

It is a privilege for me to be present with you this evening to share in your celebration of 1000 years of Christianity in your ancestral homeland, "Rus'Ukraine". In this millennium year, it is the role of your churches that we especially honour - Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant. They have been a mainstay of Ukrainian culture and spiritual ideals, inside and outside the Ukraine. It is the religious temper of the Ukrainian people which ensures that the vision of human rights and freedom of choice, as ends in themselves, is preserved in the Ukraine today. This 1000th year tradition of Christianity is the proof and guarantee that human hope and faith cannot be extinguished. The whole world celebrates this anniversary of courage and of faith.

Canadian-Ukrainians have left an indelible mark on this country - whether it is John Sopinka on the Supreme Court of Canada, or the legacy of William Kurelek's paintings, or Johnny Bucyk driving for the net. In my own Department, I have had the privilege of appointing Raynell Andreychuk as Canadian High Commissioner to Kenya, and then adding to her many distinctions, that of Canadian Representative to the UN Human Rights Commission.

I applaud the role of the Ukrainian Canadian Committee in encouraging your community to become more active in the Canadian political process. Your new Parliamentary Student Internship Programme is a vital contribution to this end.

You will permit me, as an Albertan, to say that I am not surprised that the foremost centre for Ukrainian studies outside the Ukraine is the Ukrainian Institute at the University of Alberta.

We Canadians are the luckiest people in the world, because we live in a land that is both wealthy and free. Sometimes we take that wealth for granted, and think we can spend without earning, or grow without working. And sometimes we take our freedom for granted, and forget that other countries, other systems, know nothing of the rich freedom we have here.

Let me tell you a brief true story of two capitals, two systems. Just before Easter, in 1985, Maureen and I were in Kiev. I met the Premier of the Ukraine, and asked for the release of a man named Danylo Shumuk. The Premier of the Ukraine said no, and we argued about it. On my return, I pressed the case again, as I had before.

And, last year, Danylo Shumuk was freed, and came to Canada. I met him in Ottawa, and took him to see the House of Commons - our free Parliament. He sat in the Speaker's chair, and as we walked out, I pointed to the seat of prominent Members of Parliament. I showed him the seat of the Opposition Leaders, and then I pointed to the place of the Prime Minister. And Danylo Shumuk said to me: "I know where the Prime Minister sits. He sits next to Mr. Mazankowski."