

THE 2008 QUEBEC EUCHARISTIC CONGRESS AND THE UKRAINIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

Reverend Fathers, Deacons, Sisters, Seminarians and Faithful
of the Ukrainian Catholic Church in Canada,

Christ is with us!

The Communion of the First Pioneers

With the arrival of our early pioneers to Canada, the Ukrainian Catholic Church soon took root on Canadian soil. The first settlers arrived in 1891 and by 1897, the first Ukrainian Catholic Divine Liturgy was celebrated by Father Nestor Dmitriv, satisfying the spiritual hunger that our people felt for the sacramental mysteries, especially for the Most Holy Eucharist. After the arrival of the first permanent clergy in 1902, the sacramental life of our faithful was further secured.

Our people desired a sign by which they could maintain communion with their far-off Mother Church—the presence, in Canada, of their spiritual leader, Metropolitan Andrew Sheptycky of Lviv. The great Metropolitan Andrew also desired to visit his people, but his efforts were hindered by political and ecclesiastical difficulties. Finally, an event took place that allowed the spiritual head of the Ukrainian Catholic Church to visit his flock, namely the International Eucharistic Congress held in Montreal in 1910. Having received permission to attend this Congress, Metropolitan Andrew was then able to visit the Ukrainian communities strewn across Canada. It was following this visit that Metropolitan Andrew made concrete moves which resulted in the appointment, in 1912, of the first bishop of the Ukrainian Catholic Church in Canada, Bishop Nykyta Budka. With Bishop Budka's presence in Canada, the sacramental life, especially the Eucharist through the Divine Liturgy, was assured.

The celebration of the Holy Eucharist through the Eucharistic Congress in Montreal in 1910, not only brought the faithful closer to God, but it united the struggling Ukrainian Catholic community

around their spiritual shepherd and leader. By providing for the Divine Liturgy, the bishop ensured them spiritual nourishment in the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. Holy Communion strengthened the communion of our people in Canada.

A New Eucharistic Congress

In the days 15-22 June 2008, Canada will once again host an International Eucharistic Congress in Quebec City. A Eucharistic Congress, first held in France in 1881, provides the Catholic faithful with a deeper understanding of the Holy Eucharist through conferences and guest speakers. It also provides an opportunity for spiritual enrichment through liturgical services, which unite thousands of faithful in common prayer, nourished by Holy Communion. Eucharistic Congresses have been held throughout the world and are attended by either the Holy Father or his special representative.

Plans call for the Ukrainian Catholic Church to take part in the 2008 Quebec Eucharistic Congress with a special Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom in three languages: Ukrainian, English and French. Arrangements are also being made for conferences which will highlight the specific Liturgical Theology and spirituality of the Ukrainian Catholic Church regarding the Divine Liturgy and the Holy Eucharist.

Our Participation

To assist the Archdiocese of Quebec in the preparation of this event, all Canadian Catholic dioceses and eparchies have been asked to have two special collections. These collections, for which special envelopes will be provided, are to be held in 2007 and 2008 on the feast commonly called, "*The Holy Eucharist*". The official name for the feast in the Roman Catholic Church is, "*The Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ*".

This Feast, which was officially established in the Ukrainian Catholic Church in 1720, is found in our liturgical books under the name, "*The Solemn Veneration of the Most Pure Sacrament of the Body and Blood*".

of Our Lord Jesus Christ". Although it does not make participation in the Divine Liturgy obligatory, it does have complete liturgical texts for a major feast day. The celebration of this feast is on the second Thursday after Pentecost, (this year on 7 June) but it is generally moved to the second Sunday after Pentecost. The special collection would take place whenever the feast is celebrated.

The 2008 Quebec Eucharistic Congress not only holds historical significance for us as Ukrainian Catholics, but it will also provide us with an opportunity to renew and deepen our faith and understanding of the Holy Eucharist and the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. The coming together of thousands of faithful from across North America and beyond will be a communion of faith and an opportunity for us to share our Eucharistic spirituality with one another. We encourage your participation and support of this event.

Sincerely in Christ,

+ Lawrence Huculak, OSBM

Metropolitan of Winnipeg and All Canada

+ Michael Wiwchar, CSSR, Eparch of Saskatoon

+ Severian Yakymyshyn, OSBM, Eparch of New Westminster

+ David Motiuk, Eparch of Edmonton

+ Stephen Chmilar, Eparch of Toronto

+ Michael Bzdel, CSSR, Metropolitan Emeritus

+ Cornelius Pasichny, OSBM, Eparch emeritus of Toronto

17 May 2007

Feast of the Ascension of Our Lord Jesus Christ