

formally dedicated the Polish Commonwealth under the protection of Our Lady and proclaimed her Queen of Poland on April 1, 1656.

Many miracles have been worked by the Czestochowa Icon, and are recorded in a book which is kept at the Czestochowa monastery. Copies of the icon are found in many Orthodox and Roman Catholic monasteries. Some of these copies are venerated in the village of Pisarevkain in the Volhynia Province, at Verhnaya Syrovatka in the Kharkiv Province, at Tyvrov in the Vynytysya Province. All these locations are in present day Ukraine.

As Ukraine enters a second month defending herself from Russian invasion, and as the nation of Poland has overwhelmingly opened its hearts and homes to receive Ukrainians into safety, we can see how the Mother of God has served a bridge between the two nations.

Among your daily prayers, please remember: Fr. Yakiw Norton, Fr. Oleh Hucut, Fr. Vasyl Dovgan, Tanya Antoniewicz, Richard Antoniuk, Bohdan Baranczyk, John Chorney, Gloria Dunski, Joan Hepner, Peter Holowiak Eva Lazor, Mary Maksymiak, Daniel Milinichek, Michael Onushko, Rosalie Onushko Mary Ellen Mackiewicz, William Radio, Kathryn Solan, Michael and Elsie Moroz, Myroslav Kmet, Andriy Kmet, Dan Gulack. Rodney Townes, Karina Strashinsky; Katherine Cox; Gordon

Announcements

- **PRAY FOR UKRAINE!** - Clearly Ukraine is in need of our prayers. The Brotherhood of Ukrainian Clergy in the Lehigh Valley will be sponsoring weekly Moleben services for the peace and well-being of Ukraine. **The seventh Moleben service will be this Tuesday; 22 March at 6:30 PM in Holy Ghost Ukrainian Catholic Church 315 4th St. West Easton.** We urge everyone to attend and PRAY FOR UKRAINE!
- **Refugee from Ukraine:** Recently, in his trip to Poland, President Biden made a statement that the United States is ready to accept 100,000 refugees from Ukraine. As of yet, we have received no information on how that will occur. However, we are in the process of compiling a list of anyone who might be willing to provide temporary shelter for any Ukrainian individual or families that might need a home. If you, or someone you know, might be able to do so, please leave your name at the front office.
- **The Annual General Parish Meeting!** Unfortunately, last week's Annual General Parish Meeting could not take place due to a lack of a quorum. This is very disappointing. We must all understand that if we want our parish to succeed, we must ALL take part in this meeting at least once a year. There are many decisions that cannot be made by the pastor and Parish Board alone. According to the By-Laws, they can only be made by a general meeting of the Parish. **WITHOUT YOUR PARTICIPATION**, these decisions cannot be made. There are two very important issues on the agenda this year: 1) Ratification of a new set of By-Laws; and 2) Purchase of a new furnace for the church. The next attempt at an Annual Meeting will take place SUNDAY; 15 MAY, AT THE END OF DIVINE LITURGY. **ALL ARE URGED TO ATTEND.**
- **Pussywillows Needed:** Anyone who may have a pussywillow tree and can donate some branches is asked to bring the branches to the church within the next two weeks. They would be greatly appreciated.
- **Kovbasa Sale:** The Ukrainian-American Veterans are continuing their annual fundraiser of Kovbasa for Pascha. Today is the last day to order. Please see Nik Fartuch.
- **Fasting before Holy Communion - Please note: anyone planning to receive Holy Communion at any of the Presanctified Liturgies (or any Liturgy in the evening), should follow the rule of fasting and have only one full meal during the day, usually in the evening after having received Holy Communion. In addition, they should also not have anything to eat after 12 Noon.**
- **Medical and other supplies needed for Ukraine -** There is a list in today's bulletin with items that are needed for Ukraine right now. We have been asked to stop collecting clothes and diapers (at least for the time being) since there is an overabundance. **In addition, we need volunteers to help collect and organize these donations. To volunteer, please see Susan Cooke or Tania Smirnova.**
- **Administrator Assistance Needed:** Volunteers are needed to help with the extra office work that we have encountered as a result of the war in Ukraine. We are looking for a number of people who could commit to one or two sessions a week, either a morning or afternoon session. Duties would include answering phone calls, taking donations, etc. Please see Vera Muzychka to sign up.
- **Special Limited TV Raffle-** This is a special fundraising effort for our parish. One Grand Prize: a 70" Samsung HD Smart TV! Only 100 tickets will be sold. This increases your chances of

winning! The price of the tickets are \$20 each. The drawing date will be 01 May 2022. Tickets go on sale today! For tickets see: Brian Borsevich, Robin Bodnar, or Vera Muzychka.

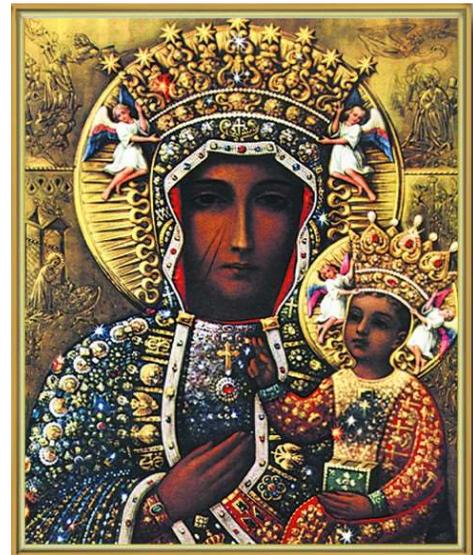
- **Coffee Social:** Today's coffee hour will be hosted by Dan Petrovich, Liliya Baklovets and John Koretski.

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UKRAINIAN DEVOTION TO THE MOTHER OF GOD.

The Black Madonna of Belz: Our Lady of Czestochowa- Bridge between Ukraine and Poland (Ninth in a series)

The history of this image of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Belz dates back to the earliest centuries of Christianity. Historians say that it is impossible to distinguish between established facts and the countless legends that arose around the icon, believed to have been created by St. Luke. The Virgin Mary allegedly permitted the apostle, a skilful icon painter, to portray her on several occasions; when she saw his paintings, she said, "The Grace of the Christ Child and of Me shall be upon these icons." No one knows precisely when the icon found its way to Ukraine. According to one theory, Anna, the sister of Byzantine emperors Constantine and Basil, brought it to Kyiv where she arrived as the fiancée of Prince Volodymyr the Great, whereupon the prince ordered the icon installed in the Church of the Tithes, Kyiv's first brick church. The icon remained there until 1240, when it was secretly transferred to the small princely city of Belz during the onslaught of the Golden Horde.



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Another theory points to the second half of the 12th century, when the two exiled Byzantine emperors, Andronicus I Comnenus and Alexius of Atel, could have brought the icon as a gift to the princes of Halych, who had offered them refuge. No matter how it got there, the Icon of

the Mother of God became established in the town of Belz in western Ukraine and was venerated there by the local Ukrainian populace for centuries. Belz



existed before 1030 AD, which makes it the oldest city in Halychyna. It is thus one of the oldest cities in Europe, an architectural monument of the Middle Ages, which has preserved its characteristic planning and structure of streets and squares. It was a desired location, located on the crossroads of several trade routes. Indeed, the city often changed hands: it was part of the Galician-Volhynian Principality (1234-1340), the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (1340-77), under the Hungarian crown (1377-82), then the Polish one (1382-1772). In other words, this city is most closely connected to the complex history of our Ukrainian people, and its dramatic pages should be acknowledged and the Image of the Holy Virgin shared in that history.

By the late 1300's, Halychyna (Galicia) had come under Polish rule, and the lands including the town of Belz became the territory of the Polish Duke Wladyslaw Opolski. According to a chronicler, one day when he was exploring the valuables at Belz Castle, Duke Wladyslaw Opolski, "discovered anew the beauty of the icon created by St. Luke." Opolski had deep devotion to the sacred icon and prayed before it often. Later, when Belz was besieged by the Tatars, Wladyslaw ordered the icon displayed on the castle wall. A Tatar arrow pierced the Virgin's neck, the hole started oozing blood, and darkness instantly descended on the Tatar troops. Raising their swords against each other, they perished beneath the walls of Belz.

Then the duke began considering a plan to transfer the icon to a safer place. Wladyslaw had the icon packed in a box and collecting other valuables, he was about to set off on the long journey, but twice the horses were rooted to the ground. That night the duke had a prophetic dream in which a heavenly voice ordered him to transfer the icon to a mountain in Poland called "Jasna Gora" and found a monastery there. After the duke promised to do this, the carts were able to set out westward. The duke invited Catholic monks of the Paulist order to the monastery at Jasna Gora and gave them the miracle-working icon. Today, this icon of the Mother of God of Czestochowa is the most popular one in Poland. However, few in Poland know that this icon was in the Galician-Volhynian Principality during the 12th-14th centuries, including the princely city of Belz.

Many years later, followers of John Hus attacked Czestochowa and plundered the monastery. When they attempted to carry the Czestochowa Icon away in a cart, the horses refused to move from the spot, held back by some invisible power. One of the Hussites became angry and threw the icon onto the ground, while another stabbed the face of the Virgin with his sword. The first man was struck dead, and the hand of the second man shriveled up.

The other invaders also suffered punishment from God. Some of them died on the spot, while others became blind. Although many of the monastery's treasures were stolen by the Hussites, the wonderworking Czestochowa Icon was left behind.

In the winter of 1655 during the Second Northern War, as the Swedish invasion of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth is known. The Swedes were attempting to capture the Jasna Góra monastery in Czestochowa. The sacred icon was replaced with a copy and the original moved in secret to the castle in Lubliniec, and later to the Pauline monastery in Mochów between the towns of Prudnik and Głogówek. Seventy monks and 180 local volunteers, mostly from the Szlachta (Polish nobility), held off 4,000 Swedes for 40 days, saved their sacred icon and, according to some accounts, turned the course of the war. This event led King John II Casimir Vasa to give what has become known as the Oath of Lviv The Roman Catholic Cathedral of the Ukrainian city of Lviv, the king