METROPOLITAN ARCHEPARCHY OF PHILADELPHIA
Ukrainian Catholic Church

810 North Franklin Street
Philadelphia, PA, 19123-2005
Tel (215) 627-0143
ukrmet@ukrcatholic.org

PYLYPIVKA (ADVENT) PASTORAL OF THE UKRAINIAN CATHOLIC HIERARCHY OF THE U.S.A. TO OUR CLERGY, HIEROMONKS AND BROTHERS, RELIGIOUS SISTERS, SEMINARIANS AND BELOVED FAITHFUL

Glory to Jesus Christ!

"Pylypivka," or Philip's Fast, which begins on November 15, is upon us. It is a time of preparation for the celebration of the Nativity of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Once again, we are called to embark upon a spiritual journey to welcome Emmanuel—God with us—into our lives and into our world.

But how can we begin this journey when we are mindful of so many things happening around us? We witness the suffering and loss of life in Ukraine caused by the Russian invasion. We see wars and conflicts throughout the world and the needs of refugees living among us. We experience political divisions, discourse, and tensions within our American society. There are many reasons for us to feel sadness and disappointment, discouragement, and even to lose hope.

Without our faith, we could easily become overwhelmed by the tragedies we see in Ukraine, in America, and throughout the world. Yet our faith and our Church help us to see a bigger picture, to recognize the deeper story unfolding in our lives, and to remember that God is with us through it all.

How can we prepare ourselves to welcome God among us? How will we glorify Him? Can this Christmas season become a profound and deeply spiritual experience for each of us?

In order to prepare ourselves properly to meet Christ on the Feast of His Nativity, Mother Church gives us these forty days as an opportunity to renew and deepen our Christian calling and vocation. We are called to deepen our knowledge of the Word of God, to cultivate a life of personal and communal prayer, and to perform acts of charity and mercy both within the Church and in the world.

These three dimensions—prayer, learning, and service—help us understand our vocation as Christians and the vocation of the entire Church.

Now is the time to set aside time each day to read Sacred Scripture and meditate upon the Word of God. We are called not only to read the Scriptures but also to grow in our knowledge of divine truth, the truths of the Christian faith, and the foundations of Christian life. Let us use these days of

preparation to listen more attentively to God's Word and to allow it to transform our hearts, our families, and our communities.

We are also called to look beyond ourselves and to be of service to others, especially to those who are less fortunate and vulnerable among us.

During Philip's Fast, let us look carefully at our own communities and recognize those who need our help and assistance. We can visit the sick, assist the poor, provide food for those who are hungry, care for orphans and children in need, support those who suffer injustice, promote peace, and offer comfort to those who are grieving.

We do not need to look far to find people who need our love and compassion. The needy live among us—in our parishes, our neighborhoods, our workplaces, and sometimes even within our own families. Let us remember that every act of charity and mercy is an opportunity to encounter Christ Himself, who comes to us in the person of our neighbor.

The world around us may give us many reasons to be discouraged, but the coming of Christ gives us every reason to hope. As we journey through these forty days, may our hearts become a place where Christ can dwell. May our families and parishes become places where His presence is encountered. And may our acts of prayer, fasting, charity, and mercy prepare us to receive with joy the Good News of the Nativity.

May the Lord bless you and your families as we begin this holy journey toward the celebration of the Nativity of Our Lord.

† Borys Gudziak
Archbishop of Philadelphia for Ukrainians
Metropolitan of Ukrainian Catholics in the United States

† Paul Chomnycky, OSBM
Bishop of Stamford

† Benedict Aleksiychuk
Bishop of St. Nicholas in Chicago

† Bohdan Danylo (author)
Bishop of St. Josaphat in Parma

Pylypivka 2026