The Dormition of the Mother of God

- In the center stand Jesus Christ, holding His Mother’s soul depicted as a swaddled infant, while her gaunt deceased body lies in repose.
- Christ is surrounded by glory, at the top of which is a six-winged seraphim, as well as numerous “uncolored” angels with sorrowful faces, those at the top awaiting to receive the soul of the Theotokos from her Son.
- Gathered around the funeral bed are the Apostles, who mourn her death. St. Peter swings the kadylo, while St. Paul is bent over near her feet.
- In the background are three hierarchs of the Church holding books, as women can be seen even further back, mourning.
- There were four hierarchs present at the Dormition (even though only three are depicted) - James, the brother of Christ, Hierotheos the first Bishop of Athens, Dionysius the Areopagite, and Timothy.
- Every face is sorrowful, yet hopeful. It is what the Orthodox call a joyful sorrow, as the faithful live in the hope of the resurrection.
- Above, in the clouds are depicted the Apostles who were carried mystically by angels to Jerusalem to be present at the Dormition.
- In the foreground is an angel cutting off the hands of Jephonias, a Jew who wished to turn over the coffin and have the body of the Theotokos fall to the ground. An archangel appeared and cut off his hands. The man later became a Christian and was healed.
- At the top of the icon we see the Holy Theotokos, crowned as Queen of Heaven.
Statement of the Council of Bishops Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA and Diaspora

On the Celebration of 30th Ukrainian Independence Day - 24 August, 2021

To the Reverend Priests and Deacons, the Monastics, the Presidents and Members of the Parish Councils of the Ukrainian Orthodox Communities, and the entire Ukrainian Orthodox Family in the United States of America and Diaspora

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

CHRIST IS AMONGST US! IS AND ALWAYS SHALL BE!

Each year on the twenty-fourth of August, Ukrainians throughout the world celebrate the historical culmination of the heroic struggle of the Ukrainian nation for freedom and self-identity - Independence Day! On this 30th anniversary we affirm the values of freedom that have characterized the spirit of our forefathers and our national pride – even if buried within the hearts and souls of the Ukrainian citizens during long periods of oppression and occupation – but never smothered. Today there is nothing hidden or stifled for we, without hesitation, declare that freedom and self-identity are not only treasured values but are essential and universal conditions for cultivating loving relationships with God and the world around us. It is critical for us to remember at the core of our being that for the Ukrainian people, the independence of our ancestral homeland has been closely tied with our Holy Orthodox Faith since the Baptism of the nation into that Faith in 988 (1,033 years ago) by the Equals to the Apostles, Great Prince Volodymyr and his grandmother, Princes Ol’ha.

Our contemporary world, Ukraine especially, is beset by threats of terror and actual war and our Faith and “faith” at the individual human level continue to uphold the virtues of freedom, hope in God’s presence and deliverance and love for all human beings. The Holy Church has always served as the “Moral Conscience of the Nation” in this regard and must return to this self-comprehension without hesitation. This, we believe, is consciously expressed by the Ukrainian government’s invitation to His All-Holiness, Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, Bartholomew I, to participate in the 30th Anniversary Celebrations. That His All-Holiness fully comprehends the importance of Ukrainian Independence and its ties to the Church is evidenced by the Holy Synod of Constantinople Tomos of Autocephaly granted to the Orthodox Church of Ukraine in 2019.

Every free nation of the world throughout the history, has experienced much of what Ukraine experiences during these 30 years of independence. The government and the people of all levels of Ukrainian society – having set aside all egotistical desires and agendas - must evolve into a self-identity that will, without question, withstand all attacks against it. It is the prayer of the hierarchy, clergy and faithful of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the United States of America and the Diaspora that our brothers and sisters in Ukraine will be blessed with a patience that will allow their faith and dedication to bear fruit for all generations to come. May God, through His Holy Church deepen the comprehension of all dimensions of “freedom” so that it may never again be taken away.

May our Lord’s Peace and abundant Blessings abide in all our hearts forever,

With paternal love in Christ and unending prayers for you all,

+ ANTONY
Metropolitan of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA and Diaspora

+ JEREMIAH
Archbishop of the Ukrainian Orthodox Eparchy in South America

+ DANIEL
Archbishop of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA and Diaspora

Given this 24th Day of August, 2021 – Monk-Martyrs of Pecherska Lavra, Theodosiy and Vasyl
Звернення Собору Єпископів Української Православної Церкви США та Діаспори з нагоди святкування 30-ої річниці Незалежності України - 24 серпня 2021 року

Всечесним священникам та дияконам, чернецтву, головам та членам парафіяльних рад українських православних громад та всій повноті Української Православної Церкви у Сполучених Штатах Америки та Діаспорі.

Улюблені Брати і Сестри у Христі,

ХРИСТОС ПОСЕРЕД НАС! Є ТА ЗАВЖДИ БУДЕ!

Щороку, 24-го серпня, українці по всьому світу відзначають історичну вершину героїчної боротьби української нації за свободу та самоідентичність - День Незалежності! У цей 30-річний ювілей ми вкотре підтверджуємо цінності свободи, які були притаманним духу наших предків та нашій національній гордості. І навіть, якщо вони були глибоко заховані в серцях і душах громадян України протягом тривалого часу утисків та окупації, проте ніколи не згасли. Сьогодні немає нічого прихованого чи скритого, тому що ми, не вагаючись, заявляємо, що свобода та самоідентичність - це не лише важливі цінності, а й суттєві та універсальні умови для розвитку та вдосконалення люблячих відносин з Богом та світом навколо нас.

Надзвичайно важливим для нас є пам’ятати, що основою нашого буття є те, що для українського народу незалежність нашої Батьківщини була тісно пов’язана з нашою Святою Православною Вірою з часів Хрещення Русі в 988 році (1033 роки тому) Рівноапостольним Великим Князем Володимир та його бабусею, Княгинею Ольгою.

Сучасний світ, особливо Україна, страждають від загрози терору та війни що триває, і наша Віра, як віра кожної людини зокрема, продовжує відстоювати цінності свободи, надію на Божу присутність, визволення та любов до всіх людей. Свята Церква завжди служила в цьому випадку “моральною совістю нації” і повинна без вагань повернутися до цього розуміння. На нашу думку, це свідомо виражається запрошеним українського уряду Святішого Вселенського Константинопольського Патріарха Варфоломія І взяти участь у святкуванні 30-річчя Незалежності. Те, що Його Воєводську повністю усвідоміть важливість Незалежності України та її зв’язки з Церквою свідчить Томос про автокефалію, затверджений Священним Константинопольським Синодом та наданий Православній Церкві України у 2019 році.

Наша культурна та релігійна спадщина як українських православних християн підписою нашу священу відповідальність забезпечити усім людям доступ до тих самих плодів і благословень, що містять в собі слово свободи та якими користуються громадяни всіх інших вільних націй. У наших спільнотах та парафіях ми несемо цю відповідальність через зобов’язання до милосердя, вдосконалення широти до незнакомців серед нас, безумовної любові до ближніх та, найголовніше, правдивого поклоніння Богу. Котрий створив усіх людей у Його досконалості на Свій образ і подобу.

Кожна вільна нація світу за всю історію пережила багато з того, що переживає Україна за ці 30 років незалежності. Уряд та народ українського суспільства, відкинувши всі егоїстичні бажання та цілі, повинні стати такою ідентичністю, яка безперервно втискає всі напади на неї. Ісусови, духовенство та вірні Української Православної Церкви Сполучених Штатів Америки та Діаспори підносять свої молитви, щоб наші брати та сестри в Україні були благословені терпінням, яке дозволяє їх вірі та відданості пронизати плоди для всіх наступних поколінь. Нехай Бог через Свою Святу Церкву поглибить розуміння всіх вимірів “свободи”, щоб вона ніколи не була відібрана.

Нехай мир нашого Господа і рясні Благословення перебувають у наших серцях завжди!

З батьківською любов’ю у Христі і безперестанними молитвами за всіх вас,

+ Антоній
Митрополит Української Православної Церкви США та Діаспори

+ Сремія
Архієпископ Української Православної Єпархії в Південній Америці

+ Данил
Архієпископ Української Православної Церкви США та Діаспори

24 серпня 2021 р. - день пам’яті Феодосія та Василія, Преподобних Мучеників Печерської Лаври
Dormition of the All-holy Mother of God, Troparion, in Tone I —
In giving birth thou didst preserve thy virginity, and in thy falling asleep thou hast not forsaken the world, O Theotokos. Thou hast been, translated to life, as thou art the Mother of Life. And by thy supplications thou dost deliver our souls from death.

Kontakion of the feast, in Tone II —
The tomb and mortality could not hold the Theotokos, who is unting in her supplications; and our certain hope in her intercessions. For, as the Mother of Life, she hath passed over to the Life. Who dwelt within her ever-virgin womb.

THE DORMITION OF THE MOTHER OF GOD

The Dormition of the Mother of God, which is celebrated on August 28 (15), is one of the Great Feasts of the Orthodox Church. The word “Dormition” is a derivative from the Latin word “dormito”, which means “falling asleep.”

The Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos is the commemoration of the falling asleep, burial, resurrection, and translation of the Theotokos into heaven in the body.

Historical Background of the Feast

The Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos is one of the oldest Marian feasts in the church. The roots of the feast go back to Jerusalem, where the apostles and the Christians of Jerusalem honored and kept alive the memory of the falling asleep of the Theotokos. Consequently, quickly, her empty tomb, in Gethsemane, became a destination for pilgrims from Jerusalem and the surrounding neighborhoods.

After the dogmatization of the doctrine of the Divine Motherhood of the Virgin Mary in the third Ecumenical Council of Ephesus (431), the commemoration of the falling asleep of the Theotokos became more popular amongst Christians in the vast majority of the Christian world.

In the late sixth century, in the year 586, the Emperor Maurice officially adopted the commemoration of the Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos into the liturgical calendar in the entire Byzantine Empire, and commanded that it be celebrated on August 28 (15).

In the second half of the seventh century, the feast of the Dormition appeared in the West under the influence of the East. It was accepted in Rome under Pope Sergius I (687-701), and from Rome it passed over to the rest of Europe.

Up until the end of the ninth century, the feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos was preceded by two periods of fasting: FIRST: before the feast of the Transfiguration and SECOND: after the feast of the Transfiguration. In the tenth century, the two fasting periods were merged into one, which includes fourteen fasting days beginning on August 14th through August 28th.

The Narrative of the Feast

The main source of the narrative of the feast of the Dormition is based on the oral and written Tradition of the church, which include: the writings of Saints Dionysios the Areopagite, John the Damascene and Andrew of Crete; the hymnography and iconography of the Church, in addition to an apocryphal narrative of the feast by Saint John the Theologian.

According to the Orthodox Tradition, the Virgin Mary lived after Pentecost in the house of the Apostle John in Jerusalem. As the Mother of the Lord, she became the source of encouragement and help for the Apostles and all Christians.

Three days before her death, the Archangel Gabriel appeared to the Virgin Mary and revealed to her the date of her departure into eternal life. Immediately, the Theotokos returned to her home and prepared herself for this event through fasting and prayer.

On the day of her repose, even though the apostles were scattered throughout the world, they were miraculously transported to be at her side. Exceptionally, the Apostle Thomas did not arrive on time to bid his final farewell to the Theotokos.

While the Apostles were singing hymns in honor of the Mother of God, they saw a vision showing Christ, accompanied by Angels and Saints, coming to escort the soul of His Most Holy Mother into heaven. With songs of praises, the Apostles carried the body of the most pure Theotokos to the grave in Gethsemane to be buried near her parents.

At Gethsemane, the disciples gathered and remained around her tomb and kept a vigil for three days. On the Third day, the Apostle Thomas arrived and asked to view for the last time the Most Holy Mother of God. When the Apostles opened the grave of the Theotokos, her body was not there. The Apostles realized then that she was taken into heaven in the body to be reunited with her soul.

The Liturgical Background of the Feast

The Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos is preceded by a two-week fasting period, which referred to as the “Dormition Fast.” It is a very strict fast, even stricter than both the Nativity and the Apostles Fasts.

In the Dormition Fast all kinds of meat, fish, oil and wine are forbidden to eat; with the following exceptions: on the feast of the Transfiguration (August 6) when fish is allowed; on Saturdays and Sundays when oil and wine are allowed.

In some churches and monasteries, the service of the “Burial of the Theotokos” is celebrated during...
I was told the story of an old peasant woman. When she was younger, she lost her only son, and only child. He was killed in the Second World War. Her neighbors, remembering she had almost idolized the child, thought that she would be inconsolable, and they were astonished when she adopted another son. They were still more astonished because he was a little black boy.

She gave him everything that her son had owned. There was no doubt of her love for him. There could be none for those who saw her face, weather-beaten and lined, marked and sealed with sorrow, and yet shining with quiet happiness.

One day a neighbor said to her: “I would never have thought that you would put another boy in your son’s place.” “I haven’t,” she answered simply: “There is only one boy, Jesus Christ”.

That woman knew blessedness which would not be possible to human nature had not the Mother of God, whom she resembled so vividly, made it possible.

The Feast of the Dormition – the Falling Asleep of the Blessed Virgin, is the epistle of all the saints and the soul of the apostles, who gathered to witness how Christ, himself, comes to escort His mother to the kingdom. The legions of saints awaited her coming, and we are mysteriously gathered to help us transform our own forthcoming death into a Paschal victory over death.

The eschatological nature of the feast of the Dormition is evident, not only in the hymnography of the feast, but also in the mysterious gathering of the apostles, who gathered to witness how Christ, himself, comes to escort His mother to the kingdom. They are mysteriously gathered to witness, again, to the truthfulness of resurrection of Christ and His victory over death.

The meaning of the feast

The liturgy of the Feast of the Dormition depicts the feast as a Paschal event. The hymns of the feast assert that the Virgin Mary experienced her own personal Pascha by passing through death and rising to eternal life. Being alive in heaven, as a queen and mother of Christ, we, now, can ask her intercessions to help us transform our own forthcoming death into a Paschal victory over death.

In the ecclesiastical tradition, the feast of Dormition of the Theotokos is called the “Summer Pascha.” This name is derived from the fact that the Theotokos experienced her own Pascha, “Passover” from this life into life eternal.

St. John of Damascus confirms the Paschal nature of the Feast of the Dormition by calling the death of the Theotokos: “The Deathless Death”. He calls it the deathless death because of the fact that death resulted in her translation into life eternal, into glorification and union with the Lord. “O how does the source of life pass through death to life? She dies according to the flesh, destroys death by death, and through corruption gains incorruption, and makes her death the source of resurrection.” (St. John of Damascus)

We can realize this only through its effect upon the world. There, before God is humanity, our humanity; but innocent humanity in all its primal loneliness; humanity with which the Spirit of God is in love. And she is ours! Therefore, it is always Advent, always spring: The life and birth and death and resurrection of Christ always goes on upon earth, and unending cycle of light. Even now the earth is continually made new; we are continually born again.

This is what really matters most of all to everyone, this is why we gather for her holy feast at the Eucharistic Liturgy: the power to be made anew. Not simply beginning again, dragging along with us the old scars, the old crippling wounds, the old weakness dragging at the will; limping with the weariness of yesterday, sore with the heart-sickness of the last defeat, bitter with the still smarting grievance against one another.

Not that, but real newness, being born again. A new will, new heart, new vision, new love – indeed new life.

But where should we look for this rebirth in this world of 21st century man? In these troubled days when “certainty” has lost its meaning, when strife, hunger, murder, and the atom bomb overshadow our daily lives and the lives of our beloved, our families need to live, as never before, as our Lady lived after the crucifixion. For it is within the Christian family that Jesus most readily enters our lives. A generation of families will need to know that, in the words of the old peasant woman, “there is only one boy, Jesus Christ”. In the way the whole world was entrusted to the care of the Most Blessed Virgin in the person of the beloved apostle John by the dying words of Christ: “Woman this is your son”, likewise all children are entrusted to their parents.

The world’s future will depend on this, in particular the future of our Ukrainian Orthodox Church, upon our realizing that the survival of all that is worth the cost of a man’s blood, depends on how we foster the Christ-life in the souls of the children.

Fr. Bazyl Zawierucha
(of blessed memory)
DEATH... NOT THE END

The death of a Christian not only affects the family, but also the entire Church, for we are all part of the Body of Christ. The Orthodox Funeral Service, which expresses this fact, is not to be seen primarily as an opportunity to extol, in a sentimental way, the virtues of an individual. Rather, the various prayers and hymns emphasize the harsh reality of death, as well as the victorious Resurrection of Christ through which the power of death is conquered. The Funeral Service comforts those who mourn; it is also the means through which the Church prays for one of its members who has died in the faith of Christ. Orthodoxy views the end of physical existence only as the termination of one stage of life. God’s love is stronger than death, and the Resurrection of Christ bears witness to this power.

Funeral Service:
The Orthodox Funeral consists of three Services. First, there is a Vigil Service after death, which is usually conducted at the time of the wake. This service is called the Trisagion Service. The Church prays to Christ “to give rest with the Saints to the soul of Your servant where there is neither pain, grief, nor sighing but life everlasting.” While the Church prays for the soul of the deceased, great respect is paid to the body. Orthodoxy believes the body of the Christian is sacred since it was the Temple of the Holy Spirit. The body will share also in the final restoration of all creation. The Funeral Service is continued at the Church, where the body is brought on the day of burial. Ideally, the Divine Liturgy is celebrated. After the Funeral Service, the congregation offers its Farewell to the deceased. The Trisagion Service is repeated at the graveside.

Memorial Service
Death alters but does not destroy the bond of love and faith which exists among all the members of the Church. Orthodoxy believes that through our prayers, those “who have fallen asleep in the faith and the hope of the Resurrection” continue to have opportunity to grow closer to God. Therefore, the Church prays constantly for her members who have died in Christ. We place our trust in the love of God and the power of mutual love and forgiveness. We pray that God will forgive the sins of the faithful departed, and that He will receive them into the company of Saints in the heavenly Kingdom.

The Orthodox Church remembers the departed in the prayers of every Divine Liturgy. Besides this, there is a Memorial Service in which the Church also remembers the dead. According to tradition, the Memorial Service is offered on the third, ninth, and fortieth day after a death, as well as on the yearly anniversary of the death. In addition to these times, the Memorial Service is always offered for all the faithful departed on “Saturdays of the souls.”

MEMORIAL SATURDAYS:

Saturdays are set aside for the commemoration of the dead within the liturgical year. Saturday is a traditional day of prayer for the dead, because Christ laid dead in the Tomb on Saturday.

Saturday before Meatfare Sunday
The establishment of the universal ancestral Meat Fare Saturday dates back to the first century of Christianity. In the Synaxarion for this day (The Lenten Triodion) it says that the holy fathers established, having received it from the holy Apostles, that on this day should be commemorated all people from the ages who have reposed in faith and piety. This day was chosen because Meat Fare week reminds us of the future Last Judgment. On the eve of this day, Saturday, as if preceding the Last Judgment, the Church prays especially for all of its reposed children, begging the Lord to have mercy on them and make them partakers of blessed eternal life.

Second, Third, and Fourth Saturdays of Great Lent
During Great Lent, the Church does not serve the usual daily commemorations of the dead (pannikhidas, litias). As a supplement to this, so that the dead are not deprived of the Church’s saving intercessions, the commemorations were established for the Saturdays of the second, third, and fourth weeks of Lent.

St. Thomas Saturday/Sunday
On this day the faithful share the remembrance of Christ’s Resurrection, and the joy and hope it brings to all.

On this day, after Divine Liturgy, the priest will celebrate a Panikhida in the church, after which he will bless the paschal foods that the faithful have brought with them. The clergy, with incense and candles, will then go in procession with the cross, followed by the faithful, to visit the graves of departed believers. At the graves, paschal hymns are chanted together with the usual litanies for the departed, concluding with the moving “Christ is Risen!”

The paschal foods will then be consumed with joy by the friends and relatives of the deceased. It is common to place an Easter egg, a symbol of Christ’s coming forth from the Tomb, on the graves of the departed, saluting them with the traditional paschal greeting: “Christ is Risen!” This practice is both to remind the faithful of the General Resurrection of the dead, and to “announce the Resurrection” of Christ to the departed.

Saturday before Pentecost
Just like Meat Fare Saturday, ancestral Saturday before Holy Trinity Day (Pentecost) is called universal. The custom of commemorating the dead on that day also dates from Apostolic times. On that Saturday, prayers are raised for all people from the ages who have died with the hope of resurrection and eternal life, because on the day of Pentecost, the Kingdom of Christ appeared by the descent of the Life-creating Most Holy Spirit. Therefore, on the eve of this feast, the Church prays for all of its children who have reposed up to then, that they would be gathered into the Heavenly Kingdom and vouchsafed eternal blessed life.

St. Demetrios Saturday
St. Demetrios Saturday is celebrated on the nearest Saturday before the commemoration day of Great Martyr Demetrius of Thessaloniki (October 26/November 8).
WHY DO WE SAY “MEMORY ETERNAL”?

St. Nicholas Velimirovich commented on the use of the phrase in detail. I once heard a funeral address when someone said of the dead person: ‘May your memory be eternal on earth!’ I was taken aback by such an erroneous misinterpretation of our faith. How can anything be eternal on earth, when everyone’s hurrying on through, like guests at a wedding.

Really, aren’t we wishing the dead absolutely nothing of value at all if we hope they’ll be remembered in this world which is itself approaching its end. But let’s say that somebody’s name is, in fact, remembered on earth till the end of time. What good’s that to them if their remembrance has been forgotten in heaven?

One time Christ’s disciples were boasting to their Master and saying: ‘Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name’ (Luke 10, 17). The Lord told them not to be so pleased about that but: ‘Rejoice that your names have been written in heaven’ (10, 20). That is to say, they should rejoice that their names are known and will be remembered and commemorated in the heavenly kingdom of light and life.

In Holy Scripture, it often says that the names of the righteous will be written in the book of the living, whereas the names of sinners will be expunged and forgotten. From the story of the rich man and Lazarus, we know that the Lord says the name Lazarus explicitly, but makes no mention of the name of the rich man. He means to convey that Lazarus entered the Kingdom of Heaven, received eternal life and eternal remembrance; but the sinful rich man was deprived of the kingdom, life and name.

Those who desire immortal remembrance want something which is in accordance with the Gospel; if they want immortal remembrance on earth they desire a vacuous thing*. You should be aware that many people who have passed through this life quietly and without causing a stir have acquired an immortal name in the next. Think on this, Meletios, my brother, and the Lord will reveal much more to you. And when you hear of my own death, say in your prayers ‘Eternal memory to him’***.

Peace and love from the Lord. Saint Nicholas Velimirovich

In all four Gospels we are told that Jesus was crucified along with two other men (Matthew 27:38; Mark 15:27-28; Luke 23:32, 39-43; John 19:18). In Luke’s Gospel do we learn about the dialogue that took place between Jesus and the two condemned criminals.

The conversation is packed with spiritual significance. Even in his final moments Jesus has a profound impact on those around him. One man repents and returns to God. The other continues to reject God and ends his life unrepentant.

The Orthodox Study Bible (OSB) in the commentary notes for Luke 23:39-43 noted that the two thieves represent two different spiritual conditions. One thief refused to take responsibility for his actions, while the other acknowledged this guilt and asked Jesus to remember him. The commentary note states: To be reconciled to Christ is to be in paradise immediately. Furthermore, the souls of the departed are in the presence of God and experience a foretaste of His glory before the final resurrection.

The repentant thief, as he approaches the end of his life, turns to Jesus and says one simple phrase: “Remember me when you come into your kingdom” (Luke 23:42). With this one line, the criminal confesses Jesus as Messiah and as King. He accepts as truth everything that the rulers, soldiers and other criminal mocked.

While Jesus doesn't react to mocking, He responds to this show of faith:

“Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise” (Luke 23:43).
Concerning Holy Unction/Aointing with Oil

Orthodox Christians should understand that the Sacrament of Holy Unction at times of sickness is not the “last rite” for the faithful Christian. It is, rather, “unto the healing of soul and body.”

Pastoral solicitude for the sick is manifested in the celebration of the Mystery (Sacrament) of Holy Unction which has its scriptural basis in Mark 6:13 and the Universal Epistle of St. James 5:1. As to the celebration of the Holy Mystery, note the following:

- The oil sanctified for use during the ritual is to be only pure olive oil without additives.
- The Holy Mystery is administered only to those who are ill.
- Where there is the inability to gather seven priests required by the ritual, the Mystery may be administered by a single priest.
- The reception of the Mystery is preceded by Holy Confession and followed by the reception of the Holy Eucharist, if the recipient is to receive them.
- The Holy Mystery may be conducted in a church, home, or hospital.
- The Holy Mystery is administered only to Orthodox Christians.
- Those in danger of death, regardless of their spiritual condition, are never denied the Holy Mystery provided they have shown some sign of repentance.

Concerning Funerals

With the exception of the first day of Pascha/Resurrection of our Lord and the Nativity of Christ, funeral services are permitted any day of the year. Unless absolutely necessary, however, funerals should not be served on Sundays.

The externals of the funeral service should always reflect the spirit of Orthodox Tradition in the reading of the Psalms, prayers, and hymns. The clear understanding of the mystery of death and man’s ultimate destiny is communicated through the funeral service itself. The benefits provided in the readings and prayers of the funeral service can be of significant comfort to those who mourn the deceased. The funeral service may be celebrated in conjunction with a Divine Liturgy should the family of the deceased desire to participate in the Eucharist, but the funeral service must not be abbreviated into a simply Panakhyda following Liturgy.

The funeral service is normally conducted in a church, but the final decision is made at the discretion of the parish priest, who best knows the soul and spiritual state of the deceased and if he was a fully participating member of the parish community. It is the custom of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church that the casket bearing the deceased be open during the funeral service. The GENERAL RULE MUST APPLY THAT IF THE CASKET IS OPEN IN THE FUNERAL HOME, IT MUST ALSO BE OPEN IN THE CHURCH.

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Cremation: The Orthodox Church, mindful that the human being is fashioned in the image and likeness of God, and is the Temple of the Holy Spirit, considers burial or entombment to be the most appropriate and acceptable manner of interring mortal remains. The Church maintains this time honored and sacred tradition as practiced in the Old Testament, the New Testament and the Early Christian communities. Though the Orthodox Church does not and cannot sanction cremation as the norm, She is mindful that most instances of cremation are not in keeping with the sacred rites and customs. Priests are obliged to make this teaching known to those entrusted to their spiritual care and are obliged in advance to ensure that there is no intention to cremate after the funeral service is complete.

THINGS TO KNOW... AND TO CONTEMPLATE...

Abortion: Convinced that human life begins at the moment of conception and that all life is sacred and sanctified, every human-being, even those in the womb, being the image of God, the Church views deliberate abortion in any stage of the human-being's development as murder of an innocent life, and therefore, a grave transgression of Divine Law.

Artificial Birth Control: The Church does not and will not condone the deliberate destruction of one’s own physical life. This is viewed as murder and considered a grave transgression of Divine Law.

When confronted with a suicide, the pastor must provide the spiritual guidance and comfort for the bereaved family during and after the funeral. He should ascertain the means, which precipitated the tragedy, present his findings and pastoral recommendations to the deceased of one’s own physical life. This is viewed as murder and considered a grave transgression of Divine Law.

THE DEATH OF AN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

A good Christian life, is in essence a preparation for a good death. Christ told His followers to always remain spiritually purified, as the saying goes, “Let us be clean and pure in heart.” (Matthew 23:23) Priests are obliged to make this teaching known to those entrusted to their spiritual care and are obliged in advance to ensure that there is no intention to cremate after the funeral service is complete.

A good Christian life, is in essence a preparation for a good death. Christ told His followers to always remain spiritually purified, as the saying goes, “Let us be clean and pure in heart.” (Matthew 23:23) Priests are obliged to make this teaching known to those entrusted to their spiritual care and are obliged in advance to ensure that there is no intention to cremate after the funeral service is complete.

The body has been created by God, in the image of God, and has been sanctified within the womb by the sanctification of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, Christ said, “Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; fear him rather who can destroy both body and soul in hell.” (Matthew 10:28)

At the Mystical Supper, Christ spoke to His Disciples, informing them of His upcoming death. “Let not your hearts be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house there are many rooms; if it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to Myself, that were I am you may also be.” (John 14: 1-3)

For us, death is our final journey home, in the hopes of living in the place Christ has prepared for His own. By dying in Christ, the soul separates from the body for only a period of time. By rising with Christ on the last day, in the general resurrection of the dead, the soul will be united with the body. Early Christians considered the day of one’s death, as the day of one’s birth into heaven.

The Body: The body has been created by God, in the image of God, and has been sanctified within the womb by the sanctification of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, Christ said, “Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; fear him rather who can destroy both body and soul in hell.” (Matthew 10:28)

Upon physical death, if possible, the body is to be washed and dressed in clothing appropriate to participate in a wedding banquet. This clothing reminds us of the inner garment of incorruption, given us at our Baptism. It is that garment which is required to participate in the wedding feast of the Lamb and His Bride, the Church.

The Casket: The body is placed respectfully in a casket, and covered with a cloth, as the body rests, and has “fallen asleep”.

The hands are to be folded over their chest crosswise, as they were many times when the person approached to receive Holy Communion (right hand over left). They now prepare to approach the Lord Himself. A prayer book, icon (Christ, the Mother of God, or Patron Saint), and cross may be placed beneath the folded hands. A candle may be placed in their hands, as a reminder

unethanasia as the deliberate killing of another person who is deemed critically ill or mentally or physically challenged. The Creator of life alone determines time of death. Suffering does not make us less human, and the Church strongly condemns any act of assisted suicide or euthanasia by a healthcare professional or any other individual. Where there is life, there is hope, and in all human beings, regardless of their physical state, the likeness of God remains intact.
Open Casket:
The casket is traditionally left open so people may pray and view the body. We view the body of the departed, and we do not fear the dead, but, instead we pray for them. Death is not able to separate the bond that exists between the loved ones, nor can it shatter the unity of Christ’s Mystical Body. There is no real separation between the living and the dead, and the prayer of each Christian soul, whether in heaven or on earth, has a profound effect upon the whole Body of Christ.

If the body is not embalmed, local laws might require a closed casket during the public service.

The body should rest in the church the night before the funeral with the Psalms being read throughout the night.

Procession to the Church:
The body is brought to the church in a procession. Whether in the morning before the burial, or the evening before, so the body may remain overnight in the church (the Liturgical day begins at sundown, therefore, an evening arrival is an arrival at the start of the final day), the procession is led by a person carrying a cross, followed by the clergy, while singing the Trisagion hymn. The casket is positioned with the body facing the altar (facing east). Candles may be placed around the casket – one at the head, one at the feet, and one at either side.

The Funeral:
The funeral service is a way for us to accompany the Christian soul on its final journey home. While the body is being buried by the living on earth, amidst all the prayer and hymns, the soul is transferred to the company of saints and angels in heaven.

Unlike many western funerals, the Orthodox funeral does not focus on celebrating the life of the deceased, but, expresses concern for the departed person, as well as for the living. The Church first intercedes before God for the peaceful repose of the departed, asking for forgiveness of their sins. The Church also offers an opportunity for the living to express their love for the person and to grieve, gaining a sense of closure. The Orthodox funeral service also provides an opportunity for the living to reflect upon the meaning of life and death, and to renew their own faith in the risen Lord, Jesus Christ, Who has conquered death.

Traditionally, funerals are not held on Sundays, as Sunday is the day of Resurrection. They should not be held on either of the major Church Feast Days, nor from Holy Thursday through Pascha.

Funerals should be held in the parish which the deceased belonged to. If the deceased did not belong to a parish, then a Funeral Home or Chapel may be used.

While the Funeral Service may stand alone, it is best if it is accompanied by a Divine Liturgy being served, allowing the family and mourners to partake of the Holy Eucharist.

Prayer of Absolution:
The priest asks the Lord Jesus Christ to forgive him/her all sins committed in life, whether voluntary or involuntary. Upon reading the prayer, he folds the paper upon which it is written, and places it in the hands of the deceased, almost like a report card to present to God. In the Ukrainian Orthodox Tradition, the priest also will lay a paper band across the person’s forehead, which is worn as a crown of victory, symbolizing that they have completed the course of life, they have crossed the finish line and their race is over.

The Final Kiss:
While it is permissible to kiss the face, hand or casket, it is common tradition to place an icon or cross placed near the coffin, which is later placed inside the casket.

The final kiss provides family and friends a final opportunity to pay their respects and to bid farewell to their loved one.

The Procession to the Cemetery:
The body is now carried out of the church, as it was brought in, with a cross, clergy, faithful all singing the Trisagion Hymn. The body is now to be taken to the burial site and buried intact.

Cremation is not an option (unless required by law under certain circumstances).

The Burial:
“You are the earth and into the earth you shall return.” (Gen. 3:10)

It is preferred that Orthodox Christians be buried facing east, in expectation of Christ’s Second Coming.

A brief gravesite service is sung. Earth and ashes (dust) from the censer are placed upon the casket in the form of a cross by the priest. “Earth, dust and ashes is what you are, and therefore, according to the Will of God, you return to the earth once again.”

A cross is placed at the grave, or etched on a tombstone, as a sign of faith and hope in the final resurrection of the dead.

The departed in Christ look forward to the resurrection of the body on the last day, when the fullness of their being will once again be restored and transformed in glory.

MEMORIAL SERVICES (PANAKHYDAS)

Third day:
Traditionally teaches us that for the first three days the soul of the newly departed remains close to the body, or near their loved ones, or visits places that were significant during their lifetimes.

According to St. Macarius the Great, from the third to the ninth day after death, the soul is shown a vision of heaven. On the ninth day, they are brought to judgment before the awesome tribunal of Christ. Therefore, we offer prayers on the third and ninth days, appealing to God’s infinite mercy, loving kindness and forgiveness.

Fortieth Day:
St. Macarius the Great, taught that between the ninth and fortieth day, the soul of the departed having experienced a vision of heaven, now experiences a vision of hell. On the fortieth day the soul once again appears before the Lord, for the last time until the Final Judgement. At this time they are assigned a place to which they ascend/descend to await Christ’s Second Coming. The fortieth day after death is considered to be the most important day of commemoration.

One year/Annual:
It is important to not forget the departed loved one, but, to pray continuously for their peaceful repose and forgiveness of their sins. It is traditional to serve a Panak hyda on the anniversaries of their death, or any time one feels compelled through thoughts, or memories of the deceased to pray for them.

Kolyvo/Fruit/Bread:
For the Memorial Service in accordance with ancient custom, a bowl of kolyvo (kutya) is placed upon the tetrapod. This wheat porridge is symbolic of the resurrection of the dead at the Second Coming of Christ. St. Paul writes, “What you sow does not come to life unless it dies.” (1 Corinthians 15:34), and St. John writes “Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.” (John 12:24).

Therefore, as the wheat is buried in the soil and seemingly disintegrates, while in fact regenerating and sprouting into a plant which grows and bears fruit, so the Christian body will be raised again from the earth. The body will not be raised in its previous corruptible form, but in a new and incorruptible state.

Memorial Saturdays:
As an expression of love, it is important to remember the soul of the departed during all Memorial Saturdays throughout the year.

Visiting the gravesite:
Traditionally, the graves of loved ones are visited during Pascha, Bright Week, St. Thomas Sunday, and throughout the year.

Prayers:
Daily prayers should be offered for the sake of the deceased, fasting and almsgiving. There is no greater show of love as to pray and do good works in the name of and for the sake of the soul of our loved ones who have fallen asleep in the Lord.

with seeds (which will bear fruit), and sweet to signify the sweetness of Paradise.
Speaking to your child about death

Death is a part of life, and as Orthodox Christians, it is important to let children know that death is not final, as Christ has conquered death.

If the child has been aware that a family member, friend, has been ill, allow them to be present as the Mystery of Holy Unction, explaining that the service helps the individual, and is for healing of body and soul. When a loved one is near death allow the child to come and say goodbye, reassuring them that even though the individual might not be able to respond, they still love them.

When death occurs, remind the child that the soul of the loved one has left the body but is still united with God. Constantly remind them how much the person who has died still loves them.

Explain the purpose of praying for the dead, and what they should expect to see at the funeral. Tell the child that the body, now an empty shell, is blessed with holy water by the priest, and assure them that the person has “fallen asleep”. While we believe the body is “sleeping”, a child might take it too literally, and be afraid to go to sleep at night, fearing they too might die. Do not be too specific with young children because they take things very literally. Even though it is correct terminology, do not tell them that the person has “fallen asleep”. While we believe the body is “sleeping”, a child might take it too literally, and be afraid to go to sleep at night, fearing they too might die.

Mention resurrection, however, be careful with very young minds when speaking about the resurrection of the dead, so they do not fear “zombies” and dead bodies returning to life. Do not say the loved one is now “watching” over them, so the child doesn’t get a complex of grandfather constantly spying on them from heaven. Instead, assure them that grandpa is praying for them, but not watching them.

Teach correctly. Do not say that a loved one is now an angel in heaven. People do not become angels. They remain themselves always.

Do tell them to pray for the person and assure them that the person prays for them. By remembering, speaking of, and praying for the individual we acknowledge the love and positive affect they had on us in life, thanking God for having allowed them into our lives even for a short time.

Do not put away all the person’s belongings, photos, clothing too quickly. Take time to mourn. Speak often of memories, keeping the individual alive through your memories.

Ask the child to help pack up some of the clothing to donate to homeless shelters, letting them know that the person, even though no longer physically with us, rejoices at being able to still help others.

Bake the deceased favorite cookies or cake together with your child. Tell them this was their grandfather’s favorite cookie recipe.

If your child is scared, do not force them to come near the casket, or attend the funeral, so as not to cause future anxiety issues. However, if they do not attend, give them a detailed explanation of what they missed. Describe the casket and what was lovingly placed inside and why. Retell how the people put flowers, or threw dirt, into the grave. Do not shield them from the truth, and do not allow them to build a wall against the reality of their loss, but slowly and gently discuss the situation, and allow them to mourn along with you.

When it is time for the panakhyda, have the child help with the preparations. Have them mix the boiling wheat, sift the flour for cookies, wash the grapes, arrange the flowers, etc. Allow them to carry something into the church and place it upon the table for the memorial service. Have them hold a candle, like a big boy or girl.

Pray as a family. During your evening prayers, do not forget to pray for the soul of the departed loved one daily, and assure the child that the loved one hears those prayers, and in turn prays for them.

Ingredients
- 2 to 3 lbs Organic Hard Red Wheat Berries or Hard Red Wheat Berries
- 2/3 cup Graham Crackers plus some extra
- 1 tsp ground Cinnamon
- 1 cup Chopped Walnuts
- 1/2 cup Silvered Almonds (plus some extra)
- 1/2 cup Parsley chopped fresh (optional)
- 1 tsp Sea Salt
- 1 Powdered Sugar
- 1 Jordan Almonds (traditionally white), sprinkles, silver dragees, etc.
- 1 platter
- 1 Waxed Paper

Instructions
- Soak wheat berries for 4 hours. Do not oversoak!
- Boil berries in lightly salted water for about an hour. They should look like bloated berries and NOT like bulgur or rice. Give the berries a little taste. Berries should be tender, chewy and pop a little in your mouth. It should not be tough to chew them.
- Strain berries and rinse in cool water. Let the berries drain for about 10 minutes.
- Cover a table with some towels and dry berries on the towels for about an hour. You are drying the outside, not the inside!
- After the drying, berries can be stored in the fridge for 24 hours.
- Combine graham cracker crumbs, raisins, sesame seeds, sugar, walnuts, silvered almonds, spices, parsley (optional) and salt. Stir into the wheat berries.
- Mound the Koliva on the platter (or in individual serving cups).
- Flatten the mound with waxed paper. Remove the waxed paper.
- Sprinkle some graham cracker crumbs over the mound and flatten again.
- Sift confectioners’ sugar over the mound and flatten again.
- Create a cross in the center of the Koliva with your choice of sprinkles or almonds.
- You may add the initials of the deceased with Jordan almonds or almond slivers.
- Decorate edges if desired.
Speeding down the highway on their way to the airport, seven men contemplated the day’s Gospel Reading from Matthew 9:27-35, which retold how two blind men called out to Christ for mercy, how He healed them, and proceeded to travel to all the nearby cities and villages to minister to the people. This small group of men heard Christ’s call and were now themselves traveling to minister to people in need.

On this late Sunday night, the 8th of August, His Eminence Archbishop Daniel, Ruling Hierarch of the Western Eparchy of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA, having months earlier begun preparations, now led a group of Seminarians who comprised this year’s Mission Trip to Ukraine.

Joining His Eminence were seminarians from the St. Sophia Ukrainian Orthodox Diocesan Seminary Subdeacon Pavlo Vysotskyi, Reader Andriy Varvych, Reader Maksym Zhuravchyk, Seminarian Andriy Akulenko, and Seminarian Mykola Stefanyk, along with guest, Very Rev. Fr. Volodymyr Muzychka, pastor of St. Volodymyr Cathedral, New York, NY.

In the heat of the August 11, 2021, summer day, the beetles buzzed, and the cicadas sang lazily in the tall trees on the grounds of the Znamyanka Orphanage. As the hot breeze stirred the leaves, the splash of color below swayed slowly. A mix of Ukrainian wildflowers, daisies, cosmos, bee-balm, Sunflowers, roses, etc. all moved hypnotically in the breeze, as the birds scratched in the dry soil searching for worms. Suddenly the door swung open, and the startled birds flew away, complaining loudly in the trees at the unforeseen disturbance. Squinting their eyes as they stepped out into the bright sunlight, several seminarians gingerly made their way down the ramp, pushing wheelchairs with smiling and squealing children in them. They were soon followed by the rest of the team members, as everyone emerged into the sunshine.

As they returned from year to year bringing with them supplies, joy and laughter.

The children living in the Znamyanka Orphanage, which is supported by the Church, are some of the most severely disabled (physically and/or mentally) orphans in Ukraine. While many traverse the orphanage grounds in wheelchairs, others are bedbound, waiting for someone to come and visit them, hold their hand, and talk with them.

During these much-awaited mission trips, His Eminence and the team bring with them a sense of peace, as the days start and end with group prayer. Archbishop Daniel blesses the children, stopping by each bed, giving each child importance, and asking for God’s mercy upon them. The members of the team take time to feed the children, play with them, read together, and hold the youngsters who crave the human touch.

As the team members excitedly bounced along the backroads, crammed now in a van for their final leg of the journey, the children of the orphanage eagerly hung around the doorway, popping in and out, awaiting to see the van approach. With shrieks of joy and laughter, the little ones bounced up and down announcing the arrival of the Mission Team.

“Vladyka! Seminarians!” they screamed as they ran out and encircled the van. The tired team members forgot their weariness, as they exited the van and found themselves surrounded by little round faces filled with joy, and dozens of little hands reaching out for hugs. Dropping their bags, and forgetting about their luggage, the young men immediately bent down and filled their arms with happy squirming children who clung to their necks and pulled on their noses. With arms filled with love, the team made its way inside the orphanage, where they will spend the next 10 days teaching about Christ, praying with the children, giving them comfort, love, and attention, and thereby, changing this world for the better, one child at a time.

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Having started the morning early with Morning Prayers, the team members had eaten a quick breakfast, and hurried to help feed the children. Knowing they would spend a few hours outdoors with the ones who are mobile, His Eminence Archbishop Daniel suggested that the team first make rounds through the building, to visit those children who are bedbound.
Walking from one room to the next, the seminarians took a few moments to stop and talk, touch, and pray with the children who usually remain out of sight. While they had been prepared for this mission trip, and told that they would see severely disabled children, the young men were still moved to the core when they visited with children who spend their days lying in bed, unable to communicate, to play, or to do the simplest of tasks. Spotting the visitors, the children’s eyes recognized the guests, and even though they could not enunciate their joy, their eyes began to sparkle as they smiled toothless grins, making unrecognizable sounds. Fighting back their own tears, the seminarians kneeled by each bed, taking the outstretched hands in their own, brushing back the hair from the children’s eyes, as they told them funny jokes and made them laugh.

Archbishop Daniel donned his epitrachelion and slowly made his way from bed to bed. He stopped by each child, who sensing the sacred moment quieted down and silently watched as His Eminence prayed over them, and sprinkled them with holy water, before moving on to the next child. He slowly moved from room to room, his voice echoing softly through the large hallways into the other rooms, where the children sat up in anticipation of his visit.

Having prayed with the children and taken care of their physical needs, it was now time to take them outside and allow them to have some fun. The seminarians took the children to the playground towards the back of the property where they played ball, hopscotch, and jumped rope. Hiding from the noonday heat, some of the children settled down at tables located under the shade of the tall trees and played with blocks and Legos.

As the lunch hour neared everyone retreated indoors, escaping the hot sun. As they still had some time before lunch was ready to be served, everyone gathered in the great room for a singalong. The seminarians, dressed in their Mission Team navy blue T-shirts stood up and sang first. The children clapped happily and begged for more. Sheepishly the young men sang a few more tunes before sitting down and joining the orphans in some Ukrainian folk songs. They were impressed with the children’s abilities, their sweet voices singing the words that generations of Ukrainian had sung before.

The laughter and music traveled down the hallway to the kitchen where the older children were assisting in the preparation of lunch. The orphanage not only provides rudimentary care and elementary schooling, but they also teach life skills. The children chopped cucumbers, baked bread, boiled potatoes, and prepared a salad.

Before long the children disappeared to their lunchroom, as the mission team members all gathered in the small kitchenette to enjoy their lunch, discuss the rest of the day’s plans, and prepared for tomorrow. Having enjoyed freshly fried cutlets, delicious salad, boiled potatoes, and carbonated water, the team members finished and one by one retreated to the game room to play a bit of ping-pong with the children who had gathered there.

As a cool breeze began to stir the tall grass and made the curtains on the opened windows sway back and forth, a few of the seminarians decided to take some of the more mobile children on a short outing. While some of the young men remained behind, visiting with the bedbound orphans, the small group traveled out onto the road pushing wheelchairs. The young people laughed and joked along the street as they walked to the nearby shop where they enjoyed ice-cream cones, and cold soda pop. For the children this was an unprecedented treat, that they seldom enjoy.

The sun began to set, and the stars began to twinkle in the eastern sky as the children all nestled in their beds, closed their eyes, and happily relived the day’s activities. One by one the lights of the orphanage went off, and a peaceful quiet covered the orphanage property. The crickets chirped happily in the cool evening air, as the residents and guests of the orphanage closed their eyes and drifted peacefully off to sleep. Soon the sun would be up, and the orphanage would once again reverberate with laughter and joy, as the Seminary Mission Trip of the UOC of USA continued its purpose of bringing love to the ends of the world and helping those in need.
The second day at the Znamyanka Orphanage, found Fr. Volodymyr Muzychka, joined by the seminarians of the St. Sophia Ukrainian Orthodox Theological Seminary, gathered in the great room at the crack of dawn for Morning Prayers. Archbishop Daniel, Ruling Hierarch of the Western Eparchy of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA, opened his service book and began to pray, as a few of the orphans showed up and awkwardly stood among the seminarians, glancing at the service books they held. Teenager Sasha, a longtime resident who is familiar with the Mission Team, boldly stepped forward and came to stand next to His Eminence, who smiled and moved to share his service book with the boy, tracing the words with his fingers to show him where they stood in their prayers. The young man stood straighter and actively participated. Each seminarian, and some of the children, took turns reading the prayers, asking for God’s blessings upon them as they go through their days. Almighty God, our Help and Refuge, the Fountain of Wisdom and Tower of strength, who knows that I can do nothing without Your guidance and help. Assist me, I pray You, and direct me to divine wisdom and power, that I may accomplish this task, and whatsoever I may undertake to do, faithfully and diligently, according to Your will, so that it may be profitable to me and others and to the glory of Your Holy Name. For Yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit: now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Having concluded their prayers, the children laughed and bounced away to the other side of the building, as the mission team made their way to the small kitchen to enjoy their modest breakfast. As they crammed into the small room, they were grateful for all the fresh food they were served, much of which was locally grown and organic. Fresh cucumber slices, tomatoes, and eggs, served with freshly baked bread. As they relished the meal, and enjoyed the hot tea, His Eminence took a moment to ask each seminarian about their impressions from the previous day, and to mention what one thing struck them the most.

Swallowing a mouthful of buttered bread, one seminarian said that he was humbled by seeing the deformities these children had. He had no idea that there were so many disabled people in Ukraine, and it broke his heart, especially when he realized there is no infrastructure in place to help them.

Another stated, that he was amazed and blessed to see the smiles and the pure innocence and joy on the children’s faces. Even though they are struggling, some unable to walk, others unable to talk, they seem filled with joy. They readily smile and laugh when given the slightest attention.

The third young man was moved by how much the children crave to be loved, to be remembered, to be noticed. He explained how he was standing near a child sitting in a wheelchair. He wasn’t paying attention to her, as he was watching some boys throwing a ball around, when suddenly he felt her hand reaching for his own. He glanced down and patted her cheek, and she smiled and began to cry. The simplest touch moved the young child to tears.

Another of the seminarians noted the camaraderie between the children. While there must be cliques, even though he’d not seen them yet, for the most part he was moved by how the older children care for the younger ones; and how the less disabled ones take care of their disabled friends by helping feed them, playing with them, leading them by the hand, or happily pushing their wheelchairs.

His Eminence turned the situation into a teaching moment. If you see and appreciate these things in the youngest and most innocent of children, be sure that you emulate these behaviors in your lives. By the Grace of God, we live in communities that are fairly well filled with joy. They readily smile and laugh when given the slightest attention.

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His Eminence turned the situation into a teaching moment. If you see and appreciate these things in the youngest and most innocent of children, be sure that you emulate these behaviors in your lives. By the Grace of God, we live in communities that are fairly well filled with joy. They readily smile and laugh when given the slightest attention.
the person who walks by you. Your kindness may be just what that person needed at that moment, just like the child who grappled around to the cheek touched. There are so many simple ways we can "touch" the lives of others every single day.

With the Archbishop’s words safely tucked away in their hearts, the team members got up from the table, thanked the Lord for the bountiful breakfast, and prepared to for the day’s activities. They once again headed for the rooms of the bedbound children, to spend some quality time with them. From room to room they wondered, settling down quietly in the room with the boys who could not sit up but had the most infectious smiles upon their faces when tickled. In the next room the kids grabbed them and they all danced around. In the next room the kids were sitting behind desks having lessons, putting together puzzles, repeating their numbers, and reading silently. The boys squatted down by each and helped them with their reading and enunciation. Fun was had by all in the arts and crafts room, as the seminarians complemented all the lovely handiwork the children had made, and sat down with them, grabbing brushes and paint, and helping them create masterpieces of art.

They spent the rest of the afternoon in this manner, slowing down and spending quality time with the orphans, so that they are loved and are worthy to be loved. The rehabilitation room was filled with all manner of exercise and strengthening machines, designed to help the children strengthen their crippled limbs. Here the boys helped the little ones by holding their hands as they tried to balance on balls and pull on workout bands. After a quick bite to eat for lunch, everyone headed outside to bask and play in the sunlight. The children once again grabbed onto the seminarians who twisted and turned around with them, little ones. As they danced, and ran around, a soccer ball appeared, and the children laughed as they played a game of soccer with their visitors.

Tired from all the sports and running around, everyone returned inside to catch their breath. Settling down in the great room, the children gathered and began to sing. The seminarians found themselves enjoying a concert as the music teacher, Tetiana Andrivna Velko led the children in song. Clapping and tapping their feet in tune, the guests were enthralled by the talent of the children, and the dedication of their teacher who was able to train them so well.

After the concert the mission team followed some of the children to the kitchen to watch how hard they were able to cook and bake. These life skills are crucial, and are taught to the children in song. As they grow into adulthood the orphans will be able to care for themselves as much as possible and lead an independent life.

After supper, as the temperatures outside cooled, some of the older orphans joined Archbishop Daniel and the seminarians on a small outing to the local store near the train station. His Eminence made sure the children who could not walk were well accommodated in their wheelchairs as they were pushed along the avenue, while the others shuffled behind them. He kept a close eye on them, making certain they were safe from the light traffic along the street.

As the little parade of wheelchairs made its way along the bumpy road, the cars slowed as their passengers stared at the unfamiliar site. Having reached the store, His Eminence directed the seminarians to take the children in circles around to see some of the things they had seen before but had only had them some treats. The simplest purchase meant the world to these kids.

Settling down outside to enjoy their ice cream, the seminarians noted how the other people stopped and looked, or tried to avoid them all together. No, they did not understand why Archbishop Daniel had insisted on taking the children out “into the world to be seen.” It was important that the populace be exposed to the disabled orphans, so that they were aware of the difficulties some people had to endure, and that they in time would make life easier for handicapped people by building ramps, rails, and other amenities to aid the disabled. His Eminence stated that one day he didn’t want people to be uncomfortable around the disabled, but to be familiar with the fact that people need wheelchairs, and instead of staring at them, they would come up and help them.

While the children lingered outside and enjoyed their sweet treats, Archbishop Daniel went back inside and purchased 200 kg of sugar and flour, 2,500 diapers, and additional arts and crafts supplies that the children could use to create more artwork.

As the group returned to the orphanage, the crescent moon began to rise in the east, and the crickets began to chirp happily in the tall grass along the roadway. The mission team, along with the orphans once again gathered in the great room, and as they had begun the day, they ended it in prayer. The youngsters listened to things from their busy day, stood and took turns praying along with the seminarians, and asked for His Eminence’s blessing before retiring to their beds.

As darkness fell, the building became quiet except for the faint light that spilled out through an open doorway into the hall. Archbishop Daniel sat drinking hot tea, along with Fr. Volodymyr, and the facility manager, as they made final arrangements to provide new electrical cables for the orphanage. Earlier in the day they had noticed that there were issues and decided that the Church would sponsor new cables to ensure a safe environment for the children. Additionally, as they had spent hours playing on the grounds of the orphanage, they noted that the fence which enclosed the facility was in disrepair. The fence is critical as it ensures the children do not wander off, and that they are safe when they are playing outdoors. Therefore, His Eminence informed the administrator of the orphanage, that the Church would help finance the purchase and installation of a new fence around the orphanage.

Satisfied that the orphans were now well taken care of and would be safe for the foreseeable future, everyone retired for the night.

The third morning at the Znamyanka Orphanage began on a bright note. As the sunshine began to peek through the colorful lace curtains of the great room, the Mission Team members opened their prayer books. His Eminence Archbishop Daniel, Ruling Hierarch of the Western Eparchy of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA began the prayers, while the orphans quietly entered and mingled among the seminarians of the St. Sophia Ukrainian Orthodox Theological Seminary. Everyone took turns reading the prayers and asking for God’s blessings and protection throughout the upcoming day.

As the final “Amen” was sung, the children could no longer contain themselves and began to run around and play with Fr. Volodymyr and the seminarians. The next hour was filled with merry games, dancing, and frivolity, until the youngsters were called away.

The Mission Team disappeared down the hallway to enjoy a quick and simple breakfast, as His Eminence met with the leadership of the Znamyanka Mayor’s Office. Sitting down to an informal meeting, Archbishop Daniel took a few moments to express his gratitude to the officials for their cooperation in installing a new sidewalk in front of the orphanage. The restoration of the pavement is a huge help and makes the lives of the disabled orphans so much better, as they are now able to easily maneuver their wheelchairs over the site, without fear of getting stuck, or worse, falling over.

The amicable meeting lasted almost an hour, as the participants exchanged local news with His Eminence, shared stories of local life, and inquired about things in the U.S. As they got up to leave, they shook hands with the hierarch, expressing their gratitude with his time to meet with them, Silence settled over the building. The children smiled in their sleep, as they dreamt of ice cream cones and candy. The angels in the heavens smiled as they looked down upon the orphanage and the people slumbering within. It is these little things, these moments spent with a helpless child, these kind words spoken with love and compassion, these smiles and hugs, that make the world a better place. Everyone rested peacefully and re-energized for the next day’s adventures.
and stated that they looked forward to many years of working together in the best interest of the innocent children housed in the facility.

While the guests were preparing to leave, the children began to gather in the great room. Their caregivers wheeled them in and arranged them in rows along one side of the room in preparation for the afternoon's entertainment. The kids squirmed in their chairs in anticipation of the concert, as the seminarians stood up and began singing for them. The orphans sat silently mesmerized by the strong voices, as the young men sang religious songs. Changing their demeanor, relaxing, and smiling, the seminarians continued singing several Ukrainian Ethnic songs. The children began to clap in tune, and then joined in as they were also familiar with many of the words.

As the seminarians finished and stepped to the side, the young audience squealed with joy as several whimsically dressed characters came rushing into the room. With big ears, floppy hats, and bright red hair, members of the local theater group performed a skit to the delight of the youngsters. As the characters tromped around in their oversized shoes, tripping over themselves, the kids laughed with glee. One by one some of the children rose to their feet, swaying in time to the music. Before too long, as their wheelchair-bound mates watched and laughed, they took over the main floor, tossing and catching toys, dancing in a conga line, and chasing each other around. The room exploded in laughter when the main character pulled out a bubble wand and began waving it around creating ginormous bubbles. As the ethereal creations glimmered and undulated, the children reached out to pop them, squinting as the soap splattered all over them. Suddenly there appeared more bubbles, slowly floating throughout the room, and drifting over the children in the wheelchairs, as the other performers joined in. Everyone had their hands up and were laughing and catching bubbles. Such a simple thing as a bubble of soap, can bring so much joy.

Members of the public filtered in slowly, oohing and aahing at the lovely array of desserts, deciding which their families would love more. As the cookies flew off the trays, the locals hurried home eager to enjoy their purchases. Some people having spotted the children sitting in wheelchairs watching, paused and came up to speak to them. Archbishop Daniel stood and watched, pleased to see that the residents were getting used to the disabled children, and they were becoming accepted members of society.

As the dinner hour approached, the leftover pastries did not go to waste, but were handed out to the children to enjoy. They had worked hard preparing them, decorating them, and trying to entice people to buy them. The funds they collected would go towards the educational programs of the orphanage and they would all benefit from them. As the day's excitement and activities, their tummies full, the usually boisterous children were sleepy-eyed and yawning by the time for Evening Prayers rolled around. Some of the younger ones fell asleep on the couches which lined the great room and were carried off to their beds as the older children joined the Mission Team in thanking the Lord for a day well lived and asking for His protection in the night as they slumbered.

Archbishop Daniel prayed softly, his voice barely above a whisper so as not to awaken the sleeping youngsters.

May Christ our True God, through the prayers of His Most Pure Mother; of the Holy, Glorious and All-praised Apostles, and the Holy Seven Maccabees, of the Holy and Righteous Ancestors of God, Joachim and Anna; and of all the saints, have mercy on us and save us, for He is Good and the Lover of all mankind.

Covering their own yawns as they responded with a quiet “Amen”.
Having completed Morning Prayers on their fourth day at the Znamyanka Orphanage, the seminarians of the St. Sophia Ukrainian Orthodox Theological Seminary, retreated to prepare themselves for the morning’s activities with the children. With broad grins on their faces, they rummaged in the chest of costumes, pulling out scarves, oversized shirts, wigs, and all kinds of props as they got ready to entertain the young audience that was already gathering in the great room.

The space overflowed with wheelchairs, and all the seats along the walls filled as the children gathered and eagerly awaited the program to begin. Subdeacon Pavlo Vysotskyi entered the room, and with great fanfare told them to prepare themselves for the most entertaining rendition of the “Turnip/Pіпка”, presented this day by world renown seminarians from “Turnip/Ріпка”, presented this day as the seminarians and orphans tumbled around. The helpers were rewarded for their assistance in extricating the turnip, as was the audience, with slices of sweet cool watermelon.

As they sat munching on the sliced fruit, the seminarians performed an additional skit, the Dumpling/Колобок. Everyone laughed and enjoyed themselves as they watched the story of the dumpling that escapes the house of grandmother and grandfather. The fairy-tale’s plot describes Kolobok’s repetitive escapes with each animal, Kolobok cunningly escapes. With each animal, Kolobok sings a song in which he explains, “I got away from Grandmother, I got away from Grandfather, and I will certainly get away from you!”. Much to everyone’s dismay, the fox eventually manages to catch and eat Kolobok by distracting him by praising his singing.

The afternoon whiled away in independent adulthood. Additionally, His Eminence met with Serhiy Yamanayev, a young man who as an orphan had lived out his childhood at the orphanage. As of two months ago, he was able to move out and live on his own. All the life skills he was taught at the facility have come in handy in allowing him to be independent in his adulthood. However, even though he has left the orphanage, and lives on his own, his body is still in need of support, as the young man undergoes weekly dialysis for both of his kidneys. Nonetheless, it was reassuring to see one of the orphans that His Eminence has known from childhood, enjoy an independent adulthood.

With his goal accomplished, Archbishop Daniel returned to the great room as the festivities began to wind down. Spotting him, the children told him they had something for him. With a smile upon his face, he watched as one of the orphans came up and on behalf of all the children presented him with a embroidered image of Christ reaching out His arms to the elderly, and disabled to have a better quality of life. Additionally, His Eminence met with Serhiy Yamanayev, a young man who as an orphan had lived out his childhood at the orphanage. As of two months ago, he was able to move out and live on his own. All the life skills he was taught at the facility have come in handy in allowing him to be independent in his adulthood. However, even though he has left the orphanage, and lives on his own, his body is still in need of support, as the young man undergoes weekly dialysis for both of his kidneys. Nonetheless, it was reassuring to see one of the orphans that His Eminence has known from childhood, enjoy an independent adulthood.

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they never truly leave the children behind, as they take them nestled in their hearts home with them. His Eminence expressed that everyone constantly inquires about the children and wishes to know how they are doing, and before posing for a group photo, he reassured them that they are in his, and every team member’s daily prayers.

As the children basked in the warmth of Vladyka’s reassuring words, they were treated to an ice cream social. Licking their fingers as the sweetness melted and dribbled down their hands and chins, they all laughed and joked. Sprinkles were liberally added, and then more sprinkles were added. Chocolate syrup flowered freely, as more bananas were sliced.

As the children took their midday rest, recuperating from all the ice cream, the mission team went out on an important errand. While sweet treats are appreciated occasionally, the children need a good hearty meal to sustain them, and to nourish their bodies. In addition to the dry supplies purchased the day before, this day they went in search of meat. Since many of the children are immobile, it is critical that their diet support their damaged muscles and twisted bones. Meat provides many essential nutrients their bodies need, such as iodine, iron, zinc, vitamins, and essential fatty acids.

Having purchased an entire freshly butchered pig, the team hauled it back to the orphanage’s industrial kitchen and helped prepare the meat for canning and freezing. All in all, the team was able to provide the facility with over 145 kilograms of pork. This meat will nourish the children for weeks to come. Having completed their major task of the day, the seminarians once again gathered up the older, more mobile orphans, and took them out for an evening stroll. The heat of the day had been replaced by a gentle breeze which made the grass sway and the trees rustle, as it tickled the children, gently tousling their hair. Once again, the little group visited the local store, this time purchasing ribbons for the girls’ hair, and little knickknacks for the boys, some balls, toys, and caps, as well as more arts supplies.

Before returning to the orphanage, the group stopped to play with the local cats and dogs. People were out walking their pets, and seeing the children’s excited smiles, they came up to them and allowed the youngsters to play with their puppies. It is unclear who had more fun, the children who squealed with glee, or the puppies with wagging tails who jumped up on their laps for more cuddles. Everyone was smiling and enjoyed the peaceful and calm evening before returning to the facility just in time to read the Evening Prayers as a family.

The Mission Team was honored to sit down to a late dinner this night with the orphanage administrator Tatyana Valko. As they enjoyed fresh potatoes sprinkled with dill, and fresh green salads, the team reminisced about the week’s activities. The seminarians shared their impressions concerning the education of the children, their wonderful manners, and polite demeanor. They laughed about the skits, and the slippery floors after the bubbles from the previous day. Each took turns thanking Pani Tatyana for her hard work and dedication to these young innocent children. In appreciation for their visit, donations, and love expressed for the orphans, she in turn thanked them by presenting each team member with a diploma of gratitude. With mutual respect and camaraderie, the children’s final words were exchanged as the seminarians tried to cover their yawns, betraying their weariness, as they stood to retreat to their rooms.

With the day’s excitement behind them, the children settled down for the night. The peals of laughter which had echoed through the building all day long died away, and were replaced with silence, broken only by a child giggling in their sleep. As the breeze faded away and stillness engulfed the town, the moon rose in the sky, keeping watch over the occupants of the orphanage as they slumbered.

As the sun rose over the Znamyanka Orphanage, His Eminence Archbishop Daniel, Ruling Hierarch of the Western Eparchy of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA, along with the Seminarians of the St. Sophia Ukrainian Orthodox Theological Seminary gathered in the great room for prayer. On this, their final day at the orphanage, Archbishop Daniel served a Moleben to the Birth-Giver of God, praying for the health and wellbeing of the children, staff, and administrators of the orphanage, as well as for the benefactors and supporters of the Charitable Mission of the UOC of the USA.

On this Sunday morning, the room was filled with orphans, teachers, and administra tors of the facility. Everyone listened intently as His Eminence read the day’s Gospel Reading from Matthew 14:14-22, retelling the time Christ took compassion on the crowd that had gathered to listen to Him preach. When evening came the Disciples asked Him to send away the people because it was late, and they were hungry. However, He instead asked that they feed them, to which they answered they had only five loaves of bread and two fish. Christ took those scanty supplies and prayed over them, then told the Disciples to pass the food out to the multitudes. This meager amount turned out to be more than enough to feed the 5,000 men gathered, not counting the women and children. They were able to satisfy everyone, and still had leftovers.

Closing the Gospel Book and placing it on the table, His Eminence turned to those standing before him and explained that with Christ all things are possible. Imagine feeding a crowd of thousands with 5 loaves of bread and two fish. It seems impossible, but nothing is impossible with God. He reiterated that through faith and prayer, God turns our own meager resources into enough to meet our needs, and more. Looking at the staff members, Archbishop Daniel stated that we must have faith in God’s ability to multiply that which we have. His Eminence asserted that he has faith that the humble offerings the mission team has provided, through
the generosity of the Church and her faithful, will grow and multiply. Never fear, only have faith, and all your needs will be met.

Concluding the service, Vladyka turned his attention to a bucket of water placed before the icon of the Mother-of-God, and making the sign of the Cross over it, prayed:

That the Lord our God will send down the blessing of Jordan, and sanctify these waters, let us pray to the Lord. That this water may be unto the bestowing of sanctification; unto the remission of sins; unto the bestowing of sanctification; unto the remission of sins; unto the blessing of soul and body; and unto every expedient service, let us pray to the Lord.

His Eminence then dipped a bundle of juniper branches into the bucket of water and began to sprinkle God’s blessings all around. First up was a little icon created by one of the orphans. The young girl proudly held her icon as Archbishop Daniel gently sprinkled water upon it, and upon the girl, making her giggle. He then turned, and sprinkled water upon all who stood behind him, and then walked around blessing all the wheelchairs, and corners of the room.

As one of the orphans, who was proudly wearing one of the seminarian’s T-shirts with the Mission Trip logo upon it, grabbed the bucket of water, His Eminence continued chanting prayers and sprinkling water. They were led by the girl who held her newly blessed icon, as she walked through the entire facility, starting with the children’s quarters.

Archbishop Daniel first blessed the bedbound children, gently sprinkling their twisted bodies with holy water, asking for God’s blessing upon them to ease their discomfort and strengthen their wills, bending down to gently stroke the cheek of a grinning child.

The little group next visited the rooms of the boys and girls who were sitting in their wheelchairs next to their beds, waiting to get blessed. Singing and sprinkling blessings throughout all the rooms and adjoining hallways, and mostly atop the little heads of all the children, Vladyka made his way through the remainder of the building. He headed to the classes to bless the children’s studies, the rehabilitation room, to ensure that the machinery worked successfully towards healing and strengthening the deformed limbs, the administrative offices, and even the laundry room, blessing every nook and cranny of the building.

As he went, he was joined by more and more people, eventually turning the tiny group of three into a true procession, led by the young girl holding her icon. Making their way outside, His Eminence blessed the newly erected fence around the property, asking that the Lord keep all those within its walls safe from harm. Walking along the sidewalk, bordered by flower beds filled with tall pink, purple and white cosmos flowers swaying softly, to the deep blues of the morning glory vines that covered the opposite side of the walk, the little group walked around the grounds of the facility.

Dipping deep in the bucket, Vladyka blessed the playground, the play structures, the storage huts, the gardens, and all the structures throughout the facility grounds, finally arriving at the kitchens. Everyone filed into the large bright kitchen, as Archbishop Daniel’s voice echoed off the tiled walls in the large room. Having blessed the entire orphanage, all the children and staff, every classroom, bedroom, hallway and stairwell, His Eminence turned one more time to the people who had followed him, and doused them all generously with the water, showering God’s blessings upon them for many years of good health and happiness.

As the seminarians packed their belongings, His Eminence met one final time with the administration of the orphanage, confirming future plans and assuring them of the Church’s continued support of the disabled orphans housed within its walls.

The children shyly loitered in the hallway, waiting to bid final farewells to the young men they’d come to care for deeply over the previous week. The seminarians, spotting the little heads peaking in, smiled and warmly invited the kids in for a few more cuddles and jokes. More than one gave up his Team T-shirt, pulling it over the head of one of the children. The shirts were too big, hanging down to their knees, but the kids didn’t care and danced around as if they were wearing the latest fashion.

Gathering in the front room of the building for a final group photo, the team members bid farewell to the children and the staff members, promising to return in the future. With parting hugs, the Mission Team picked up their bags and headed to the awaiting van which was to take them to the train station.

Parting is always difficult. The children poured out onto the front porch and stood there waving sadly, forlorn looks upon their faces. The seminarians ran back and gave each one a tight squeeze and a tickle making them giggle and squirm. As Archbishop Daniel came up to the porch and bestowed a final blessing upon the orphans before joining the seminarians in the van.

The white vehicle veered left onto the main street as its occupants turned and waved out their windows to the children who stood on the porch still waving and shouting. As the van bounced along the road to the train station, the distance growing greater between them and the orphanage, the team pulled out their face masks, and prepared to return to the world, constricted by pandemic restrictions. Soon the Mission Team boarded the train to Kyiv, leaving behind the orphanage, but, taking with them the orphans who were nestled safely within their hearts.
LEARN ABOUT THE MOTHER OF GOD...

The Virgin Mary grew up at the Temple in Jerusalem, and was betrothed to Joseph. After the Annunciation, she became the Mother of Jesus. She is known as the Theotokos – the Mother of God. When Jesus was a baby, she took care of Him. She fed Him and gave Him baths. The whole time she knew that He was special, that He was the Son of God.

The Theotokos did all the things every mother does for her child. She cooked, and cleaned, and took care of their home in Nazareth. She washed the dishes, did the laundry, and kissed her Child goodnight.

When Jesus turned 30, He left home and begun His ministry. She often followed Him from place to place. The Virgin Mary got to know all the Apostles, and they all grew to love her.

She wept at the foot of the Cross, as she watched her innocent Son being crucified. She wept for Him, and she wept for humanity. Christ looked down from the Cross and saw her. He felt sad that she was crying and was worried about His mother. Standing next to her was John, the youngest of the Apostles. From the Cross, before dying, He told John to look after her, and take her as his own mother. Looking to her, He told her to accept John as her son going forward. For the rest of her life, John would take care of her.

On the third day after His death, the Virgin Mary was among the women bringing myrrh to anoint Christ's body. She was one of the first to witness His Resurrection, and bring the news to the Apostles, including “Doubting” Thomas.

After Pentecost, the Virgin Mary mainly stayed in Jerusalem, supporting, and helping grow the Church. However, she once traveled to Cyprus, invited by Lazarus (Martha and Mary's brother, who was resurrected by Christ) to visit him. There was a storm, and her ship was blown off course and came to rest on the east coast of Mount Athos. She went ashore and upon seeing her and speaking with her the inhabitants converted to Christianity. The Virgin Mary fell in love with the beautiful island and asked her Son to grant her the island, which He did. To this day the island is dedicated to the Theotokos, and home to many male monasteries. The island is known as the “Garden of the Mother of God”, and she is the only woman permitted to step foot upon it.

When the Virgin Mary was in her 50's, she became ill and was near death. She told her friends she wished to be buried in Gethsemane, the garden where Jesus had prayed. At the time the Apostles were scattered all over the world preaching the Gospel. When they heard she was dying, they all returned to Jerusalem. Some came on foot, others by boat, and others miraculously were transported by the Lord Himself. All arrived in time, except St. Thomas.

The icon of the Dormition (Falling Asleep) shows St. Peter at her head, while St. Paul is at her feet, with the other Apostles surrounding her. Antoninus (sometimes called Jephonias) the Jew is depicted on the icon. He was a fanatical Jew, who tried to overturn the coffin of Mary to dishonor her body. An archangel was sent and cut off his hands to stop him from this disgraceful act. Later in his life, Antoninus became a Christian and was healed. Christ held the soul of His Mother, depicted as a young child. She died peacefully, knowing that the resurrection of her Son would also be hers.

When Thomas finally arrived, the other Apostles took him to the tomb in Gethsemane where the Theotokos was buried, near her parents Joachim and Anna. However, when they opened the tomb, they found it empty. The Virgin had been resurrected bodily and taken to heaven, as all we will be in the future. The only items in the tomb were the burial cloths and the tomb was filled with the fragrance of flowers. The Archangel Gabriel had given the Virgin lilies from Heaven upon the Annunciation, and the scent of these same lilies filled the tomb.

ANSWER THE QUESTIONS:

1. Who were the parents of the Virgin Mary?
2. Where did she grow up?
3. To whom was she betrothed?
4. In what city did Jesus live with His mother?
5. What island did God give her?
6. How old was Mother of God when she died?
7. Where was she buried?
8. Who was present at her death?
9. Who was missing?
10. What happened to the man who tried to turn over her coffin?
11. What was found in her tomb?

FIND THE WORDS:

ANGEL
APPOSTLES
BLUE
COFFIN
DORMITION
GARDEN
JERUSALEM
JESUS
JOHN
LILIES
MARY
MOTHER
NAZARETH
THEOTOKOS
THOMAS
TOMB
VIRGIN


Kolomiyets, Sophia Anna baptized and chrismated on May 15, 2021 at the age of 89 years, officiating clergy Fr. John Charest, Fr. Robert Popichak of Sts. Peter & Paul Parish, Carnegie, PA 15106.

Lysyi, Daria of St. Pete Beach, FL on March 22, 2021 at the age of 84 years, officiating clergy Rev. Myron Korostil of St. Michael’s & George’s Parish, Minneapolis, MN 55413.

Rudenko, Maria of Minneapolis, MN on July 8, 2021 at the age of 102 years, officiating clergy Rev. Peter Siwko of St. Michael’s & George’s Parish, Minneapolis, MN 55413.


may god grant to them many happy and blessed years!

V. Rev. Steve Repa 8/7/1983
V. Rev. Petro Siwko 8/17/1987
Rev. Andrei Kulyk 8/17/1997
V. Rev. Paul Emmick 8/18/2019
V. Rev. Ivan Lymar 8/25/2001
V. Rev. Evhen Kumka 8/28/1990

MEMORY ETERNAL!

Clergy and Deacons:

7th 1959 - PROTOPRIEST PETRO BILON
24th 1963 - PROTOPRESBYTER VOLODYMYR BUKATA
26th 1965 - PROTOPRIEST OLEXANDER JEWOTUSHENKO
3rd 1968 - PRIEST PETRO WYSZNEWSKYJ
25th 1968 - PROTOPRIEST NICHOLAS CHARISHCHAK
5th 1973 - PROTOPRIEST PETER STELMACH
5th 1974 - PROTOPRIEST HRYHORIJ CHOMYCKYJ
25th 1975 - PROTOPRIEST SEMEN IWASZCZENKO
1st 1976 - PRIEST JOHN STEPHEN PETRAKANYN
4th 1979 - HIEROMONK JUVENALIJ POPIW
21st 1979 - PROTOPRIEST PETER MELECH
13th 1980 - DEACON MYKOLA CHALY
27th 1980 - PRIEST MYKOLA WARENYK
1981 - PROTOPRIEST WASYL UMANEC
22nd 1985 - PRIEST NICHOLAS MALUZYNSKY
3rd 1986 - PRIEST JOSEPH SIMKO
28th 1991 - PRIEST MYCHAJŁO MYCHAJLUK
2nd 2010 - PROTOPRIEST PETER NATISHAN
26th 2011 - PROTOPRESBYTER NICHOLAS METULYNSKY
25th 2012 - PROTOPRESBYTER PETER HOTROVICH

AUGUST
We are extremely grateful to the individuals and families who have registered via email for the return of in-person Family Fest September 3-6, 2021!

Unlike previous summers, we cannot accommodate any drop-ins or last-minute RSVPs. We need to be particular about cabin assignments and food/supply ordering, so we thank you for understanding.

The deadline to register is August 27 (click the link in yellow below).

This weekend is a perfect opportunity for families and individuals to reconnect with Camp friends and make new ones while relaxing and playing at All Saints Camp.

Best Part: Family Fest is free to the All Saints Camp family, but donations are graciously appreciated.

Please Note: We can only accommodate vaccinated participants (ages 12+). Children under 12 are welcome.

To register for a fun-filled Family Fest, click the link below or email joshu@allsaintscamp.org. Please copy and paste the questions in the blue section below into your email and kindly provide an answer to all.
PILGRIMAGE TO THE HOLY LAND

Palamnitscha Podorzh na Svitye Zemly ta Konstantyntopol

ARCHBISHOP DANIEL

ARXIEPISKOPOM DANI'ILOM

$3,895

To register: Для того щоб зареєструватись на подорож, телефонуйте на:
SelectInternationalTours.com
sales@select-intl.com
800-842-4842

УВАГА: Мало кількість місць
ATTENTION: Limited Space Available


The Youth Ministry Certification Program offered by the St. Sophia Ukrainian Orthodox Theological Seminary is a two-semester program presenting individuals with the opportunity to strengthen their work in youth ministry through the following four courses (two per semester).

- Basic Orthodox Theology for Youth Workers
- Youth Ministry: Fundamentals of Approach and Theology
- Youth Ministry Practicum
- Contemporary Social Issues and Teenagers

Deadline for enrollment in the certification course is August 31, 2021.

For further information regarding registration, tuition, or details, contact:
Natalie Kapetsky Nixon at uocouth@comcast.com

For further information about the program or instructors visit:
www.uocouth.org/youthministry/certificationcourse

This is a Distance Learning course. Internet and the ability for video conferencing is required.

The Youth Ministry Certification Course is offered by St. Sophia Ukrainian Orthodox Theological Seminary

Presenting individuals with the opportunity to strengthen their work in youth ministry.

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stouo.org
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THROUGH THE GENEROSITY OF OUR DONORS, THE UKRAINIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE USA CONTINUES TO SPREAD THE GOSPEL AND SUPPORT OUR LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND PARISHES.

AUGUST CELEBRATIONS
У СЕРПНІ СВЯТКУЄМО

2
Holy Glorious Prophet Elias (Elijah)
Пророка Іллі

4
Holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Mary Magdalen
Рівноапостольної Марії Магдалини

5
Pochaiv Icon of the Mother of God
Почаївської ікони Божої Матері

6
Holy Martyrs and Passion-bearers Borys and Hlib of Rus
Мч. блгв. князів Бориса і Гліба

9
Holy Great-martyr and Healer Panteleimon
Вмч. і цілителя Пантелеимона

14
Procession of the Precious Wood of the Life-giving Cross of the Lord
Celebration of the Baptism of Rus-Ukraine
BEGINNING OF THE DORMITION FAST
Винесення Хреста Господнього
Пам’ять Хрестення Русі-України
ПОЧАТОК УСПЕНСЬКОГО ПОСТУ

19
THE HOLY TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD, GOD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST
ПРЕОБРАЖЕННЯ ГОСПОДА БОГА І СПАСА НАШОГО ІСУСА ХРИСТА

22
Apostle Matthias
Апостола Матвія

28
THE DORMITION OF OUR MOST HOLY LADY THE THEOTOKOS AND EVER-VIRGIN MARY
УСПІННЯ ПРЕСВЯТОЇ ВЛАДИЧИЦІ НАШОЙ БОГОРОДИЦІ І ВСЕДІВІ МАРИІ
Make a donation to support the Ministry of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA

11 The Beheading of the Glorious Prophet, Forerunner, and Baptist John
14 Church New Year
18 Holy Prophet Zacharias and Righteous Elizabeth, parents of St. John the Forerunner
21 THE NATIVITY OF OUR MOST HOLY LADY THE THEOTOKOS AND EVER-VIRGIN MARY

22 Holy and Righteous Ancestors of God Joachim and Anna
27 THE UNIVERSAL EXALTATION OF THE PRECIOUS AND LIFE-GIVING CROSS
30 Martyrs Sophia and her three daughters: Faith (Vera), Hope (Nadia), and Love (Lyubov)

УСІКНОВЕННЯ ГЛАВИ ПРОРОКА, ПРЕДТЕЧІ І ХРЕСТИТЕЛЯ ГОСПОДЬНОГО ІОАННА
ПОЧАТОК ІНДИКТУ - ЦЕРКОВНЕ НОВОЛІТТЯ
ПРОП. ЗАХАРІ І ПРАВ. ЄЛИЗАВЕТИ, БАТЬКІВ СВ. ІОАННА ПРЕДТЕЧІ
РИЗДВО ПРЕЄВФІЙНОЇ ВЛАДИЧИЦІ НАШОЇ БОГОРОДИЦІ І ВСЕДІВИ МАРИЇ

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Dormition
August 28

All Saints Camping Season:
Family Fest
September 3 -6

Church New Year
September 14

HOLY LAND Pilgrimage
Jan 25 - Feb 6
2022

Nativity of the Theotokos
September 21

UOCofUSA
uocofusa.org

Exaltation of the Holy Cross
September 27

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