



# ST. STEPHEN PROTOMARTYR UKRAINIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

DECEMBER 25<sup>TH</sup>, 2016

FEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

## *Celebrating the Nativity of Our Lord*

*"For unto us a Child is born, to us a Son is given,  
and the government will be on His shoulders. And He will be  
called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." Isaiah 9:6*

### **Address**

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Calgary, Alberta  
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### **NEW Office Hours (effective 2017):**

Mon—Thurs: 8:30am—4:00pm  
Friday: Closed  
Saturday: 8:30am—4:00pm  
Sunday: Open btwn Liturgies

### **Telephone:**

403-249-4818, press 0

### **For holiday Pastoral Emergencies:**

Fr. Bo: 403-999-9560  
Fr. Ephrem: 1-514-223-1664  
Fr. Michael: 587-223-8485

### **Email:**

Office@Protomartyr.ca

### **Parish Website:**

www.saintstephencalgary.ca

### **Eparchy Website:**

www.edmontoneparchy.com

## **CLERGY and RELIGIOUS**

### **Priest and Administrator:**

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The story of the Nativity of Christ is beautifully told in the Holy Scriptures. The story is found in Matthew 1:18-25 and in Luke 2:1-20. No matter how often the Birth of Jesus is told, we realize that it is an important event.

As the story is told by the Apostles, the Roman Empire was powerful. The Romans had conquered much of the then known world. Judea and Samaria, what we know today as Israel, were included in their conquests. Emperor Augustus ordered that a census be taken in all his lands. He needed to know how many people lived in the empire so he could tax them. Everyone had to go to the town of their family's origin to register for the census. This meant that Mary and Joseph had to go to Bethlehem. They were descendants of King David and Bethlehem was the City of David.

Mary and Joseph lived in Nazareth and it was a great distance from Bethlehem. It was about 100 miles over very rugged roads. Moreover, Mary was expecting the baby and it was almost time for her to give birth. Bethlehem was a small town and there were many descendants of David who had come to register for the census. By the time Mary and Joseph arrived in Bethlehem there was no place for them to stay. Joseph tried very hard to find a place to sleep that evening. There was no room at the inn. Finally, Joseph found a cave-like place where they could rest. This place was used by shepherds to protect their sheep in stormy weather. It was here that Mary gave birth to Jesus. The baby was wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in the straw in the manger.

Now, that night the shepherds were out in the fields guarding their sheep. Suddenly, there was a bright light which startled the shepherds. The light was so bright that it turned the night into daylight. Of course, the shepherds were frightened. Nothing such as this had ever happened. Soon an angel appeared and calmed them.

The angel said:

"Fear not for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior; which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you: You shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger"

Then a larger group of angels appeared. They praised and glorified God and sang, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, and good will toward men" (Luke 2:14). When the angels finished singing, they disappeared and the light began to fade. It became dimmer and dimmer until it was dark again. The shepherds were awed. They didn't know what to do. Finally, they decided to leave their flocks of sheep and go to Bethlehem. They decided that they wanted to see for themselves what the angels had told them. When they got to Bethlehem, they found Mary, Joseph, and the infant Jesus. They fell to their knees and adored Jesus.

Some Wise Men came from the East for they knew of the coming of Jesus. They had seen a star that told them that a new king had been born to the Jews. They followed the star and were looking for the child. At this time the governor of Judea was King Herod. He was a wicked man and was feared and hated by the people. When Herod heard about the Wise Men looking for the child, he invited them to his palace. Herod asked the Wise Men to find the child so that he, too, could worship Him. But Herod was lying. He did not want anyone to take his place. The Wise Men went on to look for Jesus. The Star led them to Jesus and Mary. When the Wise Men found Jesus, they fell to their knees and worshipped Him. They gave Jesus gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. The Wise Men left but did not return to Herod. They had a dream that warned them that Herod wanted to harm Jesus. Instead, they returned to their native country by a different route.



## CHRISTMAS LETTERS FROM OUR CLERGY...



At this time when our God chooses to enter deeply into our lives through His Incarnation, both Deacon Andriy and I wish you and your families renewed joy, happiness, holiness, peace and purpose. If we can do anything to help you in this upcoming new year, please do not hesitate to just ask.

In Christ, Fr. Bo and Dcn. Andriy



Fr Damian and I wish everyone a Spirit-filled Christmas! The monastery church, named after St Nicholas, also features an original icon of St Stephen written by Fr Damian himself (in the picture). Every morning we are up with the rooster, and in the chant for Matins, supplicate "Holy Martyrs, pray to God for us!" I always think of Stephen the Protomartyr and the parish after whom he is named. Pray for us as we pray for you! (It is sunny and plus 12 at the time of this writing.) God bless. -Fr MARK

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### 2016 CHRISTMAS PASTORAL LETTER OF HIS BEATITUDE SVIATOSLAV

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Most Reverend Archbishops and  
Metropolitans, God-loving Bishops,  
Very Reverend Clergy, Venerable  
Monastics, Dearly Beloved Brothers  
and Sisters, in Ukraine and  
throughout the world

*And the Word became flesh and dwelt  
among us, and we have seen his glory,  
glory as of the only Son from the Father,  
full of grace and truth.*

John 1:14

Christ is born! Glorify Him!

Today our hearts are filled with lightsome Christmas joy. The eternal God becomes man, so that man might be united and reconciled with Him forever. The Son of God becomes the son of the Virgin from Nazareth and allows Himself to be carried in human arms. For us, Christians, this

great and unfathomable Mystery of the incarnation of the Son of God is the key to knowing the nature of God and understanding the history of salvation. The Nativity of Christ shows us who God is and who we are to be in relation to Him and to one another.

Gazing upon the pre-eternal God born in a simple stable cave, the Church sings: "From the bosom of the Father You came forth, O Lover of mankind, and in ineffable humility accepted supernatural poverty. You, O Lord, deigned to dwell in a cave, and, as a child, You, the Creator and Lord, are nursed at the breasts. Therefore, led by a star, the Magi bring You gifts, as to the Lord of creation, and the shepherds and angels wonder and cry out: Glory to God in the highest, Who is now coming in the form of a human

being, to be born on earth" (Sunday before Nativity, Matins Praises).

In the birth of His Only-begotten Son among us, the almighty Creator of all that is seen and unseen shows us the reality of the most important and deepest truths on how parents are to regard their own child.....



.....if you would like to read this letter in its entirety, please visit our website at [www.saintstephencalgary.ca](http://www.saintstephencalgary.ca).

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## PASTORAL LETTER FROM THE UKRAINIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS OF CANADA ON THE OCCASION OF THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD

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

### **Christ is born! Let Us Glorify Him!**

*The people walking in darkness  
have seen a great light;  
on those living in the land of deep  
darkness a light has dawned.  
(Isaiah 9:2)*

At the Complines service on the Eve of the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord, Jesus Christ, we sing out “*Z Namy Boh! God is with us!*” This beautiful hymn evokes in us faith, hope and joy in the awareness that the eternal God loves us so much that He sent His Only-Begotten Son to be with us. God became man, in the person of Jesus Christ, who, in all his works and actions, showed us the unending LOVE and MERCY of His Father.

When Pope Francis opened the Year of Mercy, he expressed his hope that all faithful of the Church would be able to rediscover and experience in their lives this unending love and mercy of God. Reflecting on this past year, however, we see that much has happened that troubles our hearts. We have seen the photos of wildfires destroying thousands of homes in Fort McMurray. We weep for Ukraine, where fighting continues, with staggering loss of life. We sympathize with the millions of refugees who have fled Syria, fearing for their lives. We shudder to think that our own government has recently legalized medically assisted

suicide. Perhaps we have personally experienced some tragedy or sadness in our own lives. We may be tempted to ask ourselves: Is God truly with us? If He is, where is His love and mercy?

When God became man – when Jesus Christ was born– it was in a lowly hidden cave in the dark of the night. The light of God-With-Us illuminated that cold dark cave and gave warmth to all those present – Mary and Joseph, the shepherds, and even the animals. And so it is today in our troubled world with all its challenges. God has not abandoned us! The light of God-With-Us continues to shine forth in humble surprising ways. We see God’s mercy in the people who, in many and wonderful ways, gave assistance to the victims of the fires in Fort McMurray and in those who offered refuge or assistance to the refugees from Syria. We see it in the actions of our faithful who send help to the families of fallen soldiers in Ukraine and support the chaplains at the front. We see it in our priests who visit the dying and offer them comfort and hope through the Sacrament of Holy Anointing. We see it in those who *pray* for peace in the world and those who strive to *bring* peace, forgiveness and love to others. We see it in priests, nuns and catechists who teach the faithful about God and help them grow in faith. We see it in the humble everyday actions of mothers and fathers who work for a living and care for their children. And we see it in all concrete acts of love offered by ordinary people who heed the

words of Jesus Christ: “*When I was hungry, you gave me to eat. When I was thirsty, you gave me to drink. When I was naked, you clothed me. When I was sick or in prison, you visited me.*”

Then let our hearts not be troubled! This Christmas, let us sing out *God is with us!* more fervently than ever! And then let us continue to make it true by allowing the light of Christ to shine through us, in all our words and deeds, so that the Love and Mercy of God may transform our world and bring forth hope, peace and joy.

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ, please accept our greetings and best wishes on this feast of Nativity of Our Saviour, Jesus Christ! May every day of the coming year be filled with His light and peace. Just as a newborn baby brings much joy and love to a family, may the birth of Emmanuel *God-with-us* bring joy and love into your family and your lives.

+Lawrence Huculak, OSBM  
Metropolitan Archbishop of Winnipeg

+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

+Michael Wiwchar, CSsR  
Eparch Emeritus of Saskatoon



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### **Making Our Parish Bloom**

Knowing our Mission / Defining our Vision / Developing our Action Plan / Becoming a More Vibrant Parish

**Jan 16<sup>th</sup>, 2017 6:30pm Supper and Program**

For PPC Members, 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee, Invited guests, and any parishioners who are wanting to help move our parish forward. Please RSVP to the Parish Office 403-249-4818

## COUNTING OUR BLESSINGS... OUR SPIRITUAL LEADER, FR. BO



At this special time of year (Christmas) we like to reflect on our many blessings. Those blessings are made up of family and friends, our answered prayers, our good health and the list goes on. I wonder how many of us stop to think of how blessed we are to have our own dedicated spiritual leader, "priest" if you will. I personally have taken our priests of past and present for granted. It's their "Job" I always thought, their chosen vocation.

Over the past 8 plus months I have worked more closely with Father Bo due to my responsibilities with the website. I now have a better appreciation for the work of our parish priest. A priest works tirelessly to support not just our spiritual needs, but also in many cases the physical and emotional needs of many of our parishioners. They don't have a 9-5 work day. They say yes to almost all requests and they put their own needs last. Above all, they love God and are consistent in sharing that love of God with us.

I looked back on the interview I did with Father Bo in August of 2013. When asked how we could support him and his family (Jess his wife, children Theo, Joseph and Sera) he said, "Treat us as normal human beings and laugh at my jokes". That seemed a simple enough request (especially the laughing at his jokes, which

by the way I do get!). But perhaps the first part is a little more difficult for us. This beautiful family is just like all of us with their share of blessings and difficulties. As a parish we want them to know we love and support them.

Lastly, in that same interview, I asked, "Where do you see the greatest challenges for us as people of faith?" Father Bo answered "Make sure we keep our eyes on God and focus on the big picture". When I read that I had to smile and think to myself that Father Bo has always stayed on message. In fact at our last Parish Counsel meeting he said the very same thing.

Merry Christmas Father Bo and Family! On behalf of all the parishioners of St. Stephen's we wish you a blessed and healthy, happy New Year.



Laurie Kindrachuk, Editor

Contact me: email [laurie.kindrachuk@shaw.ca](mailto:laurie.kindrachuk@shaw.ca) or cell 403-614-5581

## PARISH NOTICES

- ♦ Please note that there will be **NO 8:30am Divine Liturgy next Sunday, January 1, 2017.**
- ♦ Fr. Bo will be away December 26—January 1. Fr. Ephrem will be preaching the Divine Liturgies in his absence. In case of emergency, please see the front of this bulletin for contact information.
- ♦ The office will be closed December 26—January 2.
- ♦ The Ark store will be closed on Sunday, December 25 (Christmas Day) and Sunday, January 1 (New Year's Day).
- ♦ Don't forget to buy Malanka tickets! Friday, January 13, 2017. Cocktails at 6:00, Dinner at 7:00pm. For more information call Ambrose Comchi at 403-862-3269, Ed Demchuk at 403-239-0871 or Ed Tysowski at 403-547-3226

***Merry Christmas to all, and to all a Good Night!***