

The Song of an Angel and Cherubs Fills the Monastery Chapel

By Jarema M. Didoszak

On May 3, 2009, the children of St. Volodymyr Ukrainian Catholic Church in Santa Clara, California, received the body and blood of Christ Our Lord in the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist for the first time. Having completed nearly two years of preparations under the direction of their ardent pastor, Fr. Petro Dyachok, these seven children accepted the graces of this holy sacrament, growing in their Catholic faith.

Adorned in white bows to mark this special event, the church pews were filled with an abundance of family, friends, and parishioners. Processioning in from the vestibule, the communicants walked hand-in-hand with their parents down the central aisle to the sounds of devotional hymns sung by the faithful. Led by Fr. Dyachok, each child came forth, bowed deeply while making the sign of the cross and kissed the icon that lay on the tetrapod before being seated in the first row of pews.



Fr. Petro Dyachok addresses the Communicants following the Divine Liturgy.

The communicants, as shown in the photograph, are A. Sydorak, E. Makarewycz, Y. Hryciw, S. Didoszak, R. Bolzowski, D. Drogobytsky and J. Marenin.

The children's families come from all parts of the Central Coast; stretching from the San Francisco Bay area south towards Monterey, and all points thereof in between. Having recently relocated, one of the boys even made the trip with his family and friends from Southern California to join the rest of the class in this joyous event.

Just a day prior, the communicants received the holy sacrament of Penance. Assisting Fr. Dyachok in administering the sacraments was Fr. Dennis Smolarski, a Jesuit priest from Santa Clara University granted biritual faculties, who also co-celebrated the Divine Liturgy on Sunday morning.

Before stepping forward to take their first holy communion, the children stood before the congregation and sang the Lord's Prayer, *Отче Наш*, in Ukrainian, their innocent voices echoing through the cavernous features of the nearly 100 year old monastery chapel. It was later commented that it was like truly having "the song of an angel and cherubs fill the monastery chapel," leaving a proud feeling of joy and peace throughout the day.

Prior to the dismissal, Fr. Dyachok recited a heartfelt poem that he had prepared highlighting each of the children's distinctive traits. With the help of the altar boys he presented each of the communicants with a certificate and affixed a lapel pin on each child, commemorating this milestone in their spiritual lives.



Communicant receiving the Holy Eucharist.

After the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy a small reception was held at the St. Volodymyr Ukrainian Catholic Center with the parish community. St. Volodymyr Ukrainian Catholic Church celebrates the Divine Liturgy at the Carmelite Monastery in Santa Clara, California, at 8:15 each Sunday morning. More information is available at www.stvolodymyrucc.org.