



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

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Statement
Episcopate of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada
on the 82nd year of commemoration of the 1932-33 Famine-Genocide in Ukraine

To the beloved clergy and faithful of the UOCC,



Glory to Jesus Christ!

The Holodomor-Genocide of 1932-33 in Ukraine undeniably is as one of the most sorrowful and tragic events in the modern history of Ukraine. The godless totalitarian regime of Joseph Stalin aimed to deliberately destroy the Ukrainian people, their culture and religious identity using starvation as a tool.

The Holodomor of 1932-33 in Ukraine has been acknowledged by the international community as a crime against humanity. Ukraine, Canada and many other countries recognize the 1932-33 Famine as genocide, or the intentional extermination of the Ukrainian people.

Every year, a more complete picture of the magnitude of the Holodomor emerges with the uncovering of additional historical documentation and witness testimonials. Scholars estimate that between seven and ten million people died of starvation. The communist regime not only denied food to the Ukrainian populace, but it attempted to seize Ukraine's God-given fertile agricultural lands. Before decimating the Ukrainian population physically, the communist authorities also committed a spiritual Holodomor by obliterating the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, destroying church buildings and arresting clergy, thereby crushing the faith of the people. To silence protests and to cover up the truth, the dictatorial regime used repression against the people, while propagating misinterpretations abroad.

Today, as we gather to remember these devastating events, we find ourselves asking how did this happen? How was it that so many millions perished in silence? One of the spiritual lessons of the Holodomor for contemporary times is the need to search for and uphold the truth.

The Lord did not allow the truth about the Holodomor to remain hidden. Today, 82 years later, many countries like our own, Canada, have learned about the tragedy of the Genocide of

1932-33 in Ukraine. God has truly blessed us to live in a country that champions human rights in a genuine form, even building a museum right here in Winnipeg, Manitoba, to educate our nation about such crimes against humanity as the Holodomor. Moreover, our Ukrainian community in Canada has united around a Holodomor Awareness Campaign to educate our fellow Canadians about the actual facts surrounding the Famine. The Canadian government has supported our efforts, having declared a national day of Holodomor commemoration to be marked annually in November, and many provinces have also recognized a day of commemoration.

As Ukraine, the land of our ancestors, once more comes under attack from a malevolent power desiring to subjugate the Ukrainian people, it becomes important to preserve the memory of the millions who perished and to convey the truth about these events. While Ukraine struggles today with the great tribulations of revolution, invasion and social and economic crisis, it becomes our duty to our ancestors and our brothers and sisters in Christ in Ukraine to collectively remember this chapter of our Ukrainian history. As long as we remain united in our collective remembrance, our descendants will not have to ask how so many perished while the world remained silent.

The Holodomor teaches us in the 21st century another important spiritual lesson – the need to respect human dignity and life. A crime against humanity of this magnitude is only possible when life can be taken so easily without consequence. As the Scriptures wisely observe about human nature, when a crime is not punished quickly, people feel it is safe to do wrong. “Because the sentence against an evil deed is not executed quickly, therefore the hearts of the sons of men among them are given fully to do evil.” (Ecc 8:11)

God has given us a chance in the 21st century to make amends and seek justice for this terrible crime against humanity. It is our duty to not only remember those who starved to death and died for the freedom of Ukraine, but we are obligated also to become worthy of the suffering of our ancestors and work toward improving our country for our descendants. This lesson holds for us in Canada as well as for those in Ukraine. We can only stand in moral solidarity with the victims by laying down an honourable and ethical pathway to the future.

On this sorrowful day, let us not forget this painful chapter in the history of the Ukrainian people. With sincere prayers to the Lord, we beseech our Merciful Heavenly Father to grant eternal rest in His Kingdom to those who perished during the Holodomor of 1932-33 in Ukraine. We also pray for the Lord’s healing grace for the survivors and their descendants. O Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, protect and save the God-loving Ukrainian people who once more struggle to defend their homeland, Ukraine.

With Archpastoral Blessing,

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Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada
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Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada
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