



**Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Ukrainian Catholic Church
(St. Mary's)
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Reverend Alexander Dumenko — Pastor (301) – 421 – 1739

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Sunday Divine Liturgies: 8:30 a.m. Holy Days as scheduled in the Bulletin

DIVINE LITURGY SCHEDULE

DECEMBER 16-23, 2018

Sunday December 16 Sunday of the Forefathers

EPISTLE COL. 3:4-17; GOSPEL: LK.14:16-24 TONE 5

8:00 a.m. – Confession 8:30 a.m. – For God's Blessings on Our Parishioners & in particular for Amy (good health) from Martha & John Stine

Sunday, December 23 Sunday before Christmas – of the Ancestors

EPISTLE HEB. 11:9-10&32-40; GOSPEL:MT.1:1-25 TONE 6

8:00 a.m. – Confession 8:30 a.m. – For God's Blessings on Our Parishioners & in particular for Cindy (good health) from Martha & John Stine

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Sunday of the Forefathers

It is not possible to imagine that any of us, while being in good health, would refuse to come to the celebration of a jubilee, or a wedding, or any other family festivity, if asked by a friend, a relative, or simply by an acquaintance or a colleague, or, let us say, by a boss, by the Queen of England or the Prime-Minister of Canada. We all understand very well that there are such dates and events that should not be neglected, if we cherish – at least a little bit – the friendship with those who invite us and want to share with us the delight of the feast. Such refusal, whatever the reasons for it might be, would necessarily be interpreted as very offensive, and consequently harm existing good relations.

Why does Christ give a parable about the attachment of mankind to the earthly things which inevitably decay? Why is this story recollected in our Church at the time of the anticipation of the Birth of Jesus Christ, two weeks before the Great Feast of His Nativity? God became a man in order to teach people that all their aspirations should be directed toward Heaven, and not toward material possessions. But we, demonstrating an outstanding stubbornness, do anything possible to leave a material legacy on this earth. We make great efforts to invest our unspent energy and funds into something that we call "eternal", but what in reality is very materialistic: our house, our career, our social status and our reputation. We still rely on our lands, on our possessions, and on our heirs, completely forgetting that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither does corruption inherit incorruption" (Cor.1:15). In other words, even the best things in life, if they are put in the place of God, in a vain attempt to substitute for Him, cease to be good and kind... Possibly, that is the motive why the Almighty God, while being eternally indulging towards us, the fallen and stubborn humankind, and loving us, his creatures, immensely, breaks often our so-called "achievements" that obscure the light of Heaven from us...

When the people that were called by God, do not go to the feast, the new guests are invited. They are called two times: first, from "the streets and lanes of the city" are brought "the poor and the maimed, and the lame, and the blind", or, according to the interpreters of the Holy Bible, publicans and sinners, and then from "the highways and hedges" the people that are situated even lower – and interpreted as the pagans – are also "compelled to come..." (Luke, 14:23). It always somehow escapes our mind that the real "eternal memory" was earned by those who abandoned the insane pursuit of earthly fame, wealth, and consolation of earthly passions. "The poor, the maimed, the lame and the blind" through their "poverty in spirit" (Math.5; 3) acquired the right to enter and fill the Kingdom of Our Heavenly Father. They deserved it only because they were not tied by any type of bond to the earthly kingdom... They were not ensnared either by oxen, or by lands, or by the embraces of their beloved – by nothing... And being called through the Holy Mystery of Baptism to eternal bliss with our God, we constantly refuse it in our everyday life... We refuse it ourselves, according to our own will and not being forced by anyone or anything... While going "to see the land", "to test the oxen" and declining the Vesper Supper of our Lord "for the sake of the family and the kids," we, the contemporary Christians, place ourselves in the position of those traitors, about whom the exasperated Master of the House said directly: "None of those men who were invited shall taste of my supper" (Luke 14:24). For "Many are invited, but few are chosen" (Math. 22:14).

The Heavenly Kingdom, the Wedding Feast, The Holy Eucharist – God's Vesper Supper – are already offered to us, we have already been called. Let us try to live and pray in a way to become worthy to enter The House of God, Our Lord!

