

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE BYZANTINE CATHOLIC METROPOLITAN PROVINCE OF PITTSBURGH

A traveler coming by ship into the great harbor of New York City cannot help but be awestruck by the imposing sight of the Statue of Liberty. Standing proudly atop a pedestal some 306 feet tall, with broken chains of vanquished tyranny and oppression beneath her feet, majestically arrayed with a diadem and thrusting a massive torch out to the open sea, this powerful and moving symbol has inspired travelers and voyagers for more than one hundred and twenty years.

“Lady Liberty” in particular has beckoned the outcasts of the Old World -- the immigrants. One can only imagine the excitement and the thrill of these newcomers, who were described so poignantly by Emma Lazarus in her memorable poem, the “*New Colossus*,” as “the tired,” “the poor,” “the huddled masses yearning to breathe free,” as they caught their first glimpse of the mighty Statue.

The journey of the immigrants to America was truly a difficult one. The crossing of the Atlantic Ocean was a three-to-four week voyage made in steerage. The ships in which they made their long voyage were often overcrowded and unsanitary. Death at sea was not an uncommon occurrence.

Upon arrival, the immigrants were ferried along the New Jersey side of New York Harbor to their first destination in America: the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service processing center on Ellis Island. In the great hall of the main building, these nervous foreigners with their strange dress and language stood in long queues waiting to undergo processing by stern faced immigration officials.

The immigrants’ thrill of arrival in the New World soon changed to anxiety and trepidation as their processing began. The newcomers were poked, prodded and probed as part of a medical examination, a procedure which was frequently new to them; they were peppered with questions concerning their medical history, their contacts in America and many other matters by makeshift interpreters speaking a garbled, fractured mix of their native tongue and other languages. On occasion, the immigrants even received new last names as officials, unsympathetic or simply impatient with their strange sounding names, hurried to complete the processing.

Having survived the hurdles of the health inspection and the questioning of the immigration officials, the immigrants’ papers received a stamp of approval. The newcomers were then led from the registration area to the foreign currency exchange on the first floor of the main building. With their new “American” money, the new arrivals purchased tickets for ferries which transported them to New York City or the New Jersey train terminal for connections to friends, relatives or prospective employers and their new life in a new country.

In the three decades prior to the First World War, these “huddled masses,” numbering

more than twelve million strong from all over eastern and southern Europe, passed through the waiting rooms of Ellis Island to new hope and new opportunities in a new land. One of the many groups making the arduous journey to America was a little-known people from a mountainous land in the heart of Europe. They had no country to call their own. As a consequence, they became people known by a variety of different names: Slavs, Ruthenians, Carpatho-Rusyns, Rusnaks or simply Hunkies. They are our ancestors. And this is their story.

It is a story of hardship and struggle; it is a story of turmoil and tragedy; it is a story of striking achievement and success.

But most of all, it is a journey of faith; a faith which supported a decision to leave family and village to venture to an unknown and faraway land; a faith which sustained their fierce determination to preserve and hold fast to the traditions of their Eastern Catholic heritage.

THE OLD COUNTRY

To understand who we are and where we have come as a Church in the past seventy-five years, it is first necessary to explore who our ancestors were and where they came from as a people. Thus, the journey of faith must start in the homeland of the founders, “the Old Country,” central Europe.

The founders of Byzantine Catholic Metropolitan Province literally came from the heart of Europe. If a map of the European continent could be envisioned as a picture with the tip of Norway as the top frame, the isle of Crete as the bottom frame, the coast of Ireland as the left side frame and the Ural Mountains as the right side frame, then the homeland of our ancestors, the area known variously as the Carpathian Rus’, the Subcarpathian Rus’, Transcarpathia, Carpatho-Ruthenia, Carpatho-Russia and Carpatho-Ukraine-- would be in the exact center of the picture.

The most striking feature of the Carpatho-Rusyn homeland is its mountainous terrain. Located just south of the crests of the Carpathian Mountains, the land, which averages 2,000 feet in elevation, is covered with forests and lined with narrow, arable valleys. The rugged landscape obviously restricted the choices of livelihoods of the people dwelling in the region. Given the rugged topography, industrialization never took place. Instead, the people of this region, who for the most part lived in small, scattered villages numbering no more than a few hundred residents, scratched out a minimal, subsistence-level existence as shepherds, loggers or small-scale farmers.

Living in the center of Europe had profound consequences on the development of the Carpatho-Rusyn people. By straddling the border between the East and the West, the Carpatho-Rusyn people were strongly influenced by a complex set of cultural, political and religious forces from both areas.

The area of central Europe was initially settled by tribal peoples from territories immediately to the north and east beyond the Carpathian Mountains in what is the present day Ukraine. Thus, the very name of the Carpatho-Rusyn people is of eastern origin. It is derived

from the word “Rus,” which is the name given to the early Slavic peoples who migrated to and eventually inhabited this area of the European continent.

The language of the Carpatho-Rusyn people also reflected its eastward orientation. The language is an East-Slavic dialect and is written in the Cyrillic alphabet which was developed by St. Cyril, the missionary monk, who with his brother, Methodius, brought Christianity to the Slavs in the ninth century. Thus, the Carpatho-Rusyn language is grammatically and etymologically related to other East-Slavic languages--Russian, Byelorussian and, in particular, Ukrainian.

More importantly than ethnic name and language, the religious life of the Carpatho-Rusyn people had its basis in the East. Like the other East Slavs, the Carpatho-Rusyns received Christianity from the Eastern Roman or Byzantine Empire. Two Byzantine Greek missionaries, the brothers Cyril and Methodius -- “The Apostles to the Slavs”-- introduced Christianity and the new Slavonic alphabet to the state called Greater Moravia, the area of the present day Czech Republic and western Slovakia in about the year 860. From there, the followers of these Byzantine missionaries moved eastward to eventually convert the Carpatho-Rusyn people.

The eastern ethnic, linguistic and religious origins and inclinations of the Carpatho-Rusyn people, however, were counterbalanced by strong influences from Western Europe. The Carpatho-Rusyn people did not have a separate province, kingdom or nation-state of their own. Rather, they lived as a national or ethnic minority falling under the sway of the prevailing political power of the day.

In the 11th and 12th centuries, the first organized state structures to reach the Carpathian Mountain borderland regions and to exercise political influence over the Carpatho-Rusyn people was the loosely knit political federation of the Kievan Rus', an Orthodox state based in the territory of the kingdom of Galicia. When this monarchy ceased to exist, the Carpatho-Rusyns fell under the domination of the kingdom of Hungary. The influence of the Hungarian kingdom, later known as the Austro-Hungarian Empire, over the Carpatho-Rusyn people would ultimately last for a period of five hundred years.

Living as part of a country which was officially Roman Catholic had a lasting socioeconomic and cultural impact on the Carpatho-Rusyns. By the late 16th and 17th centuries, the steady increase of feudal duties owed to the Hungarian lords reduced the Carpatho-Rusyn people to the status of mere serfs, individuals legally bound to the land and subject to the whims of the landlord for goods and services. In addition, the conquest, first of the center of Byzantine Orthodoxy --the City of Constantinople, and later, large portions of the territory of the Hungarian kingdom, by the Islamic Ottoman Turks lead to an increasing political and religious isolation of the Carpatho-Rusyn people and their only effective leadership, the clergy.

The desire to alter their unfavorable socioeconomic status, combined with varying forms of pressure and encouragement from the Hungarian government and the Roman Catholic establishment lead some of the Carpatho-Rusyn clergy to accept the idea of reunion with the Catholic Church. As a result, in 1646, sixty-three priests met in the City of Uzhhorod and swore allegiance to the Catholic Church.

Under this declaration of religious unity, known as the Union of Uzhhorod, the temporal and spiritual primacy of the Holy Father was recognized by the Carpatho-Rusyn religious leaders. However, the Church in the Carpatho-Rusyn homeland was not forced to take on the Latin rite. Rather, the Church was permitted to retain its distinctive ecclesiastical traditions: the Byzantine liturgy; married clergy; and observance of the “old” Julian calendar. In 1772, the Catholic Church in the Carpatho-Rusyn homeland was officially referred to by the term *Greek Catholic*, meaning a Catholic of the Greek, or Byzantine, rite.

At first, the official acts of reunion were not universally accepted by the entire Carpatho-Rusyn populace. But gradually over time, the Union of Uzhhorod took hold; so much so that by the mid-eighteenth century, Greek Catholicism had become the traditional religion of most Carpatho-Rusyns.

The Greek Catholic faith not only provided a spiritual dimension for the lives of the Carpatho-Rusyn people, but also a social focus as well. The whole cycle of life in the small Carpatho-Rusyn villages was governed first and foremost by the demands of the Church. The traditional life style of the Carpatho-Rusyn peasant, determined by the rhythms of the agricultural seasons, was intertwined with numerous religious observances and obligations, including a mandatory day of rest on Sunday, the fasts and feasts of the Church calendar, baptisms, weddings and funerals, all in accordance with traditional Church dictates. Thus, for the Carpatho-Rusyn people, participation in the activities surrounding the Church was as natural as the daily pursuit of the necessities of life itself.

In addition, adherence to their Greek Catholic faith provided the Carpatho-Rusyn people with a cultural identity. The Carpatho-Rusyns' close relationship with their Church became a kind of cultural attribute which was used to distinguish them from other nationalities within the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

As they ventured forth from their family, friends and loved ones in the Old Country, it would be this religious and cultural identity as Greek Catholics which the founders of our Metropolitan Province would seek to preserve and continue in America.

COMING TO AMERICA

By the latter decades of the 19th century, the already marginal economic situation of the Carpatho-Rusyn people had become even more precarious. The old peasant way of life, which in the best of times provided an ability to eke out only a meager living, irreparably broke down under the strain of a changing economy.

The old peasant economy, based upon feudal notions of barter and service, was replaced by a modern cash economy. Having no money, Carpatho-Rusyn peasants found themselves strapped to purchase basic necessities and to pay ever increasing taxes.

The lack of available land also increased the economic plight of the Carpatho-Rusyn populace. Although serfdom was officially abolished in 1848, the ownership of the land

remained concentrated in the hands of the ruling Austro-Hungarian aristocracy. The Carpatho-Rusyn people, while no longer serfs, were forced to continue to work under the same aristocratic landlords as poorly paid and/or indebted agricultural laborers.

With the advent of new labor-saving machines produced by the factories of the Industrial Revolution, modern farming techniques were introduced and the need for the agrarian labor supplied by the Carpatho-Rusyn peasantry decreased drastically. Having no manufacturing or heavy industries located in their own region to fall back upon, the now surplus agricultural work force could not be absorbed into the local economy.

The economic pressures upon the Carpatho-Rusyn people were further exasperated by their practices with their own limited land holdings. Land was passed down not by a system of primogeniture where the eldest son inherited all of his father's estate, but rather was subdivided among all of the male children. As the Carpatho-Rusyn population grew, the limited land holdings, often minuscule to begin with, were so continually subdivided into such tiny plots that they could no longer support the basic needs of their owners.

Beset by a changing and depressed economy, overpopulation and a lack of available and productive land, the Carpatho-Rusyns sank deeper and deeper into poverty with no immediate hope of improvement in their situation. Faced with these grim prospects, it was inevitable that the Carpatho-Rusyns would look to improve their fortunes by emigrating abroad.

Word of the opportunities to be had in America began to spread throughout southern and eastern Europe by the 1880s. Not only were Carpatho-Rusyn peasants urged to leave by letters from relatives and neighbors already in America earning dollars but also by steamship agents and recruiters for rapidly growing American industries who traveled from village to village in search of cheap labor. Not surprisingly, their message of readily available land and steady employment at wages substantially higher than what they were accustomed to making found a receptive audience among the impoverished Carpatho-Rusyn people. Before long, the exodus of economically destitute Carpatho-Rusyn peasants in search of economic improvement in America was on.

For the most part, the journey westward to America for the average Carpatho-Rusyn peasant took a common course. After a heart wrenching goodbye with weeping loved ones and a final blessing under the wayside cross at the head of the village, the prospective immigrant traveled either by horse drawn cart or on foot to the nearest major city. From there, the immigrant boarded a train for transport to a faraway coastal port where he or she would embark by ship for the journey to America.

The Carpatho-Rusyn immigrants who lived in the counties of Szepes (Spiš), Sáros (Šaryš), Zemplén (Zemplyn), Ung (Už), Bereg, Ugocsa and Máramaros (Marmaroš) departed for America from two different routes. One route was from the North Sea ports of Bremen and Hamburg in Germany; the other route was from the ports of Trieste and Fiume on the Adriatic Sea.

Arranging for overseas travel for immigrants from the Austro-Hungarian Empire was a

large scale enterprise. Two companies shared control over this lucrative passenger trade. They were the Cunard Lines and the Hamburg-Amerika Line. Thus, it is likely that the Carpatho-Rusyn immigrants traveled in steerage class to America on such ships as Hamburg's "Berengaria" or Cunard's "Pannonia" or "Carpathia."

THE FIRST CHURCHES

The earliest Carpatho-Rusyn immigrants settled initially in northeastern Pennsylvania in and took jobs as miners in the anthracite coal fields of the region. The emigres, however, soon began to realize that what had identified them, preserved them and sustained them in the "Old Country" and in the long journey to America was painfully missing in their strange, new and difficult surroundings. They had no spiritual home, no place of worship that they could call their own, no church where they could practice their distinctive Greek Catholic faith. Thus, the Carpatho-Rusyn people began to organize parishes, to build churches and to petition for priests to be sent from Europe.

By oral tradition, the first Carpatho-Rusyn priest to come to America was Father Emil (Emmanuel) Burik, who arrived in 1883. Father Burik unfortunately was killed in a train accident in New Brunswick, New Jersey and died on January 17, 1884. Others undoubtedly followed, but little is known of their pastoral activities.

In 1884, the Reverend John Volansky, a Greek Catholic priest from Galicia, answered the call to minister to the newly arrived faithful in the United States. In 1885, Father Volansky organized the first Greek Catholic parish in the United States in Shenandoah, Pennsylvania. Within a short period of time, Father Volansky's own pastoral work led to the establishment of additional Greek Catholic parishes in Freeland, Pennsylvania (1886), in Hazleton, Pennsylvania (1887), in Kingston, Pennsylvania (1888), in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania (1888), in Olyphant, Pennsylvania (1888), in Jersey City, New Jersey (1889), in Minneapolis, Minnesota (1889), Whiting, Indiana (1889) and in Passaic, New Jersey (1890). By 1894, with the arrival of additional clergy primarily from the Presov and Mukachevo Eparchies, there were thirty Greek Catholic parishes serving more than one hundred thousand faithful.

As time progressed, more and more Carpatho-Rusyn immigrants would arrive in America. Steadily, they would move ever westward. Their destination was Western Pennsylvania and Eastern Ohio and employment in the region's steel mills and coal mines. This movement westward led to the establishment of new Greek Catholic parishes in Duquesne, Pennsylvania (1890), in Leisenring, Pennsylvania (1892), in Cleveland, Ohio (1893), in Punxsatawney, Pennsylvania (1893), in Trauger, Pennsylvania (1894), in Johnstown, Pennsylvania (1895), in Braddock, Pennsylvania (1896), in Homestead, Pennsylvania (1897), in Marblehead, Ohio (1897), in Pleasant City, Ohio (1898), in Barnesboro, Pennsylvania (1898), in Charleroi, Pennsylvania (1899), in Pittsburgh (Southside), Pennsylvania (1900), in Windber, Pennsylvania (1900) and in Youngstown, Ohio (1900).

THE STRUGGLE FOR RECOGNITION

The arrival of large numbers of Eastern Rite Catholics in the United States was an event

for which the American Church was ill-prepared. The sudden appearance of increasing numbers of people who professed to be Catholic, but who followed different traditions, used a different liturgical language and conducted a different manner of public worship, was extremely disconcerting to the American Catholic hierarchy for several reasons.

First and foremost, most Roman Catholic bishops and clergy lacked even the most elementary knowledge of the Eastern Church. Knowing only the Latin Rite, the American bishops and clergy could only think of the Church in terms of uniformity and conformity rather than its universality and diversity. Given such a mind set, it was virtually inconceivable to them that these newcomers, with their married priests and non-Latin liturgy, could possibly be adherents to the same religious faith. As a consequence of their nonconforming liturgy, language and traditions, many members of the American hierarchy in ignorance viewed the newly arrived Greek Catholics more as a threat to be contained, if not outright eliminated, rather than as a welcome and complementary source of new religious vitality.

Second, the arrival of these “different Catholics” added a further complication to the then ongoing efforts undertaken to suppress the development of so-called “ethnic” churches. Led by Archbishop John Ireland of Minneapolis, Minnesota, certain members of the hierarchy felt that ecclesiastical solidarity was threatened by too close of an identification and organization of the Church in America along ethnic lines. By attempting to suppress the development of ethnic churches, these hierarchs hoped to make the Catholic Church in the United States more unified and dynamic by making it more “American” in outlook. The presence of the new Greek Catholics, who wished to differentiate and organize themselves not only in ethnicity but also in rite, confounded and deeply disturbed the leaders of the Americanization movement.

Given their complete identification with the Latin Rite and the fierce resistance to nationality churches, many Roman Catholic bishops took a decidedly unfriendly, if not outright hostile, attitude toward the new Greek Catholics. Viewing their lack of celibacy as a great source of scandal, the bishops granted little or no material aid to the married Greek Catholic clergy. Also, the hierarchs refused on many occasions to grant faculties or formal ecclesiastical permission to conduct Greek Catholic services in their churches or to grant ordinary jurisdiction to assume pastoral duties at a Greek Catholic parish. Repeatedly, the American bishops took up the matter of the “Greek Rite Priests” at their annual meetings and wrote to the Holy See at Rome demanding that only celibate priests who submitted to the jurisdiction of the local Latin bishop be permitted to minister to the Greek Catholics in the United States.

The animosity of the Latin Rite hierarchy was in some measure reciprocated by the immigrant Greek Catholic faithful and the handful of pioneer clergy. Some clergy resisted the orders of the local bishop and conducted their pastoral duties among the Greek Catholic faithful by claiming their faculties from the European bishops who permitted them to come to America. In the meantime, the organizers of the various Greek Catholic parishes, fearful of attempts to suppress their Eastern rite practices and traditions, refused to transfer parish property into the name of the local Latin Rite bishop. Instead, for the most part, individual Greek Catholic parishes kept their properties titled in the name of the parish as a nonprofit corporation. Thus, the church properties could be ultimately controlled by a lay board of trustees, rather than be held in trust by the local bishop.

With tensions between the American Catholic bishops and the Greek Catholic clergy and faithful increasing, the Holy See at Rome intervened. In an attempt to clarify the situation, on October 1, 1890, the Holy See issued a decree concerning Greek Catholics in the United States. This decree instructed the newly arriving Greek Catholic priests to obtain jurisdiction from and function under the authority of the local Latin-rite bishop. Additionally, the decree stated that all Greek Catholic priests functioning in America should be celibate. All married priests, according to the decree, should be recalled to Europe.

Rather than settling the situation, the Vatican's decree only served to worsen the relationship between the bishops and the Greek Catholic clergy and faithful. Inevitably, the differences between the American Catholic hierarchy and the Greek Catholic clergy and faithful erupted into outright schism led by the Reverend Alexis Toth.

Father Alexis Toth was a widowed Greek Catholic priest who came to America in 1890 to assume the pastorate of the new St. Mary Greek Catholic Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota. When Father Toth, who was the former director of the Greek Catholic Seminary in Prešov and a professor of Canon Law and Church History, presented himself to John Ireland, the Archbishop of Minneapolis, and requested faculties to conduct services for the newly founded Greek Catholic parish, the meeting between the two men disintegrated into a bitter quarrel. The archbishop thus refused to grant Father Toth the required permission to minister to the parish.

Outraged at what he considered not only a personal insult to him, but also an affront to the rights of Eastern Rite Catholics, Toth defied Ireland and began to conduct services at St. Mary's Church. Father Toth's animosity and anger at the archbishop grew so deep and vehement that he eventually petitioned the Russian Orthodox bishop of San Francisco to accept him into the Orthodox Church. Wishing to exploit the situation for its own advantage, the Russian Orthodox bishop gladly accepted Father Toth and his Minneapolis congregation of 361 members.

Father Toth's defection to the Russian Orthodox Church initiated an "Orthodox Movement" among some segments of the early Greek Catholic community in the United States. With the aid of the Czarist government of Russia, the Russian Orthodox Church's mission in America encouraged Father Toth's efforts to foment resentment among the early Greek Catholic parishes toward the American Catholic hierarchy and induce them to embrace Orthodoxy. Within a decade, Toth's zealous intervention and the support of a handful of other disaffected clergy resulted in fifteen Greek Catholic parishes with more than 20,000 members being led into schism.

RENEWED EFFORTS TO ORGANIZE

The Vatican's 1890 decree requiring all Greek Catholic priests serving in the United States to be celibate deeply disturbed the Greek Catholic clergy. Since most of the Greek Catholic clergy were in fact married, they considered the decree to be an outrageous and unwarranted attack on their centuries-old tradition by both Rome and the unsympathetic American hierarchy. Meeting in Hazleton in late 1891, the clergy strongly protested the decree and petitioned the Holy See for the appointment of their Vicar General to administer the affairs

of the Greek Catholic Church in the United States. When their protests and petitions fell on deaf ears, the clergy unilaterally acted in 1892 and selected from their own ranks a widowed priest, the Reverend Nicephor Chanat, to be Vicar General. Father Chanat's role essentially was to act as an intermediary between the American Catholic bishops and the Greek Catholic clergy. Unfortunately, the bishops ignored his appointment and the Greek Catholic clergy refused to follow his leadership. Thus, in 1896, Father Chanat resigned his position.

After the submission of numerous petitions by clergy and lay committees requesting the appointment of a bishop for the Greek Catholic Church in the United States, the Holy See finally acted. In May 1902, upon the recommendation of the Hungarian government, the Holy See named Canon Andrew Hodobay, a member of the Chapter of the Prešov Diocese, as Apostolic Visitor for all Greek Catholics in America. Canon Hodobay's assignment was to investigate "all aspects of the religious controversy" concerning Greek Catholics in America.

Almost from the start, however, Canon Hodobay's mission in the United States was undermined by his public admission that he came to America as the official representative of the Hungarian government. In response to Hodobay's political allegiances, the Greek Catholics in America began to fractionalize along national lines. For example, people who emigrated from the Galician region of Central Europe began to distinguish themselves as Ukrainians, not as Carpatho-Rusyns. In turn, the Carpatho-Rusyns divided themselves along regional lines into two factions: a group identifying themselves from the Prešov region and a group identifying themselves from the Užhorod region. Given his admitted political sympathies, Hodobay's mission, rather than providing a much needed source of unity and harmony, served instead to expose the divisions within the nascent Greek Catholic Church in America. Regrettably, the constant intrigues and internal rivalries which plagued the mission of Canon Hodobay only served to weaken Church discipline and to exacerbate the problem of schism and exodus to the Russian Orthodox Church.

After five years, Canon Hodobay's fractious mission in America ended with his recall to Europe. Nonetheless, the Holy See accepted Hodobay's recommendation that a bishop be named for the Greek Catholic faithful in the United States.

A GREEK CATHOLIC BISHOP COMES TO AMERICA

To restore ecclesiastical order and to stem the tide of defections to Orthodoxy, the Holy See finally relented and decided to appoint a Greek Catholic bishop for the Church in America. Thus, on March 4, 1907, the Holy See announced the appointment of the Reverend Soter Stephen Ortinsky, a Basilian monk from Galicia, as the Bishop of all Greek Catholics in the United States.

Ortinsky's appointment as bishop, however, still did not put to an end to the bitter and divisive ecclesiastical and national disputes which threatened the unity of the Greek Catholic Church in America. Two problems immediately hampered Bishop Ortinsky's administration. First, Ortinsky's Ukrainian origin and appointment of an exclusively Ukrainian corps of advisors reopened the old wound of ethnic factionalism among the faithful. Second, Bishop Ortinsky was given very limited episcopal authority. According to an apostolic letter known as "Ea Semper,"

issued on June 14, 1907, Bishop Ortinsky was forced to obtain the approval of each local Latin Rite bishop in whose diocese a Greek Catholic parish was located before he could exercise any authority over that particular parish. In effect, Ortinsky functioned as a vicar general for all Greek Catholics in the various Latin Rite dioceses in America. Lacking the necessary authority, Bishop Ortinsky was unable to impose the ecclesiastical discipline over both clergy and laity needed to bring order to the contentious, but still growing, Greek Catholic community in America.

Finally, after six long years of continuous in-fighting, ethnic rivalries and threats of schism, the Holy See at Rome established an Apostolic Exarchate or missionary diocese “for all the clergy and the people of the Ruthenian Rite in the United States of America” and granted full episcopal jurisdiction to Bishop Ortinsky on May 13, 1913. More than anything else, this decisive action on the part of Rome brought about peace and canonical unity to the Greek Catholic Church in America, which had now grown to 152 parishes, 43 mission churches, 154 priests and an estimated half million people of both Carpatho-Rusyn and Ukrainian descent.

Unfortunately, the new found harmony and unity of the Greek Catholic Church of America would prove to be short-lived. Bishop Ortinsky suddenly and unexpectedly died of pneumonia on March 24, 1916. Upon Ortinsky’s death, a papal decree divided the Church along nationality lines, with a Ukrainian branch and a Carpatho-Rusyn branch. Each branch of the Church was headed not by a bishop, but by an administrator: Father Peter Poniatyshyn for the Ukrainians and Father Gabriel Martyak for the Carpatho-Rusyns. Each administrator lacked full episcopal authority and functioned more like a vicar general for the American Latin Rite bishops to the Greek Catholic parishes in their respective dioceses. In effect, the Greek Catholic faithful were relegated to the *status quo ante*: an inferior status among American Catholics lacking an organizational identity and any authoritative leadership.

Despite the absence of a bishop, the period of Father Martyak’s administration nevertheless marked a period of relative stability and continued growth in the Carpatho-Rusyn branch of the Greek Catholic Church in the United States. An additional twenty-one parishes and for mission churches were established during this period. Moreover, the administration of Father Martyak witnessed the establishment of the first religious order for women in the Carpatho-Rusyn branch of the Greek Catholic Church in America.

With the approval of the Apostolic Delegate, Father Martyak received Mother M. Macrina and two other sisters from the Order of St. Basil the Great under his jurisdiction. On January 19, 1921, the sisters opened their first convent at Holy Ghost parish in Cleveland. In April of that year, the novitiate for the new foundation of the Basilian Order was opened with the admission of five postulants. In 1923, the new foundation moved their mother house and novitiate to Elmhurst, near Scranton, Pennsylvania. At Elmhurst, the sisters began their ministry of service to the Church by assuming the administration of the newly constructed St. Nicholas Orphanage.

THE EPISCOPACY OF BISHOP BASIL TAKACH

For eight years, the Greek Catholics in the United States waited in eager expectation for

the appointment of a new bishop. Finally, Rome acted. On March 8, 1924, the Holy See of Rome unexpectedly announced the establishment of two exarchates for Greek Catholics in the United States. Simultaneously with this action, the Holy See appointed Father Basil Takach to be the Bishop of all Greek Catholics in the United States who were of Carpatho-Rusyn, Hungarian, Slovak and Croatian descent while Father Constantine Bohachevsky was named bishop of all Greek Catholics of Ukrainian descent. The Holy See's appointment of Father Takach as bishop put an end to more than thirty years of ecclesiastical disputes, foreign interventions and intrigues, and assorted ethnic rivalries which were at times so bitter and divisive that the survival of Eastern Rite Catholic churches in America was seriously in doubt.

Basil Takach was born in a small village in Maramorosh County on October 27, 1879. Following the example of his father and his uncle, young Basil entered the Užhorod Seminary and was ordained to the priesthood in December 14, 1902. After nine years of service as a parish priest, Bishop Julius Firczak appointed Father Takach as the controller of the Eparchial bank and executive officer of its printing society. In addition to these weighty responsibilities, Father Takach was named the superior of the "Alumneum," the Eparchy's boarding school. Father Takach's honesty, dedication and kindness made him one of the most loved and respected priests in the Mukačevo Eparchy.

After World War I, Father Takach assumed even a more prominent role in the affairs of the Eparchy: spiritual director of the seminary, professor of religion at the Eparchial teacher's college, member of the matrimonial tribunal and diocesan consultor. It was in the midst of performing these important duties that Father Takach received the surprising news of his selection as the new bishop for the newly established Greek Catholic Exarchate in the United States.

The news of the appointment of Father Takach was greeted with resounding joy and approval by the faithful in America. Almost immediately, plans were made by clergy and laity to greet their new leader's arrival at a familiar destination for the immigrant Carpatho-Rusyn community: New York City.

Father Takach was consecrated as a bishop in Rome on Pentecost Sunday, June 15, 1924. Less than two months later, Bishop Takach set sail aboard the liner *Mauretania* for the United States. On August 13, 1924, a huge and enthusiastic throng crowded onto the pier of New York Harbor to catch a glimpse of the new bishop. After leading a service of thanksgiving at St. Mary's Greek Catholic Church in New York and being welcomed at a banquet at New York's Pennsylvania Hotel, Bishop Takach set about the arduous task of organizing the new Exarchate and giving much needed leadership to his dispersed and sometimes unruly flock.

One of the initial decisions confronting Bishop Takach was the location of a permanent episcopal seat and residence. In the papal bull appointing Father Takach as bishop, it was expressly stated that the episcopal seat of the new Greek Catholic Exarchate would be New York City. New York, however, was not an acceptable location because it had a much smaller Carpatho-Rusyn population than other regions of the country. Thus, Bishop Takach established temporary residences, first in Trenton, New Jersey and later, in Uniontown, Pennsylvania, as he considered a more suitable location for his episcopal seat.

Within weeks of his arrival in Uniontown, representatives from St. John the Baptist Greek Catholic Church in Homestead/Munhall, Pennsylvania, a “steel town” suburb of Pittsburgh, presented Bishop Takach with a formal written proposal offering land and financial assistance if he would establish his residence and episcopal seat at the parish. Given the parish’s close proximity to the main offices of the Greek Catholic Union, the oldest and largest fraternal organization serving the Greek Catholic community, the bishop accepted the generous offer and designated St. John’s as the cathedral of the new Greek Catholic Exarchate .

In December 1925, the bishop’s residence and chancery, described as “one of the finest in Western Pennsylvania,” at long last were completed. In February 1926, Bishop Takach moved to Munhall and officially took up residence across the street from his new cathedral.

On July 5, 1926, the bishop’s residence and the chancery were solemnly dedicated amidst long and impressive ceremonies attended by thousands. Following a formal blessing service conducted at a temporary altar erected in a large vacant field just south of the Cathedral Church and near the newly constructed residence, Bishop Takach, accompanied by Bishop Constantine Bohachevsky of the Ukrainian Exarchate of Philadelphia, Bishop Dionysius Nyaradi, the Apostolic Administrator of the Prešov Diocese, Bishop Hugh C. Boyle, the Latin Rite Bishop of the Pittsburgh Diocese, and more than one hundred priests, processed into the Cathedral for the celebration of the Divine Liturgy.

Another important initial task of Bishop Takach was the establishment of canonical order and ecclesiastical discipline in the new Exarchate. To achieve this objective, the bishop made several key decisions. First, Bishop Takach created an administrative structure for the governance of the Exarchate. Father Theophilus Zhatkovich of Trauger, Pennsylvania was named the first Chancellor of the Exarchate while Father Julius Grigassy was appointed as the head of the Matrimonial Tribunal and secretary to the bishop. A six member board of consultors also was created. The first Board of Consultors included: Father Gabriel Martyak of Landsford, Pennsylvania, Father Valentine Gorzo of McKeesport, Pennsylvania, Father Victor Mirossay of Cleveland, Ohio, Father Nicholas Chopey of Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, Father Joseph Hanulya of Cleveland, Ohio and Father Victor Kovaliczky of Perth Amboy, New Jersey.

Bishop Takach also undertook a strenuous parish visitation program for the dual purposes of meeting the faithful and creating regional governing districts or deaneries for the Exarchate . Starting with St. John the Baptist Parish in Perth Amboy, New Jersey, where he blessed a newly erected parochial school, the bishop visited sixty parishes in various parts of the country in a period of about five months. Based upon the recommendations of the board of consultors and the geographic locations of the parishes, Bishop Takach divided the Exarchate into thirteen deaneries having the following seats: New York City, Jersey City, Philadelphia, Scranton, Hazleton, Johnstown, Punxsutawney, Pittsburgh, Homestead, Uniontown, Youngstown, Cleveland and Chicago.

Simultaneously with the creation of the administrative structure for the new Exarchate, Bishop Takach ordered the clergy to take a much needed census of all of the parishes. The results of this census showed that the new Pittsburgh Greek Catholic Exarchate consisted of

almost 300,000 faithful organized into 155 parishes and mission churches served by 129 priests.

From the start of his episcopacy, Bishop Takach was motivated by a burning desire to elevate the Greek Catholic Church in America to the “spiritual, cultural and national level of other progressive nationalities.” In pursuit of this salutary goal, Bishop Takach advocated the establishment of new organizations and activities to spiritually enrich and unify the faithful. Under the bishop’s leadership, various religious organizations such as the Altar Society, the Sodality and the Rosary Society were introduced and promoted among the parishes of the Exarchate. In addition, in conjunction with the Sisters of St. Basil the Great, the bishop instituted an annual pilgrimage in honor of the Most Holy Mother of God, first at the St. Nicholas Orphanage in Elmhurst and later at the Sisters’ newly established mother house at Mt. St. Macrina in Uniontown. This annual Labor Day event quickly became a popular event among the faithful of the Exarchate and brought together thousands of worshipers from throughout the United States.

Bishop Takach clearly recognized the vital importance of a Catholic press. With the support and financial generosity of the United Societies, one of the Greek Catholic fraternal organizations, numerous forms of religious and devotional materials were printed and disseminated. Additionally, the support of the United Societies enabled the Exarchate to begin the publication of a monthly religious magazine called the *Queen of Heaven* (“Nebesnaja Caroca”). To spread knowledge of the Byzantine Rite among American Catholics, a monthly called “*The Chrysostom*,” and a weekly entitled “*The Eastern Observer*” also were published with the moral and financial support of the bishop.

Bishop Takach took special interest in the Sisters of St. Basil the Great. Viewing the teaching ministry of the sisters as crucial to the future growth and development of the Greek Catholic Church in America, Bishop Takach wholeheartedly supported all their efforts and activities. During Bishop Takach’s episcopate, the Sisters of St. Basil established and staffed ten parochial schools and six catechetical schools throughout the Exarchate.

Unfortunately, the administration of Bishop Takach as the first bishop of the Greek Catholic Exarchate of Pittsburgh was not without controversy or conflict. In 1929, the Holy See issued a decree known as *Cum Data Fuerit*. In this decree, the Holy See reiterated its previous position that the Greek Catholic clergy in America must be celibate. Bishop Takach vehemently opposed the new decree and used all possible means to persuade the Holy See to reverse its decision. When the Holy See rebuffed all appeals, Bishop Takach insisted that the celibacy decree must be obeyed. Using the celibacy decree as a rallying cry to allegedly safeguard traditional Eastern rite traditions, some priests and laity started an open campaign against the bishop and attacked his authority to govern the Exarchate. Many parishes were drawn into the conflict and numerous legal battles for control of church properties ensued. Regrettably, the conflict produced a schism within the Exarchate and led to the formation of an Independent Greek Catholic Church. Despite this sad turn of events, the Pittsburgh Greek Catholic Exarchate, under Bishop Takach’s firm and determined leadership, regained its momentum and continued to grow and establish new parishes.

Bishop Basil Takach’s pioneering twenty-four year tenure of loving service as the first

bishop of the Pittsburgh Greek Catholic Exarchate ended with his death on May 13, 1948. At the time of his death, he was sixty-nine years old. After a solemn Pontifical Requiem Liturgy at St. John's Cathedral attended by seven bishops, three abbots, more than one hundred and eighty priests and numerous civic, fraternal and cultural leaders, the bishop was buried in Calvary Cemetery at Mt. St. Macrina. Through his dedication, patience and unparalleled zeal, Bishop Takach succeeded in placing the Greek Catholic Church in America on a firm foundation for years to come.

THE EPISCOPACY OF BISHOP DANIEL IVANCHO

The immediate years following the end of the Second World War witnessed a transition in the leadership of the Greek Catholic Exarchate of Pittsburgh. Bishop Takach, who had guided the Exarchate since its founding in 1924, was diagnosed with terminal cancer. With Bishop Takach in failing health and increasingly unable to discharge his official duties, a request was made to the Holy See to appoint an auxiliary bishop to assist in the administration of the Exarchate.

The prevailing speculation at the time identified Monsignor George Michaylo and Father Stephen Gulovich, as the leading candidates to be named as the new auxiliary bishop of the Pittsburgh Greek Catholic Exarchate. The Holy See, however, confounded the conventional wisdom and announced the appointment of a relative dark horse, Father Daniel Ivancho, as the new bishop.

Daniel Ivancho was born in the village of Yasinia, Maramorosh County, on March 30, 1908. At the age of eight, he emigrated to the United States and settled in Cleveland with his widowed mother. After graduating from St. Procopius College, Ivancho was sent to Rome to pursue his seminary training. Due to ill health, Ivancho was forced to transfer to the Eparchial Seminary in Uzhorod where he completed his theological studies. On September 30, 1934, Bishop Takach ordained Ivancho to the priesthood. At the time of the announcement of his selection as the second bishop of the Greek Catholic Exarchate of Pittsburgh, Father Ivancho was serving as the pastor of St. Mary's Greek Catholic Church in Cleveland, Ohio.

In announcing the appointment, the Holy See's official decree specifically noted that Father Ivancho was being appointed to the status of a "coadjutor bishop." This appointment meant that Father Ivancho would automatically become Bishop Takach's successor.

On November 5, 1946, Father Ivancho was consecrated as the new Coadjutor Bishop of the Greek Catholic Exarchate of Pittsburgh. The four hour long episcopal consecration ceremony was not held at St. John's Cathedral, but at St. Paul's Cathedral in the Oakland section of Pittsburgh, the cathedral church of the Pittsburgh Catholic Diocese. This was done to accommodate the large number of people who wished to witness this historic event. Father Ivancho's elevation to the episcopate was highlighted not only by the attendance of a large number of Byzantine and Latin Rite bishops and clergy, but also by the presence of the Empress Zita and other members of the royal Hapsburg family of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire. The homilist at the consecration was the renowned preacher, the then Monsignor Fulton J. Sheen.

Bishop Ivancho's status as coadjutor bishop did not last for long. On May 13, 1948, Bishop Basil Takach lost his long and painful battle with cancer and died at Pittsburgh's St. Francis Hospital. Upon the death of Bishop Takach, Bishop Ivancho took full, if not, official control over the administration and affairs of the Exarchate. As he assumed the reins as the second Bishop of the Pittsburgh Greek Catholic Exarchate, Bishop Ivancho was confronted with a momentous decision which would have important consequences for the future well-being of the Exarchate.

On the one hand, the Exarchate faced a vexing problem: providing for the proper education of men for the priesthood. Until the 1920's, most of the Greek Catholic clergy was foreign born and educated. As more and more American born youth wished to become priests, obtaining a proper theological education for these candidates became increasingly problematical. One temporary solution to this problem was to have Greek Catholic men "split" their theological training into two parts: pursuing the majority of their studies at Latin Rite seminaries such as St. Vincent's in Latrobe, Pennsylvania, St. Mary's in Baltimore, Maryland or St. Bonaventure's in Olean, New York and supplementing it with two years of schooling at the Greek Catholic seminaries in Prešov or Užhorod. When the advent of World War II closed this avenue, an alternative which required prospective candidates to attend the college and seminary operated by the Benedictine Fathers at St. Procopius in Lisle, Illinois was established. Ultimately, neither of these avenues of educating young men for service as priests was deemed efficient or satisfactory. Thus, the construction and staffing of a seminary dedicated to the education and training of men who aspired to be the priesthood was viewed as a necessity for the continued growth of the Greek Catholic Church in America.

On the other hand, many advisors to Bishop Ivancho argued that the construction of a new cathedral church should be the top priority of the Exarchate. According to these advocates, the construction of a new cathedral with more seating capacity and with a more central location in the City of Pittsburgh would better serve the needs of the Exarchate both for attendance at religious ceremonies and as a way of showcasing the identity and splendor of the Eastern rite in the United States.

Lacking the financial resources to undertake both ambitious projects, Bishop Ivancho was forced to make a choice: a seminary or a new cathedral. Despite the unanimous recommendation of his board of consultors in favor of a new cathedral, Bishop Ivancho instead opted for the construction of a seminary. Thus, in a special Pastoral letter dated June 14, 1950 to the clergy and faithful of the Exarchate, the bishop announced plans for the construction and operation of the first Eastern rite Catholic seminary in the United States.

Shortly after Bishop Ivancho's announcement, a tract of land for the projected Seminary was acquired at the corner of Perrysville and Riverview Avenues on Pittsburgh's North Side. An architect and contractor were hired to design and build the new building and the grounds were solemnly blessed on July 5, 1950.

With the beginning of the 1950-51 academic year rapidly approaching and with St. Procopius Seminary no longer available to accommodate any of the Exarchate's seminarians, contingency plans were made to open the new seminary at the Mt. St. Macrina Academy in

Uniontown. At the last minute, two buildings on land adjacent to the proposed site for the seminary became available for use as temporary accommodations. After hurried preparations and renovations to these two buildings were made, the new Seminary, dedicated to the Apostles of the Slavs, Saints Cyril and Methodius, was opened on October 16, 1950 with a student body of forty seminarians and five priests serving as the initial faculty.

A little more than one year later, on the morning of October 18, 1951, a beautiful, new seminary building, featuring a golden onion shaped dome and beautiful mosaics, was officially dedicated. Bishop Ivancho presided at the blessing ceremonies. Bishop John F. Dearden, the bishop of the Pittsburgh Roman Catholic Diocese, preached one of the sermons. This most memorable event in the growth and progress of the American Greek Catholic Church was witnessed by some twenty bishops, four hundred clergy and religious and an estimated 5,000 laity. A civic program was held on the afternoon of the dedication ceremonies and featured a number of notable figures, including David L. Lawrence, the Mayor of Pittsburgh, John S. Fine, the Governor of Pennsylvania, Father Vernon L. Gallagher, the President of Duquesne University, and Stephen Tkach, the President of the Greek Catholic Union, one of the chief financial supporters of the Seminary.

In addition to the establishment of Ss. Cyril and Methodius Seminary, another notable achievement during the episcopate of Bishop Ivancho included the beginning of new religious orders in the Exarchate. An order of Greek Catholic monks following the Rule of St. Benedict was established in the late 1940's. These Greek Catholic Benedictine monks located their first independent friary initially in St. Nicholas Church in McKeesport, Pennsylvania and later in suburban Monroeville, Pennsylvania. In 1954, the Benedictine Sisters from Lisle, Illinois established a Greek Catholic foundation of sisters at Sts. Peter and Paul Church in Warren, Ohio. Finally, an order of Greek Catholic Franciscan monks was organized in Sybertsville, Pennsylvania.

Bishop Ivancho's stewardship of the Greek Catholic Exarchate of Pittsburgh came to a sudden end when he resigned for personal reasons in December 1954. Bishop Ivancho died in retirement in Florida in 1972. Though his tenure was short, Bishop Ivancho faithfully carried on the work of his predecessor and, through the founding of the Seminary, secured the continued growth and progress of the American Greek Catholic Church for years to come.

THE EPISCOPACY OF BISHOP NICHOLAS T. ELKO

With the abrupt and unexpected resignation of Bishop Ivancho, the responsibility for leading the ever-growing Pittsburgh Greek Catholic Exarchate was entrusted to the Vicar General of the Exarchate, Monsignor Nicholas T. Elko. Monsignor Elko was born in Donora, Pennsylvania on December 14, 1909. After receiving his elementary and secondary education in the public schools of his hometown, Nicholas Elko attended and graduated from Duquesne University in 1930. Upon completion of his theological studies at the Greek Catholic Seminary in Uzhorod as well graduate studies at the University of Louvain in Belgium, Nicholas Elko, along with the future Bishop Ivancho, was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Takach on September 30, 1934 at St. Nicholas Greek Catholic Church in McKeesport.

Following his ordination, Father Elko served as pastor in several parishes throughout the Pittsburgh Greek Catholic Exarchate. In addition, Father Elko became active in the Greek Catholic Union and served as its spiritual director for four years.

When Bishop Ivancho was consecrated as the co-adjutor bishop in 1946, Father Elko was named to succeed Ivancho as the pastor of St. Mary's Greek Catholic Church in Cleveland. In a short time, Bishop appointed Father Elko to a number of important posts within the administration of the diocese - Dean of the Cleveland Deanery, Episcopal Consultor and finally Vicar General. In 1952, His Holiness, Pope Pius XII, Elko named a domestic prelate with the title of Right Reverend Monsignor. In that same year, he was appointed by Bishop Ivancho to succeed the bishop as the Rector of Ss. Cyril and Methodius Seminary.

In the summer of 1954, Bishop Ivancho appointed Monsignor Elko as the Rector of St. John's Cathedral in Munhall. Monsignor Elko's tenure as the pastor of the Cathedral Parish, however, was destined to be a very brief one. A little more than three months after Elko's arrival at the Parish, Bishop Ivancho abruptly resigned from his position as bishop. Following this sudden and unexpected development, the Holy See turned to Monsignor Elko, the Vicar General of the Exarchate, to administer the diocese. Thus, on December 2, 1954, the Holy See named Monsignor Elko as Apostolic Administrator "sede plena" of the Exarchate. Reportedly, Monsignor Elko received the telephone call from Rome notifying him of his appointment as Apostolic Administrator while he was supervising some parishioners who were helping to repaint the Rectory.

As Apostolic Administrator, Monsignor Elko possessed all of the powers and authority to administer the affairs of the Exarchate which were granted to a bishop with one exception: the power to ordain priests. This deficiency was soon remedied, however, by the announcement on February 16, 1955, by Archbishop Amleto G. Cicognani, the Vatican's delegate to the United States, that Monsignor Elko would soon be elevated to the episcopacy.

On March 6, 1955, with his mother and two brothers in attendance, Monsignor Elko was consecrated as a bishop in ceremonies held in St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. The ordaining prelate was one of the highest ranking officials in the Vatican Curia: Eugene Cardinal Tisserant, the dean of the Sacred College of Cardinals and the Secretary of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches. Thus, at the age of forty-six, Nicholas T. Elko, became the first American born bishop of the Greek Catholic Church. On September 5, 1955, Bishop Elko's rapid rise within the ranks of the Pittsburgh Greek Catholic Exarchate reached its inevitable conclusion when he was officially named as the Exarchate's third bishop.

Recognizing the necessity for the Greek Catholic Church to be more responsive to the needs of its now overwhelmingly American born faithful and to adapt to the conditions presented by modern American life, Bishop Elko embarked upon a course which would lead to dynamic changes within the Exarchate. In 1955, Bishop Elko sought and was granted permission from the Holy See to permit English to be used in the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. To more effectively tie the vast territory of the Exarchate together, Bishop Elko established a new weekly newspaper in 1956 to evangelize and spread Church and religious news to the faithful. The name of the new newspaper, which was called *The Byzantine Catholic World*, was itself emblematic of

the climate of change sweeping through the Exarchate. It marked the continuation of the practice started in late 1940's whereby the traditional appellation of "Greek Catholic" was replaced by the term "Byzantine Catholic" in a effort to better clarify the religious and ritual identification of the Church for American Catholics.

Bishop Elko's tenure as bishop also was an era of tremendous growth, expansion and development of physical facilities throughout the Exarchate. Under the bishop's direction, more than one hundred churches and schools were constructed or reconstructed. This capital expansion program, while absolutely necessary to accommodate larger congregations, in hindsight had a major regrettable consequence. In an effort to be like other American Catholic churches, many traditional Eastern rite architectural features such as iconostases were omitted or removed from the newly built or renovated churches which were during this time period.

Cognizant of the need to follow an increasingly mobile laity, Bishop Elko assigned priests to do organizational work in other areas of the country. The result of these zealous labors was the establishment of new parishes in such non-traditional locales as Van Nuys, California in 1957, in Anchorage, Alaska in 1957, and in Fontana and San Diego, California in 1958.

An accomplished speaker and writer, Bishop Elko zealously endeavored to make the liturgical richness and spirituality of the Byzantine Rite better known to and appreciated by the Latin Rite Catholics both in the United States and abroad. Bishop Elko was appointed a consultor to the Sacred Congregation for the Oriental (Eastern Rite Catholic) Churches. He also took an active part in the proceedings of the Second Vatican Council held in Rome from 1962-65.

In the summer of 1967, Bishop Elko was recalled to Rome. Shortly after his recall, Bishop Elko was elevated to the dignity of an archbishop and appointed as the ordaining prelate for the Byzantine Rite in Rome and head of the Ecumenical Commission on the Liturgy. This new assignment necessitated his resignation as the Byzantine Catholic Bishop of Pittsburgh. Upon Bishop Elko's resignation, Monsignor Edward V. Rosack, the Chancellor of the Diocese, was named as the temporary Apostolic Administrator.

After serving for several years in Rome, Archbishop Elko returned to the United States in 1970 and served as an auxiliary bishop in the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Cincinnati, Ohio for fourteen years. Upon reaching his seventy-fifth birthday, the Archbishop retired from this position. He died on May 18, 1991.

Dynamic, but controversial, Bishop Nicholas T. Elko did much not only to sustain the growth of our Byzantine Catholic Church but also to gain its acceptance as a permanent part of the American Catholic Church. His many good works and efforts would provide a lasting basis for continued growth and even more prominence and respect for our Church in future years.

A CHANGE IN STATUS RESULTS IN TWO EPARCHIES

In recognition of its continued growth and development, the Holy See acted to significantly upgrade the status of Byzantine Catholic Church in the United States. By a decree

issued by the newly elected Pontiff, His Holiness Pope Paul VI, in 1963, the Exarchate, which territorially encompassed the entire United States, was divided into two separate ecclesiastical jurisdictions. The first, centered in Passaic, New Jersey, included within its territory of the entire states of New Jersey, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, North Carolina, South Carolina, Rhode Island, Vermont and Virginia, all of Eastern Pennsylvania and the District of Columbia. The second jurisdiction, centered in Pittsburgh, included in its territory the remainder of the nation. In addition, the 1963 papal decree raised both jurisdictions to the canonical status of an eparchy or a full diocese.

On July 31, 1963, the two new Byzantine Catholic Eparchies were formally established with ceremonies conducted in the newly designated Cathedral of St. Michael the Archangel in Passaic. Presiding at the ceremonies was the Apostolic Delegate to the United States, Archbishop Egidio Vagnozzi, who installed the first bishop of the Passaic, the Most Reverend Stephen J. Kocisko.

Stephen J. Kocisko was born on June 11, 1915 in Minneapolis, Minnesota. After graduating from De La Salle Catholic High School, young Stephen pursued his vocation to the priestly life by attending initially Nazareth Preparatory Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota. Later, he was sent by Bishop Takach to St. Josephat's Seminary in Rome for his philosophical and theological education and eventually was awarded a Licentiate (i.e.-Master's) Degree in Sacred Theology (S.T. L). Just prior to his departure for the United States, Bishop Alexander Evreinoff, the Ordaining Prelate for the Byzantine Rite in Rome, ordained Stephen Kocisko to the priesthood on March 30, 1941.

Upon his return to home, Father Kocisko was assigned to pastorates in Detroit, Michigan and in Lyndora, Pennsylvania. Besides his pastoral duties, he served as a member of the Matrimonial Tribunal and professor of Patrology at the Byzantine Catholic Seminary of Ss. Cyril and Methodius. In April 1956, Bishop Elko named Father Kocisko as the Chancellor of The Pittsburgh Exarchate.

Due to the growing number of faithful and parishes, Bishop Elko petitioned the Holy See for an auxiliary bishop to assist in the administration of the Pittsburgh Byzantine Catholic Exarchate. The Holy See granted Bishop Elko's request and notified him of its intention to elevate Father Kocisko to the episcopacy. On October 23, 1956, Father Kocisko was consecrated as a bishop at St. Paul's Roman Catholic Cathedral in Pittsburgh.

Following his episcopal ordination, Bishop Kocisko took up residence at Holy Ghost Parish on Pittsburgh's North Side. For seven years, Bishop Kocisko served as auxiliary to Bishop Elko. In addition, he was appointed to a number of important administrative positions within the Exarchate. These positions included Rector of the Seminary and Vicar General.

As the first ordinary of a newly created Eparchy of Passaic, Bishop Kocisko had the awesome task of starting a diocese from the ground up: providing for his residence and the Chancery Office, setting up an administrative organization for the operation of the new diocese and starting various eparchial commissions and agencies. In order to provide better news, information and overall communication within the new eparchy, Bishop Kocisko launched the

publication of a new weekly newspaper to serve the Passaic faithful. This new publication was named *The Eastern Catholic Life*.

Starting with its second session in the fall of 1963, Bishop Kocisko also took an active part in the deliberations of the Second Vatican Council. Upon his return from the Council, Bishop Kocisko took an active role in implementing all of the Council decrees including its noteworthy one which instructed the Eastern Catholic Churches to return to their authentic traditions and practices.

Upon the recall and subsequent resignation of Bishop Elko, the Holy See appointed Bishop Kocisko as new bishop of the Pittsburgh Eparchy on December 22, 1967. Bishop Kocisko's return to Pittsburgh would herald even greater recognition and honors for the American Byzantine Catholic Church.

NEW HONOR, NEW BISHOPS AND A NEW EPARCHY

At the start of the decade of the 1960's, the organizational status of the Byzantine Catholic Church in the United States was merely that of a church missionary territory with limited self-governing authority. By the end of decade of the 1960's, however, the remarkable growth and the steadfast loyalty of Byzantine Catholics in the United States would be recognized and capped by the bestowal of a new ecclesiastical dignity and status.

In order to "foster religious life" among the Byzantine Catholic faithful, Pope Paul VI issued a decree on February 21, 1969 entitled *Quandoquidem Christus* (When Christ). By virtue of this decree, the Holy Father transformed the status of the Byzantine Catholic Church in America, creating a metropolitan province with greater self-governing responsibilities, elevating the Eparchy of Pittsburgh to the status of an archdiocese or archeparchy headed by an archbishop, designating the Eparchy of Passaic as a "suffragan" or constituent part of the province and creating a new suffragan eparchy from the territory of the Pittsburgh Eparchy to be headquartered in Parma, Ohio.

Pope Paul appointed Bishop Stephen Kocisko, the new bishop of Pittsburgh, to head the new Byzantine Metropolitan Province and elevated him to the status of archbishop. Bishop Michael Dudick, who succeeded Bishop Kocisko in Passaic in 1968, remained as the head of the five year old Passaic Eparchy. Father Emil Mihalik, the Chancellor of the Passaic Eparchy, was named as the first bishop for the newly created Parma Eparchy.

THE FIRST METROPOLITAN ARCHBISHOP

Archbishop Stephen Kocisko was installed as the first Metropolitan ever in the history of the Carpatho-Rusyn people by the Most Reverend Luigi Raimondi, the Apostolic Delegate to the United States, in Holy Spirit Byzantine Catholic Church in the Oakland section of Pittsburgh on June 11, 1969. Following the decrees of the Second Vatican Council, Archbishop Kocisko promptly set about the task of moving the Church generally and Pittsburgh Archdiocese in particular back to its authentic religious traditions. To achieve this important goal, Archbishop Kocisko undertook an number of important initiatives.

Under Archbishop Kocisko's providential leadership, the theology department of Ss. Cyril and Methodius Seminary, which had been closed for two years, reopened. In accord with the guidelines set forth in the Vatican Council's Decree on Priestly Formation, the Seminary instituted new programs in pastoral and field ministry for seminarians and placed renewed emphasis on Eastern theological tradition and practices. These new programs were implemented under the direction of the Seminary's new director, Father Judson Procyk.

To encourage lay participation and to improve congregational singing in our Church's services, Archbishop aided the establishment of an institute to provide formal classes for the training of cantors serving throughout the Archdiocese.

Keenly aware of the need for increased knowledge and understanding among the faithful of their religious traditions and heritage, Archbishop Kocisko made religious education a top priority during his episcopate. An Office of Religious Education was immediately established. This new office took the lead in publishing and providing catechetical materials for the instruction of the youth in their faith and in the Byzantine Rite. Included within the many instructional materials produced by the Office of Religious Education was the acclaimed "God With Us" series. This series of catechism books was specifically developed for instruction of children in the first eight grades and eventually was used by all Eastern Rite dioceses in the United States and Canada.

Another important instructional material championed by Archbishop Kocisko was the Byzantine Leaflet Series. Published four times a year, these eight pages pamphlets, printed in color and extensively researched, proved to be an invaluable resource in explaining the liturgical services, customs and traditions of the Byzantine Catholic Church.

Preservation of religious and cultural materials was a matter of major importance for Archbishop Kocisko. In 1971, the archbishop directed the establishment of an Archdiocesan Museum for the purpose of preserving and maintaining religious articles, icons, books, paintings and other items of historical interest. Realizing the archival importance of newspapers, books and other artifacts produced by numerous Americans of Carpatho-Rusyn origin, Archbishop Kocisko facilitated the efforts of scholars at some of America's leading universities in collecting and microfilming these materials for preservation and study by future generations.

Archbishop Kocisko also undertook an active and prominent role in promoting the Eastern Rite not only on a national level but also in highest deliberative bodies of the Catholic Church. Two efforts in this regard are of particular note.

First, with the cooperation of the other hierarchs, clergy and faithful of the entire Metropolitan Province, Archbishop Kocisko erected a beautiful chapel in the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. during the Archdiocesan Golden Jubilee celebration in 1974. Designed in traditional Eastern style with an iconostasis and colorful mosaics, the chapel would serve as impressive reminder to the many visitors to the Shrine of the presence of Byzantine Catholics in the United States.

Second, as the head of a Metropolitan Province, Archbishop Kocisko was designated by

the pope to represent the Byzantine Rite in the Synod of Bishops, the highest consultative body of the Catholic Church. Through his participation at these Synod sessions, Archbishop Kocisko was not only able to express the opinions of the Eastern Rite Churches on the many issues faced by the Church in contemporary life but also to acquaint the Church Fathers from all over the world of the history and importance of the Byzantine Church in America.

Though privileged to have the rank of a metropolitan archbishop, Archbishop Kocisko was not neglectful of his pastoral role as leader of the Pittsburgh Archeparchy. With his active support, a number of new parishes and missions were established. Following the people, these new parishes were located in expanding Pittsburgh suburbs like Upper St. Clair, North Huntingdon and Gibsonia and in the Texas cities of Houston, Dallas and San Antonio. Additionally, an annual liturgy and program at Holy Ghost Byzantine Catholic Church on Pittsburgh's North Side honoring couples who were celebrating their twenty-fifth and fiftieth wedding anniversaries was instituted.

Being a former rector, the status of the Seminary was a matter of special concern for Archbishop Kocisko. To secure the financial well-being and support of this important institution for future years, the archbishop used the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of his priestly ordination and twenty-fifth anniversary of his consecration as a bishop to establish a Seminary Endowment Fund. The archbishop started the Fund with his own substantial gift of funds.

In February 1990, with repressive Communist rule finally ended in Central and Eastern Europe, Archbishop Kocisko, despite his advancing years, lead a delegation of American Byzantine Catholic hierarchs to the Eparchies of Prešov and Mukačevo to show support and solidarity with the persecuted brethren who were enjoying freedom after forty years to worship publicly again according to their historic Greek Catholic faith. This historic journey had an enormous positive moral and spiritual impact on the faithful and hierarchs in the "Old Country" homeland.

In compliance with the traditions of Vatican II, Archbishop Kocisko tendered his resignation as Metropolitan Archbishop of Pittsburgh to Pope John Paul II on June 11, 1990, the date of his seventy-fifth birthday. The archbishop's resignation concluded fifty years of service to the Church as a priest and thirty-five years as a bishop. After a lengthy illness, Archbishop Kocisko died on March 7, 1995.

THE EPISCOPATE OF BISHOP MICHAEL DUDICK

With the transfer of Bishop Stephen Kocisko to Pittsburgh in late 1967, the four year old Eparchy of Passaic was left without a bishop. After a wait of more than six months, His Holiness, Pope Paul VI, finally filled the vacancy created by Bishop Kocisko's transfer by naming Monsignor Michael Dudick as the second bishop of the Passaic Eparchy.

Michael J. Dudick was born on February 24, 1916 in St. Clair, Pennsylvania. After receiving his elementary and secondary education in the St. Clair public schools, Michael Dudick graduated from St. Procopius College in Lisle, Illinois. Upon completion of his theological studies at the Benedictine Seminary at St. Procopius, the future bishop was ordained

to the priesthood by Bishop Basil Takach on November 13, 1945.

After his ordination, Father Dudick was assigned to work in the Chancery Office of the then Pittsburgh Exarchate. For nine years, Father Dudick served in the Chancery, holding the position of Assistant Chancellor and Secretary. In addition to his administrative duties during this period, Father Dudick ministered to a number of parishes throughout Western Pennsylvania and Eastern Ohio.

Following successful pastorates at St. Nicholas Church in Old Forge, Pennsylvania and at St. Mary's Church in Freeland, Pennsylvania, Bishop Kocisko named Father Dudick the first Chancellor of the Passaic Eparchy upon its establishment in 1963. On October 25, 1963, Father Dudick was named a papal domestic prelate and received the title of Reverend Monsignor.

On July 29, 1963, His Holiness, Pope Paul VI appointed Monsignor Dudick as bishop of the Passaic Eparchy. His consecration to the episcopate and installation was held on October 24, 1968 at St. Michael's Cathedral.

Bishop Dudick's long tenure as the Chief Shepherd of the Passaic Eparchy witnessed the establishment of over twenty new parishes and missions. Many of these new parishes were organized in Southern states such as Virginia, North Carolina and Florida.

Bishop Dudick also expanded and developed the physical facilities of the Eparchy. Under his leadership, an annual stewardship program was initiated throughout the Eparchy. Through this annual fund-raising campaign, valuable financial assistance was obtained not only for the development of new parishes and missions but also for construction of important Eparchial facilities. These facilities included a new and modern Eparchial Center in West Paterson, New Jersey, consisting of Chancery offices, a chapel, museum and library, and the Carpathian Village in Canadensis, Pennsylvania.

Like his predecessor, Bishop Dudick worked diligently to re-establish authentic Eastern Rite traditions and practices. Under his direction, annual presbyterial conferences for the support, education and fellowship of all of the clergy in the Eparchy were started. Regional pilgrimages to such places as the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C., the Basilian Monastery of Mariapoch in Matawan, New Jersey and the St. Nicholas Shrine at the Carpathian Village were instituted. In addition, the position of deacon was re-emphasized and a number of married men were educated, trained and ordained by the bishop for service in this valuable ministry throughout the Passaic Eparchy. Also, a colorful Eastern Catholic bulletin series was successfully introduced and was later adopted for use by several other Byzantine Catholic eparchies throughout the country.

As a man interested in the origins and history of the Carpatho-Rusyn people, Bishop Dudick founded the Passaic Eparchy's Heritage Institute. This institute served to house a magnificent collection of religious and secular paintings, ecclesiastical art, vestments, national dress, embroideries, folk art and other memorabilia as well as library with a large collection of rare Slavonic books and manuscripts.

Bishop Dudick was a prominent and effective public spokesman for the Byzantine Catholic Church in America. A strong supporter of the pro-life movement, Bishop Dudick frequently lead clergy and faithful of the Eparchy in activities held in conjunction with the annual "Right-To-Life" march in Washington, D.C. These activities included the bishop's celebration of the Divine Liturgy at the National Shrine at the conclusion of the march. In addition, Bishop Dudick's affable and friendly manner made him an important ambassador for our Church not only in relations with Latin Rite bishops but also with hierarchs of our separated brethren of the Orthodox Church.

After eighteen years of pastorally beneficial ministry, Bishop Dudick stepped down as the head of the Passaic Eparchy in 1996. Though officially retired, Bishop Dudick still remains active and assists even today in ministering to the spiritual needs of the faithful of the Byzantine Metropolitan Province.

THE EPARCHY OF PARMA

Simultaneously with the elevation of the Byzantine Catholic Church in the United States to the status of an ecclesiastical province, the Holy See issued a decree known as "*Christi Ecclesia*." In this decree, the Vatican announced its intention to create a third diocese for the American Byzantine Church.

According to the papal decree, the large territorial expanse of the former Pittsburgh Eparchy would be considerably reduced in size. The new Pittsburgh Archeparchy would now cover the following area: the western half of Pennsylvania, eastern Ohio and all of the states of West Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma and Texas. From the remaining portion of the old Pittsburgh Eparchy, a new diocese covering the mid-west and western portions of the country was established. To head this new suffragan eparchy, which was centered in Parma, Ohio, Pope Paul VI named the Chancellor of the Passaic Eparchy, Father Emil Mihalik.

Father Emil Mihalik was born in Pittsburgh on February 7, 1920. After receiving his high school education in his hometown of Brentwood, Pennsylvania, a small suburban community south of Pittsburgh, the future bishop pursued his philosophical and theological studies at St. Procopius College and its Benedictine Seminary. On September 30, 1945, Emil Mihalik was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Basil Takach.

Father Mihalik served as a priest in a number of parishes throughout the Pittsburgh Exarchate. At the time of the creation of the Passaic Eparchy, he was the pastor of St. Thomas the Apostle Parish where he was instrumental in the construction of a modern Byzantine style church and a new parish center.

With the formation of the new diocese, Father Mihalik was given a number of administrative duties in addition to his pastoral responsibilities. These administrative duties included Director of Vocations, membership on the Matrimonial Tribunal, Diocesan Consultor and finally Chancellor of the Eparchy. Archbishop Stephen Kocisko consecrated Father Mihalik as a bishop at St. John the Baptist Cathedral in Parma and installed him as the head of the new

diocese on June 12, 1969.

Bishop Mihalik's initial task as bishop was the creation of the boards, commissions and structure necessary to administer the affairs of the new Parma Eparchy. To facilitate this effort, the bishop convened an eparchial council in the spring of 1970. Under Bishop Mihalik's leadership, formal offices for religious education and youth ministry were established. In later years, other worthwhile eparchial programs such as the secular Franciscans, Marriage Encounter, Pre-Cana, the Apostolate of St. Nicholas and Youth Singles Ministry were implemented.

To improve communication within the Eparchy, Bishop Mihalik announced the creation of a diocesan newsletter. This newsletter, named "*Horizons*," subsequently was upgraded and converted into an independent newspaper.

The increased movement of Byzantine Rite Catholic to different areas of the country created an urgent need to establish new parishes, particularly in the western portions of the United States. Bishop Mihalik responded vigorously to this challenge. Soon, parishes and missions were started in such places as Anaheim, California, Denver, Colorado, Albuquerque, New Mexico, Mentor-on-the-Lake, Ohio, Dayton, Ohio, Brunswick, Ohio, Tucson, Arizona, Spokane, Washington, Sugar Creek, Missouri, Indianapolis, Indiana and Las Vegas, Nevada. It was the foresight of Bishop Mihalik which eventually led to the creation of a separate Byzantine Catholic diocese in 1982 to cover the parishes located in the western United States.

Bishop Mihalik's episcopate also saw the introduction of a new religious order into the Parma Eparchy. Soon after assuming his episcopal duties, Bishop Mihalik asked the Order of Poor Clares to come to Parma and establish a Byzantine Foundation of their order. This invitation was accepted and the sisters eventually established a monastery in North Royalton, Ohio in the mid-1970's.

Unfortunately, Bishop Mihalik's zealous pastoral work for the Parma Eparchy were cut short when it was discovered that the bishop had terminal lung cancer. Bishop Mihalik died on January 27, 1984, less than two weeks before he would celebrate his sixty-fourth birthday.

On June 19, 1984, His Holiness, Pope John Paul II appointed a new bishop to succeed the late Bishop Mihalik. The pope's choice to serve as the second bishop of Parma was the Most Reverend Andrew Pataki, the auxiliary bishop of the Passaic Eparchy.

Born in Palmerton, Pennsylvania on August 10, 1927, Andrew Pataki began his formation for the priesthood at St. Procopius College and continued his theological studies at the newly opened Ss. Cyril and Methodius Byzantine Catholic Seminary. On February 24, 1952, Bishop Daniel Ivancho ordained him to the priesthood.

After eighteen years of service as a parish priest, Father Pataki was sent to Rome in 1970 to pursue studies in canon law. Upon his return from Rome in 1972, Father Pataki was appointed as the Rector of the Seminary and professor of canon law. In addition, he was named to Papal Commission for the revision of canon law for the Eastern Catholic Churches. In 1974, he was named a papal prelate with the title of Monsignor.

While serving as Chancellor of the Pittsburgh Archeparchy and as pastor of St. Mary's Church in Weirton, West Virginia, Monsignor Pataki was named by Pope John Paul II as Auxiliary Bishop of Passaic on May 30, 1983. Monsignor Pataki's consecration as a bishop was held on August 23, 1983 at St. Peter's Roman Catholic Cathedral in Scranton, Pennsylvania. Less than one year later, Bishop Pataki was named to succeed the late Bishop Emil Mihalik in Parma. On August 16, 1984, Bishop Pataki was formally installed as the second bishop of Parma.

Upon assuming responsibility for the stewardship of the Parma Eparchy, Bishop Pataki undertook a number of measures to improve the governance of the diocese and to advance the quality of religious life. Under the bishop's direction and guidance, a second eparchial assembly was held and important new eparchial bodies such as the Presbyterial Council, Finance Council and Priests' Pension Board were created. Bishop Pataki also promulgated a standardized form for the celebration of the Divine Liturgy and revised Holy Week services. To improve congregational singing, a Cantors' Institute with a faculty and an advisory board was created. Finally, educational videos on the Eastern Church and Byzantine Rite worship were produced by the Eparchy's Office of Religious Education.

Bishop Pataki's eleven year tenure as the bishop of Parma ended on February 8, 1996 when he was installed as the new bishop of the Eparchy of Passaic to succeed the retired Bishop Michael Dudick. With the departure of Bishop Pataki, Father David Hannes was selected by the Eparchial Board of Consultors as the temporary administrator of the Parma Eparchy. On May 2, 1996, the Holy See announced the selection of Father Basil Schott, the hegumen (chief abbot) of the Holy Dormition Byzantine Franciscan Monastery in Sybertsville, Pennsylvania to succeed Bishop Pataki in Parma.

Born on July 21, 1939 in Freeland, Pennsylvania, Myron Schott was educated in Catholic schools in Freeland and Hazleton, Pennsylvania. After his graduation from high school, young Myron Schott entered the Byzantine Franciscans in 1958. After his formal profession, whereupon he assumed the monastic name of Basil, he attended Immaculate Conception College in Troy, New York and St. Mary's Seminary in Norwalk, Connecticut. Basil Schott was ordained as a priest by Bishop Stephen Kocisko on August 29, 1965.

Subsequent to his ordination, Father Schott held a number of administrative positions within the Byzantine Franciscan community. He also saw service as a chaplain to the Byzantine Nuns of St. Clare and the Byzantine Carmelite Nuns in Sugarloaf, Pennsylvania and as teacher of religion in several Catholic schools. In addition, he was actively involved in giving retreats, workshops and renewal programs for clergy, religious and parishes throughout the United States.

On July 11, 1996, Father Schott was consecrated and installed as the third bishop of Parma. Since his episcopal consecration, Bishop Schott has faithfully ministered to the needs of the faithful of the Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Parma and continues to build upon the firm foundation of faith constructed by his predecessors.

THE BYZANTINE CHURCH IN THE WEST: THE EPARCHY OF VAN NUYS

In May 1981, the bishops of the Byzantine Catholic Metropolitan Province met in Pittsburgh. One of the topics at this meeting was the proposal made by Bishop Emil Mihalik to create a fourth diocese to minister to Byzantine Catholics in the western portion of the United States. In light of the great distances between the emerging western parishes and the episcopal see of the Parma Eparchy, Bishop Mihalik felt that a new diocese organized and headquartered closer to these parishes was imperative in order to better serve their needs. When his fellow bishops agreed with this assessment, a formal request was dispatched to His Holiness, Pope John Paul II, through the Sacred Oriental Congregation, to establish a Byzantine Catholic diocese for the western United States.

On December 3, 1981, the Holy See responded favorably to the bishops' request. By papal decree, a new eparchy composed of the states of Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington and Wyoming was created. This new eparchy would be centered in Van Nuys, California, a suburb of Los Angeles, and its cathedral would be at St. Mary's Church, the first Byzantine Catholic parish formed in the western United States. Named to head the newly created Van Nuys Eparchy was the Most Reverend Thomas Dolinay, the auxiliary bishop of the Passaic Eparchy.

The son of a Byzantine Catholic priest, Thomas Dolinay was born in Uniontown, Pennsylvania on July 24, 1923. A product of the Struthers, Ohio and Uniontown public school systems, young Thomas Dolinay graduated in 1941 and entered St. Procopius College in Lisle, Illinois. Upon receiving his degree in 1945, he entered the Benedictine Seminary and completed his theological studies in 1948. On May 16, 1948, Bishop Daniel Ivancho ordained Thomas Dolinay to the priesthood in the chapel of the Motherhouse of the Sisters of St. Basil in Uniontown.

For the next eighteen years, Father Dolinay enjoyed successful pastorates at a number of parishes throughout the Pittsburgh Exarchate and the Passaic Eparchy. In addition to these pastoral assignments, Father Dolinay, who had a longtime interest in journalism, served as the first managing editor of the *Byzantine Catholic World* and the first editor of the *Eastern Catholic Life*. In 1966, Father Dolinay was given the honor of the dignity of a papal chamberlain and the title of Monsignor.

On November 23, 1976, Monsignor Dolinay became the first auxiliary bishop of the Passaic Eparchy. His consecration as bishop was held at St. Peter's Roman Catholic Cathedral in Scranton, Pennsylvania. As an auxiliary to Bishop Dudick, Bishop Dolinay was assigned a number of important administrative tasks for the Eparchy including serving as the Vicar for the churches located in the Anthracite Region of Pennsylvania.

On March 9, 1982, Bishop Dolinay was formally installed as the first bishop of the Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Van Nuys by Archbishop Stephen Kocisko. Also attending the impressive ceremonies, which were held in St. Cyril of Alexandria Roman Catholic Church in Encino, California, were Archbishop Pio Laghi, the Apostolic Delegate to the United States, Cardinal Timothy Manning, the Archbishop of Los Angeles, thirty other Latin Rite and Eastern Rite bishops, approximately two hundred priests and over a thousand faithful.

As the new shepherd of a small and far flung flock, Bishop Dolinay faced a enormous job to lay the groundwork for the new Eparchy which would be spiritually strong and materially viable. Despite the long distances between his parishes, Bishop Dolinay set about the task of pulling the Eparchy together with great fervor and enthusiasm. Numbering only about five thousand faithful at the start of his administration, the Van Nuys Eparchy steadily grew under Bishop Dolinay's leadership. Within eight years, the number of faithful in the Eparchy tripled in size. This growth was spurred in part by the in flux of new parishioners from diverse ethnic backgrounds who found a spiritual home in the churches following the Byzantine Catholic tradition. In total, five missions became full fledged parishes and ten new missions were started under Bishop Dolinay's episcopate.

In addition to its steady growth, the Van Nuys Eparchy registered a number of firsts under Bishop Dolinay's stewardship. It became the first Eparchy to publish a financial report. It also became the first Eparchy to sponsor an annual clergy week to draw together all of the priests for continuing education and strengthening unity and fellowship among priests separated by great distances.

Drawing upon his previous experiences, Bishop Dolinay founded the Van Nuys Eparchial Newsletter. This newsletter proved to be invaluable tool in providing information and news about the Eparchy to the bishop's geographically dispersed faithful.

With the retirement of Archbishop Stephen Kocisko looming, Pope John Paul II relieved Bishop Dolinay of his responsibilities as Bishop of Van Nuys and named him Coadjutor Archbishop of Pittsburgh in 1990. To succeed Bishop Dolinay, the pope appointed the Auxiliary Bishop of Passaic, the Most Reverend George Kuzma.

George Kuzma was born on July 24, 1925 in Windber, Pennsylvania. A veteran of World War II, Bishop Kuzma attended St. Francis College in Loretto, Pennsylvania and St. Procopius College. When Ss. Cyril and Methodius opened, he transferred to and received his collegiate decree from Duquesne University in Pittsburgh. Upon completion of his theological studies, George Kuzma was ordained a priest by Bishop Nicholas Elko on May 29, 1955. He was consecrated as Auxiliary Bishop of Passaic on February 4, 1987.

Bishop Kuzma was not unfamiliar with the duties and problems facing the fledgling diocese. From 1972 until his elevation to the episcopate, Bishop Kuzma served as the pastor of Annunciation Parish in Anaheim, California. While in Anaheim, he initiated the celebration of the Divine Liturgy in Spanish to better meet the spiritual needs of the growing number of Hispanic members of his parish. In addition to serving at Annunciation Parish, the then Father Kuzma handled a number of important administrative duties in the new Van Nuys Eparchy: Treasurer, Chairman of the Ecumenical, Liturgical and Heritage Committees and member of the Clergy and Seminary Review Board. Thus, the appointment of Bishop Kuzma to head the Van Nuys Eparchy was not an unexpected development. On January 15, 1991, Bishop Kuzma was installed as the second bishop of the Van Nuys Eparchy.

In 1994, Bishop Kuzma was confronted with a natural disaster which greatly affected the

Van Nuys Eparchy. A devastating earthquake centered in nearby Northridge, California caused severe damage to the Eparchial Pastoral Center, the bishop's personal residence and to St. Mary's Cathedral. In the wake of the earthquake, Bishop Kuzma began a restructuring of the administrative offices of the Eparchy. The Pastoral Center and residence of the bishop were moved to St. Stephen's Church in Phoenix, Arizona, the largest parish in the Van Nuys Eparchy. The bishop continued the revamping of the administrative structure of the Eparchy by establishing three new regional vicariates.

Under the leadership of Bishop George Kuzma and his small, but dedicated, group of priests and religious, the Eparchy of Van Nuys continues to grow. Today, as in the past, it welcomes into its flock all faith-filled peoples of whatever race or ethnic background who wish to worship God in the Byzantine Catholic tradition.

THE CHURCH IN TRANSITION

During the 1990's, all four of the dioceses making up the Byzantine Catholic Metropolitan Province experienced changes in leadership due to retirements, death and reassignments. As a result of this "changing of the guard," this era can best be described as a transitional phase in the history of the Metropolitan Province. Highlighting this new transitional era was the rapid turnover in the leadership of the Pittsburgh Archeparchy which saw four different bishops assume responsibility for governing its affairs within the period of five years.

Anticipating his eventual retirement after more than twenty years as head of the Pittsburgh Archeparchy, Archbishop Kocisko petitioned the Vatican for the appointment of a successor. The Vatican granted the archbishop's request. On May 29, 1990, the Most Reverend Thomas Dolinay, the former Bishop of Van Nuys, was installed as Coadjutor Archbishop of Pittsburgh in ceremonies held at St. Paul's Roman Catholic Cathedral in Pittsburgh. After publicly celebrating his fiftieth anniversary of his priestly ordination and twenty-two years as Bishop of Pittsburgh, Archbishop Kocisko submitted his resignation and entered into retirement. On June 12, 1991, Archbishop Dolinay automatically became the second Metropolitan of the Byzantine Catholic Province.

Archbishop Dolinay assumed his new position with much enthusiasm and great expectations for the future. However, his plans and visions for the Archeparchy in particular and the Metropolitan Province in general went unfulfilled as the archbishop unexpectedly died on April 13, 1993 after a brief illness. With the sudden death of Archbishop Dolinay, the Board of Consultors for the Archeparchy turned to a familiar figure to administer the Archeparchy until a successor bishop was appointed. That familiar figure was the longtime Auxiliary Bishop of Pittsburgh, the Most Reverend John Bilock.

John Bilock was born in McAdoo, Pennsylvania on June 20, 1916. After graduating from the public schools in McAdoo, he pursued his collegiate and theological studies at St. Procopius College and Seminary. On February 3, 1946, Bishop Basil Takach ordained John Bilock to the priesthood in the bishop's private chapel in Munhall, Pennsylvania.

In addition to serving as a parish priest, Father Bilock was given a wide variety of special

assignments. While he was assistant pastor of St. John the Baptist Parish in Hazleton, Pennsylvania, Father Bilock was appointed the Director of the Eastern Pennsylvania Sodality Union. In 1950, after his appointment as pastor of St. John Chrysostom Parish in the famed "Russka Dolina" neighborhood in the Greenfield section of the City of Pittsburgh, Father Bilock was appointed Notary of the Matrimonial Tribunal. In 1953, he was named choral administrator of the Western Pennsylvania Byzantine Catholic Chorus.

In 1955, Bishop Nicholas Elko appointed Father Bilock as his personal secretary, secretary to the Board of Consultors and a member of the Diocesan Building Commission. One year later, Father Bilock was named to the Board of Consultors. On May 7, 1957, Pope Pius XII named him a papal chamberlain with the title of Monsignor.

On September 12, 1963, Monsignor Bilock was appointed Rector of St. John's Cathedral in Munhall. As the rector, Monsignor Bilock upgraded and improved all of the church properties, paid off the parish's indebtedness and generally reinvigorated its spiritual life. On July 15, 1969, Archbishop Kocisko appointed Monsignor Bilock as Vicar General of the Archeparchy. Later that same year, he was made a prelate of honor to Pope Paul VI.

On March 8, 1973, His Holiness Pope Paul VI named Monsignor Bilock to serve as an auxiliary bishop to Archbishop Kocisko. Monsignor Bilock was consecrated as a bishop on May 15, 1973 at Holy Spirit Church in Pittsburgh.

In his role as auxiliary bishop, Bishop Bilock used his unparalleled organizational skills to plan and coordinate most of the Archeparchy's events, activities and major functions. Some of the prominent events and activities which Bishop Bilock chaired or coordinated included the Metropolitan Province's Golden Jubilee celebration, the annual Byzantine Catholic Day at Pittsburgh's Kennywood Park, the annual St. Nicholas Day Banquet and the Labor Day weekend pilgrimage at Mt. St. Macrina in Uniontown. Besides these events, Bishop Bilock also organized and personally lead numerous pilgrimages from the Archeparchy to such places as the Holy Land, to Rome, to the famous Marian shrines in Europe and, finally, to the ancestral homeland of American Byzantine Catholics in Slovakia and Ukraine.

Another noteworthy activity of Bishop Bilock was his use of modern mass communication to create a Byzantine Catholic radio and television apostolate. Through Bishop Bilock's tireless efforts and foresight, the Divine Liturgy was broadcast every Sunday to a radio audience of thousands. Gradually, this apostolate was expanded to include televised Divine Liturgies and radio broadcasts of Christmas and Holy Week services.

Though he himself was in declining health, Bishop Bilock nonetheless accepted the unanimous selection of the Board of Consultors and assumed responsibility for the administration of the affairs of the Archeparchy. Bishop Bilock served as Archeparchial Administrator from April 20, 1993 until his death on September 8, 1994.

For more than two-and-a-half years, the clergy and faithful of the Pittsburgh Archeparchy waited for the Holy See's selection of a new archbishop. Finally, the long anticipated announcement was made. On November 14, 1994, Pope John Paul II announced the selection of

Monsignor Judson Procyk as the third Archbishop of the Byzantine Catholic Metropolitan Province and the sixth ordinary of the Pittsburgh Byzantine Diocese.

Judson Procyk was born in Uniontown, Pennsylvania on _____. After graduating from high school, the future archbishop answered the call to serve God as a priest in the Byzantine Catholic Church. His first two years pursuing this vocation were spent at St. Procopius College. With the opening of Ss. Cyril and Methodius Seminary, young Judson Procyk continued his studies at Duquesne University and was awarded his bachelor of arts degree in 1953. On May 19, 1957, he was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Nicholas Elko.

After serving successful pastorates at several churches throughout the Pittsburgh Exarchate and Eparchy, Father Procyk was named Assistant Chancellor of the Eparchy and secretary to then Bishop Kocisko in 1968. One year later, he became Rector of the Byzantine Catholic Seminary. As rector, Father Procyk directed the re-opening of the Seminary's theology department and implemented the guidelines of the Second Vatican Council's Decree on Priestly Formation. In recognition of his priestly service, Father Procyk was named chaplain to His Holiness Pope Paul VI with the title of Monsignor. In March 1975, he was elevated to prelate of honor with the title of Right Reverend Monsignor.

In July 1973, Monsignor Procyk succeeded Bishop Bilock as the Rector of St. John's Cathedral in Munhall, Pennsylvania. Monsignor Procyk would hold this position for twenty-two years. During his tenure as Cathedral Rector, Monsignor Procyk undertook the awesome task of relocating the Cathedral Parish to new and modern facilities. The highlight of this long relocation project was the construction of a new and magnificent Cathedral Church. The new Cathedral, which was modeled after the ancient Byzantine church of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, was solemnly dedicated on June 12, 1994 by Bishop Michael Dudick, the Acting Metropolitan and Bishop Bilock, the Archeparchial Administrator.

On February 7, 1995, Monsignor Procyk was consecrated as a bishop and installed as Metropolitan Archbishop in the Cathedral that he was so instrumental in constructing. Serving as the ordaining bishops were the three bishops of the suffragan eparchies of the Metropolitan Province: Bishop Michael Dudick of Passaic, Bishop Andrew Pataki, then of Parma, and Bishop George Kuzma of Van Nuys. Performing the official installation was Archbishop Agostino Cacciavillan, the Apostolic Pro-Nuncio to the United States. Presiding at the ceremonies was His Eminence Cardinal Anthony Bevilacqua, the Archbishop of Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Philadelphia. In attendance were twenty-nine Eastern Rite and Latin Rite bishops, including four bishops from the European eparchies from which American Byzantine Catholics trace their roots, as well as scores of priests, religious, representatives from various Protestant and Orthodox Churches, and hundreds of faithful, many of whom watched the proceedings on closed circuit television from the basement hall of the Cathedral.

In his short tenure, Archbishop Procyk has made significant progress in moving our Church to a more faithful adherence to Eastern Rite traditions and practices. Within the framework of the new Eastern Code of Canon Law, the archbishop has established new norms for the administration of the sacraments of initiation, instituted a new diaconate program within the Archeparchy, reestablished the Cantors' Institute to promote better congregational singing of

all Byzantine services and started a new Archeparchial Choir. Additionally, to promote greater openness about the financial situation of the Archeparchy, the archbishop has directed the preparation and publication of annual financial reports. Moreover, as the representative of the American Byzantine Catholic Church to the Synod of Bishops on the status of the Church in the Americas, the archbishop has used that forum to educate and inform bishops from throughout this Hemisphere of the presence and importance of the Eastern Rites of the Catholic Church.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

British historian Frederic Harrison once wrote that “all our hopes for the future depend on a sound understanding of the past.” In reviewing the history of the Byzantine Catholic Church in America, the greatest lesson which can be gleaned from this period of time is one of faith. It could only have been a strong and abiding faith in God which could have convinced our ancestors to leave their homeland to travel a long distance to a new and strange land in search for new freedom and opportunity. It could only have been a fierce and determined faith which sustained our ancestors to preserve and hold fast to their glorious Eastern Catholic heritage in circumstances which were often times hostile and antagonistic. Ultimately, this journey of faith proved to be a triumphant one as the faith of our forefathers, so deeply challenged on some many occasions, was amply rewarded with material blessings, honors and acceptance as a viable contributor to American Catholic life.

On this, the seventy-fifth anniversary of the founding of the Byzantine Catholic Exarchate in the United States, we fondly look back upon the great lessons of faith handed down to us not only by our forefathers but also by our steadfast hierarchs, clergy and religious who lovingly served and guided our Church to its present status as a Metropolitan Province. To them and, most of all, to Almighty God, we give thanks and praise! As we, the present members of the Byzantine Catholic Church in the United States, look forward to the future in the third millennium of Christianity with hope and optimism for our Church, may we always remember to be faithful stewards of their loving legacy of faith!

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