

St. Mary's Newsletter

St Mary's Ukrainian Catholic Parish
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Divine Liturgies

Sundays: 8:30am English (spoken)
10:30am Ukrainian (sung)
Mon-Sat: 7:30am (Chapel)
Holy Days: 10:00am
Fr Joseph Pidskalny OSBM (Admin)

Ukrainian Christmas Eve

Christmas Eve, known as Svyat Vechir or Sviata Vecheria, is marked by a day of fasting to symbolize Mary's journey to Bethlehem. Families gather for a traditional supper, sometimes leaving an empty place setting for loved ones who have passed. Hay is placed on the table to represent Jesus in the manger. Children look for the first star in the sky to start the festivities.

The dinner includes 12 meatless dishes, representing the 12 apostles, and begins with a prayer and carol. The first dish is always kutya, made of cooked wheat, honey, ground poppy seeds, and sometimes nuts.

In Ukrainian, Merry Christmas is 'Христос Рождається' (Christ is Born). The dining room often features a Didukh, a wheat decoration symbolizing Ukraine's wheat fields and ancestors. After the meal, people sing carols, or 'Koliadky', around the table or door-to-door. The Ukrainian carol 'Shchedryk' inspired the popular 'Carol of the Bells'.



DON'T HOLD BACK

A strict CEO often disciplined employees for their mistakes or perceived lack of progress. One day, a sign announced that the person holding them back from succeeding had passed away, and a funeral service was to be held. Curious, the employees gathered in the assembly room and were surprised to see the CEO present. They wondered, "If it wasn't him, who was holding us back?"

One by one, the employees approached the coffin and found a mirror inside. Next to the mirror was a sign that read:

"The only person who can limit your growth is you. Break through your limiting beliefs and take control of your life. The most influential relationship you can have is the relationship with yourself. Now you know who has been holding you back from living up to your true potential. Are you going to keep allowing that person to hold you back?"

Moral: You are responsible for your success. Don't let others' perceptions or your own doubts hold you back. Take personal responsibility and make necessary adjustments.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Rally and March for Ukraine
Sundays 2pm to 3:30pm
Canada Place (three large flagpoles)

Ukrainian Carol Workshop (free)
Monday December 2 1-3pm
highsandlowschoir@gmail.com

Winter Solstice-Traditions of Ukraine
Tuesday December 10 7-9pm
Secret Lantern Society Vancouver

Ukrainian Christmas Market 12-7pm
Ukrainian Christmas Carols 6-7pm
Saturday December 21, 12-7pm
Holy Eucharist Cathedral New West

Malanka
Saturday January 11, 2025
Ukr. Community Centre Ivan Franko

Old New Year Ukrainian Party
Friday January 17, 2025 10pm - 3am
Bar None Nightclub Vancouver

Malanka
Saturday January 18, 2025
Ukrainian Hall AUCC Vancouver

Invictus Games (Ukraine participating)
February 8-16, 2025
Various Locations-Vancouver/Whistler

Ukrainian Opera and Ballet
March 2025
Richmond Theatre

BC Ukrainian Cultural Festival
Saturday May 3, 2025
Mission BC
Check with the venue for details or updates

You can see more at :
<https://sites.google.com/uahub.ca/bcuaca/home>



Mykhailo Verbytskyi

You may have noticed that at the 10:30 am Liturgy, the Parish Choir, under the direction of Rick Ruta, has been performing the beautiful liturgical music of **Mykhailo Verbytskyi**.

Born on March 4, 1815, and passing on December 7, 1870, Verbytskyi was not only a Ukrainian composer but also a dedicated priest of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church. He holds the distinction of being one of the first professional composers from Galicia and is best known for composing the melody of Ukraine's national anthem.

Verbytskyi's anthem, "**Shche ne vmerla Ukraina**" ("**Ukraine Has Not Yet Perished**"), with lyrics by Pavlo Chubynsky, became a symbol of resilience and hope, especially during the Russian invasion of Ukraine. This powerful melody has been played by orchestras and musicians worldwide in solidarity with Ukraine.

As a composer, Verbytskyi laid the foundations for modern Ukrainian music. His contributions to liturgical music are still celebrated in the Galicia region, with compositions such as "**Єдинородний Сине**" (Only-

begotten Son), "**Святий Боже**" (Holy God), "**Алилуя**" (Alleluia), "**Отче наш**" (Our Father), and "**Хваліте Господа з небес**" (Praise the Lord from the heavens).

Verbytskyi was a true Renaissance man of the Romantic era. He was the first professional composer from Western Ukraine, the founder of the Przemyśl professional school of composers, a promoter of choral music in **Halychyna** (Galicia), a choir conductor, a guitar virtuoso, and a **Greek Catholic priest**. He popularized the guitar in Halychyna and even wrote a guitar manual.

The prominent Ukrainian **poet Ivan Franko** described Verbytskyi as the man who "revived the national spirit in Halychyna." Thanks to his relative, Eparchial Bishop of Przemyśl, UGCC hierarch Ivan Snihurskyi, Verbytskyi studied at the Przemyśl Gymnasium and sang in the choir of the Greek Catholic Church. This church ran a music school founded by Bishop Snihurskyi in 1828, where Verbytskyi studied music theory and composition with the Czech musician Alois Nanke.

In 1834, Verbytskyi entered the **Theological Seminary in Lviv**, where he began studying the guitar and wrote his first choral compositions. Despite family circumstances forcing him to interrupt his studies, he returned to Przemyśl in 1846, where he worked at the church consistory and taught calligraphy at the Institute for cantors/parochial schoolteachers.

Verbytskyi's passion for music led him to take private lessons from the choirmaster of the Roman Catholic Church, F. Lorenz. In 1848, he actively participated in **the Ukrainian Amateur Theater** in Przemyśl, performing as an actor, singer, and composer for many performances. In 1850, he was ordained a priest and served as pastor in several villages of the **Przemyśl Greek Catholic Eparchy**.

In 1864, Verbytskyi began working with the **Ruska Besida Theater in Lviv**, creating numerous musical compositions for their plays. Towards the end of his life, he focused on teaching, with students including priests-composers Viktor Matiuk and Porfyriy Bazhanskyi.

Verbytskyi's work was greatly influenced by Romanticism and the **musical traditions of Greek Catholic spirituality**. His legacy includes one complete Liturgy for mixed choir (1847) and more than 30 short biblical compositions. He also composed many secular choral works and instrumental music, including ten symphonies, two orchestral polonaises, and suites.