

# FST. ELIA'S NEWSLETTER

# **SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 2023**

СЛАВА ІСУСУ ХРИСТУ! СЛАВА НАВІКИ!

**GLORY BE TO JESUS CHRIST! GLORY FOREVER!** 

#### **SUNDAY WORSHIP HOURS:**

9:30 am Confessions 10:00 am Divine Liturgy

#### UPCOMING EVENTS

\* ST. ELIA COUNCIL MEETING Sunday, September 17th, 2023 after Divine Liturgy

For our present time consists of three intervals: the past, the future, and the present. Thus, the Lord spent three days in the earth as a symbol to teach us clearly that our resurrection shall take place after these intervals of time have been fulfilled. Our resurrection shall be the beginning of the future age and the end of this. In that age, there is neither past nor future, but only the present.

Methodius on the mystery of the Prophet Jonah.

## CONTACTS

### UKRAINIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OF ST. ELIA

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#### WEBSITES

St. Elia: www.uocc-stelia.ca

Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada: www.uocc.ca

Western Eparchy: www.uocc-we.ca

## CLERGY

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Home: 780-477-2583 / Cell: 780-984-6290 Rev. Fr. Vasyl Maskal Cell: 306-229-7743

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# PRIMATIAL ENCYCLICAL TO THE PLENITUDE OF THE UKRAINIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OF CANADA:

# REGARDING THE QUESTION OF ADOPTION OF THE REVISED JULIAN CALENDAR BY THE UKRAINIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OF CANADA

Your Grace Bishop Andriy, Honourable Father Presbyters & Deacons in Christ, Beloved in Christ Brothers & Sisters!

## I. INTRODUCTION

The XXIII Sobor of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada, convened in the God-protected city of Winnipeg in July 2015, referred Resolution R3 (on "the adoption of the Gregorian or Revised Julian Calendar") to the Council of Bishops and Liturgical Commission. Admittedly, this topic quickly descended on the list of concerns and priorities in the UOCC and was left virtually unattended to. So much has changed, however, since 2015 and the XXIII Sobor of our Church! Most impactful and dramatic among these, particularly for Ukrainians both in our ancestral homeland and in dispersion around the globe, is the illegal and genocidal full-scale war waged by Vladimir Putin and the Russian Federation against Ukraine in February 2022.

The resolution of the XXIII Sobor is, most certainly, not the only instance of discussion of the relevance of continuing to employ the Julian Calendar in the liturgical life of the UOCC – the topic has been discussed regularly and frequently in our parishes and at eparchial assemblies. Without doubt, however, the need for a decision in the UOCC on this issue has been expedited by the war in Ukraine. In particular, the recent decision by the All-Ukrainian Sobor of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine to adopt the Revised Julian Calendar (commencing 01 September 2023) has resulted in greatly amplified interest in deciding the "calendar question" in the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada.

My beloved ones, your Metropolitan hears you! I understand and acknowledge fully that further delay of discussion of this topic is no longer viable nor is it beneficial for the UOCC.

To begin the process of formulating my decision regarding adoption of the Revised Julian Calendar by the UOCC, I convened an online All-Canada Clergy Conference on 18 August 2023. Following this informative gathering, I now wish to hear from you, the faithful of our beloved Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada. While the goal is not to hear, "what the Metropolitan must do," or to "take a vote on the calendar," I do hope to hear your thoughts, concerns, and opinions on the matter of a potential modification of our liturgical life by adopting an alternative ecclesiastical calendar. To this end, I offer the following for your consideration...

#### II. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

As Canadians of Ukrainian descent, Ukrainians for whom Canada is home, spouses of the latter or former – regardless our identity, we have regulated our ecclesiastical life according to the Julian ("Old") Calendar as Ukrainian Orthodox in this country for approximately five generations. On the one hand, it has been a cherished mark of our uniqueness within our nation's multicultural mosaic and has offered a measure of comfort, allowing us to celebrate our Church feasts and fasts, removed from Western ecclesiastical tradition, secularism, and commercialism; simply put, it has defined "who we aren't."

On the other hand, as each successive generation has had to confront the usual consequences of assimilation, inter-marriage, etc., our sustained adherence to the Julian Calendar has, unfortunately,

diminished its value as a missionary instrument for growing the Orthodox faith in Canada and sanctification or churching of our nation. In reality, there are hundreds of faithful of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada who have, for many years, taken advantage of the presence of two calendars and adopted a "blend" of both worlds. This is, of course, most apparent during the Nativity season, for example. How many times has the following been expressed by our faithful: "December 25th is commercialized, but we still celebrate and exchange gifts because that's when everyone has time off. 'Our Christmas' on January 7th – that's more of a religious holiday." In summary, in the Canadian context, the "calendrical line" for Ukrainian Orthodox has become increasingly blurred with the passing of time. Finally, the reality that most Orthodox in Canada, today, have worshipped according to the Revised Julian Calendar for decades deserves our consideration as well.

My intent is not to reproduce in this encyclical an entire comprehensive, detailed list of facts about the calendars. I do want to ensure, nevertheless, that we have a clear understanding of the function of the calendar in the life of the Church:

- 1) The calendar is an instrument by which the Church sanctifies time. That is to say, we are in a constant struggle for our salvation and eternal life, and that struggle is ordered liturgically throughout the year by a calendar that allows our full participation in the life Christ, through feasts and fasts commemorating essential aspects in our Lord's earthly sojourn, those of His Most Holy Mother, the Theotokos, and of the saints of His Holy Church, who left us a rich inheritance of good examples of success in this struggle for holiness.
- 2) The ecclesiastical calendar does not regulate how we mark these salvific events with our "small 't' traditions" or folk customs. The ecclesiastical calendar does note, each year, when the feasts and fasts of the Church take place (and their duration), because of canonical decisions establishing the dates on which these commemorations/fasts are to be marked. For example, Nativity Eve will always be a day of strict fasting, whether it falls on January 6th at present or potentially on December 24th. If families prefer to gather for a "Holy Supper" on a specific day, the ecclesiastical calendar "offers no comment" regarding such a decision. Another example: we commemorate the Holy Hierarch and Wonderworker Nicholas of Myra in Lycia on December 19th at present and could potentially commemorate him on December 6th. Which day families choose to exchange gifts, however, is not an issue relevant to the ecclesiastical calendar.
- 3) Our determination to change calendars ought not be driven by secular politics, nostalgia, or emotion based on the present state of our world. As a person born and raised in Ukraine, a country neighbouring a despotic and ruinous neighbour who has, throughout history, utterly denied the very existence of the Ukrainian nation, people, culture, and language, I understand completely the present logic and desire of Ukrainians to eliminate any commonality with Russia. However, I serve in the office of Primate of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada I must ensure that any decision regarding our ecclesiastical calendar will be first and foremost beneficial for the salvation of the faithful comprising the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada. I must ensure that whatever calendar we adhere to, we are edified by it and, by it, are able to sanctify this nation and evangelize Canada, calling her people to Christ (Matthew 28:19-20) and into His Holy Orthodox Church.

#### III. ENGAGEMENT IN CHURCH-WIDE DISCUSSION

Having presented the above for your prayerful consideration, I bless all parish priests and the faithful in all parishes and parish districts of our Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada to begin engaging, without delay, in discussion regarding the potential change of ecclesiastical calendar. The discussion of this issue and submission of comments resulting from this discussion shall take place according to the following order and guidelines:

- 1) Each parish priest is instructed to convene a gathering in their parish or parish district and lead the discussion on the potential change of the ecclesiastical calendar in the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada to the Revised Julian Calendar. The session will open with prayer and the reading of this encyclical. Each parish priest is responsible for recruiting any assistant(s) he may require to aid in maintaining good order and record comments expressed at these gatherings and, if needed, help compile these comments into a summary document which accurately reflects the opinions of the participants at the gathering.
- 2) Each participant should feel free to express their opinion on the matter. All statements should be expressed in a calm, respectful manner, with concise statements, and without imposition of individual will on others. No individual participant should seek to monopolize or dominate the discussion. At the conclusion of the gathering the priest ought to seek the collective opinion of the parish whether a change of calendar is supported or not supported.
- 3) Following these parish gatherings, each parish priest is to share the summary document with their parish or parish district council and have it entered as information into the minutes of the meeting at which it was presented. The summary document is to be sent to the Metropolitan of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada, together with a covering letter signed by the parish priest and the parish council president.
- 4) All summary documents should be submitted electronically (e-mail: rudnyk1@telus.net) or in hard copy (11404-112 Avenue, Edmonton, AB, T5G 0H6) to the Metropolitan by 01 October 2023.
- 5) The Metropolitan of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada, on behalf of the Council of Bishops, will announce his decision on the potential change of ecclesiastical calendar for the UOCC by 01 December 2023.

## IV. CONCLUSION

Beloved in Christ! The decision to change the calendar which has navigated the liturgical life of our Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada for more than a century is not a simple one, nor should it be considered lightly. I trust in your good discernment and in your desire to help your Metropolitan decide on a good solution which will help us, our children, and our children's children struggle for holiness, salvation, and eternal life the God's Heavenly Kingdom!

May God help us all in our good works!

With primatial blessings & paternal love in Christ, the Lord,

ILARION, METROPOLITAN
ARCHBISHOP OF WINNIPEG & THE CENTRAL EPARCHY
PRIMATE OF THE UKRAINIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OF CANADA

Proclaimed: 25 August 2023

# <u>UPCOMING FEAST DAYS</u> (September - October)

The Beheading of the Holy Glorious Prophet, Forerunner, and Baptist John. The angel of the desert. (Commemorated September 11th)



The Beheading of the Prophet, Forerunner of the Lord, John the Baptist: The Evangelists Matthew (Mt.14:1-12) and Mark (Mark 6:14-29) provide accounts about the martyric end of John the Baptist in the year 32 after the Birth of Christ.

Following the Baptism of the Lord, Saint John the Baptist was locked up in prison by Herod Antipas, the Tetrarch (ruler of one fourth of the Holy Land) and governor of Galilee. (After the death of king Herod the Great, the Romans divided the territory of Palestine into four parts, and put a governor in charge of each part. Herod Antipas received Galilee from the emperor Augustus).

The prophet of God John openly denounced Herod for having left his lawful wife, the daughter of the Arabian king Aretas, and then instead cohabiting with Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip (Luke 3:19-20). On

his birthday, Herod made a feast for dignitaries, the elders and a thousand chief citizens. Salome, the daughter of Herod, danced before the guests and charmed Herod. In gratitude to the girl, he swore to give her whatever she would ask, up to half his kingdom.

The vile girl on the advice of her wicked mother Herodias asked that she be given the head of John the Baptist on a platter. Herod became apprehensive, for he feared the wrath of God for the murder of a prophet, whom earlier he had heeded. He also feared the people, who loved the holy Forerunner. But because of the guests and his careless oath, he gave orders to cut off the head of Saint John and to give it to Salome.

According to Tradition, the mouth of the dead preacher of repentance once more opened and proclaimed: "Herod, you should not have the wife of your brother Philip." Salome took the platter with the head of Saint John and gave it to her mother. The frenzied Herodias repeatedly stabbed the tongue of the prophet with a needle and buried his holy head in a unclean place. But the pious Joanna, wife of Herod's steward Chuza, buried the head of John the Baptist in an earthen vessel on the Mount of Olives, where Herod had a parcel of land. The holy body of John the Baptist was taken that night by his disciples and buried at Sebastia, there where the wicked deed had been done.

After the murder of Saint John the Baptist, Herod continued to govern for a certain time. Pontius Pilate, governor of Judea, later sent Jesus Christ to him, Whom he mocked (Luke 23:7-12).

The Beheading of Saint John the Baptist, a Feast day established by the Church, is also a strict fast day because of the grief of Christians at the violent death of the saint. In some Orthodox cultures pious people will not eat food from a flat plate, use a knife, or eat food that is round in shape on this day.

# Sermon on the Nativity of the Theotokos By Protopresbyter Alexander Schmemann (September 21st)



The Church's veneration of Mary has always been rooted in her obedience to God, her willing choice to accept a humanly impossible calling. The Orthodox Church has always emphasized Mary's connection to humanity and delighted in her as the best, purest, most sublime fruition of human history and of man's quest for God, for ultimate meaning, for ultimate content of human life.

If in Western Christianity veneration of Mary was centered upon her perpetual virginity, the heart of Orthodox Christian East's devotion, contemplation, and joyful delight has always been her Motherhood, her flesh and blood connection to Jesus Christ.

The East rejoices that the human role in the divine plan is pivotal. The Son of God comes to earth, appears in order to redeem the world, He becomes human to incorporate man into His divine vocation, but humanity takes

part in this. If it is understood that Christ's "co-nature" with us is as a human being and not some phantom or bodiless apparition, that He is one of us and forever united to us through His humanity, then devotion to Mary also becomes understandable, for she is the one who gave Him His human nature, His flesh and blood. She is the one through whom Christ can always call Himself "The Son of Man."

Son of God, Son of Man...God descending and becoming man so that man could become divine, could become partaker of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4), or as the teachers of Church expressed it, "deified." Precisely here, in this extraordinary revelation of man's authentic nature and calling, is the source that gratitude and tenderness which cherishes Mary as our link to Christ and, in Him, to God. And nowhere is this reflected more clearly that in the Nativity of the Mother of God.

Nothing about this event is mentioned anywhere in the Holy Scriptures. But why should there be? Is there anything remarkable, anything especially unique about the normal birth of a child, a birth like any other? The Church began to commemorate the event with a special feast...because, on the contrary, the very fact that it is routine discloses something fresh and radiant about everything we call routine and ordinary, it gives new depth to the unremarkable details of human life...And with each birth the world is itself in some sense created anew and given as a gift to this new human being to be his life, his path, his creation.

This feast therefore is first a general celebration of Man's birth, and we no longer remember the anguish, as the Gospel says, "for joy that a human being is born into the world" (Jn. 16:21). Secondly, we now know whose particular birth, whose coming we celebrate: Mary's. We know the uniqueness, the beauty, the grace of precisely this child, her destiny, her meaning for us and for the whole world. And thirdly, we celebrate all who prepared the way for Mary, who contributed to her inheritance of grace and beauty... And therefore the Feast of her Nativity is also a celebration of human history, a celebration of faith in man, a celebration of man.

Sadly, the inheritance of evil is far more visible and better known. There is so much evil around us that this faith in mankind, in our freedom, in the possibility of handing down a radiant inheritance of goodness has almost evaporated and been replaced by cynicism and suspicion. This hostile cynicism and discouraging suspicion are precisely what seduce us to distance ourselves from the Church when it celebrates with such joy and faith this birth of a little girl in whom are concentrated all the goodness, spiritual beauty, harmony and perfection that are elements of genuine human nature. Thus, in celebrating Mary's birth we find ourselves already on the road to Bethlehem, moving toward the joyful mystery of Mary as the Mother to God.

# The Cross, The Preserver of the Universe

Saint John Maximovitch (Commemorated September 27th)

In the prophet Ezekiel (9:6) it is said that when the Angel of the Lord was sent to punish and destroy the sinning people, it was told him not to strike those on whom the "mark" had been made. In the original text this mark is called "tau," the Hebrew letter corresponding to the letter "T," which is how in ancient times the cross was made, which then was an instrument of punishment.

And so, even then was foretold the power of the Cross, which preserves those who venerate it. Likewise by many other events in the Old Testament the power of the Cross was indicated. Moses, who held his arms raised in the form of a cross during the battle, gave victory to the Israelites over the Amalekites. He also, dividing the Red Sea by a blow of his rod and by a transverse blow uniting the waters again, saved Israel from Pharaoh, who drowned in the water, while Israel crossed over on the dry bottom (Exodus, Chs. 14, 17). Through the laying on of his hands in the form of a cross on his grandsons, Jacob gave a blessing to his descendants, foretelling at the same time their future until the coming of the "expectation of the nations" (Genesis, Ch. 48).

By the Cross, the Son of God having become man, accomplished our salvation. He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross (Phil. 2:8). Having stretched out His hands upon the Cross, the Saviour with them, as it were, embraced the world, and by His blood shed on it, like a king with red ink, He signed the forgiveness of the human race.

The Cross of the Lord was the instrument by which He saved the world after the fall into sin. Through the Cross, He descended with His soul into hell so as to raise up from it the souls who were awaiting Him. By the Cross, Christ opened the doors of paradise which had been closed after our first ancestors had been banished from it. The Cross was sanctified by the Body of Christ which was nailed to it when He gave Himself over to torments and death for the salvation of the world, and it itself was then filled with life-giving power. By the Cross on Golgotha, the prince of this world was cast out (John 12:31) and an end was put to his authority. The weapon by which he was crushed became the sign of Christ's victory.

The demonic hosts tremble when they see the Cross, for by the Cross the kingdom of hell was destroyed. They do not dare to draw near to anyone who is guarded by the Cross.

The whole human race, by the death of Christ on the Cross, received deliverance from the authority of the devil, and everyone who makes use of this saving weapon is inaccessible to the demons.

When legions of demons appeared to St. Anthony the Great and other desert-dwellers, they guarded themselves with the Sign of the Cross, and the demons vanished.

When they appeared to Saint Symeon the Stylite, who was standing on his pillar, what seemed to be a chariot to carry him to heaven, the Saint, before mounting it, crossed himself; it disappeared and the enemy, who had hoped to cast down the ascetic from the height of his pillar, was put to shame.

One cannot enumerate all the separate examples of the manifestation of the power of the Cross in various incidents. Invisibly and unceasingly there gushes from it the Divine grace that saves the world.

The Sign of the Cross is made at all the Mysteries and prayers of the Church. With the making of the Sign of the Cross over the bread and wine, they become the Body and Blood of Christ. With the immersion of the Cross, the waters are sanctified. The Sign of the Cross looses us from sins. "When we are guarded by the Cross, we oppose the enemy, not fearing his nets and barking." Just as the flaming sword in the hands of the Cherubim barred the entrance into paradise of old, so the Cross now acts invisibly in the world, guarding it from perdition.

The Cross is the unconquerable weapon of pious kings in the battle with enemies. Through the apparition of the Cross in the sky, the dominion of Emperor Constantine was confirmed and an end was put to the persecution against the Church. The apparition of the Cross in the sky in Jerusalem in the days of Constantius the Arian proclaimed the victory of Orthodoxy.

By the power of the Cross of the Lord, Christian kings reign and will reign until Antichrist, barring his path to power and restraining lawlessness (Saint John Chrysostom, Commentary on 11 Thes. 2:6-7).

The "sign of the Son of Man" (Matt. 24:30), that is, the Cross, will appear in the sky in order to proclaim the end of the present world and the coming of the eternal Kingdom of the Son of God. Then all the tribes of the earth shall weep, because they loved the present age and its lusts, but all who have endured persecution for righteousness and called on the name of the Lord shall rejoice and be glad. The Cross then will save from eternal perdition all who conquered temptations by the Cross, who crucified their flesh with its passions and lusts, and took up their cross and followed their Christ.

But those who hated the Cross of the Lord and did not engrave the Cross in their soul will perish forever. For "the Cross is the preserver of the whole universe, the Cross is the beauty of the Church, the Cross is the might of kings, the Cross is the confirmation of the faithful, the Cross is the glory of angels and the scourge of demons" (Monday Matins).

# The Protection of our Most Holy Lady the Mother of God and Ever-Virgin Mary (Commemorated October 14th)



This miraculous appearance of the Mother of God occurred in the mid-tenth century in Constantinople, in the Blachernae church where her robe, veil, and part of her belt were preserved after being transferred from Palestine in the fifth century.

On Sunday, during the All Night Vigil, when the church was overflowing with those at prayer, the Fool-for-Christ Saint Andrew, at the fourth hour, lifted up his eyes towards the heavens and beheld our most Holy Lady Theotokos coming through the air, resplendent with heavenly light and surrounded by an assembly of the Saints. Saint John the Baptist and the holy Apostle John the Theologian accompanied the Queen of Heaven. On bended knees the Most Holy Virgin tearfully prayed for Christians for a long time. Then, coming near the Bishop's Throne, she continued her prayer.

After completing her prayer she took her veil and spread it over the people praying in church, protecting them from enemies both visible and invisible. The Most Holy Lady Theotokos was resplendent with heavenly glory, and the protecting veil in her hands gleamed "more than the rays of the sun." Saint Andrew gazed trembling at the miraculous vision and he asked his disciple, the blessed Epiphanius standing beside him, "Do you see, brother, the Holy Theotokos, praying for all the world?" Epiphanius answered, "I do see, holy Father, and I am in awe."

The Ever-Blessed Mother of God implored the Lord Jesus Christ to accept the prayers of all the people calling on His Most Holy Name, and to respond speedily to her intercession, "O Heavenly King, accept all those who pray to You and call on my name for help. Do not let them go away from my icon unheard."

Saints Andrew and Epiphanius were worthy to see the Mother of God at prayer, and "for a long time observed the Protecting Veil spread over the people and shining with flashes of glory. As long as the Most Holy Theotokos was there, the Protecting Veil was also visible, but with her departure it also became invisible. After taking it with her, she left behind the grace of her visitation."

On the Feast of the Protection of the Most Holy Theotokos we implore the defense and assistance of the Queen of Heaven, "Remember us in your prayers, O Lady Virgin Mother of God, that we not perish by the increase of our sins. Protect us from every evil and from grievous woes, for in you do we hope, and venerating the Feast of your Protection, we magnify you."

# **Upcoming news/events in the Ukrainian Community**

\* September - October Every Wednesday evening at St. Anthony's 7p.m.-Compline & Akathist., 8p.m. Orthodoxy 101.

## \* ACUA Events & Workshops

Alberta Council for the Ukrainian Arts: 780-488-8558 / info@acuarts.ca 10554 110 St NW Unit 100 Edmonton, AB T5H 3C

# **ACUA Regular Hours:**

Tue-Thu 10am-4pm / Friday 2pm-7pm / Saturday 11am-3pm

# [ Signature Artist Series Exhibition: Sept-Oct ]

#### NADIA SCHENK & MIKYLIE SHAPKA

SEP 08, 2023 TO SEP 30, 2023

We are delighted to announce our September Signature Artists are painter Nadia Schenk and multidisciplinary artist Mikylie Shapka!

Exhibition will be on view at ACUA September 8 – September 30 during regular hours.

# ANDRII LYSENKO, HALYNA HOTSALIUK AND GALYNA PETROVA OCT 06, 2023 TO OCT 28, 2023

We are delighted to announce our October Signature Artists are painters Andrii Lysenko, Halyna Hotsaliuk and Galyna Petrova!

Exhibition will be on view at ACUA October 6 – October 28 during regular hours.

# THE SOUND OF MUZYKA SEP 30, 2023 6:30PM

MUSIC • FOOD • CASH BAR \$25 Tickets (per person)

A good old-fashioned evening of Ukrainian Folk Music featuring Brian Cherwick of the Kubasonics with special guests the Broken Banjos!

Presented by Alberta Council for the Ukrainian Arts as part of the Kava Club event series. Made possible with the support of the Government of Canada.



# **UKRAINIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OF ST.ELIA**

# ORDER OF SERVICES FOR SEPTEMBER 2023.

3.	- SUNDAY	13-th.SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST	10:00 A.M.
10	SUNDAY	14-th. SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST	10:00 A.M.
17	SUNDAY	15-th.SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST	10:00 A.M.
24	SUNDAY	16-th.SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST	10:00 A.M.

# ORDER OF SERVICES FOR OCTOBER 2023.

1 SUNDAY	17-th.SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST	10:00 A.M.
8 SUNDAY	. 18-th.SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST	. 10:00 A.M.
15 SUNDAY	19-th.SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST	. 10:00 A.M.
22 SUNDAY	20-th.SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST	10:00 A.M.
29 SUNDAY	21-th.SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST	10:00 A.M.

