



**St Stephen
Protomartyr**

ST. STEPHEN PROTOMARTYR UKRAINIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

CHRISTMAS BULLETIN 2021

CHRISTMAS PASTORAL LETTER OF HIS BEATITUDE SVIATOSLAV

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

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men (Lk 2:14)

Christ is born! Glorify Him!

Beloved in Christ!

Today we share with you a great joy that was first received and shared by nameless shepherds of Bethlehem, who outdoors in an open field watched over their flock in the middle of the night. As described by the evangelist Luke, when an angel of the Lord appeared to them, at first, they were filled with fear. But the angel spoke to them: "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord" (Lk 2:10-11). And then, when the shepherds heard the angelic choirs sing, "Glory to God in the highest," they said to one another: "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us" (Lk 2:15). And they went, they found Mary and Joseph with the Child, and, having given them due reverence, went out and told others about Jesus.

The good news of Christmas is a feast of trust—not only of trust shared among us, human beings, but, above all, of God's trust in humankind. We often speak of our faith in God, but rarely do we make note of God's good will towards us, His faith and trust in us. The Lord entrusted the first good news about the birth of the Divine Child to simple shepherds, and then He shared the Good News of the Gospel with the myrrh-bearing women, with fishermen and tax-collectors—with simple and largely unknown people.

In Christ's Nativity, the Heavenly Father entrusts His Only-begotten Son to humanity, and God becomes man! The angelic choir proclaiming "peace on earth to men of good will" speaks to the fact that God sees man as worthy of his trust and favour, preference and good will (which is how we literally translate the Greek term, *eudokia*). He sees us as good and believes in us. He sees us not only as we are today, with all our weaknesses and sinfulness, our poverty and perplexity. The Son of God sees in us His Image. In His incarnation, He takes on our human nature and teaches us to see Him, the Saviour of the world, in a small child. Seeing us as people of His good will, He sees us as those who we can become by the power of His grace just as loving parents see in their child a talented future writer or artist, a good mother or tender and responsible father, the leader of a people or their mighty protector.

In this Christmas mystery, the figure of the Theotokos personifies the trust that we humans should foster towards our Creator and Saviour, in response to God's trust in us. The Mother of God, who holds in her arms the tiny Jesus in a cold stable, teaches us that we can and must trust God and our neighbour, since the Lord loved us first and entrusted Himself to us. In receiving the word of the archangel, she gives God space in her own body, gives Him her humanity—her human nature. Then St. Joseph, the guardian of Jesus and His Mother, having learned that Mary is pregnant, at first thinks of quietly releasing her. But, when the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said: "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit" (Mt 1:20), he believed, entrusted himself to God, and did everything as the angel commanded, justifying the Lord's trust in him.

We live in a world where trust is not merely wounded, but under constant attack. A great crisis of trust is felt in different spheres of social and even church life. Through new communication technologies, the

Address:

4903 – 45th Street S.W.
Calgary, Alberta T3E 3W5 Can-
ada

Office Hours

Mon-Thurs 9:00am -2:00pm

Telephone:

403-249-4818, press 0

Pastoral Emergencies:

403-249-4818, press 9

Email:

Office@Protomartyr.ca
Coordinator@Protomartyr.ca

Parish Website:

www.saintstephencalgary.ca

Parish Calendar:

[www.saintstephencalgary.ca/
calendar1.html](http://www.saintstephencalgary.ca/calendar1.html)

Facebook:

[https://www.facebook.com/
protomartyr.ca](https://www.facebook.com/protomartyr.ca)

Eparchy Website:

www.edmontoneparchy.com

DIVINE LITURGIES:

Sunday Services:

8:30 am—Ukr/Eng
10:05—Rosary
10:30 am—English
(live-streamed on Facebook &
www.saintstephencalgary.ca/
)
5:00 pm—English

Weekday Services:

**Wednesdays & Thursdays at
9:00am**

Saturdays

5:00 pm Confessions
6:00 pm Vespers



HOLY MYSTERIES

CONFESSION:

Saturdays 5:00 to 5:45 pm
or by Appointment
403-249-4818, ext. 2

MARRIAGE, BAPTISM-CHRISMATION- EUCHARIST, FUNERALS :

Arrangements with the Pastor
403-249-4818, ext. 2

ANOINTING OF THE SICK:

For emergencies call
403-249-4818, ext. 9

DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS :

Arrangements with the office

CLERGY & RELIGIOUS

Pastor :

Fr. Michael Bombak
FatherMichael@Protomartyr.ca
Office:403-249-4818, ext. 2

Pastor, St. Basil's Melkite Greek Catholic Church

Pastor: Fr. Samer Naaman
403-249-4818, ext. 3
stbasilmelkitecalga-
ry@gmail.com
Facebook: St Basils Melkite
Greek Catholic Church Calgary

PARISH OFFICE

Office Administrator:

Linda Buck 403-249-4818, ext. 0
office@Protomartyr.ca

Sacramental Coordinator:

Kim Bombak
Sacraments@Protomartyr.ca

Communications Coordinator:

Mirna Farahat
coordinator@Protomartyr.ca

HALL RENTAL INQUIRIES

Maria Dwulit, cell: 403-816-
5610,
email: Hall@Protomartyr.ca

HALL & KITCHEN

403-249-4818, ext. 6



manipulation of truth, which has always existed throughout human history, today is carried with lightning speed all over the globe. We no longer know what to believe and whom to trust. Our understanding is permeated with the conviction that in the world there is no truth and no justice, and that at every step there is only deception, falsehood, and duplicity.

This dramatic situation is illustrated in the icon of the Nativity. The evil spirit, depicted in the form of an elderly man dressed in sheepskin, tempts Joseph, seeking to give rise to doubt in him regarding the Child and His Mother. This should surprise no one, for the devil, as the father of lies (see Jn 8:44) at every step seeks to sow mistrust and doubt regarding God's good will towards us, and fosters interpersonal conflict at all levels, in personal, family, and community life.

The current pandemic has further increased this crisis of trust. Given that the virus hides inside a person, the other for me becomes a potential source of illness, and even death. This introduces into human relations elements of suspicion, fear, and escape.

Our attitude towards social and government institutions is also marked by mistrust. Various conspiracy allegations regarding the safety of the coronavirus vaccine augment a mistrust of authority, that is already prevalent in our society, and bring out in our fellow citizens even greater confusion and fear for the future. People don't believe the government and other institutions called to care for the common good and for social health services, as is their responsibility. Possibly, because of the history of the 20th century, post-Soviet societies have a greater tendency, than do other parts of the world, to disbelieve government institutions, and thus easily become susceptible to all sorts of manipulation and propaganda. Similarly, in the politically polarized countries of the Western world, the spreading of fear and mistrust is also utilized as an instrument of political warfare. However, it is important to remember that when we adopt a principle of "I don't believe anyone," we always play into someone else's hands, someone exploits our disappointment for their own purposes. Mistrust destroys human relations at all levels. Mistrust destroys the family, society, a people, and nation!

In response to our present-day temptations regarding mistrust, the Lord Himself comes in order to reveal the truth and embrace us with His trust. On the vigil of the Nativity, we sing: "You have shone forth from a Virgin, O Christ, rational Sun of Righteousness. And a star showed You, Whom nothing can contain, contained in a cave. You led Magi to worship You and along with them we magnify You: Glory to You, O Giver of Life" (Vespers Troparion). To celebrate Christ's Nativity is to trust the Divine Child who conquers death and, by accepting human life, brings the gift of His Divine Life. Christmas is not some devotional tale but a unique event in history, which bears witness to the Lord's trust in humankind. God believes in His creation. He believes in us more than we believe in ourselves.

Through faith in God, in His birth among us, let us restore our trust in a humanity that searches for Him! Let us be people of God's favour and let us learn to place our favour in others—to see in them their good characteristics, gifts and talents, abilities, and elevated spirit. Although today the circumstances of a spreading virus at times require us to cover with protective masks our mouths and nostrils, but in God's name, let us not close off our hearts to others! Let others see joy, love, and goodness in our eyes! Indeed, in the midst of the challenges and trials of the pandemic, let us be heralds of Divine good will.

My wish is that, following the example of the Holy Family, our families be a place of mutual respect, love, and trust. I especially ask you, beloved parents, to foster a spirit of trust in your children, so that, when they encounter the challenges of this world, they know that they can always count both on you and on our Lord God, who entrusted them into your care. At various stages of your children's growth, cultivate and build trust and mutual respect in joy, love, and patience. Be for them their first teachers of profound faith, an example of fervent prayer, encourage them to serve their neighbour at an early age. Give the greatest of attention to the time of transition from childhood to youth, take care that your children know how to distinguish between the false and the authentic, between divine truth and diabolical falsehood. May your offspring know that not only you believe in them and are able to see their future in realized talents and divine gifts, developed in their souls, but that our Lord God Himself believes in them and calls on them to do His good works in the world.

And so, let us celebrate Christmas together! Wherever we may be, through mutual trust let us create today our own Bethlehem! Those who celebrate in their family circle—with sincere joy. Those who are compelled to be far from your loved ones—with a sense of spiritual unity. Those who are able to come to church—with a profound experience of the feast's solemnity and with love for Christ who gives Himself to us as spiritual food as a sign that He believes in us. Those who participate in divine services online—with a blessed longing for our brothers and sisters in Christ. Let each of us share our Christmas joy with one another—any way we can! And may the traditional Ukrainian carol resound throughout.

Dear brothers and sisters! This festive day I express to you my trust and faith, that you yourselves intuitively sense how to properly greet the newborn Saviour, and know how to share the joy of this encounter with those at your side. With Christ's Nativity, I warmly greet you all: from East to West, from North to South—in Ukraine and abroad, on all the continents of the world. In a special way, I unite myself to those who are sad or feel lonely, to all who labour far from home and precisely in this moment experience the absence of their loved ones and miss the warmth of the family home. I express my condolences to those families for whom this year it is painful to sit at Christmas Eve supper, when at the table there is an empty seat, not long ago occupied by a father or mother, husband or wife, brother or sister, son or daughter. With tearful eyes be joyful in the faith that today your loved ones are celebrating in heaven. I share my Christmas joy with our elderly—grandmothers and grandfathers, and also with the needy. I sincerely greet our soldiers on the front line—our pride. My thoughts fly to our prisoners of war and those held captive: in conveying my Christmas greeting I encourage you to not lose spirit, for our Lord God Himself believes in you. I greet our children and youth—our future, and wish that today your smile not leave your face, and that your joy be full.

From the bottom of my heart, I wish all of you the authentic joy of the children of God, a tasty kutia, a cheerful celebration of Christ's Nativity, and a happy, peaceful, and blessed New Year!

Christ is born! Glorify Him!

† SVIATOSLAV

Given in Kyiv at the Patriarchal Cathedral of the Resurrection of Christ, on the day of the all-praiseworthy Apostle Andrew the First-called the 13th of December (30th of November) in the 2021st Year of our Lord



PASTORAL LETTER OF THE UKRAINIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS OF CANADA ON THE OCCASION OF THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD 2021-2022

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

Christ is Born! Let Us Glorify Him!

Dearly Beloved in Christ!

"The earth offers a cave to the Inaccessible." Kondak of the Nativity

The *Kondak* of December 25 heralds a true paradox. It reminds us of the sharp contrasts we find in the human condition. Regarding the Incarnation of Jesus, the Indescribable, Eternal and Inaccessible God, is humbly born in a cave. This is truly a low place on earth, perhaps barely fit for animals at times and yet it is where Jesus was born. Today, we find it hard to believe that any person could be born outside of a hospital or a home. Of course, there are survival accounts of people enduring unimaginable challenges, but who could allow such intentional inhospitable human indignity?

Well, we don't have to look far to find human indignity today. Human tragedy is all around us. Physical, medical, emotional and spiritual injustice is the content of many news stories. And in the midst of these stories often there is a ray of light in the darkness, a person who shines and restores our hope in human dignity. Globally, in Ukraine, or in our own homes, the Holy Spirit is waiting to break through to others with good news and each of us would do well to ask God that question, "Lord, how do you want to use me in sharing this news?"

The good news is that despite our hearts being similar in some ways to the inhospitable cave, Jesus wants to dwell there. Our reflection on this profound mystery takes quiet time for prayer, away from the numerous demands requesting our attention as well as celebration of the Sacraments, particularly Eucharist and Reconciliation. In the stillness of our hearts, God will speak, God will give each of us grace and we have an opportunity to say "yes" like members of the Holy Family. Our hearts are mangers of humility, human dignity and love. Every thought and action that honours God or another human being is born there. Jesus is born in the manger of our hearts. This is good news. Likewise prayer together as families and parishes uplifts and confirms that "God is with us!"

Therefore, let us intercede in prayer and perhaps take positive steps toward solutions to the many inhumane things we encounter in life. Let us learn from St. Joseph who, in his obedience to God through several dreams, became the person to ignite in Jesus a sense of obedience to the Father. Let us learn from Mary, the Mother of God, who trusted in God's plan for salvation as she gave birth to Christ and played a significant role in forming the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Let us allow the Christ in us to be a light to those in our families and parishes. This is so important in an atmosphere that finds many people and numerous opinions at odds about how to deal with the COVID epidemic.

May our celebration of this profound truth this Christmas, that God is born in us, be a time to encounter Jesus Christ in our spouse, in our family members and in our parish because we are an essential part of this profound truth. May we be aware of the presence of Jesus, Mary and Joseph that give us the gift of the Holy Family which is present in our personal and parish families. And may this awareness bear fruit in our lives throughout the new year, 2022, and beyond.

God is with us! Christ is Born!

Sincerely in Christ,

+Lawrence Huculak, OSBM Metropolitan Archbishop of Winnipeg

+Michael Wiwchar, CSsR Eparch Emeritus of Saskatoon

+Stephen Chmilar, Eparch Emeritus of Toronto and Eastern Canada

+David Motiuk, Eparchial Bishop of Edmonton, Administrator of the Eparchy of New Westminster

+Bryan Bayda, CSsR, Eparchial Bishop of Saskatoon, Administrator of the Eparchy of Toronto & Eastern Canada



Christ is born!

Христос раждається!

المسيح ولد!

Ο Χριστός γεννιέται!

Le Christ est né!

ישו נולד!

Christus ist geboren!

Cristo è Nato!

Kristus se rodí!

基督誕生了!

Krist je rođen!

Христос народився!

Si Cristo ay isinilang!

Kristus on syntynyt!

मसीह का जन्म होता है!

Krisztus megszületik!

キリストが生まれる!

Chrystus się rodzi!

Kristus är född!

Chúa Kitô được sinh ra!

Mae Crist yn cael ei eni!

Cristo nasce!

Kristus er født!

Kristus yra gimęs!



Bishop David's Christmas Message.

The Legend of the Elderly Grandmother

A Ukrainian Folk Tale

Christ is Born! Let us Glorify Him!

It was the night the dear Christ-Child came to Bethlehem. In a country far away from Him, an old, old grandmother or “baba” sat in her snug little house by her warm fire. The wind was drifting the snow outside and howling down the chimney, but it only made baba’s fire burn more brightly.

“How glad I am that I may stay indoors,” said baba, holding her hands out to the bright blaze.

But suddenly she heard a loud rap at her door. She opened it and her candle shone on three old men standing outside in the snow. Their beards were as white as the snow, and so long that they reached the ground. Their eyes shone kindly in the light of baba’s candle, and their arms were full of precious things – boxes of jewels, and sweet-smelling oils, and ointments.

“We have travelled far, Baba,” they said, “and we stop to tell you of the Baby Prince born this night in Bethlehem. He comes to rule the world and teach all men to be loving and true. We carry Him gifts. Come with us, Baba.”

But baba looked at the drifting snow, and then inside at her cozy room and the crackling fire. “It is too late for me to go with you, good sirs,” she said, “the weather is too cold.” She went inside again and shut the door, and the old men journeyed on to Bethlehem without her. But as baba sat by her fire, rocking, she began to think about the Little Christ-Child, for she loved all babies.

“Tomorrow I will go to find Him,” she said; “tomorrow, when it is light, and I will carry Him some toys.”

So when it was morning baba put on her long cloak and took her staff, and filled her basket with the pretty things a baby would like – gold balls and wooden toys – and she set out to find the Christ-Child.

But, oh, baba had forgotten to ask the three old men the road to Bethlehem, and they travelled so far through the night that she could not overtake them. Up and down the road she hurried, through woods and fields and towns, saying to whomsoever she met: “I go to find the Christ-Child. Where does He lie? I bring some pretty toys for His sake.”

But no one could tell her the way to go, and they all said: “Farther on,

Baba, farther on.” So she travelled on and on and on for years and years – but she never found the little Christ-Child.

They say that old baba is travelling still, looking for Him. When it comes Christmas Eve, and the children are lying fast asleep, baba comes softly through the snowy fields and towns, wrapped in her long cloak and carrying her basket on her arm. With her staff she raps gently at the doors and goes inside and holds her candle close to the little children’s faces.

“Is He here?” she asks. “Is the little Christ-Child here?” And then she turns sorrowfully away again, crying: “Farther on, farther on!” But before she leaves she takes a toy from her basket and lays it beside the pillow for a Christmas gift. “For His sake,” she says softly, and then hurries on through the years and forever in search of the little Christ-Child.

Unlike the elderly grandmother – baba, WE KNOW the road to Bethlehem, for today we have traveled together with the angels, the wise men and the shepherds to rejoice with Mary and Joseph in the birth of the Christ-Child, who came into this world, taking upon Himself flesh, becoming one of us, that we may know how precious and loved we are by God.

Let us get to know this Christ-Child better – one day at a time, throughout the entire year – by being every-more attentive to our relationship with God, to our faith, to our prayer, to our Church, so that when our family and friends, our neighbours and our community approach us and ask “Where is the Christ-Child?” we may respond, “Yes, I KNOW HIM! He lives here in my heart, here in my home with my family, here in my Church, here in my community. Yes, I know Him very well. Let me tell you about Him.”

And in this way the story of Christmas – of Jesus’ birth, of God’s presence among us – will continue to inspire the world, transforming it through peace and love into the Kingdom of God here on earth.

As we celebrate the Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord, may Christ, truly bless you and your family with peace, love and joy, now and in the New Year!

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

Bishop David Motiuk—Eparchy of Edmonton

My dearest parishioners,

How well do you receive gifts? I suppose that question is asked less frequently than “how well do you give gifts?” But the answer to the first question is even more important in many ways for this season. Sometimes gifts make us feel uncomfortable because we don’t fully trust the giver. At other times we feel indebted by the gift and don’t know how to return it.

What we celebrate this Nativity brothers and sisters is the greatest gift we can ever receive! God become man for our salvation. We have no way of repaying Him, and we certainly don’t deserve His incredible generosity. The only question that remains to us this Nativity season and going forward into the new year is: “How well can I receive God’s gift of Himself?” The Lord is never outdone in His generosity!

Here at St. Stephen’s, we continue to work within the AHS guidelines and through Bishop David’s direction to continue the mission entrusted to us by the Lord. Information about upcoming programming is available through our website, bulletin, and social media platforms, and I encourage you to visit these often for the latest updates. Please also take a liturgical calendar for your family- Remember this calendar is useful in identifying the feasts, fasts, saints and readings for the entire year. Don’t just hang the calendar in your home, receive the liturgical calendar as a gift and invitation from the Church to deepen your relationship with Christ!

This next year we are hoping to expand our presence on social media, proclaiming the “Good News” (gospel) of the God-Man visiting His people far and wide. Despite the difficult times in which the Holy Prophet Isaiah wrote, the joy of the promised Messiah came forth in His prophesies. This joy is ours today, despite the continuing realities of the Covid-19 Pandemic. The Lord has given Himself as a gift to the world, and continues to give Himself to us in the Most Holy Eucharist. May this same Lord, born in a cave for our salvation, continue to bless you now and always!

Be assured of my prayers,
Fr. Michael Bombak

