



UKRAINIAN GREEK CATHOLIC CHURCH
SVIATOSLAV SHEVCHUK
MAJOR ARCHBISHOP OF KYIV-HALYCH

Prot. N. 16/196

**Greeting of His Beatitude Sviatoslav
To Canadians of Ukrainian Descent
Marking the 125th Anniversary
of Ukrainian Settlement in Canada
1891 - 2016**

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ!

On the occasion of the 125th anniversary of Ukrainian settlement in Canada I send prayerful greetings from your ancestral land of Ukraine to the over two million Canadian citizens of Ukrainian descent. This is a time to celebrate God's many blessings given through the vast territory of Canada to our people who have made this new land their home. And we rejoice with you, recalling at the same time the hardships and struggles you have endured over these many years.

During the Vesper service of Great and Holy Saturday, on the eve of the celebration of the resurrection of Our Lord, we sing a hymn taken from the Old Testament Book of Daniel. It is the song of praise of the three Hebrew youths who were thrown into the furnace in the foreign land of Babylon, but whom God saved for their faith and trust.

During this year of jubilee we join our voices with the three youths proclaiming: **Sing praise to the Lord and exalt Him above all forever.** Over these 125 years our people have found not only a refuge in Canada, but they have prospered and grown, becoming respected citizens of this land. They have established a new life for themselves and their descendants, which now reach to the fifth and sixth generations.

Indeed, all Ukrainian Canadians can sing: **Bless the Lord, all you works of the Lord. Bless the Lord, mountains and hills, and everything growing from the earth. Bless the Lord, you springs, and seas and rivers. Bless the Lord, you whales and all water creatures.** Truly, our people have been blessed with the fruits of this land.

In giving thanks to the Lord I call upon you at the same time to be faithful sons and daughters of both your ancestral land and of this new land.

As you sing: **Blessed are you, O Lord, God of our fathers, praiseworthy and exalted above all forever** - remember the people and land of Ukraine and pray for their deliverance from all economic hardship and threat of war.

As you sing: **Bless the Lord, servants of the Lord** - remember to participate and serve in the governance and leadership of Canada, enjoying a right of citizenship so often denied in Ukraine's history.

As you sing: **Bless the Lord, O Israel** – remember the elder brothers of this new land, the First Nations, whose territories you share, and who so often struggle with the basic necessities of life.

As you sing: **Bless the Lord, spirits and souls of the just** – remember the pioneers who have gone before you, acknowledging their sacrifices for the life you enjoy today.

As you sing: **Bless the Lord, you sons of men** – remember to hand down to the younger generations the legacy of faith, language and culture that have been preserved for 125 years.

As you sing: **Bless the Lord, priests of the Lord** – remember the gift of Christian faith passed on for over a thousand years, rooted in the Kjivan spiritual heritage.

As you sing: **Bless the Lord holy men of humble heart** – remember all your brothers and sisters that share the Canadian land, caring especially for the poor, the forgotten, the sick and the elderly.

With you I join in this prayer of thanksgiving in gratitude for these 125 years, by concluding as did the three youths mentioned above: **Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, for his mercy endures forever.**



*Given at the Patriarchal Cathedral of the Holy Resurrection in Kyiv,
30 April 2016, The Holy and Great Saturday*