

4<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

## Sunday of the Saints of Ukraine

Romans 5:18-23; Matthew 8: 5-13 &amp; Romans 8: 28-39; Matthew 5: 1-16

## Called in every age and every day to holiness!



Saints of Ukraine

Social and global changes caused by the pandemic have also changed perspectives; not in one universal way, but invariably things are perceived somehow differently because we're in a different position, individually and collectively, due to a pervasive viral threat.

We hear much of "we're in this together". True, yet we are in this in dramatically different ways. While the complaints from those who have missed out on their holidays to Europe contrast painfully with those who have no bed to sleep in because shelters are closed, our society is waking up to the truth of deep systemic inequalities habitualized and perpetuated due to bigotry and prejudice. On the heels of Me too, Truth and Reconciliation, Disability and LGBTQ Activism, the Black Lives Matter movement has gained momentum after the brutal murder of George Floyd in the US. All these movements represent populations whose vital presence in society is unacknowledged and subjugated, rendering them marginal.

As Covid spreads fear over the world, we cannot fail to see that those who suffer disproportionately are the marginalized: those seen by the most powerful as being different from them. This perceived difference may include race, class, gender, ability, or age. People are shaped as somehow "lesser" and find themselves with less opportunity leading to less education, income, respect, healthcare, leading to less opportunity and any hope for economic security and social success.

But what has this to do with us, a Ukrainian Catholic community?

*Pope Francis: Let the Church always be a place of mercy and hope, where everyone is welcomed, loved and forgiven.*

We are a community that works at hospitality, prayer, caring for others. We nurture our tradition, and our cultural heritage. This is all important and good. However, as we grow and develop in our Faith, we recognize that the Spirit is constantly driving us to deeper and broader growth. I remember hearing it said that each of us has a responsibility to overcome the prejudice of our parents! Oftentimes, we don't notice bias we were born into. It is so commonplace that it is invisible. Each of us may have different "blind spots" or possibly we may share some. Do we dare question beliefs we've had since childhood? I believe it's obligatory. When we question what we have taken for granted as truth, we might see it as problematic, or its significance in our life will be clarified and strengthened; thus, either way it is win/win.

An example of unrecognized bias is when individuals are embarrassed to be seen using a cane or walker. Why would this be? This reflects what is now called "ableism": the notion that the only good life is one lived in a fit

healthy body. This is a mistaken idea widely believed by people today. If this feels true to you, there are resources online that explain the history of this prejudicial view.

Another common example is laughing at jokes that belittle women, or racialized groups. While we imagine our laughter is in good fun, it can be hurtful to others.

Frequently, people who are not heterosexual feel judged and condemned by many who are steadfast church members. Elderly are often overlooked and even forgotten by young folks.

**Pope Francis: *Who am I to judge?***

These examples point to personal bias, but our individual prejudices might be supporting societal systems of oppression. Although our Church in North America has become a part of the mainstream, the Ukrainian Church's history of oppression must be remembered as a place from which we can stand in solidarity with the marginalized. Our Faith teaches us to follow Christ in honouring all individuals regardless of their positions. Christ did not reject the adulterers, the tax collectors, the disabled, the women, the shunned. He did not demand conditions before speaking to others with honour and compassion. We too can open ourselves in love to the vast diversity of people in our society. We choose to live in, with, as, Christ. As we continually grow in the Spirit, our actions will more consciously make choices that care for our collective population: how we vote, how we shop, how we encounter others. We are not alone; we join in the vast numbers of saints who lived before us and live among us!

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**POPE FRANCIS' PRAYER INTENTION FOR JULY:**

*The family ought to be protected.*

*It faces many dangers: the fast pace of life, stress...*

*Sometimes, parents forget to play with their children.*

*The Church needs to encourage families and stay at their side, helping them to discover ways that allow them to overcome all of these difficulties.*

*Let us pray that today's families may be accompanied with love, respect and guidance, and especially, that they may be protected by the State.*

**TODAY: Panakhyda + Hryhoriy Jacina**

**This week:**

Tuesday, July 7—Nativity of Forerunner and Baptizer John, 10 a.m. Divine Liturgy

**BIRTHDAY WISHES:**

Zofia Slusarczyk (5<sup>th</sup>), Alina Trusz (6<sup>th</sup>), Krystyna Luka (8<sup>th</sup>), Adrian Kocan (9<sup>th</sup>) and Irene Malko-Grasser (11<sup>th</sup>).

**Many blessings, MNOHAYA LITA!**