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Distinguished organizers and delegates,

Beloved participants and stewards of the 11th Assembly of the World Council of Churches,

Dear friends, brothers and sisters,

One of the core beliefs and central teachings of Christianity through the centuries is the conviction that the light of Christ shines more brightly than any darkness in our hearts and in our world. We Christians affirm and declare that the joy of the resurrection radiates through and prevails over the suffering of the cross. This is what we maintain; this is what we preach; and this is what we proclaim to the whole world. Indeed, “if Christ had not been raised from the dead, then our message is meaningless and our faith is in vain” (1 Cor. 15.14). This is surely the underlying premise and focus of the theme of this assembly, which professes that “Christ’s love moves the world to reconciliation and unity.”

Yet, even as we look around, we are obliged to confess that we have not practiced – and continue to fall short of – what we have preached over twenty centuries. How can we reconcile our magnificent faith with our manifest failure?

The answer lies in the scriptural passage for this morning’s plenary, which takes place on September 1st, the day that Orthodox Christians since 1989 have dedicated to praying for the protection of God’s gift of creation and when Christians of all confessions and communions commit to advancing the ministry of creation care. In the Letter to the Colossians (1, 19–20), we read that: “In Christ all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether in heaven or on earth, making peace by the blood of the cross”.

This passage assumes a fundamental difference between the secular and a spiritual worldview. The person with a secular mentality feels that he or she is the center of the universe. By contrast, the person with a sacred mentality considers the center of the universe to be elsewhere and in others.

A spiritual worldview suggests an enlarged – a broader or ecumenical – worldview, one that is centered and balanced in Christ as the heart of the universe. This is what provides the source of reconciliation and assurance of transformation. By perceiving the world through this lens of cosmic transfiguration and transformation, we are capable of embarking – as individuals and as society – on restoring the shattered image of creation, a process that begins with and involves acknowledging responsibility for the sin of ignoring the divine presence in all things and in all people. The entire universe – all of creation – constitutes a cosmic liturgy. When we are initiated into the mystery of the Resurrection and transformed by the light of the Transfiguration, then we are able to discern and detect the purpose for which God has created everyone and everything.

There is a need for cosmic repentance and cosmic resurrection. What is required is nothing less than a radical reversal of our perspectives and practices. “The blood of the cross” in the above apostolic reference reveals and indicates a way out of our impasses by proposing self-criticism and self-sacrifice as solutions to self-centeredness. “The blood of the cross” provides a way of assuming responsibility for our actions and our world. We should all adopt a spirit of humility and appreciate the world as larger than ourselves. We should never reduce our religious life to ourselves and our own interests. We should always recall our vocation to transform all of God’s creation.

Still, the greatest threat to our planet is not the novel coronavirus but climate change. The growing but neglected toll from rising global temperatures will actually eclipse the current number of deaths from all the infectious diseases combined if climate change is not constrained. In the wake of the pandemic, even the World Economic Forum called for “a great reset” of capitalism, arguing that sustainability will only be achieved through drastic lifestyle changes. This is what we have described as the need for repentance (or metanoia) from indiscriminate habits and destructive practices toward other people and in relation to nature’s resources.

Dear brothers and sisters,

If we are to make any change in our priorities and lifestyles, we must do so together – as churches and communities, as societies and nations. We must “bear one another’s burdens if we wish to fulfil the law of Christ” (Gal. 6.2). And here, let us call to mind the current war and unjust suffering of our brothers and sisters in Ukraine. Above all, then, we must pledge our repentance and the conversion of our hearts and lives. Today is “the right opportunity” (Is. 49.8), “the acceptable time and the day of salvation.” “The time to act for the Lord is now” (Ps. 119.126).

This is our fervent prayer for all of you in the 11th Assembly of the World Council of Churches on this consecrated day of prayer and protection for God’s sacred creation.

+ BARTHOLOMEW of Constantinople
ecological economy, changes in agricultural and biomechanical productivity, the production and use of energy, the movement and transportation of goods, levels of consumption, and so on. Unfortunately, good intentions, agreements and proclamations often remain theoretical, merely “big words,” without any impact on action, “superficial injunctions,” as it has been written. Humankind has not learned from the consequences of climate change, the destructive fires, heat waves, and floods, the rapid reduction in biodiversity, the pollution of the atmosphere and seas, the deforestation and social repercussions of the environmental crisis, above all revealed in the mass migration for ecological reasons. Humanity Theotokos Pammakaristos, the lifegiving grace and great mercy of the creator and redeemer of all, the pioneer and perfector of our immaculate faith to whom be the glory and the dominion unto everlasting ages. Amen!

September 1, 2022

† Bartholomew of Constantinople
Fervent supplicant for all before God

† VARRALOMIY.

Mилостиво Божиа Архієпископ Константинопольський, Нового Риму і Вселенський Патріарх,
Всім повноті Ієрих, Благодать, мир і мільйість від Творця всього творення Господа і Бога і Спаса нашого Ісуса Христа.

Пресвящення браття ієрархі і волюблена чада в Господі,

Вступаючи сьогодні, з Божим благословенням, у новий церковний рік, ми вищавамо разом зцялявінцем Інхідта «День охорони природного довкілля» і віддадимо славу і подяку Творцю всього за великий дар творення». 

Ми це раз від усієї душі проголошуємо, що поширення доти та постійна турбота про його охорону належать до осередка нашої православної ідентичності як один із найважливіших її елементів. Церква визнає і назває, що причиною відчуження людей від дуже доброго творення та від своїх ближніх є відчуженням від Бога. Вона смиливо нагадує нам, що немає справжньої свободи без істини та поза істинною, яка є силною, яка справедлива, яка святіє. «Пізнайте істину, і істина визволить вас» (Івана 8:32).

Понад три десятки літ Свята Велика Церква Христова різне й динамічно проповідає екологічне послання

For over three decades, the Holy Great Church of Christ emphatically and dynamically promotes the eco-friendly message of Orthodoxy through its diverse initiatives. September 1, 1989, will forever signify and symbolize the commencement of a movement that produced much fruit, raised awareness about the spiritual and ethical roots and parameters of the destruction of the natural environment, mobilized individuals and institutions, inspired the rest of the Christian world, highlighted the way of responding to this great challenge – a way that passes firstly through an understanding of its connection with the crisis of human freedom and the need for radical change in mentality and conduct with a view to creation, and secondly through a common and universal action given the global dimensions and tragic consequences of the ecological destruction.

An invaluable legacy for the future lies in the many important writings on the field of theological ecology, among which the work of the professor and academician, His Eminence Elder Metropolitan John of Pergamon, retain a prominent place. An inexhaustible source of inspiration will also be found in the presentations of the nine water-borne international symposia, which hosted renowned specialists and scientists as well as representatives of the cultural and spiritual worlds. These texts are especially beneficial for environmental learning, which has carved out a significant place in contemporary education. As it has rightly been said: “In the future, an education without ecological orientation will be a parody of education.”

Sustainable development is a one-way street. It will secure ecological balance in the present and constitute a guarantee for the future, but it has its conditions: for the Church, the elements of the word – according to a theological formulation – “are not simply utilitarian or useful material for the individual needs of human beings, but they are actions of the Person of the one Creator”. Everything created by God blesses, praises and exalts God to the ages, the heavens declare His glory. This is the message expressed by the concern of the Great Church for the protection of creation. The life of the Church of Christ is a foretaste of all that we expect in the Kingdom of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. On our way to the Eschaton, the Holy Church offers to the world the Gospel of grace as its guide and the unsurfing certainty that evil, in all its forms, will not have the final word in history.

In closing, we wish you a blessed and fruitful new ecclesiastical year, and we call upon all of you, through the intercessions of the First-among-the-saintsTk., the Church of Christ, to offer a new action for us to act as if uninform, suppressing the truth that with regard to its relationship to the natural environment, our modern technocratic and econo-centered civilization does not comprise progress, since the greatest devastation of the natural environment has taken place in our own time, and age where science and economy prevail.

Climate change is an immense destruction caused by human irresponsibility and the impasse of our model of organization in the life of our economy. We only have a future if we understand that the protection of the integrity of creation does not only comprise a hurdle for economic development, but is the vehicle for real progress.

This year, the celebration of the Day of the protection of creation are accompanied by the sound of weapons in Ukraine, by the cry of the victims of military violence, the bombardment of cities and infrastructures, the groaning of nature and moanings of refugees. Every war is a humanitarian and ecological catastrophe. The ongoing violence, beyond the thousands of human lives, also destroys the natural environment that it pollutes, forcing nations and peoples to return to ways of securing energy efficiency through means that are unfriendly to the environment. Thus, humanity enters a new vicious cycle of destructive impasses, which conform the saying: “as a presage to the end”.

Sustainable development is a one-way street. It will secure ecological balance in the present and constitute a guarantee for the future, but it has its conditions:
Православ'я через свої різноманітні ініціативи. 1 вересня 1989 року назавжди знаменуватиме та символізуватиме початок руху, який приніс багато плодів, підвищив обізнаність про духовні та етичні корені та параметри знищення природного середовища, мобілізував окремих осіб та інституції, наділив шляхом відповіді на цей великий виклик, який відкривається через розуміння його зв'язку з кризою людської свободи та необхідністю радикальних змін у культурному та духовному світі. Богословський та академічний вплив, зосереджений в роботах професора та академіка Високопреосвященнішого митрополита старця Пергамського Іоанна, претерпів значну еволюцію і удосконалення.

Безцінна спадщина для майбутнього полягає в багатьох важливих працях у галузі богословської екології, серед яких чільне місце займають праці професора та академіка, Високопреосвященнішого митрополита старця Пергамського Іоанна. Невичерпним джерелом натхнення стануть також вибіркові виступи дев'яти міжнародних симпозіумів, проводених на кораблях, в яких брали участь відомі спеціалісти і науковці, а також представники культурного та духовного світу. 

Сталий розвиток – це вулиця з одностороннім рухом. Він забезпечить екологічну рівновагу в сьогоденні та стане гарантією на майбутнє, але він має свої умови: екологічна економіка, зміни в сільськогосподарській та біомеханічній продуктивності, виробництво та використання енергії, переміщення та транспортування товарів, нові моделі споживання. На жаль, добрі наміри, домовленості та декларації часто залишаються теоретичними, просто «великими словами», без жодного впливу на дії, «поверхневими заборонами», як було написано. Людство не вивчило уроки з наслідків зміни клімату, руйнівних пожеж, спеки та повеней, швидкого скорочення біорізноманіття, забруднення атмосфери та морів, знищення лісів та соціальних наслідків екологічної кризи, які перш за все, виявилися в масовій міграції з екологічних причин. Це підтверджує вислов, що Homo sapiens донині продовжує поводитися одночасно як homo demens – необачний і ірраціональний.

Браття в Господі і благословенні чада, для Церкви елементи світу – згідно з богословським формулюванням – «є не просто утилітарним або корисним матеріалом для індивідуальних потреб людей, але вони є діяннями Особи єдиного Творця». Все створене Богом благословлює, хвалить і возвеличує Бога на віки вічно, земля і небо звіщують славу Його. Ось таким постає послання, виражене турботою Великої Церкви про захист творіння. Життя Церкви Христової є передчуттям усього, що ми очікуємо в Царстві Отця, І Сина, І Святого Духа. На нашому шляху до Есхатону, Свята Церква пропонує світові Євангелію благодаті як дороговказ і непохитну впевненість, що зло в усіх його формах не матиме останнього слова в історії.

На закінчення ми від усієї душі бажаємо вам благословенного та плідного нового церковного року і закликаємо на вас, заступництвом Першої серед святих, Богородиці «Паммакарістос», життєдайну благодать і велике милосердя Творця і Спасителя всього творіння, начальнику і доскональнику нашої непорочної віри, Якому належить слава і держава на віки вічні. Амінь!

† Константинопольський Варфоломій, палкий молитовник перед Богом за всіх Вас
I was relieved to learn from the sermon preached by the priest, Scripture read in the church and could really comprehend the passage. A little later, when I got older our equal shares. Our sister might have thought the same it seemed unfair to me that my older siblings, that were born 1 and 2 years apart, I had to learn to share. As I was growing up with my two other siblings, it gave us a perspective that helps us understand this passage. The Lord has will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away.” This quote sums up the meaning of the parable and seems to have turned into a proverbial expression. How do we understand this passage?

Profitable servants in the parable were praised and called “good and faithful.” They were good as persons and faithful in relation to their master and towards what he entrusted to them. The unprofitable servant was called “wicked and lazy.” Considering his moral inadequacy, he should have felt lucky to even get that one talent. He should have used this opportunity to prove to his master that he is able to grow with goodness as a person, and as a result to increase the talent given to him. Instead, he approached it with laziness, he buried the talent, and then in justification of himself he blamed it on his master being a hard, unfair, and greedy man. That’s how a wicked unproductive person tried to justify his laziness as if accusing his employer of greed should relieve you from the responsibility to work diligently and to make a profit for him.

This parable motivates us to consider how we use what we are gifted with. Do we bury our talent because of laziness and wicked life? Do we bury our talent because greed should relieve you from the responsibility to work diligently and to make a profit for him?

As I mentioned earlier, in our parents’ home in Ukraine kids did not get an allowance. When we needed for wanted something, we either had to present our case to the father as to why we should get it, or just asked our mother, and she interceded on our behalf. I suppose, for those who grew up in America, in homes where getting allowance was common, a more relevant illustration would be where siblings received equal amount of allowance. For the most part (except possibly the youngest), kids would not consider it to be fair. Of course, many parents attach some requirements to getting an allowance, like good grades at school, good behavior, having the chores done, and possibly some other criteria which affect the amount of allowance. Yet even if children got equal amounts every week, it would hardly guarantee that at the end of the month they would have the same sum of money. The difference would be even more drastic by the end of the year. Why? Because they used what they were given differently: one mostly spent the money, another mostly saved, yet another bought some gadgets and sold them at a profit to his schoolmates.

Unlike kids who generally are free to use their parents’ treatments and allowances as they wish, our Heavenly Father always expects us to manage the given talents wisely. He neither gives out His talents to everyone equally, nor does He expect results to be equal. According to the parable no matter what the initially received amount was we are to invest and grow, and multiply it, so that we are rewarded, when the Master returns.

Now let’s consider the moral of the parable. “To everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance, and he who does not have, even what he
і сягаєш, де ти не розсипав.
І підійшов третій слуга, що його Царства Небесного. Божим на славу Божу і робили скарби, стреміли до духовної ці двоє слуг подвоїли свої духовні і другі два. Господар похвалив другий слуга, що придбав два таланти, і каже, що буде прийти в першу добу й звідти за своє життя на землі.

Слово талант з Євангельської притчи перейшло в розповідь, але він відбув Господь від нього таланта та дав тому, що має десять. В тих часах було високо розрізняння торгівля. Були банки, які давали позик приблизно від 5 до 10 процентів, залежно від економічного положення. Індивідуум не можна було давати позики на проценти іншим людям. Але закон дозволяв йому давати позики на процентах поганам, себто не ієднам.

Ми бачимо, що той третій втратив початку синьовіїї любов до Бога. Кого вважає гіршими і байдужими. Хто він і не відносиликся до чого - іншого даному йому таланту, але він їх і не приманював. Цей син був обіймав, пасивний. Це значить, хто він і вів роботи в Бога, але не створював духовно себе. Інші і робити добру діло та невдало відносився до своїх обов'язків до Бога. І за цього господар його осудив. Ми отримуємо Божі в таємствах Святого Хрещення, але не всі рівні досконалістю. Та є і така краса — зірок? Анна казала, що деякі духовні можуть візитись до тих світів, що просто більше всіх блищать. Духи можуть візитись до тих світів є і така краса — зірок? Анна казала, що деякі духовні можуть візитись до тих світів, що просто більше всіх блищать.

І я побоявся, - пішов і таланта відібрав вернувшись, я взяв би з прибутком жну, де не сіяв, і збираю, де не збирав.

Тобі починає зароджуватись гір, і коли ці гір своєчасно не зупинити, то він бере верх і наступають ужасні дії. Я тобі охоче буде ти прийняти таємниці Царства Небесного тут на землі. На іншому світі каться вже буде зазнається. Я також відчуваю, що може бути із тебе, чи не теперь. Пам'ятайся, що людські і божествені заслуги, але не всі рівні досконалістю. Та є і така краса — зірок? Анна казала, що деякі духовні можуть візитись до тих світів, що просто більше всіх блищать.

Також Анна говорила про рай: "Отче Андар, її священик, питай це му бачить яких ближніх дітей?" Вона відповіла: "Бачу, я і сама уже знаходжуся між ними." Чи бачиш кого із знайомих? Бачу багато знайомих.

Слова Божі є наслідком своїх дій. Люди, що замолилися до грабів, зміцнюють свою віру в Бога, що відповідає Небесному. Завжди пам'ятаймо, що кого дійсно осуджували Господар, те що він прийде до світу, на якому Бога і тим губяться.

"Як ти її пізнавала?" Анна відповіла: "Душі тут ми можемо знати, тобі що вибачать, все яскраво.

бачили загальний вид раю і не спілкувалися з там перебуваючими душами. Натомість, праведна Анна бачила, як в раю живуть її знайомі, говорила з душою Марії і ангелом провідником. Анна остерігала людей на землі, щоб вони любили Бога і один одного, проводили праведне життя і пам’ятали про своє призначення до життя вічного.

Коли душа людини попадає в рай, то вона перемінюється. Душа бачить всесвіт, зорі, і віддалі немає значення. Душа далі удосконалюється і підноситься до вищих сфер ближче Бога.

Приймімо до своєї душі значення притчі про таланти і свідчення про рай праведної Анни. Зростаймо духовно, проводьмо праведне життя, зміцнюйте свій вір в Бога, традиційно у вірянині Христовім, розвивайте свої розумові здібності на славу Бога.


о.Володимир Вронський
м. Нью-Йорк, штат Н.Й.
aspect of a moment in history that forever changed the course of American life. Sometimes the references relate to positive consequences of an evil act, but more often we are further offended by the negative side effects of man’s ability to hurt and destroy his fellow man…

We offer the first prayer we shared with you nineteen years ago as a guide for your personal prayer: "Lord God, Lover of Mankind, bless our God-protected nation, the United States of America, and forgive those who hate and wrong us. Do good to those who do good and grant all our people safety, health, salvation and eternal life. Visit those who continue to suffer from the terrorist attack upon our nation and heal them. Guide those in our armed forces; in our fire, police and rescue services and in our government. Upon those who have asked us, unworthy though we are, to pray for them, have mercy.

Remember our fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters and friends who have fallen asleep in the Lord under the most horrific of circumstances and grant them rest where the light of Your Face shines in a place where there is no more pain, nor sorrow, nor suffering. May their memory be eternal before Your Throne.

Remember us, O Lord, your humble, sinful and unworthy servants and enlighten our minds with the light of Your Knowledge and guide us in the way of your Commandments, through the prayers of our Most-Pure Lady, the Birth-Giver of God and Ever-Virgin Mary, and of all Your Saints, for You are blessed to the ages of ages. Amen."

The liturgical services of the day served those in attendance as a reminder that even though the attacks of 9/11 are far behind us, the lives lost will never be forgotten.

Memory Eternal!

Photos by Seminarian Roman Marchyshak and Valentyna Dovban

THE ORTHODOX CHURCH IS BEAUTIFUL:
IN OUR HOLY UKRAINIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE USA WE ALL COME FROM DIFFERENT PLACES AND BACKGROUNDS, YET WE ALL BELONG TO THE SAME FAMILY OF GOD.

WE SHARE THE SAME FAITH AND THE SAME MISSION — TO TELL OTHERS ABOUT HIM, TO BE A BLESSING TO OTHERS, TO SPREAD THE BLESSINGS OF GOD’S MERCY AND LOVE.

ПРАВОСЛАВНА ЦЕРКВА ПРОСТО ЧУДОВА:
У НАШІЙ СВЯТІЙ УКРАЇНСЬКІЙ ПРАВОСЛАВНІЙ ЦЕРКВІ США МИ ВСІ ПОХОДИМО З РІЗНИХ МІСТ ТА КРАЇН, АЛЕ ВСІ НАЛЕЖИМО ДО ОДНІЄЇ БОЖОЇ РОДINI.

МИ ПОДІЛЯЄМО ТУ САМУ ВІРУ ТА ТУ САМУ МІСЦЮ — РОЗПОВІДАТИ ІЧИМ ПРО ХРИСТА, БУТИ БЛАГОСЛОВЛЕННЯМ ДЛЯ ІЧИХ, ПОШИРИВАТИ БЛАГОСЛОВЕННЯ БОЖОГО МИЛОСРІДЯ ТА ЛЮБОВІ.
On a warm and sunny late September morning, the beautiful parish of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary in the Borough of Northampton, Pennsylvania, came to life as the faithful arrived and filled the church to capacity in order to joyously celebrate the 101st anniversary of the founding of the parish.

The parish had initially planned to celebrate their centennial in 2021, but with the pandemic still raging, plans had to be postponed. Therefore, it was with great anticipation that the faithful, joined by the local clergy, gathered, and eagerly awaited the arrival of their hierarchs to commence the long awaited, and well-deserved celebration.

Young girls, with colorful wreaths atop their curls, and wearing embroidered Ukrainian blouses (vyshyvanky) led the way to the church, dropping flower petals along the way, in an ancient tradition of welcoming a bishop. The hierarchs smiled as they crossed over the chalk drawing of colorful flowers drawn upon the pavement, along with a large WELCOME scrawled in many colors. As they neared the church and climbed the steps, His Eminence Metropolitan Antony, Prime Hierarch of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA and Diaspora, along with His Eminence Archbishop Daniel, Ruling Hierarch of the Western Eparchy, were greeted by the parish children who bestowed colorful bouquets of flowers upon them. They were next warmly greeted by the parish administration, and Rev. Oleg Kravchenko. Fr. Oleh is the newest pastor at the parish, following Very Rev. Myron Oryhon who served in the interim after the repose of much-loved Very Rev. Bazyl Zawierucha who served faithfully at the parish for almost 30 years.

Holy Assumption (Dormition) of the Birth-Giver of God Ukrainian Orthodox Parish in Northampton, PA is 101 Years Old!
Then another myriad takes their place and copies all they did and goes along the same profitless road and vanishes as they vanished - to make room for another and another and a million other myriads to follow the same arid path through the same desert and accomplish what the first myriad and all the myriads that came after it accomplished - nothing!

His Eminence expressed that if we were to believe these sayings, we would believe life to be nothing more than a foolish dream. It is sad to say that many people feel exactly this way, as if there is no point to life, and life is almost meaningless.

However, along comes Christ today and He gives us a different point of view, declaring, “I am the Bread of Life, which has come down from Heaven and gives life to the world!” He negates the four sorrows of Buddha and corrects those who interpret life as nothing more than a foolish dream.

God is here to affirm our worthwhileness. He came to explain, but, until he saw it, he was not able to truly understand. He squinted at the sunshine, for the very first time. He squinted at the sunshine, as his mouth dropped open and he proclaimed, “Mother! Why did you not tell me how beautiful it was?” The mother replied that she had tried to explain, but, until he saw it, he was not able to truly comprehend. The glorious vision of the beautiful sky would only be understood when his eyes had been opened.

And so, Christ can talk to us about transforming our deeds into deeds of light, but, until we open our spiritual eyes to see, we will never understand what He is trying to tell us.

His Eminence continued, by stating that the founders of this parish, along with the clergy, understood this. They came to a foreign land, a country that was hostile to them, and experienced what all new immigrants experience - suspicion, hostility, and being at the bottom of the totem pole. However, despite all the harshness they experienced, all the discomfort, they turned to the one source of goodness they knew from home – our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

They turned to God, who had protected them and governed their lives back home and they brought Him with them to the new country. They put Him before their eyes, and regardless of the harshness around them, they kept their focus only upon Him.

They proved their devotion to God by prioritizing the building of churches, and the development of parish families. Here they could join their families, friends, loved ones, and strangers, and get and give comfort, support, healing, and find someone to embrace them when they needed care.

Metropolitan Antony continued by inviting everyone to come to Christ, who is the living stone who was rejected by man but precious in the eyes of God. He stated that we are all like living stones and need to build ourselves into a solid spiritual house.

Looking at the people seated before him, His Eminence exclaimed that they are the chosen people, and we are chosen to minister to the poor, to be Christ to other who are lonely, grieving, or struggling. That is what community is all about. It is a place where we receive the Body and Blood of Christ into the temples of our own bodies, uniting humanity, and divinity, becoming one with God.

Metropolitan Antony told a story about prisoners of war who found themselves tired, weary, cold, and struggling to survive the brutality around them. It was every man for himself. Food was limited and the men squabbled over it. Hopelessness permeated the camp. Then one day one of the prisoners gave his blanket to a wounded man who was shivering with cold, and then he gave a share of his food ration him and was even able to procure him some medicine. Due to the care, he showed this man, the wounded comrade survived his injuries. Seeing this, others began to emulate his actions, sharing their food and blankets. They began to know and care for each other. They formed Bible Study groups and worshipped together, and even began to create makeshift prosthetics for the amputees for the amputees in the camp. Soon the entire atmosphere of the camp changed from bleak and hopeless, to bright and filled with hope and light.

What was it that made this drastic improvement possible? How could they have turned such a dire situation into something positive? The answer is simple. The prisoners became the Church. A community of Christ. The Church is not a building, but a spiritual home for a family united in a common cause. God beckons us to enter not occasionally but always. We are the chosen people, and we are chosen to minister to the world around us.

Early Christians were forced to worship in the catacombs to evade the persecution of the Roman army. They met to worship in unlikely places, hidden from the world, meeting with the Apostles and presbyters, who were sent to lead them in worship. They gathered and worshipped, and the very walls of the catacombs trembled around them from the zeal and anticipation of the faithful who had gathered to partake of the Body and Blood of Christ. Having communed they no longer hid from the world but were directed to go out and boldly preach and minister to the world.
We are all called to be part of the priesthood and have been called out of the darkness into the light. His Eminence stated that the parents, grandparents and great-grandparents of the today’s parishioners knew that. Certainly, over the years there have been squabbles, disagreements, and even arguments among various parishioners, but the parish is here and celebrating its new centennial. Christ was with the parish, and the Holy Spirit inspired the faithful, bringing them together even after the worst of arguments and difficulties.

Metropolitan Antony recalled that he was often in the midst of such parish disagreements, however, when the meetings were over, he would always get up and ask who was going to join him for a cup of coffee. That seemingly inconsequential gesture cemented the fact that even though we may disagree, we are all part of the Church, and we still love and care for each other. We may argue, disagree, and be unhappy with each other, but we still have a common foundation which is Christ Himself.

His Eminence continued by stating that the founders of this parish knew that having partaken of the Holy Gifts they were now co-ministers in the world and had the responsibility to come and give glory and worship to God, and then with renewed strength they were responsible for going out into the world and changing it for the better, for you cannot receive Christ, and still not forgive someone. He concluded by stating that this coming week someone will cross your path who is in need of your witness in Christ. Someone will need to have his or her worthwhileness affirmed by you, as a priest. You have been chosen to transform someone’s darkness into light. Because of you, someone this week will open their eyes, squint their darkness into light. Because of you, as a priest. You have been chosen to transform someone’s worthwhileness, affirm their presence of their Church Community.

After the meal, His Eminence Archbishop Daniel stepped up to the microphone and greeted everyone on the First Anniversary of their parish Centennial, and the beginning of their second century of ministry. In honor of the celebration, His Eminence presented UOC of USA Centennial medals, which are awarded for outstanding service to the Church. The recipients of these medals were the various church organizations: Faith, Hope and Charity, Fertility, Social Service, and the parish family at the banquet. Before concluding the presentations, Archbishop Daniel reiterated the words of Metropolitan Antony, stating that the parish will face new challenges and difficulties in the coming century. The Church is constantly being challenged by modernity and secularization. People are being pulled back into the darkness by various social and moral issues. However, we are the priesthood, the ministers, and the chosen people of Christ. It is our responsibility above all else to hold true to His teachings, and to keep shining the light and showing others the way to salvation. His Eminence stated that he has every confidence that this parish is up to the challenge and will continue to play a vital role in society, and in the community in which it resides.

As the afternoon wound down, the Seminarians of the Saint Sophia Ukrainian Orthodox Theological Seminary sang several moving songs, concluding with Boge Benie (Almighty God). As the young men’s deep voices echoed off the walls of the banquet hall, everyone rose and bowed their heads beseeching the Lord’s mercy upon Ukraine. Many joined their voices to those of the seminarians, and the prayer rose as if on angels’ wings up to the Lord.

While some individuals lingered, enjoying a final cup of coffee and slice of cake, others began to bid their farewells and make their way home after a relaxing and fulfilling afternoon. As they stepped outside, they squinted against the sunlight, again remembering Metropolitan Antony’s sermon, and reaffirmed their commitment to keep their spiritual eyes open, and their hearts brightly shining the love of Christ. As they made their ways home, they were committed to searching out that someone whom the Metropolitan stated would need their attention, their assistance, and their guidance towards salvation.

With such deep faith and hope in Christ, the future is bright for the Assumption of the Virgin Mary parish in Northampton, Pennsylvania. May the Light of Christ, and the Grace of the Holy Spirit shine down upon the faithful and grant them all many joys, prosperous, and blessed years as they enter their second centennial.
On September 16-17, 2022, the Ss. Peter and Paul Ukrainian Orthodox parish family together with their parish pastor, Rev. Yuri Bobko, celebrated the 100th anniversary of the foundation of the Parish by Ukrainians from the Carpathian Mountains region and Galichyna, who began immigrating to Western Pennsylvania. Thousands of Ukrainian immigrants arrived in Butler and Lyndora, PA to work in the steel, coal, railroad, and auto industries. Between 1919 and 1920, Saints Peter and Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church were established. Ukrainians bought the property and began construction of the church, which was completed in 1922.

The faithful of the of Ss. Peter and Paul awaited the arrival of distinguished guests. His Eminence Metropolitan Antony, Prime Hierarch of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA and the Diaspora, and His Eminence Archbishop Daniel, Ruling Hierarch of the Western Eparchy.

On Friday evening celebration began with a Great Vespers service with hierarchs: His Eminence Metropolitan Antony, Archbishop Daniel and local clergy: V. Rev. Michael Kochis, Rev. Mykola Zomchak, Rev. Ihor Protsak, and newly ordained De. Pavlo Vysotskyi. At the end of Vespers, His Eminence Metropolitan Antony spoke to people underlining the importance of taking responsibility for our spiritual life and being the ones who are not afraid to live as true Christians in today’s society. He emphasized our calling, spreading the word of God first of all through the example of our lives, remembering our ancestors who sacrificially gave their lives in service to the Church. Following the service, parishioners sponsored a wine-cheese reception for visitors and family in the dining Hall of the Ukrainian Hall.

The next day, when the sun was shining brightly, all the people gathered outside, awaiting the procession with banners, and the entrance of the Hierarchs into the Church. A beautiful procession with Banners and Cross in the leadership of Hierarchs entered the Church where the pastor of the parish Rev. Yuri Bobko together with parish President Maria Corbin, and visiting clergy, greeted hierarchs with bread and salt, expressing a word of gratitude for their leadership and always guiding their faithful to main destination – Kingdom of God; asking about their prayers for Ss. Peter and Paul family, for our long-suffering motherland Ukraine during the ongoing war, and bringing the greatest gratitude before the Throne of God – Holy Eucharist.

To share the joy of celebration of anniversary together with Hierarchs gathered V. Rev. Mark Swindle, and Paisius McGrath, Rev. Fathers John Charest, Mykola Zomchak, Ihor Protsak, and Michael Sochka, and Decons. Evan (Clifford) O’Neil, Pavlo Vysotskyi, Seraphim Truckley, together with all seminarians of Sts. Sophia Theological seminary. The Archpastoral Divine Liturgy was complemented by the majestic choir of the parish under the professional lead of Lydia Rudolf and the capable assistance of member of o.p. Sisters Magdalene sisterhood Antoinette Kennedy, and to all pirohi makers who every other week make pirohi for the wellbeing of the parish.

In the end, His Eminence Metropolitan Antony together with His Eminence Archbishop Daniel expressed their gratitude to all faithful of Ss. Peter and Paul for their leadership and always guiding their faithful to main destination – Kingdom of God; asking about their prayers for Ss. Peter and Paul family, for our long-suffering motherland Ukraine during the ongoing war, to the President of St. Mary Magdalene sisterhood Antoinette Kennedy, and to all pirohi makers who every other week make pirohi for the wellbeing of the parish.

Photos by Seminarian Mykola Stefanyk and Lydia Rudolf
On the bright morning of September 10, 2022, the Saint Sophia Ukrainian Orthodox Theological Seminary building came to life. The sleepy geese who had been grazing lazily on the institute’s front lawn squawked loudly in protest as vehicles began to pull up and people emerged, pausing to smile up at the warm sunshine before ascending the steps and knocking upon the seminary door to participate in the ordination of the Subdeacon Pavlo Vysotskyi to the Holy Deaconate.

The faithful of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church joined the local clergy in the Seminary Foyer as they awaited the arrival of His Eminence Metropolitan Antony, Prime Hierarch of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA and the Diaspora, and His Eminence Archbishop Daniel, Ruling Hierarch of the Western Eparchy. Greeting the hierarchs were Readers Maksym Zhuravchyk and Andrii Vatrych, who on this day would be tonsured as Subdeacons. Having presented the traditional bread and salt the young men stepped aside as Very Rev. Fr. Andrii Vatrych, who on this day would be tonsured as Subdeacon, read in English. Both young men stood proud as their voices resonated throughout the chapel. Stepping out on the ambo Archbishop Daniel read the day’s Gospel from Matthew 22:15-22, where the Pharisees tried to entrap the Lord, but He replied to them simply but with deep meaning, that we should give unto Caesar that which is his. This goes beyond paying taxes, as it refers to being obedient to authority, which is often a difficult task. We are made in the image of God, and we are made to serve Him, by obeying the authority of our parents, our clergy, our bosses, our political leaders. If they are not following the teachings of God, then they are the ones who will answer before Him for their errors, however, we will answer if we do not humbly obey – pay our taxes, follow the local laws, honor our parents, do the work prescribed to us by our bosses. Father Vasyl concluded by reminding everyone to read the daily Scriptures, and then to listen to the message they bestow upon us.

The Divine Liturgy continued with the Seminarians singing the responses.

At the conclusion of the Anaphora, with Christ physically present upon the Altar Table, Subdeacon Pavlo Vysotskyi, having received an embrace of Archbishop Daniel and a the blessing from Metropolitan Antony, stepped out of the altar and went to stand at the back of the chapel.

Within moments, from the Altar was heard, “Command!” At the directive Subdeacon fell onto his knees and bowed towards the Altar. Rising to his feet, the two new subdeacons grasped him by his elbows and led him forward. Again, was heard, “Command!”, and the young man 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 chapel, and the subdeacon entered through the Holy Gates and kneeled before Archbishop Daniel who, sitting at the Northwest corner of the Altar table took a moment to give him counsel and bless him.

The subdeacon rose and was escorted by two priests, who held him by his arms, around the altar table, who paused as Subdeacon Pavlo humbly kissed each corner of the table. Returning to His Eminence, he once again bowed before him kissing his hand and epignation epigoniion (palitsa). The palitsa, which is the diamond shaped article hanging below the bishop’s knee, holds 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 second set of priests stepped up and led the subdeacon once again around the Altar Table, and then a third time he was once again escorted by two additional priests who finally released him to stand before the Altar Table. His Eminence arose, as Subdeacon Pavlo prostrated three times before Christ, and then got down on his knees 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.

Placing his own hands atop of the candidate’s head, Archbishop Daniel read the Prayer of Ordination:

“O God our Savior, by your immortal voice You established the office of the deaconate through Your Apostles and showed forth the First martyr Stephen whom You elected first to fulfill the work of a deacon. It is written in your holy Gospel, “whoever would be among you, let him be your servant.” Lord of all this, Your servant, whom you have consented to enter the ministry of a deacon with the totality of faith, love, power, and sanctification by the descent of Your Holy and Life-giving Spirit. For not through the laying on of my hands, but by the divine visitation of your rich mercies grace is bestowed upon your worthy ones; that he, liberated from every sin, may stand blameless by You in the awesome Day of Judgment and receive the true reward of Your promise. For You are our God, and to You we ascribe glory, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and always, and to the ages of ages.”

As the Archbishop was praying, and the Holy Spirit was acting, all the people present, clergy and laity, raised their voices and repeatedly sang “Lord have mercy!”
As the prayers were completed, newly ordained Deacon Pavlo 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 orarion, 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 orarion 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 censer, followed by the Service Book, from which the Deacon will read the prayers during the services. The final object His Eminence presented was the people was a ripida/church fan. The ceremonial fan is used during processions, and always stands by the Holy Table. This fan depicts the six-winged Seraphim, and was presented to Deacon Pavlo because he now, like the Seraphim, serves as an angel at the Altar of God.

At last Archbishop Daniel, took Deacon Ihor by the hand and led him forward to present him to the people, as they exclaimed, Axios! Axios! Axios! The newly ordained deacon humbly hugged His Eminence asking for his blessing. Receiving it he then entered through the Royal Gates to make his way to Metropolitan Antony to receive a blessing from Metropolitan Antony, was himself ordained a deacon and a priest, and now here he stands as the hierarch through whom he had learned much, thanking them for their constant support and asking for their continued prayers.

Turning to the altar, Deacon Pavlo was once again handed the Ripida/Church Fan as he took up his position beside the Altar table and slowly waved the fan over the Body and Blood of Christ. Archbishop Daniel fell to his knees, along with all the clergy in the Altar as they prayed the Lord’s Prayer. The entire time Daniel fell to his knees, along with all the clergy in the Nave to exchange a hug with his wife Valetina and his family who were wiping away tears of joy at the great celebration from Ukraine and from around the United States.

As the prayers were completed, newly ordained Deacon Pavlo slowly, humbly, and with respect waved the fan over the Altar table, just like an angel.

As the Royal Gates closed, one could hear, “Holy Things are for the Holy!” Having regularly partaken of the Eucharist, this was nonetheless the first time the young deacon would participate in the Communion of the Clergy. The faithful, who stood, eagerly anticipating their turn to partake, thought how the young man must be feeling. He must be going through a myriad of emotions at the honor of standing before God at the Altar Table.

As the Royal Gates swung open, Deacon Pavlo emerged holding the Chalice containing the Body and Blood of Christ. Archbishop Daniel recited the Consecration Prayer, took the Chalice from the deacon, and proceeded to commune all the people who had been so patiently waiting.

With the conclusion of Divine Liturgy, the Dismissal Prayer having been read, Archbishop Daniel gestured for the two young subdeacons to approach. He read the certificates of the setting aside of both subdeacons per tradition and took a moment to give a final few words of advice to the new subdeacons, explaining the honor which has been bestowed upon them and the new responsibilities they would now face.

Next His Eminence called out the newly ordained Deacon Pavlo and read his notice of ordination. He then turned to him and stated that it is a blessing to see him, the newly ordained deacon, stand in the presence of the Church. He gestured to the people gathered, but then turned to the camera and greeted the faithful and family members of Deacon Pavlo who were joining this celebration from Ukraine and from around the United States.

Archbishop Daniel commended the young man for following in the footsteps of his grandfather who himself had been a priest. Vladyka explained that he had once heard of his grandfather when he as a young boy, not yet Orthodox, sang in the choir during a prayer service held near the grounds of the church where Deacon Pavlo’s grandfather served. He smiled stating what a small world it is. For from the time when he had first heard of Father Vysotsky, he converted to Orthodoxy, was himself ordained a deacon and a priest, and now here he stands as the hierarch through whose hands the Grace of the Lord came upon that man’s grandson, Deacon Pavlo.

On the Church calendar this day we commemorate St. Job of Pochaiv, who was a man of zeal and desire, who followed the example of the Old Testament Job, who underwent much suffering. Archbishop Daniel asked that Deacon Pavlo be like St. Job, filled with zeal and dedication to serve the Lord.

Archbishop Daniel explained that he often tells the seminary students that the altar is like a hospital emergency room. Inside serve hierarchs, clergy, deacons, subdeacons, and each has a vital role to play. Just as in the ER, you need the surgeons and doctors, you also need nurses, anesthesiologists, and scribes to take down all the information. Each person holds a vast responsibility, and the ER would fail if anyone of them failed, leaving the patient to suffer. Therefore, just as they need to be prepared, so do the all the members inside the Altar. As the doctors must disinfect their hands before working on the patient, so the clergy must cleanse themselves through Confession. While they have studied medical guides, we are to have studied the Holy Scriptures. We must do our part when we enter the Altar, and we must always be prepared and ready to serve for the Glory of God.

Embracing his hierarch, Deacon Pavlo turned to him and thanked him along with Metropolitan Antony for their mentorship and support. He explained how much he appreciated their prayers, their advice, and the efforts they each made on his behalf, to hone him, shape him, and prepare him for the priesthood. There were no words to express his gratitude to them both.

With tears in his eyes he turned towards the nave and thanked his wife, Dobrodiyka Valentina, for not only being his wife, but, for being his best friend with whom he will walk this journey. He looked into the camera and with a trembling voice thanked his parents for teaching him about Christ, and taught him to love the Lord, and be grateful to Him for every little thing. The people gathered in the chapel began to cry witnessing the humility of this young man. He concluded by thanking his brother seminarians from whom he had learned much, thanking them for their constant support and asking for their continued prayers.

With final words of thanks Deacon Pavlo received a blessing from Metropolitan Antony, and was presented Archbishop Daniel with a bouquet of white roses, as he turned and invited all those present to share in his joy by attending a small luncheon prepared for them in the seminary dining hall.

Everyone enjoyed the afternoon, in good company, sharing stories, giving advice, and simply basking in the joy of the newly ordained deacon to the Church.

May the Lord bless newly ordained Deacon Pavlo with many years of health and happiness as he serves in the Lord’s Vineyard. Axios! Worthy! Гідний!

Photos by Seminarian Mykola Stefanyk and Valentyna Dovban
The world is a very difficult place these days and we all are very much concerned about what is happening – once again – to our brothers and sisters in Ukraine, suffering under new oppression and suppression from the Russian Federation through an unjustifiable invasion, which has already lasted for nearly seven months and killed thousands of men, women and children. There is no other way to describe what is happening to our people than crimes against humanity and genocide. We have been commemorating, for nearly 90 years now, the most horrific genocide of the Holodomor – Murder by Starvation during the Stalin made artificial famine of 1932-33 and all the millions killed throughout the 74 years of the Communist regime. Each year we proclaim: “NEVER AGAIN!” But here we are again suffering because of the sick mind and soul of another Russian dictator whose own people fail to contradict.

It may seem that we are far, far away from what is happening in Ukraine, but in this modern world where communication is instant, we enter daily through the news media into the cities, villages and even homes of those suffering under new oppression and beseaching our help. Archbishop Daniel will speak to you about the blessings we have received from ordinary citizens of the USA.
who have come forth to offer many forms of aid – most especially millions of dollars in cash – which have enabled our church to provide abundant aide for people across Ukraine. We cannot escape the knowledge of what is taking place in Ukraine today. The Archbishop and I have witnessed miracles taking place because the world is stepping up and not standing by in silence as it did throughout the last century.

Why do I speak of all this in my words to you during this Sobor? It is because I pray with all my heart and soul that each of you will always treasure in your hearts and souls who you are and where your parents and grandparents came from. This is important because there are those in the world who would call us to abandon who we are, to forget about where we came from, to leave what is happening in Ukraine today out of our lives and to join with them in the new world of Brazil or Paraguay or Argentina, or Venezuela. They would tempt us to be concerned with only what is happening locally rather than in the world around us - tempt us to be part of something greater than just our beautiful Ukrainian Orthodox Church throughout South America that retains the treasury of our spiritual, ethnic, cultural and historical heritage. In other words – to become something lesser than what our forefathers and foremothers labored and sacrificed for in the US, Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay, Paraguay, Paraguay, and other countries in South America.

How would our brothers and sisters in today’s Ukraine react to us if we choose to abandon our own heritage? How would our brothers and sisters in today’s Ukraine react to us if we choose to abandon our own heritage? Ukraine reacts to us if we choose to abandon our own heritage?

At the beginning of this Sobor, you will most certainly pray for the Holy Spirit’s Guidance throughout all the deliberations and discussions that will occur during the Sobor. I ask you to take that Guidance to heart and believe that all you discuss can and will reflect it. We all have received the Grace of God throughout our lives in the Holy Sacraments, beginning with Baptism and Chrismation followed immediately by Eucharist – Holy Communion – from infancy on at each Divine Liturgy. That Grace is what strengthens you, my dearly beloved, it is the force that will carry you through all moments of sadness and more importantly, moments of joy. In both, we must remember how that Grace affected us and sometimes this is difficult to do – especially in the moments of joy, when we have a tendency to take all the credit ourselves instead of giving thanks to God in the Holy Trinity - Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

May your Sobor discussion focus on how you will approach your children and grandchildren to guide them in and through faith. May you seek always to welcome them and to be examples of all that is good about being Ukrainian Orthodox Christians. They must feel at home with and loved by you. I still remember my last visit to Paraguay and the hundreds of children I met and embraced in all the parishes I visited. I have spoken about this experience here in the USA many times, always with a prayer that it can still be the same today – and that we each bear great responsibility of “letting the little children come to Christ”, Who will embrace them and love them with a love that can never be taken away.

I pray that this very same LOVE of Christ embraces each of you today my dear brothers and sisters. I pray that your Love for your Spiritual Father, Archbishop Jeremiah and his love for you will enable you to work miracles in a world that seems to deny the possibility of miracles. I thank His Eminence, as my dear Brother in service to our Lord, for the powerful witness he has been to you of Christ’s presence amongst you – a presence that strengthens and gives refuge always, just as Archbishop Jeremiah has provided to you. May you all utilize the LOVE of Christ to build a continued Ukrainian Orthodox fortress in such a world – a fortress where all who suffer, all who question, all who doubt, all who face overwhelming storms and temptations of life may find Peace, Joy and Comfort in any way, all who face overwhelming storms and temptations of life may find Peace, Joy and Comfort in any way, all who face overwhelming storms and temptations of life may find Peace, Joy and Comfort in any way, all who face overwhelming storms and temptations of life may find Peace, Joy and Comfort in any way, all who face overwhelming storms and temptations of life may find Peace, Joy and Comfort in any way, all who face overwhelming storms and temptations of life may find Peace, Joy and Comfort in any way, all who face overwhelming storms and temptations of life may find Peace, Joy and Comfort in any way, all who face overwhelming storms and temptations of life may find Peace, Joy and Comfort in any way, all who face overwhelming storms and temptations of life may find Peace, Joy and Comfort in any way, all who face overwhelming storms and temptations of life may find Peace, Joy and Comfort in any way, all who face overwhelming storms and temptations of life may find Peace, Joy and Comfort in any way, all who face overwhelming storms and temptations of life may find Peace, Joy and Comfort in any way, all who face overwhelming storms and temptations of life may find Peace, Joy and Comfort in any way, all who face overwhelming storms and temptations of life may find Peace, Joy and Comfort.

The delegates of the Sobor listened to the words of their spiritual father in both Ukrainian and Portuguese languages, as presented by His Eminence Archbishop Daniel and translated by Fr. Ivan Tchopko.

Reports from 18 parishes in Brazil, 7 parish communities and a monastery in Paraguay as well as 3 parish families from Argentina were presented for reflection and discussion by the delegates, addressing spiritual, logistical and economic needs, especially during COVID-19 pandemic and in the post-pandemic society, as parishes continue to recover from the closures and limitations as those were imposed by central and local governments.

Moreover, the Sobor received reports from the Eparchial structures, headed by the Consistory offices of the Church.

New officers for a three-year period were elected by the delegates of the Sobor, thus enabling the prayerful continuation of the administrative branch of the Eparchial structure.

On Sunday, September 4, 2022, the Sobor proceedings concluded with the celebration of Divine Liturgy, served by Archbishops Jeremiah and Daniel and all clergy present at the Sobor.
Following the Gospel reading, Vladyslav Daniel offered sermon reflection, stating "What would you say is the greatest danger facing the Church today? Liberalism, Humanism, Phariseeism, Feminism? Some say it is Christian Colleges, Post Modern Thinking. I have my own personal convictions about those things, but I do not think any of them are the Church's greatest danger.

Rather I am convinced that our greatest foe is something more personal, more intimate with each of us.
The story of the Rich Young Ruler contains so many wonderful lessons for the life of a follower of God: lessons about stewardship, humility, worldly riches, and obedience to name a few. Yet it also warns us of our greatest danger...

"I can't" are the two most destructive words in Christianity and the greatest danger facing the Church. It is the expression of a heart and mind that does not possess a faith that trusts completely in the power of God. How many times do we say, "I can't" when faced with a decision where the spiritual challenges the physical?

"I can't surrender my life to Jesus because...... I can't give up my friends for Christ even though they are bad influences. I can't put the Lord first in every thing I do because Jesus interferes with my personal ability, it is about personal faith. It is not about talent, but about desire.

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I ask them about their relationship with Jesus. Individually those are the things we say. Collectively, as a congregation of the Lord's Church we often fall into the same trap. The church has spiritual challenges the physical?

"I can't surrender my life to Jesus because...... I can't give up my friends for Christ even though they are bad influences. I can't put the Lord first in every thing I do because Jesus interferes with my personal ability, it is about personal faith. It is not about talent, but about desire.

We are talking about the same God who created the universe from nothing, who at the wave of Moses' hands parted the Red Sea and produced dry land, and who destroyed Satan's greatest weapon, death, with His Resurrection. If He can do those things, and He did, imagine what He can do with a life that trusts Him completely.

Jesus said, "With faith the size of a mustard seed you can move mountains!" Matthew 17:20 Paul said, "I can do all things through Christ Jesus who gives me the strength." Philippians 4:13. All things – everything – with the power of God!

Our doing and working in His Kingdom is not about personal ability, it is about personal faith. It is not about talent, but about desire.

With God all things are possible! He can change our "I can't" into "I will". He can transform our doubts into rock-solid confidence. Even the impossible, becomes reality.

So, get rid of all of your I CAN'Ts and start saying I WILL!"

Dozens of faithful approached the Scared Chalice in order to partake in the Most Holy Eucharist. Following the dismissal, Archbishop Jeremiah welcomed His Eminence Archbishop Daniel to Brazil and express personal greetings to His Eminence Metropolitan Antony, looking forward to welcome Metropolitan of the Church in South America in the near future.

The conclusion of the day became even more special once the delegation of the local Roman-Catholic monastic Redemptorist parish arrived, bearing in the hands the sacred image of St. Joseph – the Guardian of the infant Jesus, the mosaic work of a parishioner Edward Mauro. The mosaic was commissioned by the local Roman-Catholic parish and once completed, it was consecrated by Archbishop Jeremiah and a local Roman-Catholic hierarch as an Ecumenical spiritual act of mutual love and respect. Since the time of completion, numerous faithful of the Church have venerated and prayed in front of the icon, claiming numerous miraculous healings in the parish families, local hospitals and community centers.

The icon was brough forth, as the local roman-catholic choir chanted prayerful intercessory petitions to St. Joseph. All in attendance venerated the sacred image and in conclusion prayers were offered for the peace in Ukraine – chanting "Bozhe Velykiy!"

As the late hours of Sunday afternoon approached, the delegates and guests of the XVth Regular Sobor gathered for a farewell luncheon, thus preparing to depart for their home parishes and countries, being inspired and fulfilled for the next three years of spiritual ministry among the people of God.

The XVth Sobor of the Ukrainian Orthodox Eparchy of South America is projected to take place in Fram, Paraguay in 2025.
The Church School of St. Mary, the Nativity of the Mother of God in New Britain, CT is one of the oldest schools in the diocese. It was begun by Very Rev. Mitred Peter Kowalchyk in 1954 and, in 2 years, will be celebrating its 70th anniversary. At first, classes met in the church hall, each group being separated by portable dividers. Orthodox study materials were not available. Today, the 6 classes meet in individual rooms in the rectory and an abundance of learning tools can be accessed thanks to the internet.

Our school is under the supervision of Very Rev. Andrii Pokotylo and director Cynthia Sirick who has been teaching since 1957. Each of our teachers has dedicated more than 20 years of service to the school: Sarah Bailly (also Youth Ministry Director), Kathryn Diloizir, Kimberly Irvin, and Melissa Josefak. This year we have been blessed with the addition to the faculty of a recent college graduate, Stephanie Melnyk. In addition, we have 4 substitute teachers, 3 of whom have previously taught in our own classrooms: Elizabeth Gemski, Christine Melnyk, and Helen Yawin. Subdeacon Christopher Pokotylo, a college student, has come to our rescue many times.

One of the most anticipated events by students and parishioners is our annual St. Nicholas program. The pupils in grades K – 3 present a beautiful Nativity Pageant. The older students, grades 4 – 8, sing Ukrainian Christmas carols after having been prepared by the parish choir director and music teacher, Simion Sacalos. Prior to Covid restrictions, a brunch was prepared for parishioners by St. Olga Sisterhood who also presented a carefully selected gift to each parish child.

Each year the children participate in a 3-pronged stewardship program. They serve their parish by hosting the coffee hour, the income of which supports the parish scholarship fund. They also serve their community by sponsoring an Advent toy collection for the disadvantaged children of the greater New Britain area. Finally, each student participates in the “Pennies from Heaven” Lenten collections. The proceeds from these go to a charity of our choice. Last year the income was earmarked for Maidan United International charity which provided medical supplies to Ukraine.

Each year the elderly and shut-in members of our parish look forward to the colorful greeting cards created by our youngsters at Pascha and Christmas. The Youth Ministry provides a small, handmade gift with a Christmas card. We pray that God will continue to bless our Church School with many more years to serve Him.

Submitted by Cynthia Sirick

AVM UOC religious education classes are taught by Mrs. Mary Ost (primary) and Mrs. Karen Osmun (secondary).

The primary curriculum focuses on making the Gospel readings understandable to youth and preparation for First Holy Confession through memorization of prayers, learning the parts of the Divine Liturgy and having discussions about sin.

The secondary curriculum focuses on study of the Orthodox faith to provide basic comprehensive information on bible and church history, doctrine, and worship as well as biblical scripture and relating it to current everyday life and experiences.

We also invite the students to youth group activities such as kayaking, hayrides, and attendance at shows and concerts.

Our classes resume October 2 for the 2022-2023 school year.
After being closed for a year and a half due to COVID, the Lesia Ukrainka School of Ukrainian Knowledge and Religion at St. Mary’s Orthodox Cathedral of Detroit has reopened, under the direction of Mariia Zazulya, with all new staff and many new students.

An open house was held on September 10th and the “first bell” was rung on the 17th; as is Ukrainian tradition, all the students and staff wore their vyshyvanky, and teachers were given flowers.

In the past, as the children of the WWII generation were educated here, there were ten grades and the “sadochok.” As the school rebuilds, we have 26 students in three “riveni” plus the sadochok, with students aged four to twelve. They will have classes in Ukrainian reading and writing, history, geography, religion and music, as well as “master classes” in Ukrainian dance, folk traditions and folk crafts.

The teaching staff includes Oliia Zhuravel (sadochok), Oliia Kriuchko (history/geography), Oksana Hluska (reading/writing), Khrystyna Bilan (music), Liza Symonenko (religion). Mariia Zazula will teach dance, and parish volunteers will teach Ukrainian folk crafts.

As in years past, the children will learn poems, songs and dances, and perform them for many upcoming holidays. The first will be the visit of Archbishop Daniel for the celebration of our church holiday, Pokrova, in October. Celebrations for Mykolai, Shevchenko, Mother’s day, and others will follow.

Our parish is excited about this welcome addition to our church life!

Submitted by Dr. Luba Petrusha
**Ukrainian BEEF AND POTATO STEW**

**INGREDIENTS:**
- 1 ½ pounds of stewing beef, chopped into chunks
- 1 large onion, peeled and diced
- 3 tbs olive oil
- 5 cloves garlic, peeled and minced
- 2 tsp smoked paprika
- 2 cups beef stock
- 1 ½ tsp salt
- 1 pinch cracked black pepper
- 1 ½ cups chopped tomatoes
- 2 ½ cups potatoes, peeled and chopped into cubes
- 3 tbs corn flour
- ½ cup whipping cream
- ½ cup red wine
- 3 tbs dill, fresh, chopped
- sour cream to taste

**INSTRUCTIONS:**
Heat the oil in a large casserole dish on medium heat, season and seal the beef on all sides, 2-3 minutes. Add the onions and garlic and cook for 5 minutes. Stir in the smoked paprika and seasoning and cook for 2 minutes.

Pour over the chopped tomatoes, a can of water and the beef stock. Bring to a simmer and cook with the lid on low heat for 1.5 hours, until the beef is tender.

Transfer the beef to a bowl with a slotted spoon and add the potatoes to the pot. Add more water if necessary to submerge them. Cook for 20 minutes until the potatoes are tender. Add the beef back into the pot.

Add the cream and wine and simmer. Whisk the corn flour with 3 tablespoons of water to form a slurry, pour into the stew and cook for 2-3 minutes, stirring until thickened. Top with fresh dill and serve with a dollop of sour cream if desired.


Voytkiv, Aleksander baptized and chrismated on August 20, 2022 in St. Andrew Memorial Church, S. Bound Brook, NJ. Child of Vitaliy Voytkiv and Iryna Lechitska. Celebrated by Fr. Michael Hontaruk.


ORDINATIONS

May God grant to them many happy and blessed years!

Rev. Father James Cairns II 9/9/2017
Rev. Ihor Protsak 9/18/2021
V. Rev. Ivan Petrouchtchak 9/24/1995
V. Rev. Roman Tarnavsky 9/27/1978
Dn. Evan (Clifford) O’Neil 9/16/2017
Dn. Volodymyr Pichkurov 9/26/2021

MEMORY ETERNAL!

SEPTEMBER

NECROLOGY

21st 1953 - PROTOPRIEST LEON KUSHNIR
3rd 1954 - PROTOPRIEST MYCHAJOLO KASHUBA
27th 1960 - PRIEST TIMOTHY MACAR
24th 1966 - PRIEST MYKOLA RYBACHUK
30th 1969 - PROTOPRIEST WOLODYMYR LEWYTZKYJ
23rd 1971 - PROTOPRIEST ANANIJ MIROSHCHENKO
23rd 1972 - PRIEST MICHAEL KRAWCZUK
12th 1974 - PROTOPRIEST DAMIAN OLGIN
18th 1974 - PROTOPRIEST ANTONY STANGRY
21st 1983 - PROTODEACON MICHAEL OLHOVY
2nd 1984 - PROTOPRESbyter MICHAEL YAROSH
14th 1986 - PROTOPRIEST ANDRIJ KIST
24th 1988 - PRIEST IHOR ZBOTANIW
10th 1990 - ARCHIMANDRITE ADAM BURHA
27th 1991 - PROTOPRESbyter NICHOLAS FEDOROVICH
29th 2008 - PROTOPRIEST JOHN KRESTIUK
11th 2018 - PROTOPRIEST JOHN HARVEY

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19. Holy and Glorious Apostle Thomas

22. Holy Apostle James, son of Alpheus


31. Holy Apostle and Evangelist Luke

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6. The Conception of the Honorable, Glorious Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist John

9. Repose of the Holy Apostle and Evangelist John the Theologian

11. Synaxis of the Venerable Fathers of the Kyiv Caves Monastery (Near caves)

13. St. Michael - first Metropolitan of Kyiv

14. ПОКРОВ ПРЕСВЯТОЇ ВЛАДИЧИЩІ НАШОЇ БОГОРОДИЦІ І ВСЕДІВИ МАРИЇ

19. Апостола Фоми

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