

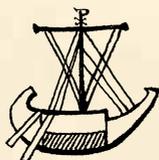


# MISSION DAYS GUIDEBOOK

*From the Ascension of our Lord  
to the Descent of the Holy Spirit*

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## *About Mission Days*



Through our active participation in the spiritual efforts of these ten Mission Days, once again we are called upon to discover and understand anew that our parish communities and families (domestic churches) are missionary in nature. Such understanding flows from the gift of our Baptism, by virtue of which, and through the power of its mystery, we have committed ourselves to believe, live, serve, and share the experience of our faith in Christ; and not simply with our family members, but with everyone we meet in life.

From the feast of the Ascension to Pentecost, together with our entire parish community, let us pray that the Lord might renew our life in God by the grace and intercession of the Holy Spirit. Throughout these ten Mission Days let us especially support in prayer our parishes, our chaplains, and our military serving in Eastern Ukraine.

If some parishes due to circumstance are unable to conduct the ten Mission Days on weekdays, or if some parishioners are unable to attend, then they should be encouraged to observe the ten Mission Days within their families. Each day they should set aside at least five minutes to read together in the “Mission Days Guidebook” (Word of God, Meditation, Word of Metropolitan Andrey, Prayer) and contemplate how they can fulfill the mission task (also included in this Guidebook). Another possibility would be to gather prayerful groups of families, who live in the same neighborhood, and conduct these Missions Days together.

## *Prayer*



O Lord, God, shine forth the light of Your Holy Gospel, so that the Christian faith might spread through us, the baptized, as children of the Light. Let us be witnesses to Your Living Presence in our lives and in our parish community, O Lord, hear us and have mercy.

The Holy Spirit provides everything: He sends the prophets, leads priests to perfection, teaches wisdom to the uneducated, makes theologians of fishermen, and unites the entire Christian community. O Comforter, Consubstantial with the Father and Son, glory be to You!

Introduction: Thursday



## THE FEAST OF THE ASCENSION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST



**Invitation:** On this solemn feast of the Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ we call upon all to respond to the invitation of His Beatitude Sviatoslav and embark together on a pilgrimage towards Pentecost. For the next ten days we will reflect together with our parish community on the daily Gospel readings for Divine Liturgy from the Gospel of St. John. By following the themes found in John's Gospel we will be able to respond with greater fervor to the invitation of the Head and Father of our Church, to proclaim the Good News of Christ's Gospel to all who seek to hear the Word of God.<sup>1</sup>



*The Gospel of St. John* is for many their favorite book of the New Testament. This Gospel is simple and easily accessible, in spite of its profound content. We sense that the author was a close friend of Jesus: throughout his entire life, John remembered and reflected on all that was said and done by our Savior, he prayed for understanding, examined every detail and sought to help others understand all aspects of Christ's mission. Thus, it is important that the Gospel of St. John, as one of the most important books of humankind, be read not only by theologians, but by everyone who seeks to understand God's love for the human race.

<sup>1</sup> See the Pastoral Letter of His Beatitude Sviatoslav "The Vibrant Parish – a place to encounter the Living Christ," 2012.

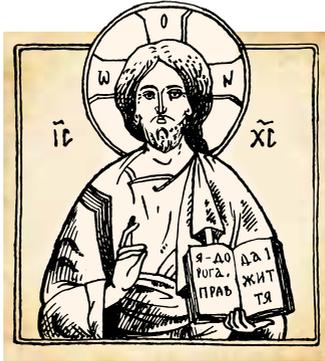
This unique testimony to Jesus, which complements the first three so-called synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke), explains for us the fulfillment of God's plan: the Eternal Word, who abided in the Father, the Son of God became the Son of Man, and the long-awaited Messiah. In offering Himself to us at the same time He grants us salvation, eternal life. Being the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, as God, he assumed our human nature. This truth about Jesus is the foundation of every truth. To believe in Christ is the only way to the Father and to eternal life.

St. John joyfully proclaims that, in contrast to those temporal things which fill our lives but pass away, Jesus is the "One who IS." These same words were used when God first revealed Himself to Moses in the Old Testament (Ex. 3:14). This exceptionally important phrase used by Christ, "I AM," is used by St. John some 150 times, seven of which especially point to the fullness of life which we receive from Jesus and through Him: only He IS the True Bread of Life (6:35) which can satisfy inner hunger; only He IS the True Light (9: 5) in the darkness of this world; only He IS the Door (10:7) which leads to eternal life; and only He IS the Good Pastor (10:11) Who can guide us because He IS the Way the Truth and the Life (14:6). Finally, only He is the true Vine (15:1), from which we can receive the fullness and power of Life. And even, when we die, He IS the Resurrection and the Life. (11:25)

John testifies that even though after His resurrection Jesus is invisibly present and abides with us, He also sent us a Consoler, Who throughout history guides the Church and directs her towards all truth. (3:5-8, 7:37-39, chapters 14-16)

The Church reads this Gospel of John in the period between Pascha and Pentecost in order that we, reflecting on the unique signs of Jesus' presence in history, might grow in love of and trust in Him, and that we might have Life in His Name (see John 20:30-31). We can say that it is John the evangelist who guides us to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit in the name of our Risen Lord.





First Day:  
Friday – Jn. 14:1-11



## JESUS IS THE WAY THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE



**Word of God:** “Do not let your hearts be troubled. You have faith in God; have faith also in me. In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If there were not, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back again and take you to myself, so that where I am you also may be. Where [I] am going you know the way.” Thomas said to him, “Master, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?” Jesus said to him, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, then you will also know my Father. From now on you do know him and have seen him.” Philip said to him, “Master, show us the Father, and that will be enough for us.” Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you for so long a time and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father ...”



**Meditation:** Jesus is the Way, the one connection between God and humankind, between heaven and earth. One might object that such a way is too narrow. In truth, the way is sufficiently wide for the entire world to pass through – if only it chooses to take it.

Jesus is the Fullness of Truth, since He reveals to us the whole truth about God and He manifests to us through His entry into the world that God keeps His promises. He is the Life, since He eternally participates in the Divine Life of the Father, and by His grace grants us the possibility to share in this Divine Life. As the Life, Jesus unites his Divine Life with ours – both now and in eternity. The purpose of our life is to be united with God the Father. Jesus Christ is the only way to achieve this.

*Quotation of Metropolitan Andrey:* The Almighty God in His infinite mercy has wished mankind every good and has sought for ways to once again guide onto the road to salvation those who were perishing in the captivity of sin. To make our salvation possible, the almighty hand of God unites heaven and earth. Over that great abyss which divided them, He provides a kind of bridge, by which we will be able to go from here to there – from earth to heaven.

That bridge spanning over the impassable and bottomless abyss is the One who said of himself: “I am the Way the Truth and the Life.” The bridge which from above the abyss unites heaven and earth, the Almighty God with fallen humanity, the heavenly light with the darkness of the world, eternal life with the daily reality of death, that bridge is the Only-begotten Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ.

*Sermon on Christmas Day, Lviv, 1939*



*Prayer:* Christ our Way and our Life, after His resurrection from the dead, accompanied Luke and Cleopas, who had recognized Him at Emmaus in the breaking of the bread. Their hearts and souls were inflamed as he spoke to them on the way, explain to them all the Scriptures that pertained to Him. Let us, therefore, shout with them, saying: Truly, the Lord is risen and has appeared to Peter.



*Mission Task:* Regardless of what tomorrow will bring – at work, in school, in our ministry – let us now resolve to spend the entire day walking with Jesus. And we will notice that, when walking along our own paths, we can neither save ourselves nor the world, but by trusting in Jesus, in His grace, we can move together with Him towards the Kingdom of God. Courageously, let us live and witness to others the truth that only Jesus is the Way the Truth and the Life.



Second Day:  
Saturday – Jn. 14:10-21



## THE HOLY SPIRIT THE COMFORTER



**Word of God:** “Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else, believe because of the works themselves. Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever believes in me will do the works that I do, and will do greater ones than these, because I am going to the Father. And whatever you ask in my name, I will do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ... If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you always, the Spirit of truth, which the world cannot accept, because it neither sees nor knows it. But you know it, because it remains with you, and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me, because I live and you will live. On that day you will realize that I am in my Father and you are in me and I in you.”



**Meditation:** Jesus encourages us to act as He acted, to do as He did. This may appear impossible. However, to help us with this task, He has given us a unique gift – the Holy Spirit Who abides in all of us. Leaving this world, Jesus prepares his disciples, and

especially us, for difficult times and challenges. He promises that He will not leave us orphans, but will send a Comforter, Who will support us and work for us and with us. Christ assures us that the Holy Spirit will never abandon us (14:16), and will lead us to the truth (14:17), which the world cannot accept (14:17); He will remain with us and within us (14:17), will teach us (14:26), and remind us of Jesus' words (14:26). In another text, Jesus tells us that the Holy Spirit is the source of truth (15:26), Who reveals to us our sinfulness and shows us the way to righteousness, and Who convinces us that God's forthcoming judgment is unavoidable (16:8), He lets us see the future (16:13), and reveals Christ's glory (16:14). The Holy Spirit has worked among human beings since the beginning of the world, but from the day of Pentecost (Ac. 2), He has begun to live and act in all the faithful.

*Quote from Metropolitan Andrey:* People often forsake the ways of God, and go their own ways leading to perdition of soul and body. In order to save souls, and lead them on the way to salvation, Christ gave us one more gift – a gift above all gifts. Ten days after His Ascension, He sent us His Holy Spirit. And this Spirit of God given to us, He lives in us, and leads all who want to submit to His holy guidance along the divine path of a Christian life. And you, my beloved, have received this gift, this great, enlightening, holy gift that in the soul of each individual receives, guides, and hears our prayer. What an inexhaustible treasure this is, what a wonderful heavenly gift, what happiness it is to be a Christian!

*Pastoral Letter on Pascha, Lviv, May 1943*



*Prayer*, (tone 1): The Holy Spirit provides every gift: He inspires prophecy and perfects the priesthood; He grants wisdom to the illiterate, makes simple fishermen become wise theologians, and establishes perfect order in the assembly of the Church. Therefore, O Comforter, equal in nature and majesty with the Father and the Son, O Lord, glory to You.



*Mission Task:* The Holy Spirit grants to all, who open themselves to Him, the power to do God's work. Let us promise that tomorrow throughout the entire day we will be especially mindful of our neighbors, and be ready to manifest to them God's love and mercy. Let us be on guard that our hearts not be a den of thieves, but rather a dwelling place of the Holy Spirit.





*Third Day:*  
*Sunday of the Holy Fathers – Jn. 17:1-13*



## JESUS' PRIESTLY PRAYER FOR US



**Word of God:** “Father, the hour has come. Give glory to your son, so that your son may glorify you, just as you gave him authority over all people, so that he may give eternal life to all you gave him. Now this is eternal life, that they should know you, the only true God, and the one whom you sent, Jesus Christ. I glorified you on earth by accomplishing the work that you gave me to do. Now glorify me, Father, with you, with the glory that I had with you before the world began. I revealed your name to those whom you gave me out of the world. They belonged to you, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything you gave me is from you, because the words you gave to me I have given to them, and they accepted them ... I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for the ones you have given me ... And now I will no longer be in the world, but they are in the world ... Holy Father, keep them in your name ... so that they may be one just as we are.



**Meditation:** At the end of the Last Supper, Jesus utters a long prayer to the Father in which He prays for Himself (1-5), His disciples (6-19), and for those who in the future would believe in the Gospel through their preaching, in other words, for us (20-26). On the Sunday after the Ascension, this text is read as

if it were the testament of our Lord. Jesus asks the Father to glorify Him, to sit as His right hand – at the place He had before the creation of the world. He had accomplished all the works that the Father gave him to do, the words He had to say were said. All the Father entrusted to Him, He revealed to His disciples. Thus, the Lord prays for His disciples, so that they might pass on His teaching, and continue His works. Jesus knows the dangers they will face. The world will hate them as the world hated Him, and will persecute and torture them. They do not belong to the world, but will be sent into the world. It is for this reason that they need protection from the Holy Spirit, the source of unity, joy and love.

*Quote from Metropolitan Andrey:* When we manifest our love to others, not merely in nice words, but especially a love made visible in our works of mercy, only then will everyone recognize that we are true disciples of Christ, recognize that we believe Christ's teaching and live by it. Let all see that we are faithful to Christ's word. For this we can expect not only respect from intelligent people, but, above all, glory and reward from Christ. "All that you have done for the least of my brethren you have done for Me."

*Joint Pastoral Letter of Metropolitan Andrey  
and the episcopate to the clergy and faithful of Halychyna:  
"Assistance to the unemployed and the poor"  
Lviv, 13 December 1931*



*Prayer*, (tone 1): The Lord appeared to His disciples who had hastened to the mountain for His ascension from here below, and they bowed before Him. They learned of His universal power and were sent to all the peoples of the earth to announce His resurrection from the dead and His return from earth to heaven. He also promised to be with them always, and His word is truth; for He is Christ our God, the Savior of our souls.



*Mission Task:* In the Priestly Prayer of Jesus found in the Gospel of John (Chapter 17), Jesus thanks the Father for the gift of His disciples. This means that my life belongs to Christ and I should be an instrument in His hands, to speak His word, to do His work. Either this evening or sometime tomorrow, let us find some cor-

ner where we can quietly pray: “Lord, I am here! Lord, I am yours!” Let us repeat this prayer as many times as necessary, until we can truly feel God’s presence in our life.





*Fourth Day:*  
*Monday – Jn. 14:27 – 15:7*



## JESUS THE GIVER OF PEACE AND TRUE VINE



**Word of God:** “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give it to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid. You heard me tell you, ‘I am going away and I will come back to you.’ I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower. He takes away every branch in me that does not bear fruit, and everyone that does he prunes so that it bears more fruit. You are already pruned because of the word that I spoke to you. Remain in me, as I remain in you. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit on its own unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. ... without me you can do nothing. Anyone who does not remain in me will be thrown out like a branch and wither ... If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask for whatever you want and it will be done for you.”



**Meditation:** At the Last Supper, Jesus gives His disciples the gift of peace. The Hebrew word *shalom* has broad and deep meaning, depending on the context. It can mean “good fortune,” “salvation,” “freedom,” and “peace.” Peace is not merely the absence of war. To receive the gift of peace means to “be healthy, strong,

stable, complete, perfect.” Christ not only grants us peace, He fosters it in us, if we are united to Him. Jesus is the Vine, God, the vine grower, and the branches are those who follow Jesus. The fruitful branches are the true believers, who produce abundant fruit in their life. However, those branches which bear no fruit and are cut off from the vine; these are the ones who reject Christ. To live in Christ means to believe that He is the Son of God (1 Jn. 4:15), and to accept Him as Savior and Lord (Jn. 1:12); to fulfill God’s will (1 Jn. 3:24); to be members of the Church, the community of the faithful (Mystical Body).

*Quote from Metropolitan Andrey:* Just as a branch cannot bud and bear fruit if it is not joined to the vine from which it receives fluids, likewise, the soul of the Christian, if it is not united, not joined to Jesus Christ, it cannot lead a Christian life, cannot blossom, and cannot bear the fruit of good deeds. When a person is united with Jesus Christ, that person receives from Christ the power of God’s grace in the same way that fluids flow from the base to the branches. Separated from the vine, a branch dry out, just as a soul, separated from Christ, becomes barren, withers and dies. As the fluids of a plant must constantly come from the roots to the vine and branches, likewise, the Christian needs to be united to Christ every day, and thus receive from Him strength and life.



*Prayer:* O Christ, when the good thief saw You, the only fruitful Vine, he became a more skillful thief, for with one small cry he artfully stole from You the forgiveness of his former sins. Therefore, let us all imitate him, and cry out: O Lover of mankind, also remember us.



*Mission Task:* We are called to peace, even amid civil turmoil and war. Tomorrow I will try to foster in myself an inner spirit of peace, the kind of peace that our Lord gives to all, who have Him in their hearts. Let this peace be manifest in my words, in my actions, in my life disposition. Then it will be possible to recognize that I am a living branch in the Lord’s vineyard.





*Fifth Day:*  
*Tuesday – Jn. 16:2-13*



## THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE SIN OF THE WORLD



**Word of God:** “They will expel you from the synagogues; in fact, the hour is coming when everyone who kills you will think he is offering worship to God. They will do this because they have not known either the Father or me. I have told you this so that when their hour comes you may remember that I told you. I did not tell you this from the beginning, because I was with you. But now I am going to the one who sent me, and not one of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’ ... But I tell you the truth, it is better for you that I go. For if I do not go, the Advocate will not come to you. ... And when he comes he will convict the world in regard to sin and righteousness and condemnation: sin, because they do not believe in me; righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you will no longer see me; condemnation, because the ruler of this world has been condemned. I have much more to tell you, but you cannot bear it now. But when he comes, the Spirit of truth, he will guide you to all truth.”



**Meditation:** During that final hour Jesus spent with His disciples, He warned them that His future community of believers would be persecuted; He explained to them where, when, and

why He must go away; He assured them they would not be left alone, since the Holy Spirit would be sent to them. Jesus knew what was about to take place, and He did not want the faith of His disciples to be shaken or destroyed. We are not alone! The Holy Spirit abides in us. He sustains us, teaches us the truth and helps us. The physical presence of Jesus Christ on this earth was very limited, both in time and in place. But the work of the Holy Spirit transcends all limits of time and space. Through the Holy Spirit every generation of the human race can come to know what sin is and where it leads. Through God's Spirit of Truth, anyone who believes in the Lord Jesus can become righteous. Our hope is that God's justice will ultimately prevail amid the trials and persecutions of the world.

*Quote from Metropolitan Andrey:* God speaks directly to every soul through the gentle voice of His grace and the silent inspiration of the Holy Spirit. As the teacher of humankind, and as the One sent from heaven for the salvation of the human race and to bear witness to the truth, Christ only speaks to the human race through His Holy Church. We need that "pillar and bulwark of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15), so that Christ's teaching can be promoted and passed on from generation to generation.

*Spiritual Instruction for Priests,  
Pidlute, June-August, 1935*



**Prayer** (Tone 3): Let us today worthily honor the memory of the first flowers of Christianity in the lands of Rus-Ukraine and those who have shone forth with heroic virtues during the persecution of the faith as true righteous ones of God and witnesses of the Gospel of Christ, for today they pray for the salvation of our souls in the glory of God.



**Mission Task:** Our Church persevered through persecution in the 20th century by the grace and power of the Holy Spirit. In our time throughout the world, our brothers and sisters in Christ are living through terrible times of persecution, especially in the Middle East. Tomorrow, let us be united in prayer with all those who bear witness to their life in Christ before this sinful world, and let us find a way to manifest the love of God to others, especially toward those who hate us, since love conquers the world.



*Sixth Day:*  
*Wednesday – John 16:15-23*



## THE PROMISE OF JOY



**Word of God:** “Everything that the Father has is mine; for this reason I told you that he will take from what is mine and to declare it to you. A little while and you will no longer see me, and again a little while later and you will see me.” So some of his disciples said to one another, “What does this mean that he is saying to us, ‘A little while and you will not see me, and again a little while and you will see me,’ and ‘Because I am going to the Father’?” So they said, “What is this ‘little while’ [of which he speaks]? We do not know what he means.” Jesus knew that they wanted to ask him, so he said to them ... “Amen, amen, I say to you, you will weep and mourn, while the world rejoices; you will grieve, but your grief will become joy. When a woman is in labor, she is in anguish because her hour has arrived; but when she has given birth to a child, she no longer remembers the pain because of her joy that a child has been born into the world. So you also are now in anguish. But I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy away from you. On that day you will not question me about anything. Amen, amen, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in my name he will give you.”



**Meditation:** At the Last Supper, Jesus spoke to His disciples about His death. He explained to them how He would soon rise and appear to them again. Jesus emphasizes that there is a great difference between His disciples and the world. The world revels in doing evil, while the disciples are called to do good and rejoice even when that good brings temporary suffering and requires sacrifice. The values of this world are contrary to the values of the Kingdom of God. If a Christian were to think according to the categories of this world, then he or she might come to see themselves as a failure. However, even if today our life is full of difficulty for the sake of Christ and His Truth, then necessarily there will come a time, when we will rejoice, as Jesus taught us. To be a disciple of Christ means to courageously look to the future and already find joy in the fulfillment of God's promises.

**Quote from Metropolitan Andrey:** It is by the light of faith, and even then with limited understanding, that we can know some of what is going to happen and recognize the path on which the Spirit leads us. And while we cannot understand everything, we can experience a justified joy and pride in knowing that the Spirit of Christ abides in us, for in Him we find a confidence greater than any assurances of this world can give, that Christ is the Son of God, God's Truth, and God's Wisdom. We do not need the witness of miracles, we don't need prophets, since the Holy Spirit is the One who Himself bears witness. (1 Jn. 5:6). When we have received the Spirit of God, when we have the Spirit of Christ, then we must no longer live according to the flesh, but according to the spirit, by the spirit we must put to death the evil deeds of the body (Rm. 8:13). This applies not just to monks and nuns, but to all Christians, because we all received the Holy Spirit in the Holy Mystery of Chrismation.

*Sermon on Pentecost, Lviv, August 12, 1938*



**Prayer, (tone 8):** Christ, as a gardener, appeared to Mary cooling her longing with the dew of His words. He said to her: Go to my brothers and announce to them the joy! For I go to My Father and My God and your God, in order to grant great mercy to the world.



*Mission Task:* Many of us still remember the days when His Holiness Pope John Paul II visited Ukraine. The faces of Ukrainians, especially those in Lviv, radiated with joy. As we know, joy is one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit (see Gal. 5:22-23), and in joy we recognize His presence among us. Tomorrow, let us make an effort to be joyful, smiling to all we meet, remembering that we are God's children, that God love us and desires our welfare in all things.





Seventh Day:  
Thursday – John 16:23-33



## ASK AND YOU SHALL RECEIVE



**The Word of God:** “Amen, amen, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in my name he will give you. Until now you have not asked anything in my name; ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be complete ... For the Father himself loves you, because you have loved me and have come to believe that I came from God. I came from the Father and have come into the world. Now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father.” His disciples said, “Now you are talking plainly, and not in any figure of speech. Now we realize that you know everything and that you do not need to have anyone question you. Because of this we believe that you came from God.” Jesus answered them, “Do you believe now? Behold, the hour is coming and has arrived when each of you will be scattered to his own home and you will leave me alone. But I am not alone, because the Father is with me. I have told you this so that you might have peace in me. In the world you will have trouble, but take courage, I have conquered the world.”



**Meditation:** In this Gospel passage Jesus tells us that that we have immediate and direct access to God. If Jesus came from the Father and returns to Him, this means that all who belong to Jesus are just as close to the Father as He is. When we ask something in the name of Jesus, the Father listens to us. However, we must ask

with faith in God goodness and taking His will into account. Since we know that the Lord loves us with a greater love than the love we have for ourselves, let us not be discouraged if it seems that our prayers have not been answered. We must be convinced that everything will work out for the best, if we rely on the Lord and seek His will.

*Quote from Metropolitan Andrey:* I say: when you are troubled, suffering, sad, or sick, always remember how Our Good God in heaven sent us His Only-begotten Son for our salvation. Remember this Son of God, Jesus Christ, has such a great love for us that we can turn to Him, and have confidence in Him, even in the most difficult and trying situation, reaching out with a child's deep conviction that we will always find in Him a warm and loving heart, filled with compassion. This very thought will become prayer, and when that conviction becomes habitual, so that in any time of difficulty we come to Jesus Christ, then not just one time, but hundreds of times we will experience Christ's love, and not even realize when the heavenly flame of God's love began to burn in our hearts.

*Pastoral Letter to the Faithful: Great Lent  
L'viv, 1906 – February 1907*



*Prayer*, (tone 6): Come, O faithful, let us zealously labor for the Lord; for He entrusts His riches to His servants; let us each multiply the talent of grace. Let one gain wisdom by doing good; let another serve with splendor; let the faithful share the knowledge of faith with the unenlightened; let others share their goods with the poor. Thus we shall multiply the treasure that has been entrusted to us, and we shall be the faithful stewards of grace, and we shall be worthy of the joy of the Lord. Grant this to us, O Christ our God, in Your goodness toward mankind.



*Mission Task:* Every one of us, most certainly, has experienced prayer, which at first, it seems, God did not answer. This may have made us doubt, whether God hears us at all, or even whether He exists. Tomorrow let us practice trusting God and in different moments of the day let us repeat the words: “Father, let Your will be done.” Is there anything better (for us) than the will of God being fulfilled in our lives?



*Eighth Day:*  
*Friday – John 17:18-24*



## THAT ALL MAY BE ONE



**Word of God:** “As you sent me into the world, so I sent them into the world. And I consecrate myself for them, so that they also may be consecrated in truth. I pray not only for them, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, so that they may all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us ... And I have given them the glory you gave me, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may be brought to perfection as one, that the world may know that you sent me, and that you loved them even as you loved me. Father, they are your gift to me. I wish that where I am\* they also may be with me, that they may see my glory that you gave me, because you loved me before the foundation of the world.”



**Meditation:** In his Priestly Prayer during the Last Supper, Jesus prays for the unity of His disciples. In the “Creed” we pray for “one holy catholic and apostolic Church” which should be the external manifestation of the interior unity of the children of God. Our unity should be founded on the unity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It must flow from God’s love and be directed towards it. Jesus said: “This is how all will know you for my disciples: your love for

one another” (Jn. 13:35). Consequently, every generation of Christians is called to foster that unity for which Christ prayed, and to fervently implore the Lord for unity especially where it has been damaged due to our sinfulness and weakness.

*Quote from Metropolitan Andrey:* The more we come to know the Church, the Bride of Christ and our Mother, the more we will be able to know the Spirit who, given to the Apostles, guides the Church and leads her to victory. The more we are filled with that same Spirit, the more we will become people of God and people with a church spirit. Every step on that road will lead us closer to one another. We will be ever more of one mind and one heart. The Christian ideal, “that all may be one” (Jn. 17:21), will become a reality in us. Then, God willing, we will be able to work according to the mission entrusted by God to our people and our Church, to promote “the union of all God’s Churches” (Petition from the Litany of Peace).

*Joint Pastoral Letter of Metropolitan Andrey,  
and bishops of the Halych Church Province, Constantine Chekhovych,  
and Gregory Khomyshyn to the clergy “On Solidarity”  
Lviv, January 31 (February 13), 1905*



*Prayer*, (tone 4): As a priest, you faithfully served our Lord, Christ our God\* and offered yourself as a sacrifice.\* O, Priest-martyr Josaphat, you have shown yourself to be the perfect sacrifice – courageously giving witness with the shedding of your blood.\* As a true pastor and follower of Christ, you never ceased to cry out:\* Father preserve them in your name, that all may be one!\* That is why today, blessed martyr Josaphat, pray that all Churches be united, and the faithful members of Christ’s flock be saved.



*Mission Task:* Discord and a lack of unity among the children of God appear first of all in the circle of those who are closest to us: in our family unit, our extended family, our own parish, etc. Perhaps someone has offended me, or perhaps I have wronged someone? Tomorrow, let us think about on all the people with whom we do not live in peace, let us pray for them and forgive them from the depths of our heart.



Ninth Day:  
Saturday – John 21:15-25

— ◆ —  
“FEED MY SHEEP!”



**Word of God:** When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Feed my lambs.” He then said to him a second time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Tend my sheep.” He said to him the third time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” Peter was distressed that he had said to him a third time, “Do you love me?” and he said to him, “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.” [Jesus] said to him, “Feed my sheep. Amen, amen, I say to you, when you were younger, you used to dress yourself and go where you wanted; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.” He said this signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God. And when he had said this, he said to him, “Follow me.” Peter turned and saw the disciple following whom Jesus loved, the one who had also reclined upon his chest during the supper and had said, “Master, who is the one who will betray you?” When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, “Lord, what about him?” Jesus said to him, “What if I want him to remain until I come? What concern is it of yours? You follow me.”



**Meditation:** The three questions Jesus asks Peter about love echo his three denials. Three is the number of fullness, three is the number to remember. The evangelist uses two different Greek words which in English are both translated by the verb “to love”: the Greek word *αγαπη* (selfless love), and *φιλεω* (the love of friendship). Christ both loves us with a love beyond words, a selfless, sacrificial love, and also with a love of true friendship. We serve Christ and our neighbor because we have come to know His sacrificial, full of friendship, faithful love. Peter’s words were a response of love to Love. The rest of his life became one of service precisely because of the power of his unique experience of Christ’s love for him.

**Quote from Metropolitan Andrej:** What a lesson this is for us! What a lesson it is for those who once did not believe! What a consolation this is for those who have not seen but believed! Among the apostles the one who most needs salvation and repentance, and maybe consolation, is Peter. In the last terrible hours of Christ’s life, as he stood in trial, Peter denied Him three times: in response to the servant-woman, to the servants or guards he swears to not knowing Jesus ... Christ appears to Peter already on this first day, no doubt speaking to him, encouraging him, purifying him, raising him up, sanctifying the soul of His disciple as a potter or sculptor works the clay, just before creating a masterpiece.

*Paschal Sunday Sermon, Lviv, April 8-9, 1939*



**Prayer,** (tone 4): Christ asked three times: Peter, do you love Me? There by He satisfied the three-fold denial; and Simon, understanding the mystery, cried to the Lord: You know all things; You know that I love You. After this, Christ said to him: Feed my sheep, feed my lambs; feed those sheep which I have fashioned for salvation with my own blood. Therefore, O blessed Apostle of God, beseech Him to grant us great mercy.



**Mission Task:** How would we have responded to the same question asked by Jesus? Do we truly love Him? St. Augustine writes: “Do you want to encounter the living Christ – then go out and find someone in need, and care for that person, look into your

heart, the source of your love and you will see God in so far as it is possible for you to do so.” Tomorrow, in church, when the collection to support the missionary activity of our Church is taken, resolve to make an offering which adequately corresponds to God’s love for us, and which will enable the Church to show God’s love where it is most greatly needed.





*Tenth Day:*  
*Sunday of Pentecost – John 7:37-52 – 8:12*



## LIVING WATER AND LIGHT OF THE WORLD



**Word of God:** Jesus stood up and exclaimed, “Let anyone who thirsts come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as scripture says: ‘Rivers of living water will flow from within him.’” He said this in reference to the Spirit that those who came to believe in him were to receive. There was, of course, no Spirit yet, because Jesus had not yet been glorified ... So the guards went to the chief priests and Pharisees, who asked them, “Why did you not bring him?” The guards answered, “Never before has anyone spoken like this one.” So the Pharisees answered them, “Have you also been deceived? ... Nicodemus, one of their members who had come to him earlier, said to them, “Does our law condemn a person before it first hears him and finds out what he is doing?” ... Jesus spoke to them again, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”



**Meditation:** Jesus used the image of living water as a symbol of eternal life (Jn. 4:10) and of the Holy Spirit. He did not do this by chance: eternal life, by its very nature implies the presence of the Holy Spirit. He brings eternal life to those who receive Him. In respect to those who denied the truth of Christ, the chief priests, the Pharisees, they

acted in such a manner since this truth did not come from them. They regarded Christ as a danger, and sought to eliminate him. However, courageous Nicodemus, having believed in Jesus, interceded for Him. Jesus Christ is the Creator of life, and His life brings light to all humankind. In this light we can see ourselves as we truly are: sinners in need of salvation. Following Christ, we no longer wander about blindly. Christ enlightens our way, and we see how we must live. He is the only one who shatters the darkness of sin and fills our life with his peace and joy.

*Quote from Metropolitan Andrew:* “If only you recognized God’s gift” (Jn. 4:10), Jesus once said to the Samaritan woman, “you would have asked him instead and he would have given you living water.” So we could speak to Christians even today. If you could only recognize God’s gift in the holy chalice, if you only knew what it contains, you would gather more frequently around the altar, you would not miss even one Divine Liturgy, and each time you would try to worthily receive the Holy Eucharist. You work so hard to attain material temporal things, and are so preoccupied with them, remembering them day and night. What good will all this work do you, what will all your efforts come to, if you neglect God’s blessing, if you forget that which is most important.

*Pastoral Letter to the Faithful, “On frequent Communion”  
Lavriv, May 1, 1909*



*Prayer,* (tone 4): In the middle of the feast of the Law, our Savior went up to the temple. He stood in the midst of the crowd, teaching them with authority: I am the Light of the world. All who follow Me shall no walk in darkness but shall have the light of immortal life.



*Mission Task:* This Pentecost Sunday can be considered the birthday of the Church, since on this day the apostles, having received the Holy Spirit, were filled with courage to bear witness to Christ and to the salvation which comes through Him. This day, we, too, should gather our courage to openly witness to our life in Christ. Let us not forget that we are not alone, the Holy Spirit acts in the world, and He wants to act through us. The Holy Spirit can make us a light in the world, if only we allow Him to do so.

*"VIBRANT PARISH" Prayer*



O Lord Jesus Christ, our Good Shepherd, as you once gathered lost sheep that they might hear Your voice and be your flock, so also today graciously look down from heaven upon our parish community, and send down on it your Holy Spirit, that it might be a place to receive the joy of Your Good News. Strengthen us with your presence, and always gather us together in prayer. Grant us the spirit of serving others, so that in our parish all might encounter You, the merciful God. Bless our spiritual leaders with Your wisdom, and inspire us to generously give of our time, talents and treasure for the building up of Your Kingdom. Unite us in peace and harmony, as befits Your community of love. Instill in us a missionary spirit, and let our parish community shine with the light of the Gospel, with prayer and good works, inviting all to share in the divine life, so that Your Name, O Savior, may be praised, together with Your eternal Father, and your most-holy, good and life-giving Spirit. Amen.

# **THE VIBRANT PARISH**

## **A PLACE TO ENCOUNTER**

### **THE LIVING CHRIST**



In 2011 His Beatitude Sviatoslav together with the bishops of the UGCC asked us to pay special attention to the renewal of parish life, as the basis for the on-going development of our Church. The parish is the place where we encounter the Living Christ, where we can grow spiritually and where the Good News of the Gospel is proclaimed, so that it can be shared with others. Our Synod encourages us all together and individually to reflect on and work for the development of our parish community, and to take an active role in the mission of the Church by fostering these aspects of parish life:

**THE WORD OF GOD AND CATECHESIS**

**LITURGY AND PRAYER**

**SERVICE TO ONE'S NEIGHBOR**

**LEADERSHIP – STEWARDSHIP**

**COMMUNITY – UNITY**

**A MISSIONARY SPIRIT**

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