



Українська Католицька Парафія
Покрова Пресвятої Богородиці

Protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary Ukrainian
Catholic Parish

550 West 14 Avenue
Vancouver, BC V5Z 1P6
E-Mail: office@stmarysbc.com

Phone: 604.879.5830
Fax: 604.874.2727
Website: www.stmarysbc.com

*The No. 1 priority for ... the church is evangelization:
"Preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ in today's world."*

01 Вересня, 2013

Volume 58 No. 35

September 1, 2013

Служби Божі/Divine Liturgies

В Неділю/Sunday

8:30 am partially sung

10:30 am sung

У Свята/Holy Day of Obligation

10:30 am and 7:00 p

Щодня/Daily Scheduled

8:15 am in church

**First Friday - 8:15 am Divine Liturgy and
Moleben to the Sacred Heart of Jesus**

Сповіді/Confessions:

- 1/2 години *перед* Службою Божою
- 1/2 hour before Divine Liturgy
- Або наперед домовитися під час тиждня
- Or by appointment during the week

**Baptism by appointment - membership in
Parish is required**

**Anointing of the Sick /Hospital Visits/
Eucharist for the sick - any time**

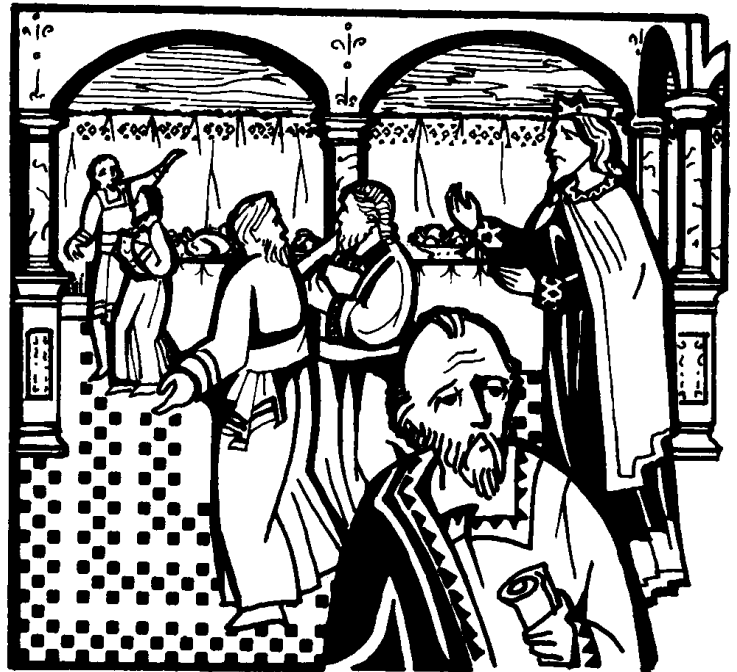
**Marriages by appointment made at least six
months in advance. Membership in Parish is
required**

Funerals by arrangement in the Parish Office

**оо. Василян/ Basilian Fathers serving the
Parish**

- Father Josaphat Tyrkalo, OSBM, Pastor
Email: pastor@stmarysbc.com
- Most Rev. Severian Yakymyshyn, OSBM
Bishop Emeritus

**15 Неділя по Зісланні Святого Духа
Початок Церковного Року
Маття 22:35-46**



**15 Sunday after Pentecost
Beginning of Liturgical Year
Matthew 22:35-46**

**SPECIAL NOTICE – Do not park in the
RESERVED stalls in front of St. Mary's
Gardens when you come for the Sunday
Divine Liturgy. Your car will be towed.**

Парафія Покрова Пресвятої Богородиці вітає всіх гостей, приятелів та рідних які зєдналися сьогодні разом брати участь в цій Службі Божі. Нехай наш Господь через заступництво Покрова Пресвятої Богородиці благословить Вас і Вашу родину.

Місячний намір Святішого Отця Папи Римського – на Вересень

Загальний намір: Відкрити вартість нівчання. Щоб чоловіки і жінки наших часів, стільки разів занурені в поспішний ритм життя, відкрили вартість мовчання і вміли слухати Бога в своїх братах.

Місійний намір: Переслідувані християни. Щоб переслідувані християни могли свідчити любов Христа.

- *Тропарі і читання в зеленій книжці на стор. 1 і 2.*

- *Кава і солодке сьогодні після неділі Служби Божої у вітальні під церквою.*

В цьому часі тільки один священник служить в парафії. Щоби вз'яти участь у Св. Сповіді, заохочуємо Вас приходити до церкви 30 хвилин скоріше перед Св. Літургією. Ви можете також наперед домовитися і прийти до Каплиці в резиденції під час тиждня.

Спеціальне прохання: після закінчення Служби Божої просимо замкнути молитвенники і співаники і поставити їх на відповідне місце. Рівнож просимо не залишайте бюлетенів і других матеріалів в лавках. Будьмо господарними в нашій церкві і допоможемо, щоби наші лавки були чисті й акуратні.

Сьогодні: Неділя, 1 Вересня:

- **Парафіяльна Катехитична програма** під час Служби Божої в 10:30 рано і буде продовжуватися кожної неділі.

П'ятниця, 6 Вересня: - Перша П'ятниця

- **8:15 ранку** - Служба Божа а від так Молебень до Серця Христового.

Неділя, 8 Вересня:

- **Парафіяльна Катехитична програма** під час Служби Божої в 10:30 рано і буде продовжуватися кожної неділі.

- **Річний Парафіяльний Пікнік** почнеться о год. 12-ій полудня. На обід буде подаватися: "Гамбургер" і "Гот дог", ярина і напитки, і морожене на десерт. Для розваги будуть різні гри для молоді і дітей. Пожертви вільні.

Четвер, 12 Вересня:

- **7:00 вечора** - **Поширення зрозуміння нашої віри** у вітальні під церквою.

Субота, 14 Вересня: Воздвиження Чесного Христа

- **8:15 і 10:30 ранку** - Служба Божа.

- **Сьогодні здержуємося від м'ясних страв**

Неділя, 15 Вересня:

- **Парафіяльна Катехитична програма** під час Служби Божої в 10:30 рано і буде продовжуватися кожної неділі.

Понеділок, 16 Вересня:

- **7:00 вечора** - **Сходини Парафіяльної Ради** у Борд Румі.

The Protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish welcomes all guests, friends, visiting relatives and Parishioners in celebrating this Divine Liturgy together. May our Lord, through the intercession of our Blessed Lady, the Mother of God, bless you and your family!

Monthly Papal Intentions for September

General Intention: Value of Silence – That people today, often overwhelmed by noise, may rediscover the value of silence and listen to the voice of God and their brothers and sisters.

Missionary Intention: Persecuted Christians – That Christians suffering persecution in many parts of the world may by their witness be prophets of Christ's love.

- **Tropar, Kondak & readings** in the green booklet pages 1 and 2.

- **Coffee and sweets** are available today **following the Sunday 8:30 am and 10:30 am Divine Liturgies** in the Fellowship Room. **All guests and parishioners are invited.**

UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE - only one priest is serving the parish. To receive the Mystery of Reconciliation, (Confession), you are encouraged to come thirty (30) minutes before the Divine Liturgy. You may also make an appointment to come during the week to the chapel in the rectory.

A SPECIAL Request: At the conclusion of each Divine Liturgy, please close all Liturgy and/or hymnbooks and return them to their proper place. Also, please do not leave any church bulletins or other reading material in the pews. Each and every participant is invited to do their part to be true stewards of our parish church by helping to keep the church pew pockets and pews clean and neat. Thank you.

TODAY, Sunday, September 1:

- **Parish Catechism for Pre-Schooler's** during the 10:30 am Divine Liturgy.

Tuesday, September 3: - 7:00 pm - Memorial Divine Liturgy + Olga Malenchuk in chapel.

Friday, September 6: Feast of Christ the Lover of Mankind - First Friday

- **8:15 am** - Divine Liturgy followed by Moleben to the Sacred Heart.

Sunday, September 8:

- **Parish Catechism for Pre-Schooler's** during the 10:30 am Divine Liturgy.

- **Annual Parish Picnic begins at 12 noon.** The meal will consist of Hamburgers and Hot dogs with all the trimmings, Lettuce salad, Potato salad, vegetables, coffee, tea and juices and ice cream for dessert. For entertainment, we have invited "Scruffles" the balloon maker, pony rides for the young and games for children of all ages. A donation for the meal will be accepted.

Thursday, September 12: COME AND JOIN US FOR THE FINAL FEW LESSONS ON:

- "THE CREED" A STUDY OF OUR FAITH at 7 pm in Fellowship Room.

Saturday, September 14: Feast of Exaltation of the Holy Cross of Jesus Christ

- **8:15 and 10:30 am** - Divine Liturgy in Church.

- **This day we abstain from meat**

Sunday, September 15:

- **Parish Catechism for Pre-Schooler's** during the 10:30 am Divine Liturgy.

Monday, September 16: - 7:00 pm - Parish Council Meeting in the Board Room

Це пригадка для всіх вірних. Просимо приходити вчасно на Службу Божу. Будьмо готові разом заспівати початковий гімн. Зрозумійте, якщо Ви прийдете до Церкви після Великого Входу, Ви пропустили більшу частину Служби Божої, і дійсно не вислухали приписаної Служби Божої на неділю.

Церковна Етика: Будьмо свідомі, що беручи участь у Св. Літургії ми мусимо одержати кінцеве Благословення перед тим як ми залишимо Службу Божу. Ми рівнож просимо не виходити з Церкви перед закінченням Служби Божої. Ми просимо Вас не спілкуватися в Церкві перед, під час і після Служби Божої. Прошу це робити в притворі Церкви або у Вітальні під церквою. Залишім наву (Nave) церкви для вірних які моляться.

Молитва Митрополита Андрея Шептицького за українську родину

Боже великий, Боже отців наших! Дай нашому народові якнайбільше добрих, святих християнських родин. Дай нам таких батьків, які голосно й відверто признавалися б до божественної Твоєї Євангелії і до Твоєї служби. Дай нам батьків, які для своїх дітей були б прикладом християнського життя, правдивими опікунами та добрими провідниками в житті. Дай нам таких матерів, що вміли б добре, по-християнськи виховувати своїх дітей, а для своїх чоловіків були б поміччю, потіхою та доброю радою. Дай нам таких дітей, які були б потіхою та славою батьків і красою свого народу. Благослови, всемогутній Боже, український нарід. Даруй йому ласку вірно Тобі служити і доступити колись вічної нагороди в небі, бо Тобі, Боже, у Святій Тройці єдиний, Отче, Сину і Духу Святий, належить вся слава, честь і поклін навіки вічні. Амінь.

Просимо всіх Парафіян приносити продукти для потребуючих, які не псуються (non-perishable) в першу і третю неділю кожного місяця.

PRAYER FOR A VIBRANT PARISH - O God, Creator of Heaven and Earth! Because of your indescribable love for us, you sent your Only-Begotten Son, Our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ - The Way, The Truth, and The Life - and our Salvation. In His name, we turn to You. Strengthen our hearts and minds in Christian love and in unity of purpose as we strive to build a Vibrant Parish. Give us the grace to model our lives according to the Word of God. Instill in us the desire to pray and to celebrate the Holy Mysteries as one Christian Family in our Parish Community. Inspire us to follow Your great command to be a servant to the less fortunate among us! Grant this, O Lord, through the mercies and love for mankind of Your Only-Begotten Son with whom You are blessed, together with Your All-Holy, Good and Life-Giving Spirit, now and for ever and ever. Amen!

YEAR OF FAITH Heavenly Father, we ask for Your blessings as we celebrate this Year of Faith that we may deepen our personal encounter with Christ, that we may be more able to share our faith with those around us; to share our love for the Church and its people as Christ showed His love for us. By this, we renew our baptismal call by living out our daily moments with faith, hope and love. We ask through the prayers of the Most Holy Mother of God and all the saints. Amen.

ПРОСИМО щоб оголошення до наступного дво-місячного календаря треба подати до канцелярії не дальше як 20-го дня цього місяця.

“Pyrohy Making” dates for the Bazaar – Wednesdays at 8 am: Sept. 11; Sept. 25; Oct. 9; Oct. 23 and Oct. 30. For more information, call Henriette Ukrainetz at 604.291.0087.

To Request Prayers for: yourself, your family, or a friend - please submit the name to the Parish Office or place a note on the collection plate.

Пам'ятайте помолитися: за Вашу родину, за членів Парафії, а особливо за тих які знаходяться в лікарнях, або тих що очікують Божої відповіді на їхні молитви, або радіють Божою відповіддю, або за тих які відзначають уродини, або роковини, або за тих що покликані до їхньої вічної винагороди, або за родину яку вони залишили.

Remember to pray for: your family; fellow parishioners; those confined to their hospital beds or their homes; those seeking God’s guidance or rejoicing with God’s favour; or for those celebrating a birthday or anniversary; or have been called to their eternal reward or for the family they leave behind; as well as any other need.

Please remember in your prayers: Bishop Severian Yakymyshyn, OSBM, Fr. Josaphat Tyrkalo, OSBM, Fr. Steven Basarab, Mary Balsevicius, Joseph Bayduza, Frances Bethune, Elizabeth Duda, Mary Earl, Quenten Fabiano, Catherine Hladij, Alice Humenick, Bohdan Karpinski, Emily Kuzyk, Bodzie and Shirley Lawryshyn, Ben Marchinkow, Joseph Nadelko, Roma Nowakowski, (Bishop Ken’s mother), Orest Obuck, John Pura, Mary Scott, Dave Shelast, Tiny Zarski.

Please Visit: our Parishioners that are in the hospital or have difficulty getting around in their homes. They need your visit, your phone call, as well as your prayers.

Please pray for vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

If there are people you visit requesting prayers, or a visit from the Priest, please inform the Parish office so that father might know to visit them.

NOTICE TO ALL PARISHIONERS: The Divine Liturgy begins at 8:30 A.M. or at 10:30 A.M. on Sunday mornings. You have the responsibility to arrive before the church bells ring announcing the beginning of the Service. Realize that in order to have attended the Sunday Service you would have: received the Opening Blessing, listened to the Gospel, participated in the Consecration of the Holy Gifts, and following Holy Communion, would have received the Dismissal Blessing to strengthen you to proclaim the Good News throughout the week.

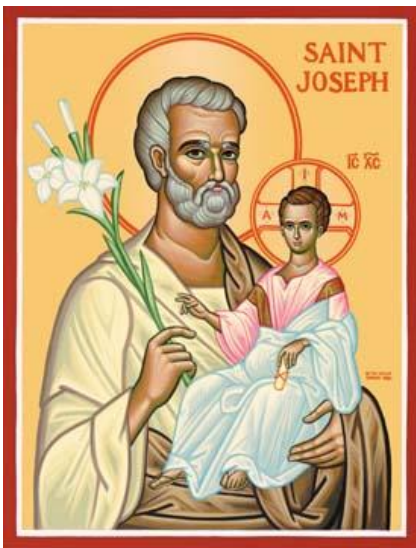
Church Etiquette: We also ask that you do not visit in the main part of the Church (the Nave) before, during, or after the Service. Please use the Vestibule or the Fellowship room to conduct your conversations - leave the Church proper for those that want to pray.

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS - Almighty and Merciful God, inspire those You have chosen to hear and answer Your call to the Priesthood and Religious Life. Give them the courage to be the prophets for our times. Give them the wisdom and openness to live their personal call. Give them the strength to be ready witnesses of Your love and care for the world. May they find support and encouragement in our words and in our prayers. Through the intercession of Mary, the Mother of God and all the Saints. Amen.

Prayer by Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky for Ukrainian Families

God Almighty, O God of our Fathers! Grant to our nation many good and holy Christian families. Give us fathers who will loudly and openly confess your holy Gospel and be in Your service. Give us fathers who will be a good example of Christian life for their children, true protectors and good leaders in life. Grant us mothers who are capable of bringing up their children in a Christian way, and are a joy and help as well as good advisors for their husbands. Grant us children who will be the pride and joy of their parents and the splendour of their nation. Almighty God, bless our Ukrainian nation. Grant her the grace to faithfully serve You and one day to be granted the eternal reward in heaven. For You are a good and loving God, and we give glory to You, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and forever and ever. Amen.

PRAYER FOR EVANGELIZATION 'YEAR OF FAITH' - O God, who wills that all should be saved and come to the knowledge of truth, pour out Your Spirit upon us and grant that we may respond zealously to Your urgent call to lead back to the Church those who have strayed. Prepare their hearts and minds to be receptive to the saving Gospel of Your Son. Send us workers to gather in Your abundant harvest, so that all Your people, obedient to the Word and sustained by the power of the Sacraments, may advance in the way of Salvation and love. Through Christ, Our Lord. Amen.



St. Joseph, guardian of Jesus and chaste husband of Mary, you passed your life in loving fulfillment of duty. You supported the holy family of Nazareth with the work of your hands. Kindly protect our fathers who trustingly come to you. You know their aspirations, their hardships, and their hopes. They look to you because they know you will understand and protect them. You too knew trial, labour and weariness. But amid the worries of material life your soul was full of deep peace and sang out in true joy through intimacy with God's Son entrusted to you and with Mary, his tender Mother. Assure those you protect that they do not labour alone. Teach them to find Jesus near them and to watch over them faithfully.

Special Petition for Evangelization – *Let us ask our Heavenly Father for His gifts of wisdom & courage in our efforts of spreading the Good News and building up God's kingdom on earth, let us pray to the Lord.*

Bulletin Announcements must be in the office by Wednesday noon. It is your responsibility to notify the office, do not think that 'well they know', Father or the Secretary may know but do not always remember to put it in the bulletin!

Monthly Calendar Announcements for the next two months must be in the office by the 20th day of this month.

Food Bank Donations: *We encourage all parishioners to contribute to the Food Bank on the first and third Sundays of every month. PLEASE ADD YOUR SUPPORT.*

When you make a donation towards the purchase of Deacon, Lector, and Acolyte vestments, you will be remembered in the prayers of the Acolyte/Lector/Deacon during every Divine Liturgy.

We have received the Deacon/Lector Gold, Blue Red and white vestments. **The Sisters corrected their mistake in quoting the price of vestments: The final cost with shipping is \$5,628.60.** (If more donations are received we will purchase two green Deacon vestments at a cost of \$550/each).

Each time the Deacon, Lector or Altar Server vests, they include in their prayers the persons that have provided them with the vestment. Your donation is greatly appreciated. May the Mother of God continue to intercede for you before the throne of God!

DONATIONS:	UCWLC	1,000.
	Parishioner: Anonymous	1,700.
	Parishioner: Anonymous	800.
	Parishioners: Anonymous	420.
	John & Irene Sliziak	200.
	Parishioner: Anonymous	100.
	Ben & Bonny Marchinkow	100.
	Bessie Lashin	100.
	Stephanie Dorosiewich	<u>100.</u>
Total donations to date:		4,520.

When Parishioners or visitors want to arrange a meeting with the Pastor, please approach Rev. Fr. Josaphat after the Divine Liturgy or call him at 604-879-5830, or email him to: Pastor@stmarysbc.com. Fr. Josaphat would be pleased to meet with you to discuss: Home or Hospital visits to the sick, plan for your Marriage, Baptism, Funeral or help to prepare for any other Service. Or you may need Spiritual Support or help to be a full member of the Parish. What ever your need, please approach Fr. Josaphat.

Reminder to Families or Individuals Admitted to Hospital - If you or a family member is admitted to a hospital and you wish to have a priest visit, please be sure to have someone call the rectory at 604-879-5830, to make this request. Your pastor may have no other way of knowing that you or your loved one is in hospital. Remember privacy legislation restricts the information that can be given out by the hospital.

Please note: parish members requesting the celebration of a Divine Liturgy for a special intention (Thanksgiving, the Infirm, General Intentions, the Deceased, Help of the Holy Spirit, for the Travellers, or any other intention) please see Fr. Josaphat following the Divine Liturgy or call the Parish office to arrange for it.

Our Liturgical Year

“O Author of all created things, Who has established the seasons and the years, bless the crown of the year with your goodness, O Lord.” (Indiction Tropar)

Our Eastern Rite is a priceless heritage and treasure of the Eastern Church and our Ukrainian people. It is noted for its venerable antiquity, its profound content, its mysticism, symbolism, and magnificent liturgical ceremonies. Developed by

the greatest and most gifted of the faithful of the Eastern Church of different ages, countries and peoples, it has been sanctified by the prayers, tears, and sacrifices of the saints, as well as by the blood of martyrs. Our Rite, a faithful reflection of our holy faith, beautifully harmonizes with the soul, mentality and character of our people.

An integral part of our Rite and its most beautiful expression is the Liturgical Year. It resembles a grand panorama in which we find painted in radiant and vivid colours the whole history of man's redemption. During the Liturgical Year we have the opportunity to mediate upon and relive the glorious mysteries and events in the life of Jesus Christ and his most Holy Mother. It places before us, for our admiration and imitation, the heroic deeds and virtues of an immense throng of saints, martyrs and holy people. The Liturgical Year calls us to experience days of spiritual joy, jubilation and triumph as well as days of fasting, penance and holy sorrow for our sins.

For many long centuries our Rite has preserved our Church and people in our native land. It can do the same for us, and our children, now, in the various settlements throughout the world. Obviously, therefore, we ought not only: know our Rite, cherish it, and live according to its precepts, but also we should bring up our children in such a manner that they too will know and cherish it.

With this in mind, we present this article, "A Byzantine Rite Liturgical Year", an outline of the history, meaning, content, and practices of our Liturgical Year.

What is the Liturgical Year?

In a pastoral letter issued at the close of the Second Vatican Council (1965), our Bishops, together with Major Archbishop Cardinal Joseph Slipyj, defined the Liturgical year as: "A liturgical cycle of the Universal or some particular Church, that consists of Sundays, weekdays, the feasts of our Lord, the Mother of God, the saints and the periods of fasting and forbidden times (times when we are to abstain from boisterous parties)."

We call the Liturgical Year: the Ecclesiastical or Church Year, because it contains the Church Calendar, which in some respects is similar to and in others differs from the civil calendar. In the Eastern Church the Church Year differs from the civil calendar in that it does not begin the New Year with the first of January, but begins with the first day of September, which is called the Beginning of the Indiction. This means that the whole cycle of our Church Year begins with the first of September and ends with the thirty first of the following August.

What is Meant by Indiction?

The word "indiction" comes from the Latin word "indictio", which literally means "institution, proclamation, appeal, announcement." The "indiction" was an edict of the Roman Emperors used to determine the land tax throughout the Roman Empire. Such edicts began to appear during the reign of Diocletian (284–305) in the year 297 A.D. At first, they were issued every five years, then later every fifteen years. Gradually the word "indiction" came to denote not only an imperial proclamation, but also a fifteen year cycle as well as the first day of this cycle.

Originally, the indiction was used exclusively for fiscal and tax purposes. But slowly it began to be used in determining the various dates of civil life. This fiscal year did not coincide with the astronomical year, which since the reform of Julius Caesar in the year 46 to the coming of Christ, began with the first day of January. The first day of the indiction was originally the twenty-third of September because that was the day on which Caesar Augustus was born, but under Constantine the Great (306–337) it was changed to the first day of September.

The Beginning of the Indiction – The New Liturgical Year

The Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council in Nicea in 325 adopted the first of September as the opening of the New Church Year and this day has been observed in the Eastern Church to the present time. The Latin Church opens its Liturgical Year on the first day of Advent, i.e., the beginning of the preparation for Christmas.

The indiction of which we are speaking – there were other indictions – is called the Byzantine (or Constantinopolitan or the Constantinian) indiction which, except for Egypt, became mandatory throughout the Roman Empire. Justinian I (527–590) adopted the indiction for establishing the dates of documents, and this practice was not abandoned until the year 1097.

The Beginning of the Indiction – A Church Feast

Later, when September one was designated as the beginning of the Church Year, it was also called the Church Calendar, it assumed a religious character and became a feast of the Church, i.e., a day which had its own special liturgical service. On this day our Church commemorates the day on which Christ entered the synagogue in Nazareth and read from the scrolls the words of the prophet Isaiah. “The Spirit of the Lord has been given me, for He anointed me...to proclaim the Lord’s year of favour.” (Luke 4:18–19) No reliable evidence exists to indicate when the beginning of the Indiction became a feast of the Church; we do know, however, that it already existed in the eighth century.

The Character and Content – Of the Liturgical Year

The Liturgical Year is so arranged that its central place is occupied by our Divine Saviour; around him are gathered the Mother of God and all the angels and saints. In the decree of the Second Vatican Council on the “Constitution on the Liturgy” we read: “Holy Mother Church is conscious that she must celebrate the saving work of her divine Spouse by devoutly recalling it on certain days throughout the year. Every week, on the day that she has called the Lord’s day, she keeps the memory of the Lord’s resurrection, which she also celebrates once a year, together with His blessed passion, in the most solemn festival of Easter. Within a cycle of a year, moreover, she unfolds the whole mystery of Christ, from the incarnation and birth until the ascension, the day of Pentecost, and the expectation of blessed hope and the coming of the Lord.”

The Most Pure Virgin Mary, who is accorded the most prominent place after Christ in the work of redemption, also stands nearest to Christ in the Liturgical Year. This is evident in the various feasts in honour of the Mother of God. The

decree on the “Constitution on the Liturgy” declares that: “In celebrating this annual cycle of Christ’s mysteries, Holy Church honours with special love the Blessed Mary, Mother of God, who is jointed by an inseparable bond to the saving work of her Son. In her, the Church holds up and admires the most excellent fruit of the redemption, and joyfully contemplates, as in a faultless image, that which she herself desires and hopes wholly to be.”

Around the persons of our Lord Jesus Christ and His most holy Mother we see the grand choir of the Church triumphant in heaven, that is, all the saints of the Old and New Testaments: “The Church,” says the same Council, “has also included in the annual cycle days devoted to the memory of the martyrs and the other saints. Raised up to perfection by the manifold graces of God and already in possession of eternal salvation, they sing God’s perfect praise in heaven and offer prayers for us.”

Holy Church, like a good Mother, also commemorates during the Liturgical Year her children who have departed into eternity, and who are in purgatory. For this reason, she has designated certain special days, called ‘Soul Days’, on which she offers prayers and special memorial services for the faithful departed. Finally, the Church Militant also dedicates special times in the Church Year in which the living are asked to engage in spiritual works, prayer, fasting, and penance in order to develop their spiritual life more fully. “Finally”, we read in the decree on the “Constitution on the Liturgy”, in the various seasons of the year and according to her traditional discipline, the Church completes the formation of the faithful by means of pious practices for soul and body, by instruction, prayer, and works of penance and of mercy.”

In summary, our Liturgical Year is a mighty hymn of honour and glory to God, in which the threefold Church takes part – the Church Triumphant in heaven, the Church Suffering in purgatory, and the Church Militant on earth. In the Church Year, the entire content of our holy faith finds its most beautiful expression. Like a colourful rainbow our Liturgical Year joins earth to heaven, and enlightens, purifies, sanctifies and lifts us up to God.

Spiritual Significance of the Liturgical Year

In the pastoral letter written by our bishops and the Archbishop Major Cardinal Joseph Slipyj at the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council (1965), we read: “The Liturgical cycle of our Church is very rich. Our Liturgical Constitutions guide the faithful throughout the whole year and continuously place before their eyes the mysteries of the life, passion, death, and resurrection of our Divine Saviour, the grandeur of the Divine Motherhood and powerful intercession of the most Holy Virgin Mary, the lives of holy men and women, who by their heroic imitation of Christ glorified God and the whole human race. The seasons of fast and abstinence from boisterous entertainment are to help the faithful exercise more self-control and better prepare them for the sacramental encounter with Christ in the Holy Eucharist and that face-to-face encounter with Christ on the day of his Second Coming at the end of the world.”

From what has been said, it is evident that our Liturgical Year resembles a great

spiritual book that teaches us in a practical manner how to praise, love and serve God and thus save our souls. It speaks to us not only of the great love and mercy of God towards us, but also of His strict justice. This spiritual book predisposes us for prayer, sacrifice and penance.

Holy Church desires that the cycle of the Liturgical Year be for us an ever-present preacher and teacher of God's love and the love of His most holy Mother. She desires that it serve as a school of spiritual life, virtue and holiness, and that it be our sure and faithful guide to heaven. Great indeed then, is the significance of the Liturgical Year for our spiritual life, especially for the following reasons:

The Liturgical Year – Is Christ Living and Active

For us the festivals of the Liturgical Year, according to the Church, should not be mere commemorations of past historical events, but should rather be opportunities, here and now, to re-live these events and participate in them as though they were just now taking place. The person of Jesus Christ in whom the whole cycle of the Ecclesiastical Year is centered is not a dead person, who once lived, worked, and passed into history. Jesus Christ is eternally alive and active. Just as he once did on earth, so he does now. He teaches and admonishes us, sanctifies and forgives us, offers Himself up for us, saves us, and draws us to Himself by His example. "Jesus Christ," says St. Paul "is the same today as He was yesterday and as He will be forever." (Heb. 13,8) The Liturgical Year, then, is a continuation of Christ's life, work and doctrine among us today. It is the mystical repetition of the mysteries of Christ's life in the hearts of the faithful.

In his encyclical letter of November, 1947, "Mediator of God", Pius XII wrote: "The Liturgical Year devoutly fostered and accompanied by the Church is not a cold and lifeless representation of the past, nor a simple, bare record of a former age. Rather, it is Christ Himself who is ever living in His Church. Here He continues that journey of immense mercy which He lovingly began in His mortal life 'going about doing good' with the design of bringing men to know His mysteries and in a way live by them. These mysteries are ever present and active ... they are shining examples of Christian perfection as well as sources of divine grace." (§165) Similarly, the decree of the Second Vatican Council on the "Constitution on the Liturgy" states that: "Recalling thus the mysteries of redemption, the Church opens to the faithful the riches of her Lord's powers and merits, so that these are in some way made present for all times, and the faithful are enabled to lay hold upon them and become filled with saving grace." (§102)

The Liturgical Year – A Source of Profound Veneration of the Mother of God

The Liturgical Year is not only a very rich source of the love of Jesus Christ, but is also a fountain of the profound veneration of His most holy Mother. Jesus and Mary are so closely united, that one cannot love Jesus Christ without, at the same time, loving the all-pure Virgin Mary. "Whoever honours Christ," says St. Epiphany of Cyprus (t403) "honours also Mary; whoever does not honour Mary, does not honour Christ. "

The Liturgical Year gives us a wonderful opportunity to study the role and

significance of the most holy Mother of God in the work of redemption, to admire her most beautiful virtues and learn to love her as our Mother, Mediatrix and Protectress. "For Mary," says the decree on the "Constitution on the Church", "who, since her entry into salvation history, unites in herself and re-echoes the greatest teachings of the faith as she is proclaimed and venerated, calls the faithful to her Son, His sacrifice and to the love of the Father ... This most Holy Synod deliberately teaches this Catholic doctrine and at the same time admonishes all the sons of the Church that the cult, especially the liturgical cult, of the Blessed Virgin be fostered ... " (§65 and §67)

The Liturgical Year of our Eastern Church is particularly remarkable for its profound and sincere veneration of the Mother of God, expressed in all our church services.

The eminent scholar and authority on the tradition of the Eastern Church, a Catholic priest and Prince, Maximilian of Saxony, in his "Lectures on the Eastern Liturgies", makes the following remark about the devotion to the most Pure Virgin Mary in the Eastern Church: "Above all, is the veneration of the Mother of God especially a characteristic of the Eastern Liturgies ... The cult of the Mother of God in the East is ancient. All the great Marian feasts began in the East, so that devotion to Mary permeated the blood and bone of all the faithful of the Eastern Church ... They were so reared in the veneration of the Mother of God that whosoever did not venerate her was simply regarded as an unbeliever and non-Christian. Thus, for example, a well known Greek song declares, 'Those who do not kiss your holy icon, O Virgin Mother of God, consider them as infidels and deliver them over to the fires of hell.' – All the Slavic peoples, especially the Ukrainians, inherited this love for the Mother of God from the Greeks." Our Kievan Metropolitan George (1069–1072) in his canonical collection "Precepts to the Confessing Sons and Daughters" says: "He who does not pray to the holy Mother of God with trust, let him be cursed."

The Liturgical Year – Is the Gospel in Practice

During the Liturgical Year, besides the festivals of our Lord, His Virgin Mother, we also celebrate the memory of the different saints. Their names fill a very great part of the Church Calendar. Every day in the year is dedicated to one or more saints. By their lives they have clearly demonstrated that they attained sanctity solely because they followed the example of Christ and His most holy Mother and lived according to the teachings of the Holy Gospel. Their example and heroic virtues speak to us in a language that is understood by all – the language of the Holy Gospel. Hence, their lives are for us the Holy Gospel in action.

Pope Pius XII in his above mentioned encyclical says: "In the course of the Liturgical Year, besides the mysteries of Jesus Christ, the feasts of the Saints are celebrated ... we should imitate the virtues of the saints just as they imitated Christ, for in their virtues there shines forth under different aspects the splendour of the Divine Redeemer." (§166, §167)

The Saints by their holiness of life continually remind us of our duty to become saints – a duty we assumed by our baptismal commitment. Sanctity is not the

privilege of only a few. The words of Christ apply to all of us: "Be you perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect," (Mt. 5,48); so too, do the words of the Apostle Paul: "The will of God is your sanctification." (I. Thes. 4,3)

The Second Vatican Council, in many places of its decrees, reminds all the faithful of this obligation to strive for holiness of life, for sanctity: "All the faithful, whatever their condition or state, are called by the Lord each in his own way, to that perfect holiness whereby the Father Himself is perfect ... Therefore, in the Church, everyone whether belonging to the hierarchy, or being cared for by it, is called to holiness ... Therefore, all the faithful of Christ are invited to strive for the holiness and perfection of their own proper state." (Constitution on the Church, §11, 39, 42)

By their own example, the saints teach us that sanctity is within the reach of people of all ages and all walks of life. All one has to do is love God, please Him in all things, and fulfill His holy will as the saints did.

Our Liturgical Year is truly a wonderful school of spiritual life. In this school we learn the simple alphabet not only of the love of God, but also of great holiness, which flows naturally from the veneration and imitation of Jesus Christ, the most Pure Virgin Mary and the saints.

The Liturgical Year, like a beautifully painted iconostas, constantly places before our eyes the sublime history of the redemption of the human race. Let us strive, therefore, to be, not mute but vocal witnesses, and active participators in the sacred events of our Liturgical Year, who exemplify these events in the actions of our daily lives.

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The Feast of the Nativity of the Most Holy Mother of God

The Church does not have the custom of celebrating the earthly birthday of the Saints of God, but rather celebrates their heavenly birthday, that is, the day of their death, which for them, is the beginning of eternal life. The Church does make exception, however, for the two greatest Saints in the Church: the most Pure Virgin Mary and St. John the Baptist. We celebrate not only their heavenly birth, but also their earthly birth.

One of the great feasts we celebrate at the beginning of the Liturgical Year is the feast of the Nativity of the most Holy Mother of God. As is evident from the words of the tropar of this feast, it is joyful and significant. It is joyful because it is the birthday of the Mother of God, the Queen of Heaven and earth. It is significant because it places before our eyes the great truth of our faith concerning the Divine Motherhood of the most Pure Virgin Mary, from whom "shone forth the Sun of Justice, Christ our God." The morning star has risen therefore, the rising of the sun is not far off. The sublime name of the feast given in our liturgical books also indicates the great significance of this feast: "The Nativity of our most Holy Queen, the Mother of God and ever Virgin Mary".

What is the basis for the institution of this feast? What is its history and its significance?

The Institution of this Feast

The Gospel records very few incidents in the life of the most Pure Virgin Mary. It says nothing about her nativity, her parentage, her childhood or youth, or her Assumption into heaven. What is the source of our information about all these things? All this information comes from the tradition of the Church and the apocryphal writings. The Apocrypha are those writings that relate certain events from the life of Jesus Christ or his Blessed Mother that are not included in the Holy Gospel. Although the Church does not acknowledge the Apocrypha as authentic writings nor as trustworthy historical sources, nevertheless, much of what they relate belongs to the authentic tradition and belief of the early Church.

The chief source of information on the life of the Holy Mother of God is the Apocryphal book written around the year 170–180 called the *Proto-evangelium of James*. This book presented the basis for the institution of such feasts as the Conception of St. Anna (the Nativity of the Holy Mother of God), the Presentation in the Temple, and the feasts honouring Joachim and Anna, parents of Mary. From this book we learn the circumstances surrounding the birth of the Virgin Mary, and the names of her parents, Joachim and Anna.

The apocryphal Proto-evangelium of James in the early Church was held in high esteem. Among the many Fathers who cite or explain it are St. Epiphany, St. Andrew of Crete, St. Sophronius, Patriarch Germanus I, St. John Damascene and Patriarch Photius.

In the Proto-evangelium of James we learn that the Blessed Virgin Mary was descended on her father's side from the royal house of David, and on her mother's side from the priestly line of Aaron. Her parents lived in Nazareth and were fairly well-off. They were also distinguished for their holiness and their great love of God and neighbor. Joachim was accustomed to dividing the fruits of his labour into three parts: one part he gave to God as a sacrifice, the second part he distributed among the poor, and the third part he kept for himself. Their one great sorrow was that they had no children. Among the Jews, childlessness was looked upon not only as an absence of God's blessing, but as a punishment from God. Because of their childlessness, Joachim and Anna suffered much. Therefore, it is not surprising that they should unceasingly implore God for a child. This was the main purpose of all their prayers, fasting, and alms. Finally, God blessed them in their old age with a child. She was destined to the Mother of God.

The History of the Feast

The feast of the Nativity of the Mother of God in the Eastern Church is one of the most ancient Marian feasts; so ancient, that the time of its appearance cannot be accurately determined. St. John Chrysostom, St. Proclus, St. Epiphany, St. Augustine and St. Roman the Melodist mention it. A tradition in Palestine recounts that St. Helena (+330), mother of the Emperor Constantine, built a church in Jerusalem honouring the feast of the Nativity of the Mother of God. The Sacramentary of Pope Gelasius (492–496) of the fifth century also mentions this feast.

The Patriarch Anatole (449–458), Stephan of Jerusalem (6c), St. Andrew of

Crete, the Patriarch Sergius (7c), St. John Damascene, the Patriarch Germanus (8c), and St. Joseph the Studite (9c) all composed sticheras and hymns in honour of this feast. The official introduction of this feast in the Byzantine empire is ascribed to the Emperor Mauricius (582–602).

From the East, the festival of the Nativity of the Mother of God found its way to the West, spreading to Rome in the seventh century and in later centuries, throughout the entire Latin Church. September 8 was selected as the day of this feast because on that day nine months were completed from December 9, the day on which the church celebrates the conception of the Pure Virgin Mary in the womb of Anna. This day was also selected because it marked the day on which a church in Jerusalem was consecrated in her honour. This feast ranks as one of the twelve major feasts in our Liturgical Year. It has a one day pre-feast and a post-feast lasting only four days because the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross is celebrated on September 14.

The Nativity of the Most Holy Mother of God A Day of Universal Joy

The birth of Mary, was a singular source of joy for her parents, Joachim and Anna, for heaven, for earth, and all creation. The spiritual joy occasioned by this feast of the Nativity of the Mother of God is stressed by many Church Fathers. St. Andrew of Crete, in his longer sermon on this feast, extols the Most Holy Mother of God as the one in whom all the prophecies and prefigurements of the Old Testament were fulfilled. Fittingly, extolling her with the most sublime titles of praise, he summons all to share in this joy: heaven, earth, sea and every creature; finally, he concludes with the words: “For today a child is born, from whom we have received salvation, Christ God and Word, who, having come, abides with us forever.” St. John Damascene in a sermon for this day says: “The day of the Nativity of the Mother of God is a day of universal joy for, through the Mother of God, the entire human race is renewed and the sorrow of the first mother, Eve, was transformed into joy.”

The divine liturgies of this day are filled with joyful melodies, almost as though we were celebrating the Nativity of our Lord or his glorious Resurrection. The principal motives underlying this joy is: the end of childlessness for Joachim and Anna, the beginning of our salvation, the most wonderful dignity of Divine Motherhood bestowed on Mary, the unique role and significance of the Mother of God in the work of the redemption of the human race.

The first to rejoice at Mary’s Nativity are her parents. In the sticheras of the Aposticha in the Small Vespers service, the Church cries out to them: “Rejoice, O Joachim and Anna, rejoice, for from a barren woman is born the Cause of our joy and salvation.”

The angels and all the faithful also rejoice at Mary’s Nativity: “To Your honorable Nativity, O Most Holy and Pure Virgin,” we sing in the Small Vespers service in the sticheras at Psalm 137, “The multitude of angels in heaven and the human race on earth are singing praises, for you became the Mother of the Creator of all, Jesus our God. While imploring Him, do not cease praying for us, who after God place our hope in you, O Mother of God, ever praised and Immaculate.”

All the Saints of both the Old and the New Testaments share in this joy: “Renew yourself, O Adam,” says the Exapostilarion of the Matins service, “be happy, O Eve, rejoice you prophets together with the Apostles and the righteous, for today the universal joy of the angels and men has shone forth from the righteous Joachim and Anna: The Mother of God, Mary.”

Finally, the Church calls upon the faithful to pay due veneration to the Mother of God: “Come, all you faithful, let us hasten to the Virgin, for she is born, who even before her conception was destined to be the Mother of our God. She is the vessel of virginity, flowering rod of Aaron from the stem of Jesse, proclaimed by the prophets, and the child of Joachim and Anna. She is born; and through her the world is renewed, and the church is clothed in splendour. She is the holy temple, where God abides, a virgin vessel, a royal chamber, in which the wondrous mystery of the marvelous union of the two natures of Christ is accomplished. By paying worship to him let us praise the All Pure Virgin.”

The Cult of the Saints Joachim and Anna

The day following the feast of the Nativity of the Mother of God, the Church honours the “Holy and Righteous Ancestors of Christ, Joachim and Anna”. The Church pays them special veneration as the parents of Mary and the ancestors of Jesus Christ. Hence, in our service they are called “Ancestors of God” (Greek = Theopater). In the dismissal prayer of the church services, we daily ask their prayerful intercession.

During the services in their honour, the Church rejoices, praising their role in our salvation, and extolling them as the most blessed of parents. “Come today, O lovers of the feast,” we sing in the sticheras of the Vespers services of September 9, “let us rejoice, singing, and let us zealously honour the memory of Joachim and Anna, because for us they gave birth to the Mother of God, ... O Blessed couple, you surpassed all parents, for you gave birth to the most beautiful of all creatures! Truly, you are blessed, O Joachim, being the father of such a Virgin! And blessed is your womb, O Anna, for you brought forth the Mother of our life. Blessed is she who nursed Her, that she in turn might nourish Him, the Nourisher of all creatures. Therefore, we implore you, O Blessed ones, pray to Him for the salvation of our souls.”

The veneration of Joachim and Anna began quite rapidly after the institution of the feast of the Nativity of the Mother of God. In the sixth century churches began to be erected in honor of St. Anna. Emperor Justinian I (527–565) in the year 550, dedicated a church in Constantinople in her honour. Also, a church was erected in her honour in Jerusalem, the place of her birth. These two churches had a great influence on the spread of the cult of both the parents of the Blessed Virgin Mary, but especially of St. Anna. The Eastern Church began to celebrate their memory on September 9 near the end of the sixth century. Ancient Greek hymns also exist in their honour, and in the writings of the Fathers, especially those of St. Epiphany and St. John Damascene.

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