

**Homily on the occasion of the Praznyk
of Sts. Vladimir & Olga Cathedral
26 July 2015, Winnipeg MB**

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ!

Today we gather in this cathedral church to celebrate the memory of the patrons of this parish, namely the Equal to the Apostles, Sts. Vladimir and Olga. The memory of these two great saints takes us back to the establishment of the Christian faith in the ancient lands of Kyivan Rus' and like an embroidered rushnyk, it leads us through more than one thousand years of Christian faith down to our times.

Often when we reflect on the great saints of the Church we think of the martyrs, the popes and patriarchs, the bishops and priests, the religious sisters and ascetics who devoted their total lives to God. When we think of Saints Vladimir and Olga we think of a different category of people. Saints Vladimir and Olga were secular leaders of the people; they were parents; and they were members of the laity. The example they gave in their lives has as much meaning for us today as it did a thousand years ago when they lived on this earth.

Princess Olga was a woman of faith. Even though she lived in a very pagan world, she held strong to her Christian faith and tried to pass on this faith to her children and grandchildren. So often in the history of the Ukrainian people it has been the mothers and grandmothers who have shown wonderful examples of Christian piety in their lives, and have tried so very hard to pass on their faith to their children and grandchildren, especially when there has been no one else to do this. During the Communist times in Ukraine it was the mothers and grandmothers who passed on their faith to their children. And even today when so many parents have no time or desire to live their Christian faith and pass this on to their children and grandchildren – it is the grandmothers who carry the torch of Christian heritage.

Prince Vladimir is remembered as a leader who took his role seriously and did what was best for his people. He considered the best direction to lead his people to provide for their needs, including their education and general welfare. With the good of his people in mind St. Vladimir lead them to the Christian faith. His decision proved to be fundamental

to the establishment of the faith, culture and life style of the Ukrainian people, down to our very days. Good leadership in the secular world does not flee from the Christian faith – it rather accepts and encourages it.

Dearly Beloved in Christ!

As we celebrate these two great figures in the lives of the Ukrainian nation let us think about the example they offer us today. In our lives as leaders in the community, as parents and grandparents, and as lay Christians following the teachings and directions set by Jesus Christ, let us look to the example of Sts. Vladimir and Olga as models for us.

Ukraine today needs good Christian leaders to lead the people ahead on the road to economic stability, social peace and political order. Ukraine as well needs parents and grandparents who will raise their children in the Christian faith, rejecting the ever-growing popularity of secularism and weak morals. And Canada also has these same needs. May the example of Sts. Vladimir and Olga provide us with the inspiration to achieve these goals in our lives and in the lives of our children.

AMEN!

Metropolitan Lawrence Huculak, OSBM