

Giving THANKS

Dr. Oleg Klipitch and Etobicoke's Ukrainian community reflect on the leadership, friendship, and compassionate guidance of Father Bogdan Mironovich



When Liliana Prykhodko lost her dearest friend not long ago, her world fell apart and she struggled to adjust to life without her friend.

"My world was shattered, and my faith declined with the unfair death of a beautiful, happy, young mom of two. I found myself constantly looking for answers to the question 'where is God, how can He possibly allow this to happen?'"

Often, people in such sorrowful situations find it hard to know who to turn to for help - but Prykhodko had the benefit of knowing exactly who could lead her through this crisis, local spiritual leader Father Bogdan Mironovich.

"Father Bogdan visited us, and right away he sensed something was wrong. With his strong and confident beliefs in the highest Christian values, he slowly, drop by drop, restored my faith," says Prykhodko.

This is a sentiment shared by many in western GTA's Ukrainian Orthodox community. People young and old, from all walks of life, rely and depend on the guidance, advice, and strength of Father Bogdan.

"In our religion and culture, we say thank you to the people who made an impact in our lives, especially before Easter," says Dr. Oleg Klipitch, a longtime friend of Father Bogdan's. "He is turning 50 this year, and I would like to say congratulations for his 50th birthday, and for his accomplishments. He is very unique and very gifted to say the least. He helps so many people in different ways - inspiring them, understanding them, and giving them advice."

"Whenever I have problems or concerns where I need someone to listen and give advice, Father Bogdan provides time and prayers," adds Dr. Olena Klipitch. "He has the ability through his faith to understand and gives me advice which brings peace, comfort and strength."

Father Bogdan has been serving the

area for five years, and has quickly become an indispensable part of the community's spiritual fabric. He is also a highly educated man, having attended two theology schools in Russia, and one here in Canada.

"My initial intention wasn't to become a priest, but to make myself more familiar with the official teachings of the church," says Father Bogdan. "I studied for eight years, and worked with street kids, at-risk people, and prisoners. After that, I received an invitation from the Holy Spirit Seminary Director in Ottawa, and I studied in the seminary at the University of Ottawa."

After finishing seminary school, Father Bogdan worked with credit unions, while at the same time working as a Deacon. He built a successful career in finance, but felt something was missing from his life.

"I recognized one day that I was rejecting the call of God. I just realized it was my destiny - I am a priest. I needed to take care of the church. So I submitted my resignation from the credit union."

Father Bogdan was welcomed into the community with open arms, and is a crucial source of spiritual guidance for the entire congregation - even with hard-to-reach teenagers.

"I asked him to talk to my teenage daughter - she was having some distractions," says Dr. Klipitch. "He can find a way to speak with teenagers, with little kids, with elderly people, and with people my age. He has a unique ability to find common ground."

Prykhodko agrees, adding that Father Bogdan goes out of his way to reach out to the community's youth.

"My older daughter Viktoriya, like every teenager, is going through a youth maximalist phase, but she was just recently saying that Father Bogdan is very honest and wise. She always carries the Rosary that Father Bogdan brought her from Jerusalem,"

says Prykhodko. "My young friend Mariana Doubas even named her newborn son in the honor of father Bogdan."

"No other pastor has influenced me or has had such an impact on my family's spiritual development as Father Bogdan has in the last couple of years, from the emotional service during our wedding to the loving tears of true happiness during our son's Baptism," says Doubas.

Father Bogdan is renowned for supporting his congregation through stressful times, and goes above and beyond in every aspect of his priesthood - whether it's making house calls and lending a supportive ear, or helping the congregation's older ladies churn out hundreds of perogies overnight.

"He even came and blessed our office," says Dr. Klipitch. "In our culture, we have priests bless the place you work. Him doing it had special meaning for me."

"Father Bogdan has come many times to pray for the clinic and pharmacy. He is a patient at the clinic but he is a friend first," says pharmacist Maher Shaker.

The community is unanimous in its support for this man who has had such a positive effect on their personal, professional, and spiritual lives.

"A country should know its own heroes. I'd love for our community to know a little more about Father Bogdan, and appreciate his work a little bit more. Occasionally, a simple thank you means so much," says Dr. Klipitch.

"In my humble opinion, the people make all the difference," says Father Bogdan. "It brings a tear to my eye that people have such an opinion of me."

"For five years as a priest, in this community, I've learned that inside every heart is a beautiful shining star. I love them, I love their families, and love their children. I just try to do my best."

"I NEED TO DO AS MUCH AS I CAN, BECAUSE I FEEL I SHOULD HAVE BEEN A PRIEST 20 YEARS AGO. MY BROTHERS HAVE BEEN ON THE FRONT LINE FOR 20 YEARS. IT'S TIME TO WORK HARD, LIVE HARD, AND PRAY HARD - AND DO IT WITH A SMILE." - FATHER BOGDAN MIRONOVICH