



УКРАЇНСЬКА ПРАВОСЛАВНА ЦЕРКВА В КАНАДІ
UKRAINIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OF CANADA
L'ÉGLISE ORTHODOXE UKRAINIENNE DU CANADA

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November 11, 2015

Statement
of the Episcopate of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada
on Remembrance Day

Reverend clergy, dearest brothers and sisters in Christ,

Glory to Jesus Christ!

*“Greater love has no one than this:
To lay down his life for his friends.”
(Jn 15:13)*



On November 11, in this year marking the 70th year of the end of the Second World War, the Episcopate of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada calls upon the faithful of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada to remember the more than 100,000 Canadian Armed Forces personnel who perished in wartime, peacekeeping and training during their military service to Canada. Over the past century, these Canadian military servicemen and women, whose names are known and unknown to us, have served our country with courage and honour.

Many soldiers from among our Ukrainian Orthodox faithful bravely served their new country in the First World War and Second World War. Over the decades since, many men and women from Ukrainian Orthodox families have served in the Canadian Armed Forces in peacekeeping, in military training and in conflict zones in over 30 deployments around the world today. Most recently, one year has just passed when Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent and Corporal Nathan Cirillo lost their lives during service right here in Canada. All of these soldiers past and present have made the ultimate sacrifice by giving their lives in defense of the human rights, civic privileges, security and freedoms that each of us enjoy today in Canada.

Warfare is a tragic consequence of fallen humanity. At many times throughout history, Christians have been called to serve in armies. Christian soldiers go to battle with the intention of protecting and defending their homeland and people. They are guided by this sense of duty and a willingness to sacrifice their life for others. They are motivated by Christ's teaching that the greatest love one

can have is to “lay down his life for his friends.” (Jn 15:13) Moreover, the Christian soldier extends compassion towards prisoners of war and the defeated enemy.

Military chaplains have an important role during wartime to help these soldiers make sense of the chaos and violence surrounding them in battle. The chaplains bring compassion and serve to remind them of their humanity and faith. The UOCC contributed towards establishing Ukrainian Orthodox chaplaincy in the Canadian Armed Forces during WWII through the efforts of Fr. Semen Sawchuk, the first Ukrainian Orthodox chaplain in the Canadian military. In recent years, the UOCC has reprised its chaplaincy work in the Canadian military. The UOCC currently has one priest, Fr. Charles Baxter, serving as a chaplain in the Canadian Armed Forces. Also, His Eminence Metropolitan Yuriy serves as an Orthodox representative on the Interfaith Commission on Canadian Military Chaplaincy.

This year, Remembrance Day carries special meaning for our Ukrainian Orthodox faithful in Canada who are seeing wartime sacrifice as a current reality. Since 2014 our Canadian military has been involved in the coalition fighting in Iraq and Syria against ISIL, the terrorist group responsible for tyranny against thousands of Christians. Furthermore, our spiritual homeland of Ukraine has entered its second year defending itself from Russian-backed terrorists and an incursion of Russian military in its eastern oblasts and Crimea. Currently, Canadian military trainers are in Ukraine, the country of our ancestors, for training and sharing their knowledge with the Ukrainian Armed Forces as it defends itself against armed aggression.

Over the past year, Canada – motivated by the respect for life, a basic Christian value – has been a leading country on the world stage in standing firm against world aggressors in defense of human rights and the rule of law, and to avert terrorism and the spreading of violence.

On November 11, we pay tribute to Canada’s fallen soldiers, our veterans and active military personnel for their loyal and dedicated service to Canada. During our memorial services, let us pray for the eternal memory of our fallen Canadian soldiers and reposed veterans as we remember their enormous sacrifices that have made it possible to live in our peaceful and democratic Canada, one of the greatest countries in the world.

O Lord, give rest to the soul of Your departed servants in a place of light, a place of refreshment and a place of repose, where there is no sickness, sighing nor sorrow.

Memory Eternal! Вічна Пам'ять!

With Hierarchical Blessing,

† **YURIJ**, Metropolitan

† **ILARION**, Bishop

† **ANDRIY**, Bishop