Lord, when You were baptized in the Jordan, the worship of the Trinity was made manifest. For the voice of the Father gave witness to You, calling You Beloved; and the Spirit, in the form of a dove, confirmed the certainty of His words. Glory to You, Christ our God, who appeared and enlightened the world.

Just as we do not kneel from Pascha until Kneeling Vespers of Pentecost, we also do not kneel from the Nativity of Christ until Theophany. The Holy Apostles utterly forbade kneeling and prostrations, concerning which St. Basil the Great testified in a letter to the Blessed Amphiloctius.
Theophany: Reveals God and Creation

BY T BOBOSH: WORDPRESS - JANUARY 7, 2019

Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. And John tried to prevent Him, saying, “I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?” But Jesus answered and said to him, “Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he allowed Him.

The river waters of the Jordan are not only washing God in the flesh, they encompass God as Jesus is immersed in the waters. He who created the waters allows Himself to be submersed beneath the waters. There is no such place in the entire cosmos where God cannot enter, including Hades, the place of the dead. In the River Jordan Jesus shows that God can disappear beneath the waters, be buried in the waters and yet still be both alive and be God. He is preparing us for what will happen to Him in his burial. His very presence in the world reveals to us that God is doing the unexpected. God is uniting Himself to us humans. God is making it possible for us to share in the divine life, to experience holiness. God is showing that the physical world which He created is capable of containing God and revealing God to us. In the waters of the River Jordan we learn who Jesus really is.

And we learn that the physical things can be sanctified and made holy. The physical world is revealed as a means to convey life to them, to show that we humans are not merely physical, material beings – we are fully capable of being spiritualized, as being the very means for us to encounter God. Christ steps into the Jordan River and in touching the water, Christ makes the water a means for us to experience holiness, to experience God. How is this possible? Because God made water

in the beginning to be a means to reveal Himself to us. God is showing us what creation is capable of being. And God is showing us we can encounter Him in and through the creation God made as a gift for us. God reveals that all the physical world belongs to God is capable of life because it is spiritual as well. Indeed when science wants to study the world as if there is no God, then the world of matter is devoid of God, it is lifeless. In the Gospel we learn that matter, the physical world has as spiritual dimension if we care to find it.

And so we see the physical world, God’s creation becomes life giving in Christ. Not only life giving, but giving eternal life. And we see in Christ that not only the physical world is capable to being touched by God and made holy, but we ourselves as humans are able to be holy – to be united to God.

When we baptize people into Christ, we use the physical tools given to us by God – water and holy oil – to convey life to them, to show that we humans are not merely physical, material beings – we are fully capable of bearing life and even giving life, we are made to be united to God. The nature of water to give a new birth was revealed in baptism.

A final point, sometimes we Orthodox major on the minor in so many ways surrounding feasts. The prayer of the blessing of water says:

“And grant unto all them that touch it, and partake of it, and anoint themselves with it, sanctification, health, cleansing and blessing.”

It doesn’t say that we should take it home and venerate it as if it is some holy object worthy of veneration. We are not to treat it as if it is imbued with nuclear power. We are to use it to bless ourselves and encounter God. It’s purpose is to give us an experience of God. The holiness of this water is that it means God is present with us. So use it to bless yourselves and your homes and your gardens, so that the God who showed us the nature of water in baptism will be present with you in your person and in your home. God enters our life not to give us “sacred objects” to venerate, but to transfigure us into beings who are united to Him.

The importance of Theophany is also shown to us in that while only two of the four evangelists tell us anything about the birth of Jesus, all 4 evangelists tell us about the baptism of Christ. In modern popular thinking, Christmas is the big event and feast, whereas in the Church it is the Theophany of Christ which reveals the importance of Christ’s birth. Popular piety does not always mirror theology and sometimes popular piety looms larger than life itself.

As has already been stated, Theophany is significant because it marks the beginning of the public ministry of Jesus. Mark’s Gospel in fact begins with the appearance of John the Baptist and the baptism of Jesus by John in the Jordan. This is the beginning of the Gospel for Mark, not Christ’s Nativity.

At Christ’s baptism, God is beginning to unveil His mysterious plan for the world. In Jesus encountering God in the flesh – divining and humanity united, Creator and creation sharing a common life. When Jesus steps into the River Jordan, this is God’s son entering into the waters, but it is also the incarnate God entering into the water which God created at the beginning of the world as described in Genesis 1.

God creates the world and the waters of the world, and then God enters into these same waters and is immersed in them. This is the great mystery of Theophany. Jesus Christ reveals God to us. He reveals God’s plan for the world.

When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened from heaven, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” (Matthew 3:13-17) It is the events surrounding the baptism of Jesus (the Theophany) which help us understand why the birth of Jesus is significant to us. For it is only after His baptism that Christ begins His public ministry. Only after His baptism does Jesus begin proclaiming the Gospel and doing the miracles which we know about and which we proclaim in our Sunday lectionary.

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The imagery of the baptism of Christ (Matthew 3:13-17) lends itself readily to comparisons with other significant biblical narratives and interpretations of the life of Christ. In the beginning (Genesis 1) God’s Word calls the waters into existence and then tames and contains them while in the baptism of Christ the Word of God now descends into the waters He created transfiguring and cleansing them, restoring them to that condition which they had in the beginning so that the waters can again serve God’s life-giving purposes. Christ descends into the waters as a servant, and as a servant he is buried in a tomb and as servant He descends into Hades, liberating all the dead from bondage to death and He rises from the tomb in glory shown to be in fact the Messiah and the Son of God.

So the hymns of Theophany pick up on many of these themes in order to continuously weave together for us a seamless garment of salvation. Drawing together the various images as the warp and weft and weaving them together to form beautiful theology which brings joy to all believers. We can look at three hymns from the Matins of Theophany to understand the riches of theological meditation found in the Feast.

“We know that in the beginning You brought the all-destroying flood upon the world, causing the terrible destruction of all things. O God, You reveal strange and mighty wonders! And now, O Christ, You have drowned sin in the waters for the comfort and salvation of mortal man.”

In the Old Testament, God drowned both the sin or humanity as well as most of humanity itself in the Great Flood (Genesis 6-9). At Theophany, again the sins of the world are being drowned, but this time God is going down in the waters too. In Genesis a few humans were saved in the ark, but God was outside of the ark. At Theophany God is plunging Himself into the waters and taking humanity with Him, not to drown humanity but to cleanse it of its fallen and sinful nature in order to save us. God doesn’t leave us dead beneath the water but raises us up from death to a new life.

“... in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water. Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a clear conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ...” (1 Peter 3:20-21)

For Christ, the incarnate God, allows Himself to be immersed beneath the waters of Jordan in order to be buried with humankind, to drown sin, and to cleanse humanity from sin. It is no longer something God is doing to the world, but in the incarnation, God enters into creation and allows Himself to experience human death in order to save humanity from death. Christ buries fallen human nature with Himself but raises up renewed humanity. In this way, Christ’s baptism is a prefiguring of His death and resurrection, but done for all humanity. Christ restores humanity in His baptism, and our humanity is restored by Christ in our baptisms, for in our baptisms we die with Christ when we go under the water and we are resurrected with Him when we come up from the water.

“Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.” (Romans 6:3-5)

“... you were buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.” (Colossians 2:12)

So in the Matins of Theophany we sing:

“Word without beginning, You have buried mankind with You in the stream: He was corrupted by error, but You make him new again. And the Father ineffably testified to You with a mighty voice: This is My beloved Son, equal to Me by nature.”

The narratives of creation and the flood find their significance not in telling us about past history, but in revealing the depths and riches of theology found in the events of Jesus Christ’s life. They are theological events and reveal theology and the Christ of God to us which is their true significance.

“Let the whole created earth clothe itself in white, for on this day it is raised up from its fall from heaven. The Word who preserves all things has cleansed it in the flowing waters: washed and resplendent, it has escaped from its former sins.”

The Baptism of Christ at Theophany is a theological event, revealing the nature of God to us. It is a cosmic event in that it affects the salvation of the entire universe, not just the human race. The Genesis creation story is about the Word of God bringing into being not only the human race but the entire world and cosmos. Theophany, the baptism of the Word of God incarnate, continues that theological revelation. God is being revealed to us, and our relationship to the Creator is being revealed, which is far more significant than any historical understanding the Scripture might give to us of the world.
The word Theophany originates from two Greek words, Theos – God, and Phainein – showing. Therefore, it literally means a “revelation of God” in Greek (Θεοφάνεια). This ancient icon of the Theophany depicts Christ’s baptism in the Jordan River. Iconography is an Eastern Christian art tradition that uncovers the spiritual realities underneath temporal events. Let us take some time together to ponder the spiritual reality depicted in this icon.

The icon is clearly divided into three different sections—the two banks of the Jordan and, in the center, where Christ stands. Each bank of the Jordan spires up into a mountain.

There is a significance to the mountains in the background. We know from the Old Testament that mountains are a place of encounter with God (Abraham, Moses, etc.). Here the mountains witness to a divine encounter at this moment. It is as if they are reaching toward the centre of the icon where the Trinity is revealed. Through this, we understand that all of the creation bows down to God.

These mountains represent the two heavenly and the earthly worlds, which Christ spans the divide between. On one bank, the earthly realm, stands John the Baptist, who baptizes Christ. But John’s gaze is focused not on Jesus, but on the Holy Spirit descending from above. On the right bank, the heavenly world, angels wait to minister to and clothe Christ the King. The true heart of the scene is the revelation to John and to us that Jesus is the Christ, our Messiah and God’s beloved Son.

We recall that it was the Jordan river that, enabled by God, the People of God crossed, moving from East to West. Thus, they entered into the promised land and God’s covenant with His people was fulfilled. In the icon, John stands on the west side of the river (earth) and the angels on the east (heaven). In this event, Christ initiates a movement from the west to the east; from the old covenant to the new; from the old, promised land to the new, promised land.

Jesus, the Messiah is easily identifiable by the nimbus (halo) surrounding the His head bearing a cruciform containing the Greek letters omikron, omega, nu – “I am He who is” the name of God in Ex 3:14. Outside the nimbus (halo) are the Greek letters IC XC – the Christogram. In icons of the Theophany, Christ is depicted either completely naked or minimally clothed. He is the second Adam (1 Cor 15). In shame, the first Adam hid from God in his nakedness. Christ, who is both God and man, is unashamed. In Him we see the beauty of undefiled humanity. As He submits to John’s baptism, it is the Messiah that in actuality sanctifies the world. Note that His hand is in a sign of blessing. Unlike our baptism where the waters cleanse us of our sins, here, it is Christ Who cleanses and sanctifies the waters. All of creation is baptized at this moment.

At the lower edge of the icon, there are two figures, who represent the water itself responding to the power of the Creator entering into the river. These figures represent the Jordan River and the Red Sea as we read in Scripture: “The sea saw and fled, the Jordan turned back.” Ps114:3.

Christ God, the creator of all that is, stands in His creation and creation recognizes Him as reflected in the Psalms: “You divided the sea by your might; you broke the heads of the dragons in the waters”. Ps 74:13.

“When the waters saw you, O God, when the waters saw you, they were afraid; the very deep trembled.” Ps 77:16

It is significant that John stands at the right hand of Christ where the prophet Elijah stands in the icon of the transfiguration on Mount Tabor. This links the first great theophany in the life of Christ to that which occurs in the transfiguration. As do all the prophets, the lives of both Elijah and John ultimately point us to Christ. John’s baptism initiates a movement from the west to the east; from the old, promised land to the new, promised land.

One final piece of symbolism is the ax stuck in the small tree below John the Baptist. The ax in the tree symbolizes his words in Luke’s and Matthew’s Gospels: “Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree, therefore, that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire” (Lk 3:9). This prophecy of John’s is an eschatological prophecy, meaning that it looks towards the end of the world. Israel saw the Messiah as an eschatological figure—one who would usher in the final Kingdom of God—just as we look forward to Christ’s Second Coming at the end of time.

All the baptized are continually called to repentance and to bear fruit for the Kingdom of God. As part of the new covenant, the faithful are not made sons and daughters of God by their ancestral heritage but by their response to God’s calling and the fulfillment of their baptismal promises. Therefore, this feast reminds us of our own baptismal promises and urges us not to become spiritually lazy but to work to fulfill them.

How are we, today, called to bring God’s love to those we meet, and help build the Kingdom of God in our community today?
In the days following the Feast of Theophany (January 6/19), it is customary for the priest to visit his parishioners for the traditional Theophany home blessing. All who reside in the home should make every effort to be present for the blessing.

In anticipation of the arrival of the priest to the home, the family’s icon corner and lampada (hanging candle) should be prepared. If there is no icon corner, a small table should be placed on the eastern wall of the main room of the dwelling (the dining room or kitchen table may be used). The table, covered with a white cloth, should be set with one or more icons standing upright, along with a candle in a candlestand and small bowl with the Holy Water that the family received in church at the Theophany Blessing of Water, along with a clearly printed list of the Baptismal names of all who live the home and perhaps of other relatives or friends who may be ill, that they would ask to be remembered in prayer.

Upon the arrival of the priest, he should be greeted by all of the family members, each of whom asks the priest’s blessing. The head of the family, if present, should ensure that the candle is lit and that all televisions, radios, computers, etc. in the home are turned off. Lights should be turned on in all the rooms of the home that are to be blessed. Then the entire family gathers with the priest before the icon corner or around the table to begin the Theophany blessing.

**BLESSING OF HOMES AT THEOPHANY**

Just in time for this season’s blessings at Theophany, the UOC of the USA has published a service book for the blessing of homes.

Books are now available for purchase.

Learn how to prepare to have your home blessed, and avail yourself of the words to sing the responses as the priest prays and blesses your home.

$5.00
PER BOOK

uocofusa.org/service_books
Серед численних благословень існує традиція душпастирських відвідін помешкань вірних із Йорданською водою. Це практика має своє коріння в самому нашому Господі Ісусі Христі. Зі Святого Письма ми знаємо, що Сам Ісус Христос відвідував доми. Тому, ось, як так чинив Христос, Церква закликає священиків відвідувати домівки своїх парафіян.

Запрошувати та приймати священника у своєму дому – це відкрите свідчення віри в Ісуса Христа та свою принадлежність до певної парафії, епархії та Вселенської Христової Церкви. Тому, з вдячності за віру в Христа та святу Церкву, робіть це щиро і відкрито.

Що важливо знати християнам щодо окроплення Йорданською водою та відвідування священником наших домівок?

Душпастирські відвідін або візит священника (пароха) до своїх вірних (парафіян) із благословенням Йорданською водою – це прекрасна традиція нашої Церкви для особистої зустрічі та ознайомлення вірних із своїм священником-душпастирем.

Такі відвідін проводяться в період від Богоявлення Господнього (6 січня /19 січня) до Стрітення Господнього (2 лютого/15 лютого). Щоб священик міг прийти та благословити вашу домівку, вам слід записатися у храмі або домовитися із ним особисто.

Фотографія з назвою: «During the celebration of the THEOPANY, as you consume the Holy Water, you also enter the Jordan with Christ, repenting of sins - receiving purification... - Archbishop Daniel»

В період святкування БОГОЯВЛЕННЯ, споживаючи Святу Воду, Ви входите також у Йордан з Христом, каючись за гріхи - отримуючи очищення... - Архієпископ Даниил.
In a celebration of faith and community, His Eminence Metropolitan Antony and Archbishop Daniel led the Nativity of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ services at the Spiritual Center of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA in South Bound Brook, NJ on January 7, 2024.

The St. Andrew Ukrainian Orthodox Memorial Church, serving as a sacred space for faithful, became a focal point for the Christmas festivities. The liturgical leadership of Metropolitan Antony and Archbishop Daniel added a profound depth to the spiritual observance, emphasizing the importance of ancient traditions, unity, and the message of love and hope that Christmas embodies.

Both hierarchs of the Church delivered heartfelt spiritual reflections that resonated with the faithful in attendance. Vladyka Daniel related a story of a young boy, who survived the most recent bombings in Eastern Ukraine, who recovered from a destroyed chapel a figurine of Christ-child, took it home and whispered to parents that he will keep Jesus “safe”. Archbishop stated, that as centuries ago, the world was and is still not ready to welcome the Savior into their lives and hearts; yet the example of little Alipij shows us the power of the will of a human, as long as our hearts and lives concentrated on his message of love and salvation, even in the midst of destruction. Vladyka’s words likely echoed the meaning of the season, encouraging reflection, gratitude, and a renewed sense of purpose. The faithful, in turn, embraced the spiritual teachings, fostering a sense of community and shared faith in the newborn Savior.

The clergy, standing alongside Metropolitan Antony and Archbishop Daniel, fulfilled a crucial role in leading the liturgical aspects of the Christmas services. The sacred rituals and traditions were upheld with reverence, creating an atmosphere of sacredness and devotion. The choir’s responses, under the leadership of Dr. Michael Andrec contributed to the seamless flow of the service, allowing the faithful to fully immerse themselves in the religious experience of the Nativity of Christ.

In a spiritual Christmas liturgy marked by solemnity and reflection, Metropolitan Antony led the faithful in heartfelt prayers, extending special supplications for the well-being and peace of Ukraine. The Christmas liturgy became a platform for both spiritual celebration and a poignant moment of solidarity with the people of Ukraine.

As spiritual leaders, presiding over the liturgical celebration of Christmas, Metropolitan Antony and Archbishop Daniel took a moment to address the congregation and emphasize the importance of collective prayer, particularly in times of global significance. Amidst the joyous atmosphere of the holiday season, the Archbishop Daniel’s emotional words served as a reminder of the challenges faced by Ukraine and the power of communal intercession.

The inclusion of Ukraine-specific prayers in the Christmas liturgy showcased the UOC of the USA’s commitment to addressing the broader concerns of the global community. By incorporating these prayers, the hierarchs of the Church demonstrated the Church’s role as a compassionate and empathetic institution that extends its spiritual reach beyond the immediate congregation.

In the spirit of the Nativity of Christ season, the hierarchical prayers for Ukraine underscored the universal message of hope, peace, and goodwill. The liturgy not only celebrated the birth of Christ but also served as a reminder of the Church’s role in fostering empathy, compassion, and a collective responsibility to uplift those facing challenges around the world.

The Christmas day prayers served as a beacon of light for the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA, symbolizing resilience, unity, and the enduring strength of faith as the ancestral homeland Ukraine continues to fight the invasion and destruction caused by Herod-like actions of Russia.

As clergy and faithful gathered to celebrate the birth of Christ, there was a palpable sense of unity and shared purpose. The Christmas services at the Spiritual Center of the UOC of the USA were not merely a religious observance; they were a communal expression of faith, love, and the enduring values that bind the faithful of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA together. The communal prayer served as a testament to the strength of the Ukrainian Orthodox community’s faith and its commitment to preserving the rich traditions that define this sacred festive season.

Photos by Subdeacon Maksym Zhuravchyk
Йорданська вода отримує особливу силу від джерела всякої сили – від Ісуса Христа, Який освятив її своїм зішестям у Йорданські води. Аналогічно, сьогодні кожна вода, освячена священником під час Богоявлення, отримує особливу силу відштовхувати диявола та захищати домівки і людей від усякого зла та гріха.

Слід пам’ятати, що обливання Йорданською водою не замінює Таїнства Покаяння (Сповіді), яке залишається єдиним та необхідним для об’єднання з Господом Ісусом Христом у Святому Причасті.

Присутність священника у вашому домі – це також чудова нагода висловити подяку за парафіяльне служіння. Під час йорданських відвідів можна дізнатися від священника про потреби парафії та конкретні спосіб допомоги чи взяти участь у проектах церкви.

Від Он Світця Ісус Христос, у Святому Причасті!

On Saturday, December 16, 2023 supporters of our Seminary, were welcomed to Saint Sophia Ukrainian Orthodox Theological Seminary, Somerset, NJ for the Annual “Christmas at the Seminary” Fundraiser. The fundraiser and open house is held annually as a meet and greet with the current student body, while also raising funds for daily needs. People from local parishes, from Western PA and all the way as Chicago, IL and Georgia came to help and participate at this joyful event.

The Seminary Choir conducted by Deacon Roman Marchyshak performed several Christmas Carols in Ukrainian and in English, that were able to amaze and touch all the people present there with the joy of the Christmas Carols. All the seminarians worked tirelessly to perform a professional and heartfelt presentation that counted with the voices of Deacon Paulo Vysotskyi, Deacon Andrii Vatrych, Subdeacon Maksym Zhuravchyk, Subdeacon Andrii Akulenko, Subdeacon Mykola Stefanyk, Subdeacon Yuriii Izhyk, Subdeacon Nicholas Worobei, seminarian Bohdan Bodnar, seminarian Marian Meleshko, seminarian Marian Koval, seminarian Nicolas Laliberté and the part time student Mykola Myhovych.

We cannot forget Dobrodijka Oksana Pasakas for organizing the event and the menu, with the help of Pani Anna Krykh, Pani Maria Morozovska, Dobrodijka Olena Shak, Olена Lymar and the wives of the seminarians who also contributed to the menu.

With the blessing of His Eminence Metropolitan Antony, the presentation of the event was led by V. Rev. Vasyl Pasakas, the Dean of the Student Life of the Seminary.

The singing encompassed this historic house so much that after the break for a Lenten meal, Deacon Roman with his violin together with Walter Syzonenko with his accordion and accompanied by seminarian Volodymyr Lymar with his flute and Roman Shak continued in the cheerfulness of a Christmas carol sing-along in the seminary living room.

We are grateful for all that made an effort to come visit us, talk and meet the students. Also grateful for those that sent their donations as way to support the future of our church.

Photos by Subdeacon Mykola Stefanyk
Улюблени в Хрісті!

З важким серцем і глибокою скорботою звертаємося до Вас у цей такий час у житті нашої любов України. Нелюдське бомбардування, завдане нації землі російськими військами, занурило нас у глибоку темряву, і наші серця болять за незлічену кількість жертв, постраждалих від цього безглуздого насильства.

Перед обличчям такого спустошення ми, Українська Православна Церква США та Діаспоро, об'єднані в молитві, солідарності та непокійної рішучості. Святість людського життя, наріжний камінь нашої правoslавної віри, знаходиться під серйозною загрозою, і наш обов'язок свідчити Євангеліє змує нас виступити проти несправедливості, жорстокості та так, геноциду, які спікали нашу батьківщину.

Як пастори Церкви, ми рішуче засуджуємо агресію, яка призвела до втрати невинних жертв, переміщення сімей і осередкення нашої священної землі. Наші церкви, які були символами надії та придушення, тепер є свідками страшань народу, чи спокій була випробувана без міри.

У цей час темряви ми звертаємося до Любові Новонародженого Христа за розрахів та силу. Посилаймо наші молитви за мир, благаючи заступництва Пресвятої Богородиці, Покровительки України та всіх святих, які свідчать віру серед біди.

Ми звиклися світові спільноти бути солідарними з народом України. Незвичай свідомість світу прокинута до нагальних обставин цієї гуманітарної кризи та її справедливість переходить в агресію.

До наших братів і сестер, які переживають жахи війни, знайти, що наші серця з вами, і наші молитви підносяться за ваш захист, розраду та визволення від цього випробування. Незаймана місце Божа осінніть наше землю, присвоївши здійснені, примирення та відновлення миру.

Переживаючи ці темні часи, нехай наша любов одне до одного і непокійна віра будуть маючи надії. Перед обличчям труднощів ми, Українська Православна громада в США, Австралії, Німеччині, Британії, Парагваю, Іспанії, Франції, Великої Британії і Нідерландів, виступаємо свідченням міцної сили віри, співідчування та непокійного прагнення до справедливості.

З важким серцем і глибокою молитвою,
+Антоній, митрополит
+Даниїл, архієпископ

Beloved Faithful,

It is with a heavy heart and profound sorrow that we address you during this grievous time in the life of our beloved Ukraine. The inhumane bombing inflicted upon our land by the Russian forces has plunged us into a profound darkness, and our hearts ache for the countless lives affected by this senseless violence.

In the face of such devastation, we, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA and Diaspora, stand united in prayer, solidarity, and unwavering resolve. The sanctity of human life, a cornerstone of our Orthodox faith, is gravely threatened, and our duty to bear witness to the Gospel compels us to speak out against the injustice, brutality and yes, genocide, that have befallen our homeland.

As shepherds of this flock, we condemn in the strongest terms the aggression that has led to the loss of innocent lives, the displacement of families, and the desecration of our sacred land. Our churches, which have stood as symbols of hope and refuge, are now witnesses to the suffering of a people whose resilience has been tested beyond measure.

In this time of darkness, we turn to the Love of the Newborn Christ Child for solace and strength. Let us intensify our prayers for peace, invoking the intercessions of the Holy Birth-Giver of God, the Protectress of Ukraine, and all the saints who have borne witness to faith amidst adversity.

We call upon the global community to stand in solidarity with the people of Ukraine. May the conscience of the world awaken to the urgency of this humanitarian crisis, and may justice prevail over aggression.

To our brothers and sisters enduring the horrors of war, know that our hearts are with you, and our prayers ascend for your protection, comfort, and deliverance from this ordeal. May the mercy of God overshadow our land, bringing healing, reconciliation and the restoration of peace.

As we navigate these dark times, let our love for one another and our steadfast faith be a beacon of hope. In the face of adversity, we, the Ukrainian Orthodox community in the USA, Australia, New Zealand, Brazil, Paraguay, Argentina, France, Belgium and Germany stand as a testament to the enduring power of faith, compassion, and the unwavering pursuit of justice.

With heavy hearts and fervent prayers,
+Antony, Metropolitan
+Daniel, Archbishop
In the midst of the grim reality of war and bombings, the importance of providing children with a semblance of normalcy and joy during Christmas cannot be overstated. In war-torn areas, where the daily lives of families are disrupted by conflict and uncertainty, the resilience and well-being of children become a paramount concern. Despite the challenges, efforts to ensure that the spirit of Christmas endures for these young souls take on a special significance.

With the blessing of His Eminence Metropolitan Antony, Prime Hierarch of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in the USA and Diaspora, Archbishop Daniel, Ruling Hierarch of the Western Eparchy of the UOC of the USA and Consistory President allocates funds donated by the faithful of the Church to aid those in need in war-torn Ukraine. Funds are distributed in the Donetsk and Mariupol Eparchy (under the leadership of Metropolitan Serhiy), through the service of Rev. Fr. Kostyantyn Kuznetsov, who along with his wife Natalia, and team of volunteers, oversees the delivery of the donated food and logistical items to the refugees and the men and women of the Ukrainian Armed Forces.

With the aid of the UOC of the USA, Fr. Kostyantyn was able to deliver toys and sweets to children in war-affected regions during the holiday season. These acts of generosity aim not only to bring momentary happiness but also to instill a sense of normalcy amidst chaos. By providing children with toys, gifts, and treats, the hope is to momentarily transport them to a world of joy, creativity, and innocence, shielding them from the harsh realities of their surroundings.

Children from Mariupol, Avdiivka, and other areas of the Donetsk region attacked and destroyed by the invading Russian forces, got a reprieve from their constant stress and uncertainty, when Fr. Kostyantyn delivered toys and sweets to them. Visiting an establishment for refugee children with special needs, his team was able to deliver some Christmas cheer. While many children were timid, unsure, afraid to let their guard down, they eventually opened up and allowed their personalities to shine through. Little girls’ eyes sparkled as they got princess kits, while the boys got little trucks and cars. Games, puzzles, chess sets and books were distributed to children of all ages bringing smiles to their faces, as they broke out in song. These children have survived the horrors of war and are stronger than many adults having witnessed the tragedies of war. Giving them a chance to enjoy once again their quickly fading childhood was a blessing to both the receivers and the givers.

On Christmas Day the faithful, local residents, refugees and defenders, young and old, crowded into the local Orthodox church, the Cathedral of John the Baptist, to celebrate the Birth of Christ. After the Divine Liturgy, Fr. Kostyantyn handed out boxes of chocolates to each child as they approached to venerate the Cross. Nobody left empty-handed. The souls of the adults rejoiced at the Nativity of the Lord, and their hearts rejoiced at seeing smiles on the children’s faces. 

But even though the world celebrates Christmas, the bombs do not stop flying, the missiles are still launched, and Ukrainians are still dying, getting maimed, and losing their livelihood. Even though the volunteers are exhausted from many hours of packing and distributing supplies, they nonetheless muster up the strength to continue the good work they do. The focus shifted to the Armed Forces as thermal clothing was supplied, along with medical supplies, coffee, fruit, bread, and some homemade varenky. The weary soldiers took a moment to rest and replenish their energy by enjoying what now appeared as delicacies as they too celebrated the Nativity of the Lord. Having enjoyed a hearty meal, they donned woolen sweaters and thick warm socks before heading back out to the frontlines to defend their homeland, and all of Democracy.

However, it is not only children who are in need of some cheer and normalcy. Every day people line up at the Distribution Center, patiently waiting their turn to receive a care package. For the adults the needs are varied and more of a necessity – hygiene products, oil for cooking, bags of flour and sugar, canned goods, bread, salt, water, etc. All these staples of life we take for granted, but it is difficult to survive with these barest of necessities. Through the donations received, truckloads of supplies arrive. As the menfolk get busy unloading the boxes and bags, the women begin sorting and preparing bags filled pasta, soup, pickled goods, canned meats, shampoos, soaps, lotions, etc.

In these challenging circumstances, the act of giving becomes a powerful symbol of solidarity and compassion. It sends a message to both adults and children that, even in the face of adversity, the world cares about their well-being and happiness. Such initiatives not only cater to their immediate emotional needs but also contribute to their long-term psychological resilience.

In the face of war, providing toys and sweets may seem like a small gesture, but its impact can be profound. It reminds children that, despite the tumultuous times, there is still room for love, compassion, and the magic of Christmas. It becomes a beacon of hope in the darkness, fostering a sense of resilience that can endure beyond the holiday season.

This Christmas season, make a difference in the life of a child, a traumatized adult, a displaced person who has no home, a warrior who has lived through nightmares, and donate to the UOC of the USA Ukrainian Humanitarian Relief Fund.
UOC of the USA Honors Her Spiritual Father

Metropolitan Antony

УПЦ США Вшановує Свого Духовного Отця

Митрополита Антонія

11th Anniversary of Enthronement as the 4th Metropolitan of the Church
Names’s Day - Venerable Anthony the Great Feast Day
Birthday Celebration

11 річниця Інтронізації 4 митрополита Церкви
Іменінні - преподобного Антонія Великого
День Народження

30TH JANUARY, 2024
St. Andrew Ukrainian Orthodox Memorial Church
10am - Liturgy

30 СІЧНЯ 2024 РОКУ
Українська Православна церква-пам'ятник св. Андрія Первозванного
10 ранку - Літургія
Beef Stew

INGREDIENTS:
- 1 1/2 pounds cubed chuck roast or other beef
- Vegetable oil
- 5 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 large onion, diced
- 1 1/2 teaspoons salt
- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
- 2 cups beef broth
- 2 cups water
- 1 cup tomato sauce
- 4 to 5 white potatoes, peeled and cubed
- 3 to 4 carrots, chopped
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch
- 1/2 cup heavy cream
- 3 tablespoons chopped dill

INSTRUCTIONS:
Preheat a large sauté pan over medium-high heat and add a drizzle of olive oil. Once the oil is hot, add the cubed beef (any variety will work). Season the beef with a few pinches of kosher salt and brown the meat all over. Next, add in the minced garlic and diced onion; sauté until the onion is tender and translucent. Add the seasonings: salt, black pepper, paprika and ground cumin.

Cook this mixture for a few more minutes, then pour in the tomato sauce, beef broth and water. Bring the liquids up to a simmer, close the pan with a tight-fitting lid, reduce heat to low and simmer for 1 to 1 1/2 hours, or until the beef is tender.

Once beef has reached the desired level of tenderness, remove it into a small bowl with a slotted spoon; this will create more room for the root vegetables to cook. Add the peeled, cubed carrots and potatoes. They need to be well-submerged in the broth; add more water or beef broth if needed. Cover the pan with a lid and cook covered for 25 minutes, or until the potatoes are fork tender.

Meanwhile, prepare the cornstarch slurry. Combine the cornstarch and heavy cream until smooth. Once the potatoes are cooked, add the slurry into the sauce and return the beef to the mixture. Stir and cook for a few more minutes until the sauce thickens considerably.

Season with fresh dill when ready to serve. This dish goes well with a dollop of sour cream on top.
16 As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. 17 And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”

Matthew 3:16-17

16 І охристившись Ісус, звернувся вода. І сьо небо розкрився, і побачив Божий Дух, що спускається, як голуб, і сидив на Нього. 17 І ось голос почувся з неба: Це Син Мій Ілюбляений, про його Я висловляю!“

Від Матвія 3:16-17


Suanovsky, Melisa Rose baptized and chrismated on October 22, 2023 in Holy Trinity Church, New York, NY. Child of Ihor Rusanovsky and Yuliya Melisakowska. Sponsors: Oksana Zhytkovych and Alla Romanenko.


Dushenko, Matthew of Burbank, IL on July 18, 2023 at the age of 3 years, officiating clergy V. Rev. Vasyl Sendeha of Sts. Peter & Paul Parish, Palos Park, IL 60464.

Dushenko, Serhii of Burbank, IL on September 9, 2023 at the age of 35 years, officiating clergy V. Rev. Vasyl Sendeha of Sts. Peter & Paul Parish, Palos Park, IL 60464.

Hnojewyj, Olexander of Melrose, MN on October 31, 2023 at the age of 78 years, officiating clergy Rev. Myron Korostil of St. Michael’s & George’s Parish, Minneapolis, MN 55413.

Kutas, Michael J. of Newtown, PA on November 23, 2023 at the age of 92 years, officiating clergy Rev. Richard Jendras of St. Mary Parish, Allentown, PA 18102.

Vlasich, Nicholas of Munster, IN on October 21, 2023 at the age of 82 years, officiating clergy His Eminence Metropolitan Antony of St. Michael’s Parish, Hammond, IN.

Zorka, Kathleen of Bridgeport, CT on November 25, 2023 at the age of 102 years, officiating clergy V. Rev. Stephen Mazluk of St. Mary’s Parish, Bridgeport, CT 06606.

Cesina, Alice Jean of Glen Campbell, PA on December 6, 2023 at the age of 90 years, officiating clergy Rev. Ihor Protsak of St. John the Baptist’s Parish, Clymer, PA 15728.

Nurko, Ann of Millstone, NJ on January 3, 2023 at the age of 101 years, officiating clergy Rev. Zinoviy Zharsky of Holy Trinity Parish, Trenton, NJ.


Sereda, Linda of Chicago, IL on December 21, 2023 at the age of 75 years, officiating clergy V. Rev. Vasyl Sendeha of Sts. Peter & Paul Parish, Palos Park, IL 60464.

Glory to Jesus Christ! All Saints Camp Committee would like you to join us for our Annual Meeting in February 2024! A final date determination will be selected soon! The Annual Meeting will be held in a virtual format to include as many interested people to attend as possible! Please email your name and parish to ASC Secretary, Chris Mills at chrismills@allsaintscamp.org or ASC Chairman, Father John Haluszczak otettsivan@gmail.com if interested in attending! Further details will be emailed to you. Thank you for your continued support of All Saints Camp!
ORDINATIONS

JANUARY

HIS EMINENCE METROPOLITAN ANTONY 1/26/2013
V. REV. MYRON MYKHAYLYUK 1/2/1977
V. REV. PAVLO BODNARCHUK 1/3/1993
REV. ANDRIY MATLAK 1/9/2013
V. REV. OREST POUKHALSKII 1/9/2000
V. REV. ROMAN YATSKIV 1/14/1989
REV. YURI BOBKO 1/18/2020
V. REV. IOAN PROTEASA 1/19/1992
V. REV. HARRY LINSINBIGLER 1/25/2003
V. REV. GERALD OZLANSKI 1/25/1987
REV. SVIATOSLAV HOT 1/25/2020
V. REV. STEFAN BILOGAN 1/28/2001
V. REV. NICHOLAS KLODNICKI 1/28/1984
V. REV. MYROSLAV SCHIRTA 1/30/1998
ARCHDN. VASYL JANICK 1/28/2006

ARCHBISHOP WOLODYMIR (DIDOWYCH) – JANUARY 20 1990

28th 1942 - PROTOPRIEST ISIDORE KOSTIUK
27th 1955 - PROTOPRIEST JOSEPH BODNAR
6th 1958 - PRIEST STEFAN VULCHYN
9th 1968 - PROTOPRESBYTER JOHN SAWCHUK
9th 1968 - PROTOPRESBYTER LEV WESOLOWSKY
26th 1974 - PROTOPRESBYTER ALEXANDER DOWHAL
9th 1984 - PROTOPRIEST MYKOLA UHORCZAK
28th 1990 - PROTOPRESBYTER JURIJ HULEY
17th 1996 - PROTOPRIEST TYT MELNYCHUK
13th 1996 - PRIEST GREGORY WOLKOWYNSKY
19th 1999 - PROTOPRIEST MYKOLA HODYNSKY
10th 2002 - PROTOPRESBYTER PETRO BUDNIAJ
20th 2023 - PROTOPRESBYTER WILLIAM DIAKIW
CALENDAR OF EVENTS
Get involved in the life of your Church!
The success of all Church sponsored events depends upon your active participation!

Theophany
January 19

Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee
February 25

Start of Great Lent
March 18

The Meeting of our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ
February 15

St. Anthony the Great
January 30

UOCofUSA
uocofusa.org

Zaccheus Sunday
February 18

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South Bound Brook, NJ 08880
Shipping address: 135 Davidson Ave.
Somerset, NJ 08873
Tel: (732) 356-0090