



Big thanks are extended to all our volunteers. Too many to mention by name.

May the good Lord bless you abundantly with His Choicest Blessings!

Ha Mnohaya I Blahaya Lita!

SAINT NICHOLAS
UKRAINIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH



УКРАЇНСЬКА КАТОЛИЦЬКА
ЦЕРКВА СВЯТОГО МИКОЛАЯ

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ПІД ОПІКОЮ
ПРЕЧИСТОЇ ДІВИ
МАРІЇ ОДІПТРИЇ

UNDER THE
PROTECTION OF
MOTHER OF GOD



CHURCH BULLETIN

December 24 Грудня – 2017

ЦЕРКОВНИЙ ВІСНИК

3 Різдв'яного Послання Блаженнішого Святослава

Ви ж знаєте ласку Господа нашого Ісуса Христа, що задля вас став бідним, будиши багатим, щоб ви Його вбожеством розбагатіли (2 Кор.8,9)

Христос Раждається! Славимо Його!

Дорогі в Христі!

Сьогодні ми знову ділимося невимовною радістю святого Різдва, яка наповнює серце кожного віруючого. Божий Син став одним із нас, взявши собі за матір Діву з Назарета. Син предвічного і всемогутнього Бога, Творця всього видимого і невидимого, народився в бідному вертепі та особисто зазнав всієї людської нужди. Це не тільки історичний факт, подія давно минулих років, а й наша дійсність. У цій події, що сталася у Вифлеємі Юдейському понад дві тисячі років тому, ми пізнаємо безмежну Божу любов до всього роду людського на всі часи: «Бог бо так полюбив світ, що Сина свого Єдинородного дав, щоб кожен, хто вірує в Нього, не загинув, а жив життям вічним» (Ів. 3, 16).

(Продовження в середині бюлетену: РІЗДВ'ЯНЕ ПОСЛАННЯ)

From Christmas Pastoral letter of
His Beatitude Patriarch Sviatoslav

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich. (2 Cor. 8:9)

Christ is born! Glorify Him!

Beloved in Christ!

Today once again we share the unspeakable joy of the Holy Nativity, which fills the heart of each believer. The Son of God became one of us, having taken as His mother a Virgin from Nazareth. The Son of the Pre-eternal and Almighty God, the Creator of all that is visible and invisible, was born in a poor stable cave and personally experienced all human misery. This is not merely some historical event from long ago, this is our reality as well. In this event that took place in Bethlehem more than two thousand years ago we recognize God's infinite love for the human race, for all time: "For God so loved the world, that he gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life" (Jn 3:16).

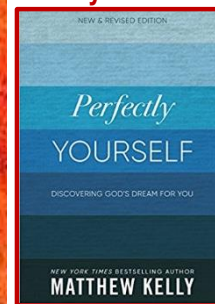
(Cont. inside: CHRISTMAS PASTORAL)

Христос
Раждається!
Славимо Його

Christ is born!
Glorify Him!

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

Веселих Свят
Різдва Христового!



← Matthew Kelly: PERFECTLY YOURSELF
(Discovering God's Dream for You)

It is our Christmas gift for all of you. Let us read it. I guarantee that it will make us think: Who am I? What am I here for?

Please take one! * * * Просимо взяти!

CHURCH BULLETIN

December 24 Грудня 2017
ЦЕРКОВНИЙ ВІСНИК
LITURGICAL SCHEDULE



Saint Nicholas Church
Церква Св. Миколая
(Під Опікою П.Д.М.)

ПОР'ЯДОК СВ. ЛІТУРГІЙ

4:30 PM For Parishioners - За Парохіян

Dec. 24: S. of Fathers, Christmas Eve (Greg.)
Неділя Праотців (Jul.)

10:00 AM +Анна Васків (ОЖ ОЧСУ)

10:00 PM Great Compl. & Christmas Lit. (Greg.)
Вел. Повечеря і Різдв. Літургія

CHRISTMAS – РІЗДВО (Greg.)

Monday, December 25 Грудня, Понеділок

12:00 PM For Parishioners - За Парохіян

Synaxis of Theotokos – Собор Б. (Greg.)
Tuesday, December 26 Грудня, Вівторок

9:30 AM +John & Mary Colomon
(Allen & Nadine Burkholder)

St. Stephen Protomartyr – Св. Степан (Гр.)
Wednesday, December 27 Грудня, Середа

9:30 AM В нам. Ігора Гусака і родини

Thursday, December 28 Грудня, Четвер

8:00 AM +Christine Kocaj Gordon (Family)

Friday, December 29 Грудня, П'ятниця

8:00 AM Int. of Marianne Chort & Tim Hogue

Saturday, December 30 Грудня, Субота

9:00 AM Int. of Fr. Marijan (Dolores Baranyckyj)

4:30 PM +Dmytro Ilkiwskyj (Family)

Dec. 31: S. after Christmas (Greg.)
Неділя Отців (Jul.)

10:00 AM +Михайло Лоза (Дружина Уляна)

Eternal Light Burns for
+Olga Kolotylo
Requ. by Walter Jagodzinski

→ There will be no noon Liturgy from
December 17. Next Noon Liturgy will be
January 21, when we host Buffalo Mass
Mob. Please consider joining us that day in
great number. Thank You! ← ← ←

Недільні коверти приготовані.
Просимо забрати.

2018 Church Envelopes are ready
for pick up in the church by Fillmore side.

Календарі приготовані. Червоні за
Юліанським, сині за Григоріанським

Calendars are ready.
Red – Julian, Blue – Gregorian

Thank you, Fr. Ray, for preparing
Prophora for Christmas Eve.

MERRY CHRISTMAS!
Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

Веселих Свят
Різдва Христового
Христос Раждається! Славимо!

Вічне Світло в честь П. Д. М. горить
у подяку Господеві за все
одержане продовж 2017 року.

Ukrainian Treasures & More



Judie Hawryluk

79 Southridge Dr
West Seneca NY 14224

716-674-5185

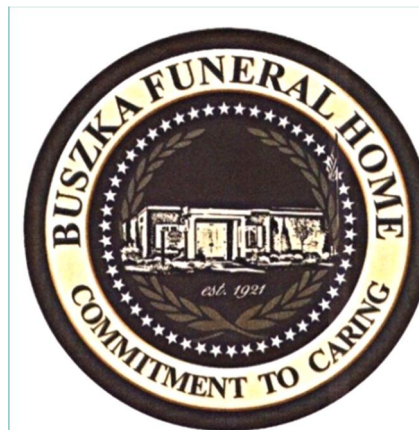
Ukrainian Eggs, Jewelry & Embroidery

photos on facebook.com

jahawryluk@gmail.com



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St. Nicholas Ukrainian Catholic Church



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www.UkrainiansOfBuffalo.com

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Live Music first Friday every month
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\$100.00 дол. – 52 рази до року.

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Become a member of Ukrainian FCU and save money with lower rates on loans, make money with higher interest on your savings, and save time with our convenient online services!

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ОЩАДНІ ТА ЧЕКОВІ РАХУНКИ | СЕРТИФІКАТИ | М.М | ПЕНСІЙНІ РАХУНКИ | ПОЗИКИ | КРЕДИТИ НА НЕРУХОМІСТЬ | ПЛАТІЖНІ КАРТКИ VISA | MONEYGRAM | ГРОШОВІ ПЕРЕКАЗИ | ЕЛЕКТРОННІ ПОСЛУГИ |ПОСЛУГИ НОТАРІУСА| ПЕРЕКЛАДИ|СТИПЕНДІЇ|

Buffalo Branch Ukrainian Home Dnipro 562 Genesee Street Buffalo NY 14204 (716) 847-6655 www.ukrainianfcu.org	Amherst Branch Ellicott Creek Plaza 2882 Niagara Falls Blvd Amherst NY 14228 (716) 799-8385 www.ukrainianfcu.org
Business Hours Closed Wednesdays , Зачинені по середах Mon., Tuesday, Thursday 9:30 am - 5 pm Пон., вівторок, четвер Friday / П'ятниця 9:30 am - 7 pm Saturday / Субота 9 am - 1 pm	Business Hours Closed Mondays , Зачинені по понеділках Tuesday - Thursday 9:30 am - 5 pm 3 вівторка по четвер Friday / П'ятниця 9:30 am - 6 pm Saturday / Субота 9 am - 1 pm

Membership subject to eligibility. Federally insured by NCUA.

Щоб довідатися більше інформацій про це що діється в громаді, Просимо відвідати веб-сторінку.
<http://www.ukrainiansofbuffalo.com>

Is the the web-page to find More information and events In our Ukrainian Community.

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4166 Union Rd.,
Cheektowaga, NY (In Airport Plaza) **630-0130**

2321 Millersport Hwy.
Amherst (Getzville Plaza) **688-1495**

Are you listening to "Good Samaritan"
Ukr. Radio Program on WJL 1440 AM
Every Sunday at 2:00 PM?

Thank you for your donations!
We welcome your comments.

Чи ви слухасте нашу радіо передачу
«Милосердний Самар'янин»
Неділя, 2 год. на WJL 1440 AM?
Сердечно дякуємо за пожертви!

Please include our Church
in your charitable donations!

Просимо підтримувати Рідну Церкву
талантами, часом і пожертвами.

Cell Phones - Мобільні Телєфони:

Please turn off or silence your cell phone
before entering the church. Thank you!

Просимо вилучувати ваші мобільні
телєфони підчас Святої Літургії.

DONATIONS TO SAINT NICHOLAS

(Donation for Christmas)

Lucas, Verostko & Chort Families – \$5,000.00

Thank you for your Generosity!

The Ukrainian American Youth Association
of Buffalo, New York
Lesia Ukrainka Branch
is pleased to announce their annual

Ukrainian New Year's
MALANKA 2018

Saturday, January 13, 2018

Ukrainian Cultural Center "DNIPRO"
562 Genesee St, Buffalo, NY 14204

Come one come all to a night of great music, dancing,
food & friends!!

MUSIC provided by "Pawuk Bros" of Rochester

Tickets sales starting December 1, 2017

\$40 per person – adult / \$75 per couple

Students (ages 13-20) \$30

Includes: All Night Buffet

For More Information, Questions, Tickets & Reservations
Please contact:

Ann Serediuk (716) 316-1051

Euro Deli (716) 630-0130

The Ukrainian Cultural Center "Dnipro" interior is a
Smoke-Free Environment.

The New York State Liquor Control Authority Strictly
Prohibits the Bringing in of Any Outside Alcoholic
Beverages

===

ОСЕРЕДОК СУМ

ім. ЛЕСІ УКРАЇНКИ в Бофало Н.Й.

Влаштовус

ТРАДИЦІЙНУ МАЛАНКУ 2018

в суботу 13-го січня 2018 р.

В залах Українського Дому "Дніпро"

Щиро запрошуємо Українську громаду
міста Бофало і околиць до участі.

BOOKS, CDs, DVDs, CARDS, etc.

Oles Cheren & Lyubov Yesup,

dba Cataract Press from Parma, Ohio,
are visiting our parish next Sunday with a
large selection of **UKRAINIAN BOOKS** both
in English and Ukrainian, CDs, DVDs, MAPS
of **UKRAINE**, GREETING CARDS, JEWELRY
imported from Ukraine, MUGS, EMBROI-
DERY, T-SHIRTS, SCARFS, auto **MAGNETS**,
and much more

The focus of their display is the Lord's
Nativity and includes **CHRISTMAS CARDS**,
TREE ORNAMENTS and **CAROLS**.

These are displayed in the church hall.

A percentage of the proceeds will be
donated to our parish. We encourage our
members and guests to take advantage of
this extraordinary opportunity.

Mark your Calendars!

Buffalo Mass Mob XXV

will be at Saint Nicholas Ukrainian Catholic
Church on Sunday, January 21st, 2018 at Noon.

This will be our 25th Mass Mob. We are very
proud of reaching this number. None of what
we have accomplished would have been
possible without the people who come to the
Mass Mobs. Thank you.

An interesting part of the history is that the
Saint Nicholas Church was originally started at
our last Mass Mob church, Saints Peter and
Paul Orthodox Church.

Buffalo Mass Mob is looking forward to our
twenty-fifth Mass Mob! We will have more
details in the coming weeks.

Зазначіть собі цю дату

РІЗДВЯНЕ ПОСЛАННЯ БЛАЖ. СВЯТОСЛАВА

(Продовження з обкладинки)

Споглядаючи новонародженого Спасителя в бідному вертепі, у яслах на сіні, ми відчуваємо, наскільки Божа мудрість перевершує мудрість людську. У світлі різдвяної зорі сила, слава і багатство, що походять від людини, виглядають порожніми, минушими та малозначущими. Христос, Син Божий, задля нас став убогим і немичним, відмовився від небесної слави, щоб народитися як останній серед людей – нужденним, що немає де голови приклонити, як співає наша колядка: «...не в царському палаці, а поміж бидляти...» Він задля нас «стає бідним, бувши багатим, щоб ми Його вбожеством розбагатіли» (пор. 2 Кор. 8, 9). Приймаючи людську нужду і немич на себе, Син Божий підносить убогу людину до Господньої величі. Примітно, що саме вбогі пастушки в околицях Вифлеєма стали першими адресатами цієї спасенної благовісті, яку і нам сьогодні сповіщає ангел Господній: «"І ось вам знак: Ви знайдете дитя сповите, що лежатиме в яслах". І вмить пристала до ангела велика сила небесного війська, що хвалила Бога й промовляла: "Слава на висотах Богу й на землі мир людям його вподобання"» (Лк. 2, 12-13). У Різдві немов відбувається обмін дарами: Бог сходить із неба на землю, щоб людина вийшла на небо; Син Божий стає вбогим, щоб збагатити людину.

Коли нині живемо у світі, де жаждою матеріального збагачення нерідко переростає, за словами Святішого Отця Франциска, у «нове ідопоклонство грошам», а в «економіці проявляється великий брак уваги до людини, що зводить людську істоту лише до однієї з її потреб – споживання» (Радість Євангелія, 55), ангел Різдва скеровує своє послання саме до вбогих і закликає їх, а разом і нас прославити Бога, в якому вміщене справжнє і вічне багатство людини. Будучи з'єднаними з Христом, «в якому сховані усі скарби мудрості і знання» (Кол. 2, 3), християни постають перед світом «як бідні, які багатьох збагачують; як ті, що нічого не мають, а все посідають!» (пор. 2 Кор. 6, 10). І ось у Різдві те багатство – життя з Богом і в Бозі – приходять до нас і стає джерелом нашої радості і надії, якими ми обдаровуємо одне одного.

Попри злидні і випробування сьогодення, маємо визнати, що насправді існують різні види бідності – духовна, культурна, освітня, цивілізаційна і аж тоді – матеріальна. Убозтво сучасного світу частіше має не матеріальний, а духовний характер. Нинішні «скоробагатки» в Україні переважно є бідніші – і духовно, і культурно – за жebraків. І ця духовна убогість, тобто віддаленість сильних цього світу від Бога, нерідко спричиняє соціальну несправедливість, згубне використання влади, корупцію та зловживання ресурсами, даними для загального блага.

У такій ситуації не достатньо, щоб багаті призначили частину крихт зі свого стола як певну допомогу убогим. Потрібна переміна людського серця, яке допустило б до себе Боже світло і Божу благодать. Бо хто вважає себе рятівником



бідних, а не несе Бога - той пропонує порожні ідеології, які лише використовують злидні людини з політичною метою і, насправді, не здатні їх усунути. За таких обставин бідні ставатимуть ще біднішими, а багаті далі наживатимуться. Лише той, хто стане багатим Богом, зможе преобразити власне життя та сприяти побудові справедливого суспільства, у центрі якого стоятиме людина, а не прибуток; загальне добро, а не егоїстичні інтереси окремих груп чи кланів.

У Різдві Христос нас усіх робить багатими, насичує і підносить з усіх видів бідності, бо Він народжується у Вифлеємі для того, щоб кожну людину зробити своїм братом чи своєю сестрою – дитиною Божою, учасником вічних Божих благ. Ось чому Різдво – свято загальнолюдської солідарності, коли особа не багата, позбавлена «золота-дарів» цього світу, збагачує багатьох своїх ближніх «ціннішим даром» – «вірою серця і щирою любов'ю», як про це співаємо в наших колядках.

Дорогі в Христі! Щоб гідно святкувати Різдво, ділімося з убогими – всякого виду бідності – тим багатством, яке ми, віруючі люди, посідаємо, насамперед духовними дарами, а відтак і матеріальними благами. Нехай прадідівська колядка, яка вітає Царя в бідному вертепі, буде для нас Божим заповітом наблизитися до вбогих і збагачувати їх скарбами нашої святої віри. Похилиймося над Христом, присутнім у наших нужденних братах і сестрах, даючи їм відчути близькість Бога, який огортає кожного своїм безмежним милосердям і своєю безумовною любов'ю. Завіттаймо з колядою до наших воїнів у місцях їхнього перебування – чи то в домівках, до яких вони повернулися після виконали святого обов'язку захисту Батьківщини, чи у військових частинах, чи на фронті. Навідаймося до постраждалих від бойових дій, приймімо до свого серця бідного та потребуючого – так ми приймемо Христа із Пресвятою родиною, збагатимо наш дім, родину та суспільство невичерпними Божими скарбами, «яких ані мілі не точить, ані злодії не викрадають» (Мт. 6, 19-20). До цього кличе нас свята Церква, коли співає: «Приготуймося нині духом і поспішімо зустрінути чистими очима і добрими ділами Того, хто своїм чудесним народженням схотів прийти до своїх. Він народжується у Вифлеємі, щоб нас, позбавлених райського життя, зі свого милосердя, знову до нього ввести» (Стихира з Вечірні Неділі перед Різдвом).

Дорогі браття і сестри, зі щирого серця бажаю кожному з вас, від наймолодшого до найстаршого, від найбагатшого на Божі дари до найбіднішого, в Україні і на поселеннях, справжньої радості дітей Божих, смачної кулі, веселих свят Різдва Христового та щасливого, мирного і благословенного нового року!

Христос рождається! Славимо Його!
† СВЯТОСЛАВ



Christ is Born! Glory Him!

Христос Раждається! Славте Його!

- KITCHEN is closed for Christmas till Jan 12.
- Thank you for your patronage.
Thanks are extended to all volunteers!
- Coffee Hour - Usually Every Sunday after Liturgy in Church Hall, so please join us downstars. Thank you!

Until we meet next Sunday...

TOP'S GIFT CARDS:

Please help us raise money for our Church by purchasing Top's Gift Cards from us. If you buy in Tops anyway, why not help. You do not lose or gain anything by doing this, but our Church will benefit greatly. We receive back 5% of your spending. To take advantage of this program, see Mary Bodnar or call 655-3810, or call the rectory. Thank you and God Bless!

Please note: You can purchase gasoline with this card at Tops Gasoline Station.

У нас успішно продаються Карточки з крамниці "Топс". Купуючи їх ви допомагаєте церкві. Для Вас не робить різниці чи ви платили грішми чи карточкою, але церква дістане від „Топс” 5%. На \$1,000 церква одержить \$50. Що б закупити слід звертатися до п. Марії Боднар, або до канцелярії. Дякуємо!

CHURCH BULLETIN is published weekly.
Deadline for information is Friday Evening.

ЦЕРКОВНИЙ ВІСНИК видається тижнево.
Інформації подавати до П'ятниці вечора.

**SAINT NICHOLAS UKRAINIAN
CATHOLIC CHURCH**

**УКРАЇНСЬКА КАТОЛИЦЬКА
ЦЕРКВА СВЯТОГО МИКОЛАЯ**

(під опікою Пречистої
Діви Марії Одигітриї)

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308 Fillmore Avenue, Buffalo, N. Y. 14206

Rectory: (716) 852-7566

Fax: 855-1319 ~ Kitchen: 852-1908

Confession: Before Liturgies

Сповідь: Перед Св. Літургіями

Baptism: By appointment

Хрещення: За домовленням

Marriage: Contact 6 months in advance

Вінчання: Голоситися 6 місяців скорше

Religion classes – Релігійна Програма
Saturday - Субота

Ministry to the sick – Опіка над хворима

Family members should call the Rectory

Родина повинна повідомити священика

IN EMERGENCY CALL ANY TIME

В разі потреби завжди можна закликати

V. Rev. Marijan Procyk, pastor

Rev. Robert Moreno, visiting priest

**Please call if you are hospitalized,
homebound and need a priest.**

**Просимо закликати якщо ви у лічниці
або приковані до ліжка!**

CHRISTMAS PASTORAL OF HIS BEATITUDE SVIATOSLAV

Gazing upon the newborn Saviour, lying in a simple stable cave, on hay in a manger, we sense how Divine wisdom exceeds human wisdom. In the light of the Christmas star, human power, glory, and wealth seem empty, fleeting, and insignificant. Christ, the Son of God, became poor and helpless for us. He abandoned heavenly glory in order to be born among humans—deprived, having no place to lay His head, as we sing in our traditional carol: “not in a royal palace, but among cattle....” For us He becomes poor, having been rich, so that we might become rich in his poverty (see 2 Cor 8:9). Taking human misery and frailty upon Himself, the Son of God raises us poor humans to our Lord’s grandeur. Indeed, the poor shepherds of the Bethlehem and its surroundings are the first to receive this good news of salvation, proclaimed to us today by the Angel of the Lord: “And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.’ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, ‘Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased!’” (Lk 2:12-14). Christmas, it would seem, brings about an exchange of gifts: God descends from heaven to earth, so that mankind might ascend into heaven; the Son of God becomes poor, so that we might all be enriched.

Today we live in a world where, in the words of the Holy Father, Pope Francis, the pursuit of material enrichment frequently grows into a “new idolatry of money,” and “the economy lays bare... a lack of real concern for human beings; man being reduced to one of his needs alone: consumption” (Evangelii gaudium, 55). And yet, the angel of the Nativity directs his message to the poor and calls upon them, and us as well, to praise God, in Whom we find hidden the true and eternal wealth of humankind. In being united with Christ, “in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Col 2:3). Christians appear before the world “as poor, yet making many rich, as having nothing, yet possessing everything” (2 Cor 6:10)! And thus, in the Nativity, this wealth—a life with God and in God—comes to us and becomes a source of our joy and hope, which we exchange with one another..

In the midst of the misery and challenges of the present day, we should recognize that there are many forms of poverty—spiritual, cultural, educational, civilizational, and only then—material. The poverty of the present world is frequently not material, but spiritual. Thus, in a certain sense, today’s “new rich” in Ukraine may, in fact, be spiritually and culturally poorer than beggars. On the other hand, this spiritual poverty, that is, this distance of the powerful of this world from God, frequently creates social injustice, disastrous abuse of authority, corruption and misuse of resources, given for the common good.

In this situation it is not enough for the rich to share a portion of the crumbs from their table as a form of help for the poor. What is needed is a change of the human heart, an opening



which will allow Divine light and grace to enter. For the one who claims to be a saviour of the poor, but does not have God in his or her heart—such a person carries empty ideologies which only exploit human suffering for political gain, but in reality, are unable to end it. In such circumstances the poor become poorer while the rich continue to prosper. Only those who have become rich in God can transform their own lives and contribute to the creation of a just society, having the human being at its centre rather than profit, the common good rather than egotistical interests of particular groups or clans.

In His Nativity Christ makes us all rich, fills us and raises us out of all forms of poverty, for Christ is born in Bethlehem in order to make every person His brother, His sister—a child of God and sharer of eternal divine blessings. That is why Christmas is the feast of solidarity for all humankind, even for those who cannot bear the gifts of gold of this world, for it enriches all with “a gift more precious than myrrh: the faith of the heart and sincere love,” as we sing in our Ukrainian carol.

Beloved in Christ! In order that we may worthily celebrate Christmas, with those who suffer from all forms of poverty let us share of the riches that are ours—our spiritual gifts above all, and then material gifts. May our ancient carol-koliada, which greets the king in a poor stable cave, be a Divine covenant for us, to approach the poor and share with them the riches of our holy faith. Let us lean down before Christ, present in our impoverished brothers and sisters, allowing them to experience the closeness of God, Who embraces all with His endless mercy and unconditional love. Let us greet with carols our soldiers, wherever they may be—in their homes, having fulfilled their sacred duty to defend their country, in their military units, at the front. Let us visit those who were wounded in battle, let us receive into our hearts the pain of the poor and the needy, for in doing so we will receive Christ with the Most Holy Family, enriching our own homes, our families, and the society we live in with endless divine treasures, “where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal” (Mt 6:20). This is what the Holy Church encourages us to do in singing: “Let us meet Him with pure hearts and with good works. Let us prepare ourselves now through the Holy Spirit to greet Him who is coming to His own people as He himself had willed. He is being born in Bethlehem, so that through His compassion He might bring back all of those who were exiled from life in Paradise” (Sunday before the Nativity, Stikhera from Vespers).

Dear Brothers and Sisters, with a sincere heart I wish each of you, from the youngest to the oldest, from the richest in Divine gifts to the poorest, in Ukraine and abroad—the true joy of children of God, a tasty kutia, a Christmas full of cheer, and a happy, peaceful, and blessed New Year!

Christ is born! Glorify Him!

† SVIATOSLAV

From "Good Samaritan" Ukr. Radio pr.

The message of Christmas is not simply addressed to humanity in general; it is addressed to each of us in a very personal way. It touches our soul in a way that is unique and exceptional. This coming week, we need to recognize the Nativity of Christ as a very special gift and receive it with faith and thankfulness. “And lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, until it came and stood over where the young child was.” The Magi followed the light which was given to them faithfully; and being obedient to this light they were led to the Christ child. If we try to be faithful to the full measure of light that God has given us and bear witness to this light, the Lord will not fail to lead us through all the concrete circumstances of life, and whenever it is needed – right up to the Christ Child in whom we have placed our hope. Like the Magi, we offer our treasures, we offer the little child the most precious things we have. In spirit, we offer gold, the sign of Jesus’ sovereignty over all riches and all created things, a sign also of our own detachment from earthly goods. In spirit, we offer incense, the sign of adoration, for Jesus is our Lord and our God. We offer in spirit, myrrh, the spice with which we honor in advance the death and resurrection of our Lord, and through which our own incarnation through Jesus is represented. Christmas marks the miraculous awakening of humanity into the Divine light, and it all began with the first cry of a little child whose birth we will soon celebrate. There is no greater miracle or gift of love, but sometimes we are distracted by the hustle and bustle of this festive season that we lose sight of the real meaning behind the greatest story ever told.

The Lord Jesus humbled Himself, taking the form of a child, becoming a servant in peasant robes. Christ did not have to humble Himself, there was nothing for Him to gain - except our salvation - and sometimes we forget whose birthday it really is and what the celebration of Christmas is all about. This Christmas, I pray that each of us feels the joy of knowing that Jesus is in our hearts, in our homes, among the family and friends that we love, and in the simple things of life that mean so much to us. We need to focus more on loving and serving one another, because so often we are forgetting how to see Christ in one another. As we rejoice in the birth of our Lord and Savior, let us always be mindful of what Christmas is all about. Yes, Christmas is a time for friends and families to reunite. Yes, Christmas is a time for miracles, and stories that capture our hearts. But Christmas is also a time to remember the gift of salvation, the good news which the infant Jesus has brought to our lives, and we need to celebrate and cherish this gift with one another.

About a week before Christmas, Stephen’s family bought a new nativity scene. When they unpacked it they found 2

figures of the Baby Jesus. "Someone must have packed this wrong," the mother said, counting out the figures. "We have one Joseph, one Mary, three wise men, three shepherds, two lambs, a donkey, a cow, an angel and two babies. Oh, dear! I suppose some set down at the store is missing a Baby Jesus because we have 2. You two, run back down to the store and tell the manager that we have an extra Jesus. Tell him to put a sign on the remaining boxes saying that if a set is missing a Baby Jesus, to have them call us. Put on your warm coats, it's freezing cold out there." Stephen and his father went to the store. The manager of the store copied down his mother's message. All week long they waited for someone to call. Surely, they thought, someone was missing that important figurine. Each time the phone rang mother would say, "I'll bet that's about Jesus," but it never was. Father tried to explain there are thousands of these scattered over the country and the figurine could be missing from a set in Florida or Texas or California. Those packing mistakes happen all the time. He suggested to simply put the extra Jesus back in the box and forget about it. "Put Baby Jesus back in the box! What a terrible thing to do," said Stephen and his sister. "Surely someone will call," mother said. "We'll just keep the two of them together in the manger until someone calls." When no call had come by 5:00pm on Christmas Eve, mother insisted that father "just run down to the store" to see if there were any sets left. Stephen and Mary ran ahead as father reluctantly walked out in the cold. Mary got to the store first and pressed her nose up to the store window. "They're all gone, Daddy," she shouted. "Every set must be sold." "Hooray," Stephen said. "The mystery will now be solved tonight!" When they returned home they noticed their mother was gone and so was the extra Baby Jesus figurine. "Someone must have called and she went out to deliver the figurine," my father reasoned, pulling off his boots. "You kids get ready for bed while I wrap mother's present." Then the phone rang. Father yelled "answer the phone and tell them we found a home for Jesus." But it was Stephen's mother calling with instructions for them to come to 205 Chestnut Street immediately, and bring three blankets, a box of cookies and some milk. "Now what has she gotten us into?" my father groaned as we bundled up again. "205 Chestnut. Why that's across town. Wrap that milk up good in the blankets or it will turn to ice before we get there. Why can't we all just get on with Christmas? It's probably 20 below out there now. Of all the crazy things to do on a night like this." When they got to the house at 205 Chestnut Street it was the darkest one on the block. Only one tiny light burned in the living room and, the moment they set foot on the porch steps, mother opened the door and shouted, "They're here, Oh, thank God you got here, Ray! You kids take those blankets

into the living room and wrap up the little ones on the couch. I'll take the milk and cookies." "Would you mind telling me what is going on, Emily?" my father asked. "We have just walked through below zero weather with the wind in our faces all the way." "Never mind all that now," my mother interrupted. "There isn't any heat in the house and this young mother is so upset she doesn't know what to do. Her husband walked out on her and those poor little children will have a very bleak Christmas, so don't you complain. I told her you could fix that oil furnace in a jiffy." Their mother strode off to the kitchen to warm the milk while Stephen and his sister wrapped up the five little children who were huddled together on the couch. The children's mother explained to my father, "I saw your home phone number every day at the store, on those nativity boxes. When the furnace went out, your number kept going through my mind. It said on the box that if a person was missing Jesus, they should call you. That's how I knew you were good Christian people, willing to help folks. I figured that maybe you would help me, too. So I stopped at the grocery store tonight and I called your misses. I'm not missing Jesus, mister, because I sure love the Lord. But I am missing heat. I have no money to fix our furnace." "Okay", said father. "You've come to the right place. Now let's see. You've got a little oil burner over there in the dining room. Shouldn't be too hard to fix. Probably just a clogged flue. I'll look it over, see what it needs." Mother came into the living room carrying a plate of cookies and warm milk. As she set the cups down on the coffee table, Stephen noticed the figure of Baby Jesus lying in the center of the table. It was the only sign of Christmas in the house. The children stared wide-eyed with wonder at the plate of cookies my mother set before them. Father finally got the oil burner working but said, "You need more oil. I'll make a few calls tonight and get some oil," father grinned. On the way home Stephen's father did not complain about the cold weather and had barely set foot inside the door when he was on the phone. "Ed, hey, how are you?" "Yes, Merry Christmas to you, too. Say Ed, we have kind of an unusual situation here. I know you've got that pick-up truck. Do you still have some oil in that barrel on your truck? You do?" By this time the rest of the family was pulling clothes out of their closets and toys off of their shelves. It was long after their bedtime when they were wrapping gifts. The pickup came. On it they placed clothing, three lamps, blankets and Christmas gifts. Even though it was 30 below, father let the kids ride along in the back of the truck. No one ever did call about the missing Baby Jesus in the nativity set, but as Stephen grew older, he realized that it wasn't a packing mistake at all. Baby Jesus saves!

When I reflect on the real meaning of Christmas, I often

remember one of my personal, all-time favorite movies to watch during the Christmas season, The Bishop's Wife (1947). It is a story about an Episcopal Bishop, Henry, who has been working for months on the building plans for an elaborate new cathedral which he hopes will be paid for by a wealthy benefactor. In the process, Henry begins to lose sight of his family, the meaning of Christmas, and even the reason why he became a clergyman in the first place. Slowly and surely, an angel sent from heaven, named Dudley, brings the Bishop back to his senses, and reminds him what Christmas truly means, as well as the importance of his faith and his family. One of my favorite scenes appears at the very end of the movie, when the Bishop is reciting the Christmas Eve sermon to his congregation, the one that Dudley wrote for him: "Tonight I want to tell you the story of an empty stocking. Once upon a midnight clear, there was a child's cry. A blazing star hung over a stable and wise men came with birthday gifts. We haven't forgotten that night down the centuries; we celebrate it with stars on Christmas trees, the sound of bells and with gifts. But especially with gifts. You give me a book; I give you a tie. Aunt Martha has always wanted an orange squeezer, and Uncle George could do with a new pipe. We forget nobody, adult or child. All the stockings are filled -- all that is, except one! And we have even forgotten to hang it up. The stocking for the child born in a manger. It's his birthday we are celebrating. Don't ever let us forget that. Let us ask ourselves what he would wish for most, and then let each put in his share. Loving kindness, warm hearts and the stretched out hand of tolerance. All the shining gifts that make peace on earth".

Jesus is the reason for this holy season, and let us never lose sight of the gift that God has given us through the birth of His Son, our Lord and Savior. May the peace and love of the Christ child, the real gifts of this Holy Season, be with you always. Merry Christmas!

-----From last Bulletin: (Photo No. 46)



No. 47. From the archives: Anybody you know? 3 apxibib.





Feast Day of St. Nicholas – Празник Св. Миколая
Liturgy in St. Nicholas Church on December 17, 2017



