



**METROPOLITAN ARCHEPARCHY OF PHILADELPHIA**  
**Ukrainian Catholic Church**

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**CHRISTMAS PASTORAL OF THE UKRAINIAN CATHOLIC HIERARCHY OF THE USA 2025**

“The divine power is revealed today in the great mystery of humility. Almighty God is born as a helpless Infant, so that through His weakness He may show strength.”  
— *St. Gregory the Theologian, Homily on the Nativity*

Christ is Born!

Reverend Fathers, Deacons, Venerable Monks and Sisters, Brother Seminarians, and Beloved Faithful:

In the mystery of the Nativity, the Lord of the universe, wrapped in swaddling clothes, is laid in a manger in a dark cave so that He may fill the hearts of all who believe with unending light. He, who needed nothing, freely embraced poverty so that we might learn to despise what the world calls great and seek what heaven considers truly precious.

Can we fathom the greatness of the Mystery of God’s Incarnation? He who is incomprehensible to all creation today becomes visible as an Infant. He who is infinite begins life within time. He who holds the universe in His hands lies in a manger.

Today the shadow of ancient sin is scattered, for the light of the New Adam has shone forth. The earth, once cursed because of sin, now receives blessings through the Lord’s Incarnation. He came not to judge but to save. Not to punish but to heal. Not to reject but to bring God’s beloved children back into the Father’s house.

The shepherds, who heard the voice of angels in the darkness of night, followed the light of the star—and that light did not remain merely external; it entered their hearts. As *Gregory the Great* writes: “He who truly finds Christ cannot return as the same person. They went out as shepherds of the flock, but returned as prophets.”

The haste of the shepherds is a sign of a fervent search for truth. What they saw and heard so deeply moved them that, forgetting their flocks, they set out by night for Bethlehem to understand the meaning of that light and to proclaim the Savior to others. Whoever seeks Christ does not delay. Seeing the Infant in the manger and recalling the words of the angels, they united Image and Word and recognized before them Emmanuel, which means “God-with-us” (Isaiah 7:14).

The faithful of our Church in Ukraine and throughout the world celebrate the Holy Nativity of Christ for the fourth consecutive year amid a terrible war. On December 25, 2025, we mark the **1401st day of the heroic struggle of the Ukrainian people** following the full-scale Russian invasion. Hundreds of thousands of lives have been lost—soldiers, volunteers, women and children, the elderly; cities and villages have been destroyed; territories occupied; and the blood of the innocent slain by the Russian aggressor cries out to heaven. Above all, we long for true peace—peace that will halt the murderous fury of the red beast, the Herod of our days, who continues to feed on the blood of long-suffering Ukraine.

“In these fierce times of War we have so many reasons for sorrow and lamentation that we would leave this world in suffering and without hope—if there were no Savior Christ... But when there is hope, then one can—indeed, must—rejoice in spite of every affliction.”  
— *Venerable Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky, Pastoral Letter to the Clergy and Faithful, December 23, 1943*

As a Church, we face many challenges. The war in Ukraine has inflicted countless wounds. Therefore, we need the Physician—the Savior—who enters human history to be today with our defenders on the front lines, with the wounded in hospitals, with widows and orphans in their grief, and with the innocent slain in the Heavenly Kingdom.

America, too, needs healing, as it suffers from division, polarization, fragmentation, inequality, and many other trials.

Each of us longs for the healing love of God, which alone can mend the fractures in our souls, families, and communities.

The Lord is coming!

Let us open wide not only the doors of our hearts but also of our homes: let us welcome the hungry and thirsty, the displaced and those who have lost everything; let us warm the naked with our embrace, and serve the sick with love and patience. Let us pray for those who are in captivity and do all we can to make their voices heard in freedom.

We, too, hasten after the light of the star to find Christ—the Sun of Righteousness. Let us come with pure hearts to the Bethlehem Cave. Let us bring not gold and myrrh but faith, love, and humility. For those who draw near to Christ receive peace, joy, and new life.

May Christ who was born today illumine our souls, purify our hearts, and strengthen us on the path to salvation.

To Him be honor, glory, and worship forever.

Christ is Born!

Glorify Him!

† **Borys Gudziak**

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

† **Paul Chomnycky, OSBM**

Bishop of Stamford

† **Benedict Aleksiychuk (author)**

Bishop of St. Nicholas in Chicago

† **Bohdan Danylo**

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