

PASTORAL LETTER  
OF THE UKRAINIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS OF CANADA  
MARKING THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE HOLODOMOR –  
THE MAN-MADE FAMINE IN UKRAINE (1932-1933)

To the Very Reverend Fathers and Deacons, Monastics and Religious Sisters, and Laity of the Ukrainian Catholic Church in Canada.

*Glory be to Jesus Christ!*

Dearly Beloved in Christ:

This year people of Ukrainian descent throughout the world will initiate plans to mark the 75th anniversary of the Holodomor – the man-made famine in Ukraine that occurred in 1932-1933.

This great tragedy continues to cry out to the world for its recognition as a crime against humanity and pleads never to be erased from the memory of the human race. Although the lands and people of Ukraine have suffered famine as a natural phenomenon throughout history, never was such an atrocity purposely engineered and enacted upon our people for political motives. This indeed was as an act of genocide by the government of the Soviet Union under Joseph Stalin. How should we remember this event, as we approach its 75th anniversary? We can look to the Old Testament, the Second Book of Chronicles to find direction for our commemoration. There we read: “When evil comes upon us, the sword of judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we will stand before this house, and we will cry out to You in our affliction, and You will hear and save.” [II Chron 20:9] Love of God, faith in Jesus Christ and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, have been the foundations of our Christian Ukrainian nation since the time of the baptism of Kyivan Rus’. And today we are moved by the Holy Spirit to approach this remembrance in Christian truth and charity.

*Christian Truth*

Christian truth calls upon us to make efforts to spread the knowledge of this tragedy beginning with our own Ukrainian people; especially

the younger generation that often knows so little of this event. To do this we have published literature, films and the internet, which provide us with much needed background information about the Holodomor. Christian truth also calls upon us to help non-Ukrainians become informed about this act of genocide, so that history may never repeat this horrific act against any member of the human race. There are any in Canada, who know nothing of this man-made famine in Ukraine.

### *Christian Charity*

Christian charity reminds us to pray for the estimated 7 million souls who perished. Our prayers are also needed for many others who continue to be traumatized by this event to this day. Christian charity also calls upon us to find it in our hearts to forgive those who played any role, whatsoever, in this tragedy. Our anger at the injustice cannot overpower our Christian call to forgive.

### *Proclamation and Proposals*

It is for this reason that we, the bishops of the Ukrainian Catholic Church in Canada, proclaim the month of November 2007 to be a month of mourning and commemoration of the Holodomor. We call upon our faithful, especially through the parishes, to make use of fervent prayer, helpful information and good deeds as a Christian response to this tragedy. Parishes are called upon to celebrate a memorial Divine Liturgy and Panakhyda for the souls of all those who perished in the famine. This would especially be appropriate on Saturday, November 24th, as this is the day established by the government of Ukraine for this commemoration. If this is not possible then another day should be chosen during the month of November. Information should be given through the available media such as the parish bulletin, newspapers and magazines, newsletters, radio, television and internet as well as symposiums, conferences or any other forms of social communications.

Good deeds in solidarity with the hungry and the needy are highly recommended. These include such activities as soup kitchens, “hunger banquets,” and donations to the local food bank, which can be concrete demonstrations of our awareness of hunger and famine, which continue to this day.

## *Conclusion*

St Paul asks a pertinent question in his letter to the Romans when he says: What will separate us from the love of God? Will anguish, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril or the sword? [...] No, in all these things we conquer overwhelmingly through Him who loved us. [Rom 8:35, 37]

Dear Beloved in Christ,

Let us render homage to the millions of our Ukrainian brothers and sisters who perished in the Holodomor—the great man-made famine in Ukraine, especially as we approach its 75th anniversary. Let us spread the knowledge of this tragedy with the means available to us. And let us raise our voices in solemn prayer for their eternal memory – *vichnaja pamiat.*

14/23 September 2007

Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross

- + Lawrence Huculak OSBM,  
Metropolitan of Winnipeg and all Canada
- + Michael Wiwchar CSSR, Eparch of Saskatoon
- + David Motiuk, Eparch of Edmonton
- + Stephen Chmilar, Eparch of Toronto
- + Ken Nowakowski, Eparch of New Westminster
- + Michael Bzdel CSSR, Metropolitan Emeritus of Winnipeg
- + Severian Yakymyshyn OSBM, Eparch Emeritus of New Westminster
- + Cornelius Pasichny OSBM, Eparch Emeritus of Toronto