

**PASTORAL LETTER OF THE
UKRAINIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS OF CANADA
ON THE OCCASION OF THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD, 2009**

To the Very Reverend Clergy, Monastics and Religious Sisters, Seminarians and Laity of the Ukrainian Catholic Church in Canada:

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Christ is Risen! Indeed He is Risen!

O Christ our Saviour, the angels in heaven sing the praises of Your Resurrection. Make us, on earth, also worthy to extol and glorify You with a pure heart. (Paschal Matins)

We mean well to give glory to God when we celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. However, we humbly attempt to give glory to God, aware that we are joining the heavens in a mystery that they are continuously celebrating. Therefore, as we ask for the grace “to extol and glorify God with a pure heart” we are reminded by a Father of the Church not to merely give lip service to this mystery but to “*offer to God a sacrifice – which is ourselves... Let us acknowledge our worth... Let us revere the Archetype, Jesus,... Let us come to understand the power of the mystery and who it is for whom Christ died.*” (St. Gregory of Nazianus – *On the Holy Pasch.*)

We truly give glory to God and the Resurrection of Jesus Christ when we respect the human person. Each one of us is called to give witness to this profound mystery of the Resurrection and we do right to celebrate this feast as members of the Body of Christ, the Church. During the Great Fast, we recognize our sinfulness. We bring to mind how, like the Prodigal son, we have squandered the gifts God has given us. We seek God’s abundant mercy because we understand better how much we truly need it. This Lenten journey, returning to the Father, is an important step in how we prepare ourselves to participate ultimately in Christ’s glorious Resurrection.

It follows that we understand better the infinite affection of God the Father, His indescribable mercy and compassion. Though we are not deserving of His love, we marvel at the Resurrection of Christ and are spellbound when we rediscover that the love the Father has for Jesus is the love the Father has for us. We are surrounded by this mystery of life in the Trinity by the power of the Holy Spirit. It becomes clear that our celebration of the Resurrection, our feasting and joyous church services are the external expressions of an inner reality and awareness of the worth and dignity of humanity.

Yet this wonderful mystery is sadly challenged today by a tragic mystery in society. How is it that the dignity of the human person, proclaimed so clearly by Christ, is ignored in the reality of human trafficking, human exploitation, abortion, artificial contraception, broken families and disrespect for others on so many levels? Who will proclaim the message of Christ’s Resurrection, the mystery of the Father’s love for Jesus and humanity if we remain silent? We are called to celebrate the Resurrection both in our church and with our daily life choices. Respecting human life from conception to natural death, nurtured in families and communities that pray together, is truly giving glory to God and the Resurrection of Jesus Christ! “*Offer to God a sacrifice – which is ourselves... Let us acknowledge our worth... Let us revere the Archetype, Jesus,... Let us come to understand the power of the mystery and who it is for whom Christ died.*”

On this occasion of the feast of the Christ's Resurrection, we your Bishops bless and wish all of you that He bestow upon you His choicest graces to sanctify your souls, good health to continue your life's endeavors, and profound happiness as you celebrate in your parishes, communities and families. We also bless and send greetings to those who are aged, sick and lonely, and greet all of you with our traditional greeting - CHRIST IS RISEN!

Sincerely in Christ,

- + **Lawrence Huculak, OSBM, Metropolitan Archbishop of Winnipeg**
- + **Michael Bzdel, CSsR, Archbishop Emeritus of Winnipeg**
- + **Michael Wiwchar, CSsR, Bishop Emeritus of Saskatoon**
- + **Severian Yakymyshyn OSBM, Bishop Emeritus of New Westminster**
- + **Cornelius Pasichny, OSBM, Bishop Emeritus of Toronto**
- + **David Motiuk, Eparchial Bishop of Edmonton**
- + **Stephen Chmilar, Eparchial Bishop of Toronto**
- + **Ken Nowakowski, Eparchial Bishop of New Westminster**
- + **Bryan Bayda, CSsR, Eparchial Bishop of Saskatoon**