

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)

Great Lent Reflections

We begin Great Lent: The Great Fast—the great reflection on life and death. For many weeks the readings of each Sunday have been teaching us how to step back and take a critical look at ourselves. What motivates our actions? (Laws or Love?) How do we see others? (With condemnation or compassion?)

During Lent our task is to focus on our relationship with God. The Fast is not about diet; it is about doing what it takes us personally to bring our consciousness into harmony and awareness of Divine presence in our ordinary existence. Our liturgical services support and sustain our personal journeys by praying together as a community, through the readings, and hymns.

In our parish every Friday we pray for the deceased. This service called "Sorokousty," literally means "forty mouths" referring to an ancient monastic practice of 40 monks or priests singing this commemoration of our departed sisters and brothers. Sorokousty is a beautiful way to remind us that our Christian family reaches beyond our present time and space to encompass generations past. Each family in our parish (including deceased parishioners) have a book where the names of family members who have died are written. Every name during each Sorokousty is read out.



During Mark's first month of college, the professor gave his students a pop quiz. He was a conscientious student and had breezed through the questions until he read the last one: "What is the first name of the woman who cleans the school?" Surely, this was some kind of joke. He had seen the housekeeper several times. She was tall, dark-haired and in her 50s, but how would he know her name? He handed in his paper, leaving the last question blank.

Just before class ended, one student asked if the last question would count toward the quiz grade. "Absolutely," said the professor. "In your careers, you will meet many people. All are significant. They each deserve your attention and care, even if all you do is smile and say 'hello'." Mark never forgot that lesson. He also learned her name was Dorothy. Everyone in your life is everyone just like the people you give importance to.

Moral of the Story: Everyday, we meet people that will, at some point or another, make an impact in our lives. Some of these people, we don't think much about simply because they're always in the background. They don't put too much attention on themselves. But every person we meet is important because he or she will make a difference in our life. Treasure those who are around you.

UPCOMING EVENTS

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

War Tails Documentary
March 3, Monday 7-10pm
Rio Theatre Vancouver BC

Ukrainian Friday Night Suppers
Mar 21, April 18 4-6:30pm
Ivan Franko Society Richmond BC

Grand Ukrainian Party
Saturday March 8 10pm
Bar None Nightclub Vancouver

St Mary's Parish Lenten Mission
March 21,22 10am Mar 23 8:30 and 10:30am
St Mary's Ukrainian Church Vancouver

Perogies For Peace
March 29 4-6pm
Holy Eucharist Cathedral New West

Ukrainian Opera and Ballet
March 2025
Richmond Theatre

Pysanka Ukrainian egg Design
Saturday April 12 1:30pm
181 Roundhouse Mews Vancouver

BC Ukrainian Cultural Festival
Saturday May 3, 2025
Mission BC

Flea Market
Saturday June 7, 2025 10am-3pm
Ukrainian Catholic Centre
3150 Ash Street Vancouver BC

Check with the venue for details or updates

Ukrainian pysanka legends

The Hutsuls—ethnic Ukrainians who live in the Carpathian Mountain highlands in western Ukraine—believe that the fate of the world depends upon the pysanka. As long as the egg writing custom continues, the world will exist. If, for any reason, this custom is abandoned, evil—in the shape of a horrible serpent who is forever chained to a cliff—will overrun the world. Each year the serpent sends out his minions to see how many pysanky have been written. If the number is low the serpent's chains are loosened and he is free to wander the earth causing havoc and destruction. If, on the other hand, the number of pysanky has increased, the chains are tightened and good triumphs over evil for yet another year.

Newer legends blended folklore and Christian beliefs and firmly attached the egg to the Easter celebration. One legend concerns the Virgin Mary. It tells of the time Mary gave eggs to the soldiers at the cross. She entreated them to be less cruel to her son and wept. The tears of Mary fell upon the eggs, spotting them with dots of brilliant color.

Another legend tells of when Mary Magdalene went to the sepulcher to anoint the body of Jesus. She had with her a basket of eggs to serve as a repast. When she arrived at the sepulcher and uncovered the eggs, the pure white shells had miraculously taken on a rainbow of colors.

A common legend tells of Simon the peddler, who helped Jesus carry his cross on the way to Calvary. He had left his goods at the side of the road, and, when he returned, the eggs had all turned into intricately decorated pysanky.

Ukrainian superstitions and folk beliefs

Many superstitions were attached to Ukrainian pysanky. Pysanky were thought to protect households from evil spirits, catastrophe, lightning and fires. Pysanky with spiral motifs were the most powerful, as the demons and other unholy creatures would be trapped within the spirals forever. A blessed pysanka could be used to find demons hidden in the dark corners of your house.

There were superstitions regarding the colors and designs on Ukrainian pysanky. One old Ukrainian myth centered on the wisdom of giving older people gifts of pysanky with darker colors and/or rich designs, for their life has already been filled. Similarly, it is appropriate to give young people pysanky with white as the predominant color because their life is still a blank page. Girls would often give pysanky to young men they fancied, that included heart motifs.

Ukrainian color symbolism

It is not only motifs on Ukrainian pysanky which carried symbolic weight: colors also had significance. Although the earliest Ukrainian pysanky were often simply two-toned, and many folk designs still are, some believed that the more colors there were on a decorated egg, the more magical power it held. A multi-colored egg could thus bring its owner better luck and a better fate.

The color palette of traditional Ukrainian folk pysanky was fairly limited, as it was based on natural dyes. Yellow, red/orange, green, brown and black were the predominant colors. With the advent of aniline dyes in the 1800s, small amounts of blue and purple were sometimes added. The meanings below are generalizations; different regions of Ukraine interpreted colors differently.[17]

Red - is probably the oldest symbolic color, and has many meanings. It represents life-giving blood, and often appears on pysanky with nocturnal and heavenly symbols. It represents love and joy, and the hope of marriage. It is also associated with the sun.

Black - is a particularly sacred color, and is most commonly associated with the "other world," but not in a negative sense.

Yellow - symbolized the moon and stars and also, agriculturally, the harvest.

Blue - Represented blue skies or the air, and good health.

White - Signified purity, birth, light, rejoicing, virginity.

Green - the color of new life in the spring. Green represents the resurrection of nature, and the riches of vegetation.

Brown - represents the earth.

As with symbols, these talismanic meanings of colors applied to traditional Ukrainian folk pysanky with traditional designs, and not to modern decorative pysanky. From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

