



Eparchy of Edmonton
25 Year Pastoral Plan

Evangelization: A New Springtime
“Encountering the Person of Christ”

TO KNOW GOD,
TO LOVE GOD,
TO SERVE GOD

A Call to Action
for Parish Renewal

ONE DAY...

... after preaching to the crowds, Jesus invited Peter to “put out into the deep waters and let down your nets for a catch” (Luke 5:4). Peter and his companions – the first disciples called by Christ – cast their nets and, “When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break” (Luke 5:6). Jesus’ words, *put out into the deep*, ring out as loudly today as they did some 2000 years ago.

Put out into the deep are also the words that Blessed Pope John Paul II used to invite the whole Church – you and me included – to embark on a new stage of its journey at the outset of the third millennium – the renewal of the fundamental mission of the Church, that is, to “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:19-20). This is nothing less than *evangelization* – *an encounter with Jesus Christ!*

Therefore, we will embark upon a period of renewal within the Eparchy of Edmonton, and, like Peter and the other disciples, we place our hope and faith in Jesus and *put out into the deep*, trusting that the Lord will also navigate our journey into a deeper relationship with the mystery of the Holy Trinity. Our renewal, our Pastoral Plan, will not follow a particular ‘magical’ program; rather, we will *start afresh from Christ Jesus* and plan our journey with Him. Along the way, we will pay attention to certain pastoral priorities which act as guides through our journey. Among these are: holiness, prayer, the Sunday Eucharist, the sacrament of reconciliation, attentiveness to the Word of God, the witness of love, diversity of vocations, Christian unity, and the gift of young people.

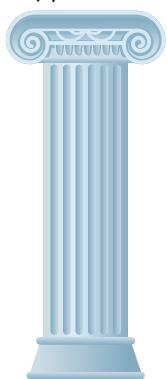
Bearing in mind the social and cultural realities of Canada, the Plan calls on all Ukrainian Catholics – clergy, religious, monastic, and laity – to develop a much stronger and more zealous evangelizing and missionary thrust. As evangelization starts at the parish level, the concept of the *vibrant parish* has been adopted. A *vibrant parish* is one that is alive and active,

enriching those who practice their faith regularly, and reaches out to those who do so infrequently or not at all. It also means going beyond the bounds of the Ukrainian Catholic Church and inviting all to a life in Christ. Eastern liturgy, theology, spirituality, and discipline, are to be shared with all who desire it, including other Eastern and Western Catholics, Orthodox, other Eastern Christians, other Western Christians, and other faiths. A *vibrant parish* is one in which we fall in love with Christ, and having fallen in love with him, we can't help but share this news with others – we want to show others the *pearl of great price* which we have found. So we serve one another, care for the poor and the marginalized, practice stewardship, volunteer, and perform charitable work and outreach. We help people to deepen their relationship with Christ by coming to *know God, to love God, and to serve God*. Hence, our pastoral plan of evangelization is based on three pillars of parish renewal: Word, Eucharist, and Service.



*"Put out into the deep waters
and let down your nets for a catch." (Luke 5:4)*

WORD



TO KNOW GOD

There is no doubt - the Scriptures are central to the Christian faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God. The study of the Word of God is essential in coming to know God's plan for our salvation. We know Christ by knowing his Word and understanding his teachings.

Each person and each family are invited to discover or rediscover the Sacred Scriptures by regular reading and reflection. We are encouraged in our parishes to organize regular bible studies working through both the Old and New Testaments and to ensure that our catechism classes are to include appropriate bible material, emphasizing the stories and parables of Jesus. We are encouraged to

not only assist in the formation of others but to seek the assistance of others for our own faith development.

In addition to the study of the Word of God, the knowledge of our faith is nourished and developed through on-going catechesis. Today, we recognize the need for continuous faith development among children, youth, young adults, adults, and seniors alike – *from cradle to grave*. As Ukrainian Catholics, our catechetical formation should necessarily be based upon material appropriate to our Eastern Christian heritage and spiritual patrimony. Keeping in mind the major tasks of catechesis, we will officially use the following catechetical programs: *God With Us* for children and youth; and *Generations of Faith for Byzantine Churches*, a five-year program which brings together the entire parish family using an inter-generational approach. We will also

develop a *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* for Ukrainian Catholic usage, and resources for on-going faith formation of a Christian life that is centred on the mystery of the Incarnation of Christ.

It takes a whole parish to raise a Christian. Parents are always the *first educators* of their children in matters of faith and morals. Grandparents also provide help in the faith-rearing of their grandchildren. Parishes are blessed by the active presence of Sunday School teachers and catechists. Youth of-

ten respond best when given the opportunity to let their gifts and talents shine through, including in faith formation. *Youth Evangelizing Youth* intends to develop further the skills of our youth and involve young people in the ministry of evangelization among their peers. Clergy, religious, and monastics not only assist in the formation of others but are also in need of continued formation, mentorship, and guidance. The whole local Church is involved in the continued formation of each member of the Body of Christ.

CALL TO ACTION

- How can I organize my schedule and ensure that my home environment is conducive for personal reading of the Bible?
- Do I have a means to record thoughts, ideas, questions that may arise as I am reading?
- Do I participate in the various catechetical programs at my parish? in my eparchy?
- Do we have a Family Bible in our icon corner or place of family prayer? Do we provide opportunity for our children to read the Scriptures aloud during family prayer?
- Are there any particular words or phrases of Scripture that we can place

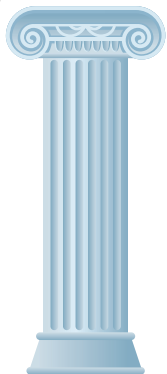
throughout the house (bedrooms, family rooms, etc.) that will remind us daily of the Lord's Word?

- What do we do in our parish that manifests our reverence for the Word of God?
- Does my parish offer Scripture Study? Am I aware of Scripture Study programs that I can suggest to our parish for utilization?
- Do I have any questions and/or suggestions that arise from my personal/family reading of the Bible that I can bring to my pastor for

clarification and/or edification?

- Does my parish offer the *Generations of Faith* program? Do I participate? What can I do to bring the program to my parish?
- Can I make changes to my schedule so as to participate in the conferences, workshops, and seminars on Scripture and Catechesis offered at various times?
- Is my parish open to allowing our clergy and religious to pursue their own on-going faith formation? What can I/we do to make this happen?

EUCCHARIST



TO LOVE GOD

Having come to know Christ, we are moved to love him more through prayer and celebrating the Word of God, the Holy Mysteries (Sacraments), and our Eastern spirituality.

In *Listening to the Word of God*, we are invited to rediscover the Sacred Scriptures so that it may be *life-giving encounter with God*. In *Proclaiming the Word of God*, we are called upon to preach the

Gospel beginning with our families and friends. We are encouraged to have a Family Bible in our home, give it a place of prominence and distinction, and drink from its life-giving sources regularly. We are

encouraged to understand and appreciate that the Word of God is integral to the Divine Liturgy from which flows the Eucharist – in the Divine Liturgy, we encounter the Living God in the Word of God, that is, the Word made Flesh, and in the Eucharist, in Body and Blood of Jesus.

Liturgy is above all the celebration of the mystery of our salvation, accomplished in the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, by means of the Holy Spirit, rendering us children of the Father. This mystery is communicated to us in visible signs through the Mysteries.

Families and parishes are encouraged to rediscover and recover Sunday as the Lord's Day, together with the active participation in the Divine Liturgy

and reception of the Holy Eucharist, the source and summit of our faith. New Gospel and Epistle books will make the readings more understandable to modern listeners.

The administration of the three sacraments of Christian Initiation together – Baptism, Chrismation, and Eucharist – will be restored, even to infants. And the ancient practice of baptism by triple immersion in water will also be restored. Through Christian Initiation we are made one with Christ and with his Body, the Church. Therefore these sacraments will be ideally celebrated on a Sunday or feast day in the presence of the greater worshipping community.

We encourage and value vocations to the priestly and diaconal orders as well as religious and monastic women and men. We will have improved marriage preparation and post-sacramental care which can contribute to the sanctification of the different moments in the journey of married Christian couples.

Parishes are called to emphasize moments of liturgical prayer to which penitential value is particularly attributed and to offer regular opportunities for Confession. Pastors, and parishioners collaborating with them, are to renew their pastoral efforts in visiting the sick and elderly and celebrating the sacra-



Adult Baptism by immersion.

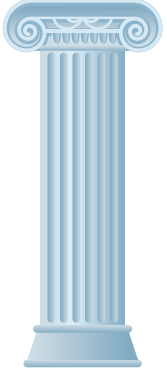
ment of anointing for those who are gravely ill.

To help us respond to God's love, we can improve our spiritual life in a variety of ways. Prayer is the practice of the presence of God where we touch the heart of God. A new resource to be developed, *Teach Me to Pray*, is intended to help us rediscover the "school of prayer." We can sanctify the whole day with the celebration of the Divine Praises a privileged source of prayer which nurtures us. An Eparchial Commission of Sacred Art will advise parishes on improvements which correspond with Eastern tradition, in particular icons.

CALL TO ACTION

- In what ways can I more fully participate in the Sunday Divine Liturgy? How often do worldly concerns distract me at Liturgy?
- How often do I exam my conscience?
- How often do I nurture my relationship with the Lord in the reception of forgiveness in Confession?
- Do I long to know God through prayer?
- Have I ever participated in the Divine Praises at my parish?
- Have I considered being a reader?
- Are there ways in which we as a family can extend the Divine Liturgy into our family prayer at home?
- Are we open to some of our children being called to a special vocation in the Church? Why or why not?
- In what ways can our parish promote vocations?
- In what ways can our faith help us to improve our marriage?
- Can I assist in marriage preparation classes at my parish?
- Are the Mysteries of Christian Initiation celebrated on Sunday in my parish?
- Can I help in baptismal preparation classes?
- Do we have regular times for Confession in our parish?
- Do we pray for the sick and ill in our parish? Do we visit them? Can we be more involved with our pastor in the Mystery of Holy Anointing?
- Do we consider icons as integral to our faith and worship?
- Does our church building interior help us to respond to God's love, lifting us beyond worldly concerns?

SERVICE



TO SERVE GOD

Having come to know and love Christ better, we desire to follow him through witness and service. From the creation of the world, the Lord has called us to be his faithful stewards of all that rightly belongs to him. We are to not only maintain what has been entrusted to us but also to work diligently to foster order, development, and growth in to order to bring forth a good yield. We are entrusted not only the earth but also our own personal lives, our health, the gift of time, our talents and wealth, our families and children, our neighbours and community, our nation, and finally, his Gospel – the Good News, and his Church, the kingdom of God throughout the world. We are to be stewards on two levels: personally and collectively.

Christians are called to be good stewards of two distinct communities: within the community in which they live; and, in their parish, the community of believers to which they belong. Taking an active role in the sharing of responsibilities of roles to meet the needs of these communities is good stewardship. Recall the words of the Lord: “whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant” (Matthew 20:26). Christians in the positions of leadership and authority are to see themselves as servants: stewards of God’s authority and servants for those over whom they have been given authority, and this extends to care for creation (environment).

Hospitality is not so much a task as it is a way of living life and sharing with others: being welcoming and friendly to guests, travellers, and foreigners. A home that lives and breathes hospitality is a home that is alive. In the early Church, hospitality was a public and sacred duty to welcome strangers and travellers, to offer them food, shelter, and pro-

tection. Today, our understanding of hospitality has been reduced to the idea of inviting friends, family, parishioners, or fellow-believers for dinner and fellowship, whether at home or in the parish hall. Our challenge is to go beyond the conventional understanding of hospitality and to re-discover the gift of hospitality as it was understood in ancient times and by the early Church. We accomplish this at home and in our parishes by simply being welcoming to each other. We can also pay attention to the stranger and guest and extend invitations to fellowship meals and gatherings that are extensions of the Divine Liturgy.

Every parish is the kingdom of God on earth. It has the humble beginnings of a mustard seed, but over time with God’s grace, grows into an active community, a living tree. As a living tree where birds find shelter and nest, every active parish community is called to be a refuge, a place of rest and protection for the weary, the downcast, the heavily laden and those in need. It is in the living and active parish community that people encounter the living God. “Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28).

As a living tree, the parish has branches that reach to neighbour, the local community, and beyond.



Each parish must develop of group of parishioners that will first take time to explore existing needs, parish resources, and possibilities. Above all, this is done in an atmosphere of prayer, asking the question - *Lord, what works of charity and outreach do you want our community to be involved in?* The possibilities are numerous.

Charity reveals itself in many ways, first and foremost, in works of mercy, both corporal and spiritual. Corporal acts of mercy include: feeding the hungry, donating clothing to those in need, finding shelter for the homeless, providing medical attention to those who are sick. Spiritual acts of mercy include: visiting the sick, the lonely, and the dying, counselling those in distress. Acts of charity, wheth-

er corporal or spiritual, serve to alleviate the pain of suffering. They deal with the symptoms of a given social problem. We must go further than just alleviating the symptoms – we must address the problem.

Social Justice is charity, or works of charity, aimed at changing society, by conquering root causes for serious social problems. One of the greatest challenges that we face as a Church today is the issue of human life and its dignity. Our challenge is simply this - how are we as a family, as a parish, as an Eparchy going to respond to areas of social injustice.

The Church is missionary by nature. As such, the Eparchy is called by Christ to reach out to others as part of its missionary activity.

CALL TO ACTION

- How can I best live as a self-gift to God? To others?
- Am I willing to give a portion of my day in prayer, reading of Scripture to the Lord? Can I give my time to family, friends, and service in the community?
- Do I treat my body respectfully as the temple of the Holy Spirit without making an idol of it?
- Do I rely on the Lord's 'daily bread' without dependence on my material

- wealth? Do I share my wealth with others? Can I give a tithe (10%) to the Lord?
- In what ways can I offer my gifts and talents to my parish? to my community? To my neighbour? Am I willingly to give freely or do I expect a stipend?
- In what ways can my family be more hospitable?
- In what ways can I encourage a more hospitable spirit at my parish?

- In what ways can I improve in practicing corporal and spiritual acts of mercy?
- Where do I/we see social injustice in our midst? Can I/we identify the sources of this injustice?
- Am I willing to making people aware of social injustices? How?
- What action can/we take to address social injustices?
- How can I better participate in missionary activity?

Saint Peter writes, "You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light" (1 Peter 2:9). While there is an ordained priesthood that serves for the sanctification of the members of the Church, all baptized members share in the one priesthood of Christ. We all share in Christ's teaching by proclaiming the Word and being catechized.

We all share in Christ's sanctifying by praying and participating in the sacraments, especially the Divine Liturgy. We all share in Christ's shepherding by feeding the hungry, caring for the sick, visiting the imprisoned. As our journey toward parish renewal leads us to the Father's Kingdom, through Christ, guided by the Holy Spirit, may we be truly disposed to knowing, loving, and serving God more perfectly.



The 25 Year Pastoral Plan
Evangelization: A New Springtime
"Encountering the Person of Christ"

can be downloaded at our website - <http://goo.gl/eGSRf>

© Eparchy of Edmonton, 2012. All rights reserved.

Photos: Icons and Soup are public domain;
Baptism on page 2 from Progress Ukrainian Catholic News. Used with permission.

GLORY TO GOD!