



## *Protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary Ukrainian Catholic Church*

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### *Celebration of the Holy Mysteries*

**RECITATION OF THE HOLY ROSARY AND CONFESSIONS:** ½ HR BEFORE DIVINE LITURGY

**BAPTISM & CHRISMATION / ANNOINTING OF THE SICK / COMMUNION CALLS & VISITATIONS:**  
CONTACT FR. IHOR TO MAKE ARRANGEMENTS

**MARRIAGE PREPARATION:**  
CONTACT FR. IHOR AT LEAST SIX MONTHS PRIOR TO SETTING THE ACTUAL WEDDING DATE

**RELIGIOUS EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN:**  
CONTACT MRS. CHRISTINA VOGEL AT (603) 686-2092 TO REGISTER YOUR CHILDREN

**SCHEDULE OF DIVINE LITURGIES:**  
SUNDAYS: 10 AM (September thru May)      MON THRU SAT: AS NOTED IN WEEKLY BULLETIN  
9 AM (June thru August)      HOLY DAYS OF OBLIGATION: 7 PM

#### **DIVINE LITURGY AND VESPERS SCHEDULE FOR WEEK OF NOVEMBER 6, 2022**

**Sunday, November 13<sup>th</sup> – Twenty-Third Sunday after Pentecost and Feast of St. John Chrysostom**

Divine Liturgy: 10 AM      Propers: Tone 6 and Festal Tones      Vestments: Bright  
Epistle: Ephesians 2: 4-10      Gospel: St. Luke 10: 25-37  
Intention: For all Parishioners followed by Panakhyda for the blessed repose of the souls of **all Deceased**  
**+Veterans of Our Armed Forces**

**Saturday, November 19<sup>th</sup> (10 AM):** For the blessed repose of the souls of **Deceased +Members of Samaruk Family** with Panakhyda, offered by the Samaruk Family  
**Saturday, November 19<sup>th</sup> (7 PM):** Vespers Service

## ***Divine Liturgy and Vespers Services Schedule and Intentions for November and December***

**Sunday, November 20<sup>th</sup> (10 AM):** For all Parishioners followed by Panakhyda for the blessed repose of the souls of all +Victims of the 1932-33 Holodomor in Ukraine

**Thursday, November 24<sup>th</sup> (10 AM):** Thanksgiving Day

**Saturday, November 26<sup>th</sup> (10 AM):** For the blessed repose of the soul of +**Romana Khrystyna** Maksymowych with Panakhyda, offered by the Maksymowych Family

**Saturday, November 26<sup>th</sup> (7 PM):** Vespers Service

**Sunday, November 27<sup>th</sup> (10 AM):** For all Parishioners

**Saturday, December 3<sup>rd</sup> (7 PM):** Vespers Service

**Sunday, December 4<sup>th</sup> (10 AM):** For all Parishioners

**Saturday, December 10<sup>th</sup> (10 AM):** For the blessed repose of the souls of +**Irena**, +**Hryn'**, +**Volodymyr**, +**Ivan**, +**Paranya**, +**Nazar** and +**Cheryl** with Panakhyda, offered by the Hyk Family

**Saturday, December 10<sup>th</sup> (7 PM):** Vespers Service

**Sunday, December 11<sup>th</sup> (10 AM):** For all Parishioners

**Saturday, December 17<sup>th</sup> (7 PM):** Vespers Service

**Sunday, December 18<sup>th</sup> (10 AM):** For all Parishioners

### ***Christmas Week and Theophany Services:***

**Saturday, December 24<sup>th</sup> (10 AM):** Liturgy of St. Basil the Great followed by Liteeya Service

**Saturday, December 24<sup>th</sup> (4 PM):** Christmas Eve Divine Liturgy (All English Language Liturgy)

**Sunday, December 25<sup>th</sup> (10 AM):** Nativity of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (Holy Day of Obligation)

**Monday, December 26<sup>th</sup> (7 PM):** Synaxis of the Holy Mother of God

**Tuesday, December 27<sup>th</sup> (7 PM):** Feast of St. Stephen, Protomartyr

**Saturday, December 31<sup>st</sup> (7 PM):** Vespers Service

**Sunday, January 1<sup>st</sup> (10 AM):** Liturgy of St. Basil the Great - Feast of the Circumcision of Our Lord

**Friday, January 6<sup>th</sup> (7 PM):** Feast of Theophany with Great Water Blessing (Holy Day of Obligation)

**Saturday, January 7<sup>th</sup> (10 AM):** Christmas Day according to the Julian Calendar (All Ukrainian Language Liturgy)

### **Saturday Services**

Fr. Ihor is celebrating Vesper services every Saturday at 7 PM. All parishioners are invited to attend this beautiful service. Those who wish to have a Divine Liturgy celebrated for a loved one whether living or deceased or for a private intention are still able to do so. Please request your Divine Liturgy by contacting Fr. Ihor at (860) 617-6357 or cantor Jerry Maksymowych at (603) 627-2042. Please note that Saturday Divine Liturgies will now be celebrated only at 10 AM whenever they are requested. If no Divine Liturgy has been requested for a particular Saturday, then none will be celebrated on that day. The Divine Liturgy schedule in the bulletin will only show 10 AM Divine Liturgies on Saturdays when they have been requested. If the bulletin does not show a 10 AM Divine Liturgy for a given Saturday, then this means that particular Saturday is available for your request.

### **Суботні Богослужіння**

Отець Ігор святкує Вечірню кожної суботи у 7-мі годині вечером. Ласкаво просимо усіх парафіян до участі. Парафіяни які бажають замовити Божественну Літургію в суботу для померших або на особисті інтенції можуть дзвонити до о. Ігоря на номер (860) 617-6357 або до дяка п. Ярослава Максимовича на номер (603) 627-2042. Суботні Божественні Літургії будуть відслужені тільки о годині 10-тій ранком коли замовлені. Якщо Літургія в певну суботу не буде замовлена, то в цей день не буде жодна відправлена. Порядок Богослужінь в бюлетені покаже тільки ті суботні Служби Божі які є замовлені. Якщо в бюлетені

не відображається Божественна Літургія на дану суботу, то це означає, що ця субота доступна на Ваше замовлення.

## ***Liturgical Propers, Readings and Sermon for Sunday***

### **Liturgical Propers for the Twenty-Third Sunday After Pentecost and Feast of St. John Chrysostom**

**Resurrectional Tropar – Tone 6:** Angelic powers stood by Your tomb. The guards fell as dead. Mary came seeking Your most pure body. You vanquished hell; it was no match for You. You went to meet the women, for You are the Giver of life. You are risen from the dead. Glory to You, O Lord.

**Festal Tropar – Tone 8:** Grace shone forth from your mouth like a fiery beacon and enlightened the universe, bestowing on the world not the treasures of greed, but rather showing us the heights of humility. As you teach us by your words, O John Chrysostom, our father, intercede with the Word, Christ our God, for the salvation of our souls.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,

**Festal Kondak – Tone 6:** From heaven you received divine grace; your lips have taught us all to worship the Triune God, O blessed John Chrysostom. It is fitting that we praise you; for you are a teacher, clarifying things divine.

now and always and forever. Amen.

**Resurrectional Kondak – Tone 6:** Christ, our God, the Giver of life raised the dead from the valley of gloom. With His own life-creating hand, He gave resurrection to all mankind. For He is the Savior, the Resurrection, the Life and the God of all.

**Prokimen – Tone 6:** Save Your people, O Lord, and bless Your inheritance, and bless Your inheritance.

VERSE: To You I cry, O Lord my God: do not be deaf to my call.

**Prokimen – Tone 1:** My mouth shall speak wisdom and the meditation of my heart understanding.

### **Апостол (Еф 2: 4-10)**

До Ефесян послання св. апостола Павла читання.

Браття, Бог, багатий милосердям, з-за великої своєї любови, якою полюбив нас, мертвих нашими гріхами, оживив нас разом із Христом - благодаттю ви спасенні! І разом з Ним воскресив нас, і разом посадовив на небі у Христі Ісусі; щоб у наступних віках Він міг показати надзвичайне багатство своєї благодаті у своїй доброті до нас у Христі Ісусі. Бо ви спасенні благодаттю через віру. І це не від нас: воно дар Божий. Воно не від діл, щоб ніхто не міг хвалитися. Бо ми його створіння, створені у Христі Ісусі для добрих діл, які Бог уже наперед був приготував, щоб ми їх чинили.

### **Epistle Reading for the Twenty-Third Sunday after Pentecost (Ephesians 2: 4–10)**

A reading of the letter of St. Paul to the Ephesians.

Brethren: God is rich in mercy; because of His great love for us He brought us to life with Christ when we were dead in sin. By this favor you were saved. Both with and in Christ Jesus He raised us up and gave us a place in the heavens that in the ages to come He might display the great wealth of His favor, manifested by His kindness

to us in Christ Jesus. I repeat, it is owing to His favor that salvation is yours through faith. This is not your own doing, it is God's gift; neither is it a reward for anything you have accomplished, so let no one pride himself on it. We are truly His handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to lead the life of good deeds, which God prepared for us in advance.

**Tone 6: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.**

Verse: He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High shall abide under the protection of Almighty God.

**Tone 6: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.**

Verse: He shall say to the Lord: "You are my Protector and my Refuge, my God in whom I trust."

**Tone 6: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.**

Verse: The mouth of the just man shall meditate wisdom and his tongue shall speak judgment.

**Tone 6: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.**

Verse: The law of his God is in his heart, and his steps will not falter.

**Tone 6: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.**

## **23-а НЕДІЛЯ ПО ЗІСЛАННІ СВ. ДУХА**

### **Євангелія (Лк 10: 25-37)**

У той час, якийсь законовчитель устав, щоб його випробувати, та й каже: "Учителю, що мені робити, щоб вічне життя осягнути?" А Ісус мовив до нього: "В законі що написано? Як там читаєш?" Озвався той і каже: "Люби Господа, Бога твого, всім серцем твоїм, усією твоєю душею і всією силою твоєю і всією думкою твоєю; а ближнього твого, як себе самого." "Ти добре відповів," сказав Ісус, - "роби це й будеш жити." Та той, бажаючи себе самого виправдати, каже до Ісуса: "А хто мій ближній?"

Мовив тоді Ісус, кажучи: "Один чоловік спускався з Єрусалиму до Єрихону й потрапив розбійникам, що його обдерли й побили тяжко та пішли геть, залишивши півмертвого. Випадком ішов якийсь священик тією дорогою; побачив його й, збочивши, пройшов мимо. Так само й левіт прийшов на те місце, глянув на нього й пройшов мимо. Але один самарянин, що був у дорозі, зненацька надійшов на нього, й, побачивши його, змилосердився. Він приступив до нього, перев'язав йому рани, полив їх оливою і вином; потім посадив його на власну скотину, привів до заїзду й доглянув за ним. На другий день він вийняв два динарії, дав їх господареві й мовив: Доглядай за ним, і те, що витратиш на нього більше, я заплачу тобі, коли повернуся.

Хто з оцих трьох, на твою думку, був ближнім тому, що потрапив розбійникам в руки?" Він відповів: "Той, хто вчинив з ним милосердя." Тоді Ісус сказав до нього: "Іди і ти роби так само."

### **Gospel Reading for the Twenty-Third Sunday after Pentecost (St. Luke 10: 25-37)**

At that time, a lawyer stood up to pose Jesus this problem: "Teacher, what must I do to inherit everlasting life?" Jesus answered him: "What is written in the law? How do you read it?" He replied: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself."

Jesus said, "You have answered correctly. Do this and you shall live." But because he wished to justify himself, he said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" Jesus replied: "There was a man going down from Jerusalem to Jericho who fell prey to robbers. They stripped him, beat him, and they went off leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road; he saw him but continued on. Likewise there was a Levite who came the same way, he saw him and went on. But a Samaritan who was journeying along came on him and was moved to pity at the sight. He approached him and dressed his wounds, pouring in oil and wine. He then hoisted him on his own beast and brought him to an inn, where he cared for him. The next day he took out two silver

pieces and gave them to the innkeeper with the request: "Look after him, and if there is any further expense I will repay you on my way back."

"Which of these three, in your opinion, was neighbor to the man who fell in with the robbers?" The answer came, "The one who treated him with compassion." Jesus said to him, "Then go and do the same."

### **Sermon for the Twenty-Third Sunday after Pentecost**

Glory to Jesus Christ! My Dear Brother and Sisters in Christ!

In two days we begin the Nativity Fast, also known as Phillip's Fast or in Ukrainian, Pilipeewka. At this time of year, we always read the Parable of the Good Samaritan at Sunday Liturgy. This parable answers the question "Who is my neighbor" by describing the Incarnation in a parable. If we are to be Christian in any way, we must understand this parable and have it resonate in our souls. The person who has these words living in his soul not only understands the infinite beauty of the Incarnation and the reason why it was necessary, but he also does not need anyone to ask him, "Who is your neighbor?" We know the answer to that. It is all of humanity, especially everyone whom we meet throughout our life. What gives us the ability to live the Christian life? Of course, we know, it is only by God's grace.

A lawyer in Jesus' time was a Jew who studied and interpreted the Law. He was not at all like what we understand lawyers to be today. This lawyer should have been a man of character and high moral standing. Instead, this lawyer was one of many flunkies who would go to Christ and try to trip Him up somehow. This question that he asks is amazing. It is a foolish question. To stand in front of the God-man and ask Him, "What should I do to inherit eternal life" – is to be filled with pride and self-absorption. Jesus challenges the lawyer to interpret the law which he does correctly when he answers, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.'" The lawyer's failure, however, comes from his inability to recognize who his neighbor is.

We know that every person is our neighbor. Every person is created in dignity and bears within them the stamp of God's love. It is much easier to love an abstraction like 'humanity' than it is to love the flesh and blood person standing right before you. Our neighbor may be someone in need outside our normal sphere of life in which case we should extend ourselves to that person. Our neighbor may also be someone in need so close to us that we cannot even see their need; perhaps it is someone living under our own roof.

As represented by the priest and by the Levite in this parable, if our prayer and if our study of Scripture is not penetrating our heart and elevating our soul to compassion, then we are missing the mark. The Apostle Paul writes: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become a clanging cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing." We must love God with all of our heart, with all of our soul, with all of our strength, and with all our mind. And this compassionate love must be extended to our neighbor. Christ's revolutionary message extends the concept of 'neighbor' from the confines of those within one's immediate circle of family and friends to encompass all of God's creation!

As we enter into the season of thanksgiving and gratitude, let us be fully aware of the generosity, mercy, patience, and love, which God shows to all of us despite our shortcomings and sins. Therefore, let us also extend some measure of this same generosity, mercy, patience, and love to our neighbor, which includes everyone we meet. Amen!

### **ПРОПОВІДЬ НА ДВАДЦЯТЬ-ТРЕТЮ НЕДІЛЮ ПІСЛЯ ЗІСЛАННЯ СВЯТОГО ДУХА**

Слава Ісусу Христу! Дорогі в Христі браття і сестри!

Притча про милосердного самарянина, яку ми сьогодні чули в Євангельському читанні, була сказана Господом на пояснення одному законнику, який не розумів, що йому слід робити, щоб успадкувати вічне життя. Питання про зміст життя, про спасіння, про вічне життя і зараз непокоїть багатьох. Гранично ясну відповідь на це питання, яке хвилює людину, дав Ісус Христос. На закінчення притчі Господь дав йому настанову: «Йди і ти роби так само». Ця настанова в особі законника звернена до всього християнського світу і до кожного християнина зокрема.

Перше, на що потрібно звернути увагу, це місце, де відбувається подія, про яку розповідає притча. Чоловік ішов з Єрусалиму до Єрихону, тобто з Божого міста у світ. На цій дорозі його тяжко побили і пограбували розбійники. Через деякий час тією самою дорогою ішли священник і левіт. Побачивши потерпілого чоловіка, вони пройшли мимо. На перший погляд священник і левіт не зробили нічого злого потерпілому, але й не зробили нічого доброго.

Хоча євангеліст Лука не уточнює мети їхньої подорожі, правдоподібно вони верталися із служіння в Єрусалимському храмі, до дому, від Бога до світу. І що ж відбувається? Ті, що були покликані і посвятилися служити Богові і людям, побачивши на своїй дорозі потерпілого, відмовилися надати йому першу невідкладну медичну допомогу. Їхня поведінка показала правдивий стан їхньої душі, що вони прославляли Бога лише устами, а не серцем, тому не побачили Божого образу в потерпілому; їхня побожність виявилася пустою, не принесла бажаних плодів любові і милосердя до ближнього. Цю правду потвердив сам Ісус своїми словами: „О лицеміри! Добре про вас пророкував був Ісаї: Оцей народ устами мене поважає, серце ж їхнє далеко від мене” (Мт. 15, 7-8).

Натомість самарянин, котрим євреї погорджували, виявився більш побожним, ближче до Бога, бо думав і дбав про потерпілого. Що ж він зробив такого особливого, надзвичайного, що Сам Господь поставив його за приклад людинолюбства? Та нічого особливого. Він зробив тільки те, що підказували йому серце і совість, зробив просто і природно, за одним порухом співчуття. Просто і природно це виходить лише у тих, хто має добре серце і чисту совість.

На жаль, зовнішня побожність може тільки маскувати душевні лінощі, черствість і байдужність до чужих страждань. Справжня віра в Бога кличе нас на допомогу всім, хто перебуває в потребі, незалежно від їхньої віри, національності та кольору шкіри, громадянства чи світогляду. «Йди, і роби так і ти!» – промовляє Христос до кожного з нас, вказуючи на приклад самарянина. Адже на своїй життєвій дорозі, як на євангельському шляху до Єрихону, ми зустрічаємо безліч покривджених життям, позбавлених дому, батьківщини, батьківської опіки. Кожна зустріч із ними є викликом для нас. Як і священник або левіт, ми можемо ухилитися від зустрічі з ними, винахідливо вишукуючи мотиви, що кличуть нас у дальшу дорогу, заважають зупинитися, поспівчувати, допомогти ближньому. Ось тоді ми й повторимо трагічну помилку тих священнослужителів з цієї притчі, котрі, гордо прямуючи до храму на зустріч із Богом, не помітили, як проминули Його образ і подобу, даровані нам Господом у наших ближніх.

Любов до ближніх навіртає і до нас любов Божу, а без неї немає доступу в Царство Боже. Сама тільки віра без любові не врятує людину. Без любові віра мертва і, як пустий звук, пропадає безслідно. Суха, черства душа не здатна до співчуття ближнім, не знайде співчуття і до себе на суді Божому. Її чекає там одна невблаганна суворість Божа. За словом апостола Якова: «Немилосердний суд тому, хто не творить милостині». Амінь.

**Communion Verse:** Хвалить Господа з небес, хвалить Його на висотах. Пам'ять про праведника буде вічна, лихоті слави він не лякається. Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the highest. The just shall be held in everlasting memory; they need not fear an evil reputation. Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

# ***Parish Announcements***

## **We Welcome You!**

If you are visiting our church today, our parish family is delighted to welcome you here! Thank you and God bless you for visiting with us today! We welcome all our visitors and guests who worship at our parish. We invite families and individuals who wish to become members to register by calling Fr. Ihor at (860) 617-6357.

## **Вітаємо Вас!**

Якщо Ви відвідуєте нашу церкву сьогодні, наша парафіяльна громада рада вітати Вас тут! Щире спасибі Вам, і нехай Бог благословить Вас за Ваші відвідини з нами сьогодні! Ми запрошуємо сім'ї та осіб, які бажають стати членами, зареєструватися у нас по телефоні о. Ігоря на номер (860) 617-6357.

## **Please Pray for our Sick and Homebound Parishioners**

Fr. Ihor Papka, Fr. Zbigniew Brzezicki, Oleh and Valentina Babski, Michaelle Baker, Marylou Blaisdell, Luba Dyky, Carmel Horangic, Christine Kolagji, John Koromaus, Helen Kucman, Martha and Ray Majkut, Karen and Jaroslaw Maksymowych, Jean Mandych, Sherri Martel, Katherine Masso, Jennifer McMillan, Katharine McNaughton, Jackie Morales, Lauren Morales, Tanya and Ronald Morales, Alice Morris, Elizabeth Mozina, Olympia Pasicznyk, Billie Sheesley, Derek Stanley, Pauline Stanley, John Terninko, Elisha Wallace, Cindy Wilson, Dr. Mark Windt, Lauren Zelenski. Please contact Fr. Ihor if you would like to add a friend or loved one to this prayer list.

## **November Birthdays and Wedding Anniversaries**

The following parishioners are celebrating a birthday or wedding anniversary this month:

November 1 – Doug V.

November 6 – John T.

November 6 – Yuriy S.

November 15 – Laurent M.

November 17 – Pamela Y.

November 21 – Katarina V.

November 25 – Cassie G.

November 28 – Richard Y.

November 30 – Mila B.

November 30 – Maria and Andrew B. (wedding anniversary)

Our parish community wishes this month's birthday and anniversary celebrants peace, joy, love and good health on their special day as well as throughout the year. May our dear Lord grant all of you many more healthy, happy and blessed years. Happy Birthday, Happy Anniversary and На Многая літа! (Na Mnohaya Lita!).

## **St. Nicholas Lunch**

The Ladies Guild will be hosting the annual St. Nicholas lunch on Sunday, December 4<sup>th</sup> in the church hall after Divine Liturgy. Details of this event will be announced in next week's bulletin. Please note that this year we will return to the tradition of only one small gift bag being given to each child of the parish from St. Nicholas himself.

**Please do not bring any gifts to this event.**

## **Обід зі Святим Миколаєм**

У неділю, 4-го грудня, у церковній залі після Божественної Літургії, Жіноча Гільдія влаштовуватиме щорічний свят Миколаївський обід. Подобиці цієї події будуть оголошені в бюлетені наступного тижня. Зауважаємо усіх, що цього року ми повернемося до традиції, де кожній дитині парафії від самого Святого Миколая буде вручений лише один маленький подарунок. **Будь ласка, не принось жодних подарунків на цю подію.**

# ***Weekly Reflection:***

## **Learning about Our Catholic Faith – The Squirrel**

A Jewish, a Protestant and a Catholic congregation that were located close to each other in the same town were having problems with squirrels. The leaders of these three congregations got together to discuss what to do about this problem, but after a brief meeting they decided to go off on their own to find a solution. They agreed to get together in a few months to compare notes and see how each had handled the problem.

When the leaders got together a few months later, the rabbi spoke first and told the others that he had hired an exterminator who set up traps and had limited success in controlling the squirrel problem. The minister then spoke and related a similar story about the exterminator he had hired. Finally, the priest was asked how he had handled the squirrel problem. “Oh, it was easy”, he said, “We baptized the squirrel and now we only see him at Christmas and Easter.”

Reflect today on whether you or someone you know behave like “the baptized squirrel” and only come to church on rare occasions. But why is it important to come to church every Sunday and on holy days of obligation? In the third commandment, God tells us to “Remember the Sabbath day” and to “keep it holy.” When we go to church on Sunday, we humbly obey this important command and acknowledge the value of the Sabbath not just in the Catholic faith but also in our personal lives. Jesus, too, put great importance in going to church. Before His crucifixion, He instituted the first Mass at the Last Supper. By attending Mass, we commemorate the Lord’s Supper and recognize the great sacrifice that Jesus made on the cross for us.

The Holy Eucharist is an important symbol of our Catholic Faith and we get the wonderful opportunity to receive it during Divine Liturgy. The bread and wine, through the power of the Holy Spirit, are transformed into the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ so when we partake of the Holy Eucharist, we are actually receiving Jesus Christ Himself, Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity. The Catechism of the Catholic Church prescribes that we must attend Mass on Sundays and all Holy Days of Obligation. This is one of the precepts of the Church and we must keep in mind that the Church speaks with the authority of Jesus Christ. The Church is God’s instrument of faith and morality here on earth so we are to obey its instructions.

Going to church is not just a basic Catholic tenet, it is a way for us to nurture our faith and grow spiritually. We are very fortunate that we are able to freely access our churches and attend Divine Liturgy any time we want to. The early Christians were subject to great torture because of their religious beliefs. They were persecuted yet, despite all the hardships they had to face, they persisted and continued to practice their faith. Like the early Christians, we must also be passionate in the way we express our belief in God and one way to do that is to seek His presence during Holy Mass. By going to church, we open ourselves up to God and receive His word through our local priest. God’s Word is food for our soul and we are nourished by it.

Being part of a church means we become part of God’s spiritual family. We are all made to be social beings. “No man is an island” as the popular saying goes. When we go to Mass, we grow not just as an individual Catholic but also as a member of a bigger Catholic community. It is similar to us being a student of a school. Our education would not be complete without the help of our professors, school administrators and classmates. In the same way, each of us makes up the entire church and together we help one another reach our full potential. We are accountable for one another, we worship God together and we rebuke one another if we sin. Our spiritual journey is certainly more enriching and insightful when it is shared with other people who share our faith and beliefs. If it has been a while since you have been to church, remember that Jesus is patiently waiting for you there in the holy Tabernacle. Christ is knocking on the door of your heart and He patiently waits for you to open it and invite Him into your life. He will not force His way in. It is up to you to let Him in, and when you come to church regularly, you will be doing just that. May God richly bless you and help you to make this commitment in your life. We look forward to seeing you and welcoming you in church this coming Sunday.