Twelve Great Feasts with Pascha being first without equal.

The day-to-day riches of the ecclesiastical calendar, which are not well known outside Orthodoxy, are the celebrations of saints, be they apostles, prophets, martyrs, hierarchs or monastics. Each day, the Church commemorates the memory and lives of different saints, as catalogued and described in the Synaxaristes, which abound with examples of spirituality and virtue such as ceaseless prayer, fasting, humility, patient endurance, sacrifice, chastity and martyrdom, all of them woven together by love, the greatest of virtues: love for man and love for Christ.

Saints provide the faithful courage and hope; their lives serve as guidelines with directions and instructions for believers. The martyrs of the Church — beginning with the first male (St. Stephen the Archdeacon) and the first female (St. Thekla) martyrs, to the Christians martyred throughout the Middle East and across the world each and every day — hold a particular honor and serve as a reminder that the material goods of the earth are temporary and that this life is fleeting, while the life to come is eternal.

The daily cycle of feasts connect us to all the saints, to the Ever-Virgin Mary and above all, to Jesus Christ our God. The Ecclesiastical New Year reminds us to recalibrate our lives and center our schedules as much as possible around the Church for, as St. Cyprian the Hieromartyr (+258) says, “A person cannot have God as his Father if he does not have the Church as his Mother.”

Source: Huffington Post and the Church of Cyprus

Photos by Yani Kayakoparan and the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople
The second day of the Synaxis of the Hierarchs of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople commenced in the early hours of Thursday, September 2, 2021, in order to cover a vast number of topics on the agenda.

Among the presented topics was a lengthy discussion about the spiritual dimensions of the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic, titled “The Pandemic and Ecclesiastical Life”. His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch expressed his parental gratitude to the hierarchs of the Patriarchate for their archpastoral love and care for the spiritual flock of the Church in various Metropolias and Eparchies of the Great Church of Christ. Hie Eminence Elder Metropolitan Emmanuel of Chalcedon presented a Response to the Introductory Remarks of the Patriarch, offering communal gratitude of the brother-hierarchs to His All-Holiness for his guidance and leadership by example during the past 18 months of the ongoing Pandemic struggle and for the 30 years of spiritual leadership on the Patriarchal Throne of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople.

An important presentation was made by the renown medical expert Prof. Soterios Tsiordas, who at length reflected on the medical and spiritual variances of concern as related to the ongoing increase in infection by Delta variance of the virus. The hierarchs of the Church reflected on Preventative, Therapeutic and Spiritual means of care for the flock of Christ. The presentations were made by Their Eminences Metropolitan Nektarios of Hong Kong, Metropolitan Arsenios of Austria, Metropolitan Kyrillos of Hierapytne and Seteia as well Metropolitan Makarios of Australia.

Following the discussion, the hierarchs entered a second session of the day, touching upon the pastoral dimensions of the Church, which was titled “The Proclamation of the Gospel in the 21st Century” and led by Their Eminences Archbishop Soterios of Canada, Metropolitan Soterios of Pisidia, Metropolitan Ambrosios of Korea; Their Graces Bishop Tomotheos of Assos, Bishop Raphael of Ilion, Bishop Ambrosios of Argyroupolis.

The third session of the day included a discussion on “The Church and the Contemporary World”, reflecting on the ministry of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in today’s geopolitical, ecclesiastical and social environment. Presentations were made by His Excellency Demetrios Paraskevopoulos: “Contemporary Geopolitical Data and the Orthodox Church”; His Eminence Metropolitan Kyrillos of Kene: “The Ecumenical Patriarchate: The Canonical Tradition and Ecclesiology in Light of Contemporary Developments”; and His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America: “The Ecclesiastical Fund Established in Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew’s Name: An Initiative of the Archdiocese of America.”

The day concluded with another set of presentations on the Ecumenical and Inter-Christian and Interreligious Relations, which were made by the esteemed Professor Aristotelis Papanikalaou: “Regarding the Document “For the Light of the World”, Mr. George Vlantes: “The Contemporary Landscape pf Ecumenical Relations” and by his Eminence Elder Metropolitan Emmanuel of Chalcedon: “The Ecumenical patriarchate in Dialogue with the non-Christian Religions.”
September 18th, 2021 found the Metropolia Center of the Ukrainian Church of the USA resplendent in God's Glory. The dew-covered grass sparkled like diamonds in the morning sunshine, as the heavy mist rose to reveal the tall domes of the St. Andrew Memorial Church, their gold crosses gleaming in the sunshine.

Today was another special day at the center. After years of painstaking studies at the Saint Sophia Ukrainian Orthodox Theological Seminary... after years of accompanying the hierarchs of the Church on parish visitations... after years of volunteering and serving the Church in various capacities, Deacon Ihor Protsak would be ordained into the Holy Priesthood.

As the faithful arrived, to join their prayers to this special occasion, Deacon Ihor Protsak serving the Church in various capacities, Deacon Ihor Protsak would be ordained into the Holy Priesthood.

Ascending the steps to the church one left behind the beauty and relative peace of the morning, to enter into a heavenly basking in a peace far greater, and one only God could provide. As the candles glowed softly in the prayer alcove to the left, people stopped and prayed, lit candles, and paused to hear God's voice in the stillness of the moment.

Entering the nave, one’s eyes were automatically drawn upward to gaze upon the mosaic of Christ which glowed softly, illuminated by the rising sun. The icons along the perimeter reflected the heavenly through God’s saints, who gazed serenely down upon the people who had gathered below them.

As the bells chimed, the curtains over the Royal Gates parted, the gates were opened revealing the heavenly Altar. Standing before the Altar, resplendent in gold vestments, stood His Eminence Archbishop Daniel, who in the presence of His Eminence Metropolitan Antony, Prime Hierarch of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA and Diaspora, would ordain Deacon Ihor on this day.

Reminiscent of Jacob’s dream of angels ascending and descending from heaven, Archbishop Daniel turned to the people and descended from the Altar to the Nave, followed by over a dozen priests, numerous deacons, subdeacons, and altar servers. As His Eminence stood in the middle of the nave, the priests flanked him on either side, with the deacons and others taking their places accordingly.

From above, the glowing mosaic of Christ gazed tranquilly down upon the scene below - His soldiers, His saints, His chosen ones, through whom He would expand and grow His Church. As if on cue, a ray of sun lit up the opposite wall, reflecting light upon the clergy, whose gold and white vestments seemed to glow ethereally, transforming to the otherworldly, and shifting the minds of all the faithful who gazed upon them to the heavenly. As His Eminence Archbishop Daniel began to pray, the choir, led by Choir Director Dr. Michael Andrec, sang angelically, adding to the surreal atmosphere of the little church.

During the Little Entrance, as Deacon Serhiy Khomitskyi presented the Holy Gospel, Archbishop Daniel, holding Dikiri and Trikiri, turned, pausing in all four directions, to bless the faithful. The clergy, the choir, and the faithful all loudly proclaimed their faith, and sang, “Come, let us worship and bow down before Christ. Save us, O Son of God, Who are wondrous in Your saints, we sing to You, Alleluia.”

His blessing, the loud singing, the tall candles, the sparkling vestments, caught the eye of the youngest lamb in the church that morning. Her eyes wide in bewilderment, and her mouth parted in wonder, little Taissa, the youngest daughter of Fr. Vasyl and Dobrodijka Oksana Pasakas, inched forward to stand just before the hierarchs and gater into a heavenly realm of amazement. His Eminence turned towards the nave and discovered the little lamb standing before him. Smiling sweetly, having blessed the people, he leaned down and gently tapped the top of Taissa’s head with the candle stick, before turning to his right to continue blessing the others. Little Taissa stood mesmerized, undaunted by the attention, until her older brother Jacob came and pulled her back. Everyone smiled at her innocence and awe, remembering...
Christ’s words of “the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.”
(Matthew 19:14)

As the Divine Liturgy continued, His Eminence, followed by the clergy, reentered the Altar. Within minutes, Deacon Ihor Protasak, enacting one of his final duties as a Deacon, and censed the icons as the Epistle was read. Commemorating the Feast Day of Holy Prophet Zacharias and Righteous Elizabeth, the parents of St. John the Forerunner, was from Matthew 23:29-39. In the Gospel Christ admonishes the scribes and Pharisees, calling them hypocrites, for on the outside they seem pious, and yet they have killed the prophets sent to save them. The Lord bemoans Jerusalem, and how He would have gathered her children, but she was not willing.

His Eminence Archbishop stepped out on the ambo to deliver his moving sermon. He began to speak softly, recollecting the time he had once visited Munich, Germany. While taking an early morning stroll, he noted great numbers of people heading into the woods. Out of curiosity he followed, and found himself facing the worst of humanity. His Eminence found himself at the gates of the Dachau Concentration Camp, where over 32,000 people had lost their lives in a span of less than three years. With a cold drizzle falling, he watched as silently people walked up to the remains of one of the buildings, and picked up a stone as a keepsake. He too picked up one such stone, not as a reminder of the Concentration Camp, but, as a reminder of how low humanity can sink in its pride and greed.

The stone also serves as a reminder that in the camp were numerous arrested Orthodox clergy who had refused to play along with the agenda set forth by the society around them. Instead of betraying and turning in people of Jewish descent, they instead followed Christ’s teaching to save all life, even in losing one’s own in the process. These priests were arrested and imprisoned, and even in such dire conditions, cold, hungry, with imminent torture and death looming before them, they still managed to serve Divine Liturgy from their hearts, using a single spoon, a few drops of juice, a couple of crumbs of bread. Their faith remained strong, as it was in the prophets and martyrs of old.

His Eminence continued by stating that we live in a corrupt world, often led by evil, but, we, as Christians, need to fight against it. We need to keep the Church pure and solid. We need to proclaim our Faith, and not allow the world to morph it into something acceptable to today’s society. The martyrs did not fear persecution, but, openly proclaimed Christ, defended His teachings, and protected life. Today’s society looks back upon the martyrs as being old fashioned and out of touch. Today’s society proclaims itself to be more tolerant and compassionate, accepting everyone, loving everyone’s uniqueness, and yet, today’s society, in its great compassion destroys life willfully.

It is distasteful for a mother to murder her baby, therefore, we call unborn children “embryo” or “fetus”, trying to convince ourselves that the unborn infant, is just a “thing” and not a human, and therefore, society not only allows, but, defends and even encourages the killing of these children for the comfort of the parents. It is also compassionate to not make others suffer, therefore, society teaches us to be merciful and permit the killing of the elderly, who suffer with disability and disease, and are of little benefit to society. We play God, as we focus on our own convenience and interest.

We need to not only be Christians secretly in our hearts, nor is it enough to wear a cross on a chain about our necks proclaiming our faith. We need to live and enact our Faith. We need to defend the helpless, preserve life from conception to natural death, we need to make our voices heard, call our politicians and voice our opinions, stand up to society, knowing full well that society will turn on us like a ravenous dog.

Being a true Christian requires sacrifice. At this point of world history, we no longer sacrifice our lives, but, we need to sacrifice our comfort, the way we live. Current generations are being raised with a sense of entitlement, as if the world owes them something, and they are permitted to do everything. However, as St. Paul so clearly stated, “all things are lawful, but, not all things are beneficial to me.” 1 Corinthians 6:12. In other words, just because society tells us it is okay, it is not illegal, does not mean it is right for us to do. We need to follow Christ in all things, sacrificing our security, our pride, our own comfort, to defend Christianity, to defend life, to stand up for what is right, to the very end.

Our faith is evident through our daily lives, not only by what we speak, but, how we speak, what we do, what political views we hold, how we treat others, and how we act. Therefore, His Eminence declared, that we must remain vigilant over our own souls and hearts, protect them from being polluted by society, and be strong in faith to stand up for the truth.

Archbishop Daniel conclude his sermon by asking that everyone pray for Deacon Ihor as he enters the Holy Priesthood. He then paused, and looked around at the people before him and stated that “we are all priests by virtue of our baptisms”. He looked people in the eyes and stated that the Lord has placed you as a priest in whatever path of life you are on, and as such you need to enact your priesthood, reflecting Christ in your daily lives, at work, at leisure, in your family life, public life, work life, personal life. Whatever you do throughout your day, remember you are a priest, and you are to evangelize the world, protect life, and defend the Faith through your words, and through your actions.

Be fearless the way you preach, the way you live, and the way you act.

With this His Eminence quietly turned and returned to stand before the Altar of God. Silence followed his words the magnitude of his words worked their way into the hearts and souls of all who were present. Even the choir seemed to have froze for a minute, while they too contemplated their assignments, before rousing themselves and returning to the moment and their musical notes.

At the start of the Great Entrance, as the cherubic hymn was sung, Deacon Ihor, holding the Aor over his head exited the Altar and stood in the narthex, praying. The Great Entrance is a solemn procession where the prepared gifts of bread and wine are taken from the Table of Oblation and placed on the Altar before rousing themselves and returning to the moment and their musical notes.

As Archbishop Daniel held the Gifts high and loudly prayed and proclaimed, “May the Lord our God
remember us all in His Kingdom, always, now and forever, and from all Ages to all Ages” and returned to the Altar. Deacon Myroslav lifted him up, and they stood on either side of Deacon Ihor who had been waiting in the Nave.

Taking him by his arms, Deacon Myrosav loudly proclaimed, “Command!” as the candidate to the priesthood, Deacon Ihor, made a prostration. The two deacons led him forward, and again proclaimed, “Command!” before the tetrapod as Deacon Ihor once again prostrated. Standing back up, Deacon Ihor was led up to the Royal Gates and presented to Archbishop Daniel who was awaiting them, as Deacon Myroslav proclaimed “Command! Holy Master, bless him who is before thee.”

The archbishop, wearing his mitre, was seated in the bishop’s chair which had been placed in front of the altar, a little to the left side, so as not have the Archbishop’s back to the altar itself. As the candidate kneeled before his hierarch, Vladyna leaned down and gave him last words of advice and encouragement. He removed the Aër from the deacon’s shoulders and placed it upon the altar, as two priests came forward, and taking Deacon Ihor by the arms led him around the Altar table, stopping to kiss each corner. Reaching the Northwest corner, Deacon Ihor kneeled before the sitting Archbishop and kissed his Epigonation/Palitza, which is the diamond shaped cloth that hangs from his right hip, denoting him as a “soldier” of Christ, and symbolizes the Word of God, fighting the wiles of the enemy.

Once again two priests take Deacon Ihor, and they lead him around the Altar table, repeating the process two more times, while the clergy sang:

Hear us, you martyred Saints who have fought the good fight and received crowns, entreat the Lord, to have mercy on our souls. Glory to you, Christ our God, the Apostles’ boast and pride, the Martyrs’ fervent joy whose preaching is the consubstantial Trinity:

O Isaiah dance with joy, for the Virgin is indeed with child and brought forth a son, Emmanuel. Who came both as God and man, Day-at-the-Dawn is his name and by magnifying him, we call the Virgin blessed.

With three rotations completed, Deacon Ihor kneeled at the Southwest corner of the Altar table leaning his head upon his hands which rested on the table. Vladyna Daniel covered his head with his Epitrachelion and his right hand, as he read the Prayers of Cheirotonia over him, while the clergy, the choir, those present at the Liturgy, and those attending over the live stream all prayed and sang “Lord, have mercy!” in English, Ukrainian, and Greek.

As prayers from around the world were raised, His Eminence prayed, The divine grace, which always heals that which is infirm and completes that which is lacking, ordains the most devout Deacon Ihor to the office of Priest. Let us, therefore, pray for him, that the grace of the All-Holy Spirit may come upon him.

O God, great in might and inscrutable in wisdom, marvellous in counsel above the sons of men: You the same Lord, fill with the gift of Your Holy Spirit this man whom it has pleased You to advance to the degree of Priest; that he may become worthy to stand in innocence before our glorious Queen of Your kingdom, to minister the word of Your truth, to offer to You spiritual gifts and sacrifices, to renew Your people through the font of regeneration, that when he shall go to meet You, at the second coming of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, Your only-begotten Son, he may receive the reward of good stewardship in the order given to him, through the plenitude of Your goodness.

For blessed and glorified is Your all-holy and majestic name, of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit, now, and ever and to the ages of ages.

Archbishop Daniel then raised newly ordained priest Ihor to his feet and led him at the Royal Gates, where he removed the deacon’s stole off his shoulders and in turn presented him with the epitrachelion, proclaiming “Axios” before turning to Father Ihor and placing it over his head, as the people replied “Axios!”. He then presented and tied the belt around his waist, followed by a beautiful new Phelonion, exclaiming “Axios”, which means “worthy”, as the people replied “Axios!”. Archbishop Daniel then presented a cross which he hung around the new priest’s neck, followed by a service book, and finally taking him by the shoulders he presented to the faithful, newly ordained Father Ihor, who stood adorned in his “Christ” white vestments virtually glowing from his ordination. As the church reverberated and the heavens echoed with “Axios”, the newly ordained priest carefully bestowed the Holy Sacrament. His Eminence gave the faithful one last blessing, returning the Chalice to the table of Oblation.

With a bashful smile, and tears of humility and joy shining in his own eyes, Fr. Ihor stepped down from the ambo to share the moment with his lifemate, exchanging a teary smile and a quick hug before returning to the altar. As the Creed was recited, the new priest greeted the concelebrating priests with a holy kiss, then stood at the altar and concelebrated the Divine Liturgy with them. Thus, the Divine Liturgy continued with the new priest shining in his new white vestments leading the way, supported by the senior clergy.

After the consecration of the Holy Gifts, Father Ihor came and stood before the altar as Archbishop Daniel handed him the consecrated Lamb saying: “Receive this Divine Trust, and preserve it whole and unharmed until your last breath, because you will be held to an accounting therefore in the Second and Awesome Coming of our Great Lord, God, and Savior, Jesus Christ, at which time He will demand It from you.”

As the faithful lined up to partake of the Holy Eucharist, the Royal Gates opened and out came Father Ihor holding the Chalice. Under his hierarch’s watchful gaze, the newly ordained priest carefully bestowed the Holy Sacrament. His Eminence gave the faithful one last blessing, returning the Chalice to the table of Oblation.

With a sigh of joy and relief Father Ihor descended from the ambo to read the Prayer of Dismissal, thanking God for this day, for His Gifts, for His mercy, and asking for
since been afforded a great place in the traditional aspects. The candelabrum stands upon, or just behind the Holy Altar. Having recited the appropriate prayers, and blessed the objects with holy water, His Eminence returned to stand on the Ambo. Flanked once again by the columns of clergy, with the newest clergy at the far end including newly ordained Father Ihor, who stood across from his classfellow, Father Mykola, who was ordained the previous month, His Eminence addressed those who had joined via the LiveStream. His Eminence expressed his gratitude to the parents who raised such a God loving son, and asked the faithful of the Church to support the young priest, to pray for him and his family, to ask God to give him the strength to stand up fearlessly, and be courageous in the face of a morally lacking society.

As he concluded, His Eminence Metropolitan Antony stepped out of the Altar to address the newly ordained Father Ihor, bestowing upon him his blessing and advice. His Eminence advised the young priest to always remember to start, end, and fill the day with the Holy Spirit. Vladyka made a profound statement when he explained that the unforgivable sin against the Holy Spirit, is that we remain ignorant of Him. Ignorant not in not knowing about Him, but, ignorant in our ignoring of Him. Therefore, Vladyka stated that Fr. Ihor must never ignore the Holy Spirit, but, allow Him to work in him, and through him.

As the Metropolitan blessed the young priest, Archbishop Daniel stepped out and presented the certificate of ordination to him, reading off that by his ordination he is now blessed to perform baptisms, crowning ceremonies, marrying a man with a woman, hear confessions, and all other Holy Sacraments. Handing the certificate to the new priest, and giving him his blessing, he then turned his attention to Dobrodijka Nellia and invited her to join her husband upon the sola. The young couple stood together as she bowed her head. The Archbishop laid his hand upon her head and prayed that God grant her strength and wisdom to help her husband in his ministry.

Father Ihor took the opportunity to thank the hierarchs for their compassion, support and encouragement over the years. He asked that they keep him and his family in their prayers, before turning to the others and thanking the Archbishop who had traveled great distances to participate in this celebration. He thanked the Seminary Instructors, his brother seminarians, and guests for joining him on this day and asked for their continued support and prayers. He turned to his wife, and thanked her for always being there for him, and finally thanked his family for supporting him as he had studied and encouraging him as he followed his calling. As he invited everyone to enjoy a luncheon at the seminary building, his brother seminarians stepped up and greeted him, presenting him with roses, and sang a joyous rendition of Mnohaya Lita! Many Years!

With smiles upon their faces the faithful and clergy, began to leave the church. Pausing to enjoy the many blooms, the buzzing bees, and myriad of colors at the foot of the church steps, the faithful began to make their way to the seminary, as the children ran up and down the steps chasing each other around the church.

Soon the church doors were locked, and the car park was empty, but the celebration continued, as joyful laughter and song emanated through the open windows and doors of seminary, and floated across the Metropolia Center grounds. A new priest has been ordained to serve the faithful of Christ’s Church. A new branch has sprouted on the Vine. May the Lord bless newly ordained Father Ihor, along with his wife, Dobrodijka Nellia, with many happy, healthy and blessed years, as they work to grow the Church, defend the righteous, and safeguard all life. Mnohaya Lita!

Photos by Subdeacon Yaroslav Bilohan and Elizabeth Symonenko
The trees glowed a bright red and yellow under the Autumn sunshine, as on Sunday, September 26, 2021, the parishioners of St. Nicholas Parish, in Troy, NY, along with parish pastor, Rev. Vasyl Dovgan, eagerly awaited the arrival of His Eminence Archbishop Daniel, Ruling Hierarch of the Western Eparchy of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA and the Diaspora.

Gathering in the Narthex of the church the children stood holding flowers, awaiting their much beloved Archbishop. The children fidgeted and giggled as they spotted His Eminence, along with several seminarians of the St. Sophia Ukrainian Orthodox Theological Seminary ascend the steps. The children ran up and happily handed Archbishop Daniel lilies, which he gratefully accepted, and then in turn gave each child a flower to hold. The members of the parish administration and sisterhood expressed their gratitude to their hierarch for his visit on this auspicious occasion. After a brief exchange of words, His Eminence stepped into the Nave where he was greeted by Fr. Vasyl. Kissing the offered Cross, His Eminence bestowed his blessings upon the parishioners and guests who had gathered on this warm Sunday morning.

The center aisle of the nave was decorated with lovely tulle bows and white flowers, which hung from the ends of the benches. Walking past the bows, Archbishop Daniel entered the church and under the peaceful gaze of the saints looking down through the beautiful icons His Eminence walked up to a small stand before the iconostas upon which rested an icon of Christ, and a small gem-encrusted Gospel Book. With a gentle smile he turned and looked back to see a young girl dressed in white, timidly approach. This was Fr. Vasyl and Dobrodiyka Ilona’s daughter Solomia, who was from Matthew 22:1-14 about a parable Christ told comparing the Kingdom of Heaven to a marriage feast prepared by a king for his son. In his sermon, Archbishop Daniel explained that the invitation still stands, and we are all invited to participate in the feast. However, we must not be like the guest who was not properly attired. In those days the host of the celebration would hand out garments for his guests to wear upon joining the celebration, therefore, there was no excuse for this man, even though he was called in off the street, to not be properly attired. This man intentionally had refused to don the new garments provided to him. His Eminence stated that we are given new garments during our baptism, and it is up to us to wear them proudly, keep them clean, and join the banquet to which we are invited by the Lord Himself.

At the conclusion of the Great Entrance, two seminarians, Subdeacon Pavlo Vysotsky and Reader Maksym Zhuravchyn, exited the Altar and headed to the Narthex to retrieve Subdeacon Volodymyr Pichkurov who has been standing in prayer awaiting them. Today, Subdeacon Volodymyr, in the presence of his wife, Valentina Pichkurova, his children, and grandchildren, would be ordained into the Holy Deaconate of the Church.

As Deacon Adrian Mazur called out “Command!”, Subdeacon Volodymyr fell onto his knees and bowed towards the Altar. Rising to his feet, the two seminarians grasped him by his elbows and led him forward. Again, was heard, “Command!” and the subdeacon once again fell to his knees and bowed in the middle of the Nave. Rising up he was led forward to the Royal Gates, “Command, Holy Master, the one who presents himself before you!” echoed through the church, and the subdeacon entered through the Holy Gates and knelted before Archbishop Daniel, who was seated at the corner of the Altar table. His Eminence gave the subdeacon his blessing, and a few words of encouragement before he rose to his feet and was escorted by the two deacons, who held him by his arms, around the Altar table, pausing as Subdeacon Volodymyr humbly kissed each corner of the
As the Archbishop was praying, newly ordained Deacon Volodymyr slowly rose to his feet and stepped to the side. Archbishop Daniel took each piece of the new deacon's vestments, blessed them and presented them to the people, before placing them on the newly ordained Deacon.

First was the oraron, which is the deacon's stole that is draped over his left shoulder allowing him to raise the front portion with his right hand, like a raised angel's wing, while reading the litanies, and performing other tasks. As His Eminence stepped forward and raised the oraron before the people, he exclaimed "Axios!" and the people replied, "Axios! Worthy! Гідний!"

Next Vladyka presented the cuffs, which remind the deacon that he serves by the power and Grace of God, not on his own merit, and are a symbol of the bonds that tied the Savior's hands during His Passion. The cuffs were followed by the epigonation (palitsa). The palitsa, which is the diamond shaped article kissing his hand and epigonation held a dual meaning. First, it denotes the celebrant as a "soldier" of Christ. Second, it symbolizes the Word of God, fighting the wiles of the enemy. A set of priests stepped up and led the subdeacon once again around the Altar Table, and then a third time he was led around. His Eminence arose, as Subdeacon Volodymyr prostrated three times before Christ, and then kneeled at the southwest corner of the Table, placing his right hand over his left upon the corner, with his head humbly resting upon his hands.

As the prayers were completed, the deacon emerged holding the Chalice containing the Body and Blood of Christ. Archbishop Daniel recited the Communion Prayer, took the Chalice from the deacon, and proceeded to commune all the people who had been so patiently waiting, starting with the child Solomia, whose confession he had heard earlier that morning.

As the dismissal was read, the faithful all made way to the parish hall to continue the celebration. Three scrumptious cakes were displayed – one for His Eminence, one for Deacon Volodymyr, and one for young Solomia. It was a triple celebration. The ceremonial fan is used during the services. The final piece provided by the Service Book, from which the Deacon will read the prayers during the services. The final object His Eminence presented the deacon because he once again bowed before him, each vying for attention, as they laughed and shoved each other. His Eminence grabbed them all, enclosing them in a large bear hug as they giggled and squealed.

As the sun hung low in the western sky, the people began to depart for their homes. With final farewells, may stand blameless by You and eagerly anticipating their turn to partake, contemplated how Deacon Volodymyr must be feeling. He must be going through a myriad of emotions at the honor of standing before God at the Altar Table.

Thus having shared of the broken bread, of the love of each other, and the love of God, they people joyfully wiled away the afternoon basking in the warmth of friendship, enjoying a tasty meal, sharing stories, catching up on news, and making plans for the future.

As the Royal Gates closed, Deacon Volodymyr emerged holding the Chalice containing the Body and Blood of Christ. Archbishop Daniel took up the ripida and held it over the Gifts as His Eminence fell to his knees before them and prayed the Lord's Prayer.
On a beautiful Sunday morning, September twelfth, in a rural area of the Eastern Shore of Maryland, stands a little grey church nestled between corn stalks. Outside of Holy Trinity Ukrainian Orthodox Mission, stands about fifty people, waiting for their spiritual Father Bishop to arrive.

The time comes and out from the car stands His Eminence, Metropolitan Antony, the Prime Hierarch of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA and the Ruling Hierarch of the Eastern Eparchy of which Holy Trinity is part. First to greet His Eminence with a beautiful bouquet of flowers was Nadia Baratney. Next Michael Hretchka, Parish Board President and Wolodymyr Stepowij, Parish Board Treasurer offered greetings from the Parish Family with the traditional bread and salt. Finally, Father Stephen greeted His Eminence with the hand cross and Holy Water expressing the joy that the Parish had as their Father Bishop was present in the life of the Parish. His Eminence expressed the joy of being present in the life of his flock, not because it was an anniversary or special occasion, but rather that it gave us the time to be together in prayer.

Arriving with His Eminence were Deacon Myroslav Mykytyuk, who concelebrated the Liturgy and from our St. Sophia Seminary, Subdeacon Pavlo Vystotatsky, Reader Andrew Vatrych and Seminarian Andrii Akulenko. The Divine Liturgy began and the responses were sung by our Parish Choir Members under the leadership of Wolodymyr Stepowij. Metropolitan Antony preached on the Gospel message. We worry so much about how our 401 retirement funds are doing that we forget that we have brothers and sisters in need. As Orthodox Christians we have an obligation to help those less fortunate than we are. He spoke about the laws of love that Jesus left us: “To love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind and all our strength; and to love our neighbor as ourselves.” How often do we even think about God in our daily life when we worry about all the earthly possessions that we own. Do we think about God’s judgment in the end? Loving our neighbor as ourselves does not mean looking in the mirror and seeing what we want to see. It means that as we take care of our own daily needs, so too we must also help those around us who are less fortunate take care of their daily needs.

His Eminence spoke about how we judge people. The simple man or woman on the street who needs our compassion and yes, even our monetary care. How often do we judge them and say that we will not help them because what will they do with our money? That is not loving our neighbor as ourselves. He reminded us that the way we judge others is the way that God will judge us. We say the Our Father every day (hopefully). Do we understand that every time we say this, the only prayer that Jesus gave us to pray to His Father, that we are asking God to judge us in the same way that we judge others?

Our Metropolitan talked about our daily prayers. The one prayer that has become the spiritual foundation of his spiritual life is the Prayer of St. Ephrem: “O Lord and Master of my life, take from me the spirit of sloth, despair, lust of power, and idle talk. But give rather the spirit of chastity, humility, patience, and love to Your servant. Yes, O Lord and King, grant me to see my own transgressions, and not to judge my brother, for blessed art You, unto ages of ages. Amen.” He prays that this prayer may become the anchor and foundation of our daily lives as well.

Following the Divine Liturgy, all of us gathered at Doyle’s Restaurant for a time of breaking our fast and fellowship. We are thankful to His Eminence for being with us and inspiring us both with his presence and especially through his prayers. May God grant him many, happy and blessed years! Eis polla eti despota!
“І все, що робите, робіть від душеї, як для Господа, а не для людей, знаючи, що в нагороду від Господа одержите спадок, бо ви служите Господу Христу”. (Кол. 3:23-24)

В суботу, 4 вересня 2021 р. Високопреосвященний Архієпископ Даниїл з радістю помолився та поблагословив діток (і їхніх батьків) та вчителів Школи Українознавства та Релігії при Церкві-пам'ятнику св. Андрія Первозванного в Свят Бавнд Брук, Н. Дж. (пані Галина Маринець - директор) з нагоди початку НОВОГО НАВЧАЛЬНОГО РОКУ!

Владика благословив усіх та звіртаючись до батьків, архієрей закликав їх до спіпраці з вчителями, адже після закінчення наукових навчальних занять розпочинається правдивий розвиток набутих знань. “Виховуймо наших дітей в християнських цінностях, відомо, їх разом духовності та моралі – будьмо позитивними взаємними людьми в їхній житті” – наголосив владика.

Високопреосвященний архієпископ Даниїл також нагадав про важливість вивчення мов, що сприяє інтелектуальному розвитку дитини. Святе Письмо вчить нас, що важливо здобувати знання і що ми повинні наполегливо працювати. “Розумне серце здобуває знання, а вухо мудрого шукає знань”. (Прит. 18:15)

На завершення відправи Владика Даниїл окропив присутніх освяченою водою та подарував дітям іконки Пресвятої Богородиці.

Діти були раді повернутися до рідних стін школи та зустрітись зі своїми друзями-однокласниками та наставниками-вчителями. Щороку школа приймала 85 дітей у своє виховання.

“Тож учимся бажаємо сумління та натхнення, батькам, учителям – здоров‘я та терпіння і нехай на усіх чекають добри зміни та прощищення, а Боже Благословення перебуває над усіма нами.”

Photos by Subdeacon Yaroslav Bilohan

Text by Seminarian Andrii Akulenko
BEEF STEW RECIPE

Author: Natasha Kravchuk
Servings: 8 people
Prep Time: 30 minutes
Cook Time: 2 hours
Total Time: 2 hours 30 minutes

Every bit of this beef soup is infused with wonderful flavor from slow roasting in the oven. Pair with beef stew recipe with fresh bread or serve it over mashed potatoes.

INGREDIENTS

• 6 oz bacon chopped into 1/4" strips
• 2 Tbsp olive oil to sauté
• 2 lbs. beef stew meat (or beef chuck cut into 1″ pieces)
• 2 1/2 tsp sea salt or to taste, divided
• 1 1/2 tsp black pepper freshly ground, divided
• 1/4 cup all-purpose flour
• 2 cups good dry red wine
• 1 lb. mushrooms thinly sliced
• 4 carrots peeled and cut into 1/2" thick pieces
• 1 medium yellow onion diced
• 4 garlic cloves minced
• 1 Tbsp tomato paste
• 4 cups low sodium beef broth or beef stock
• 2 bay leaves
• 1/2 tsp dried thyme
• 1 lb small potatoes new potatoes, or fingerling, halved or quartered

INSTRUCTIONS

1. In a large, oven-proof pot, sauté bacon over medium heat until golden brown and fat is released. Using a slotted spoon, remove bacon to a separate bowl.

2. While bacon is cooking, place beef in a large mixing bowl and season with 1 1/2 tsp salt and 1 tsp black pepper. Sprinkle beef with 1/4 cup flour and toss to combine and evenly coat beef. Transfer beef in 2 batches into the hot bacon fat and cook over med/high heat, until beef is browned (3 min per side). Add olive oil if needed. Transfer browned beef to the bowl with bacon.

3. Add 2 cups wine to the pot and bring to a boil, scraping the bottom to deglaze the pot. Add sliced mushrooms and simmer over medium heat about 10 min.

4. Meanwhile, heat a large non-stick skillet over medium/high heat and add 2 Tbsp olive oil. Add sliced carrots, diced onion, and 4 chopped garlic cloves, and sauté 4 min. Add 1 Tbsp tomato paste and sauté another minute. Transfer veggies to the soup pot.

5. Add 4 cups beef broth, 2 bay leaves, 1/2 tsp dried thyme, 1 tsp salt, and 1/2 tsp pepper. Return beef and bacon to the pot then add potatoes. Stir to combine and make sure potatoes are submerged in liquid. Cover with lid and bake at 325°F oven for 1 hour and 45 min.

RECIPE NOTES

For a healthier stew, you can tilt the pot after it comes out of the oven to allow the liquid to pool to one side, then skim off any excess fat.

SAINT HELEN DISCOVERS THE PRECIOUS AND LIFE-GIVING CROSS

In 326 A.D. St. Helena (Св. Галина), the mother of Constantine the Great traveled to Jerusalem to find the Cross upon which Christ was crucified. After much searching the location was identified.

On the spot where the Cross had been buried St. Helen also discovered a beautiful and fragrant flower that nobody had ever seen before. This flower is known as “Vasiliko” or “Basil” meaning “flower of the King”.

Underneath the Basil, the Cross of Christ was found, but with it were the other two crosses, those used to crucify the two thieves on either side of Christ. The sign with the inscription, “Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews”, also lay among the three crosses. In order to determine which one was the true cross, a sick woman was told to kiss each of the three crosses. The woman kissed the first cross with no result. She kissed the second cross and again nothing happened. However, when the ailing woman kissed the True Cross, she was immediately made well. It so happened that a funeral procession was passing that way, and so the body of the dead man was placed on each of the crosses, and when it was placed on the True Cross, the dead man came to life — thus the name the “Life-Giving” Cross, which gives life not only to that man, but to each person who believes in the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross and His all-glorious three day Resurrection.

We always wear a Cross around our neck, and we make the sign of the Cross on us and on things around us. The Lord protects us from harm through the power of the Cross.
1. In what year was the True Cross found?

2. Who discovered the True Cross’s location?

3. How many crosses were found?

4. How did they identify which was the True Cross?

5. What plant was found growing on that spot?


Bancells, Ryan Christopher baptized and chrismated on April 13, 2014 in Four Evangelist Church, Bel Air, MD. Child of Christopher Bancells and Christina Marie Rinkers. Sponsors: Michael Schmig and . Celebrated by Fr. Gregory Czumak.

Cadle, Madison Lee baptized and chrismated on May 1, 2021 in St Nicholas Church, Greenwood, VA. Child of of Zuzekerman and Amanda Cadle. Sponsors: and . Celebrated by Fr. Charles Sanderoff.


Davis, Benjamin Peter baptism and chrismated on April 23, 2017 in Four Evangelist Church, Bel Air, MD. Child of of Lee Davis and Christina Marie Rinkers. Sponsors: and . Celebrated by Fr. Gregory Czumak.


Komorkin, Ariana (Mariya) baptized and chrismated on April 24, 2022 in Holy Trinity Mission Church, Seattle, WA. Child of of Komorkin and . Sponsors: and . Celebrated by Fr. Andriy Matlak.


may god grant to them many happy and blessed years!

Rev. James Cairns II 9/9/2017
V. Rev. Ivan Petrouchtchak 9/24/1995
V. Rev. Roman Tarnavsky 9/27/1978
Dn. Evan (Clifford) O’Neil 9/16/2017

Do not just read the pages of the Bible and Holy Scripture, but live the pages, allowing them to lead you along the path towards God and salvation.

— Archbishop Daniel

Ne просто читайте сторінки Біблії та Святого Письма, а живіть сторінками, дозволяючи їм вести вас шляхом до Бога та спасіння.

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