



Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Toronto and Eastern Canada
Українська Католицька Єпархія Торонта й Східної Канади
Éparchie Catholique Ukrainienne de Toronto et de l'Ést du Canada

PASTORAL LETTER
ON THE OCCASION OF THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD 2022-2023

To the Reverend Clergy, Monastics, Seminarians and Laity of the Ukrainian Catholic Church
In the Eparchy of Toronto and Eastern Canada

Christ is Born! Let Us Glorify Him!

Dearly Beloved in Christ!

🎵 Happy Birthday to You 🎵 is a song we sing often. I mark the event of my birthday every year as I am sure you do. Yet if anyone of us or if I ask myself “**Why** was I born?”, I must admit that neither I nor anyone of us had a plan before we were born. But Jesus did. “*God eternal is born today!*” we sing in the famous Christmas carol. And the Church in her wisdom helps us appreciate this truth every year we celebrate the incarnation of the Divine Son, Jesus Christ!

God is love and He chose to express His love for us, offering us eternal life with the Most Holy Trinity. To do this, He chose to die for us, to conquer sin and death. Then He rose from the dead to offer us eternal life. For this he was born. We are invited to discover our purpose in Him.

Clearly, it is a tragedy to live a meaningless life and suffer a meaningless death. But uniting ourselves to the birth, life, death and resurrection of Christ we discover the meaning of our birth, life, death and resurrection. Only then can we understand how abortion, euthanasia, addiction and abuse of self or others, senseless aggression and greed are ways we don't unite ourselves with Christ.

Has humanity lost its way? Well, not completely. Amid all these tragedies there is a ray of light in the darkness, a person who shines and restores our hope in human dignity. Worldwide, in Ukraine, or in our own homes in Canada, the Holy Spirit is waiting to break through to others with good news and wants to do this through you. Each of us would do well to ask God that question, “Lord, how do you want to use me in sharing with others this purpose and hope in light of so many who search for meaning in their lives?”

We must enter into the mystery of the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus. We must pray at home, fast, pray at church and celebrate often the mysteries of confession and Eucharist. We must take a path to heal wounds and traumas and be attentive to the poor and those in need. Our families must become better domestic churches so that others can encounter Jesus Christ. We must pray with others in all places. Then we will appreciate better why Jesus was born and we can truly celebrate His birth.

Thus, our celebration of the birth of Christ, Christmas, will shed light on the question we just asked, “Why was I born?” God gives us life, and with His purpose in mind we know why and how to live, that is, for God. We know how to die, that is with the intention of doing the will of God. We can accept the fact we will resurrect to live forever, but it depends on our choices today and God's mercy as to where that will be.

Through the intercession of the Theotokos, may the Holy Spirit come upon you and may Jesus be born in the manger of your heart. May you draw others to this as a true Missionary Disciple according to your encounter with Jesus Christ. Then with joy and peace in our hearts, we can become the change God wants to see in the world and the change we want to see. Then, we can truly sing for others and for Christ, “Happy Birthday...”

God is with us! Christ is Born!

+Bryan Bayda, CSsR,
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