



Mission Society of the Mother of God of Boronyavo

Autumn 2013

Note from the Chaplain

Glory to Jesus Christ! Here we are again!

First off, thank you to those who have been steadily sending in your donations all summer long: your fidelity to our Church in Eastern Europe is really amazing. An envelope shows up in the mailbox almost every day. I think it is safe to say that most of our readers pray for the restoration of our Church there every day, and hopefully for the building up of the Byzantine Catholic Church in America as well!

Secondly, in this issue, you will read about the donations sent to the Eparchy of Mukachevo in Ukraine and the Archeparchy of Prešov in Slovakia in early August; new projects from Ukraine of new churches and houses that need our help; the Sisters of St. Basil in Uzhhorod; and letters from Europe.

Thirdly, do pass the Newsletter around to others. Do ask others to help out with prayers for our Church's reconstruction and revitalization in the face of continued social, religious and economic problems in the region. And feel free to ask others to help out by dedicating a garage sale or church breakfast to the needs of our Church.

May God bless you, and Our Lady of Boronyavo watch over you!

Father Christopher Zugger



**SS Peter and Paul, parish church of Mokra,
Perekhyn**

A Reminder to Readers

The Union of the Ruthenian Eparchy of Mukachevo with the Holy See of Rome took place in 1646, which marks the foundation of the Byzantine-Ruthenian (Greek) Catholic Church. From 1745 until 1910, the entire territory of the Mukachevo Eparchy was Greek Catholic. Workers who converted to Orthodoxy in the United States re-introduced the Orthodox Church in 1912 in the village of Iza. With the encouragement of the government of Czechoslovakia after 1918, an Orthodox Eparchy was re-established here in 1931, under the Patriarch of Serbia. In 1945 the Orthodox had 109,000 faithful.

In 1945 the Greek Catholic Eparchy had 462,000 faithful; 459 churches; 354 priests. By 1949, that was all swept away by the wrathful hand of Stalin and with the assistance of missionary bishops and priests from the Moscow Patriarchate of the Orthodox Church. All of the parishes that were left open were declared to be Russian Orthodox, and 50 years of unrelenting persecution began, with our Church driven to a life of whispered Liturgies in towns and services in barns or forests.

Today the Russian Orthodox have 180 parishes in the Transcarpathian Oblast.

All support of the Mission Society's work is in addition to members' and donors' existing support of their local parish, their eparchy, and the Metropolia of Pittsburgh. Renewal of our Mother Church in Central Europe cannot mean a diminishment of our financial and spiritual dedication to the church in America.

**MISSION SOCIETY OF
THE MOTHER OF
GOD OF
BORONYAVO, INC.**

The Mission Society is an independent organization dedicated to the renewal and strengthening of the Byzantine Catholic Church in America and Central Europe.

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In the 1990s, the painful process of restoration began. The local government of the Transcarpathian Oblast of the Republic of Ukraine undertook to restore churches to Greek Catholic worship. This has only been partially successful. A large number of the pre-1945 churches were returned to the Eparchy, by popular vote or court decisions. Many times the Orthodox have refused court orders to return the older churches, or to share churches between both communities. Eventually it just became too expensive to continue to struggle for return or full sharing.

In other villages and small towns, the Greek Catholics are a minority, and so they decided that they could not try to regain the old churches, and so it was time to build new ones. As a result, the Eparchy has been building scores of new churches in the 21st century. **You can read all about the fascinating story of 50 years of survival in the underground, and the challenges of restoration, in Father Zugger's book *Finding A Hidden Church* (Eastern Christian Publications, 2009). You can buy this for \$30 at the Byzantine Seminary Press store (412) 322-8307, or via the Press website <http://www.byzantineseminarypress.com/>; Our Lady of Perpetual Help website www.olphnm.org or at the parish store (505) 2 for auto-graphed copies; or from the company's website <http://www.ecpubs.com/>, or by phone (703) 691-8862.**

Projects from Mukachevo Eparchy:

The Mother Church for over one million Byzantine-Ruthenian Catholics in Europe and North America, this eparchy continues to make strides in its steady recovery from communist persecution, atheist propaganda, and now the scourge of consumerism and indifference to religion.

Parishes – 420*

Parish Clergy – 268

Seminarians 93

Hiero-monks 29

Monks and Friars 40

Sisters 45

Faithful 384,500

*Many parishes have more than one church in a town, or cover several villages.

The Byzantine Catholic Church (Ruthenian) around the world:

Canada 5,000

Croatia 21,300

Czech Republic 17,900

Hungary 327,200

Serbia and Montenegro 22,100

Slovakia 233,368

USA 84,227

Total 1,095,595

Deacon Andrew Bodnar *Vechnaya Pamyat* ("Eternal Memory")

Deacon Andrew Bodnar fell asleep in the Lord on January 27. He was born in Zemplinske Hardiste, a village south of Trebisov, in eastern Czechoslovakia in 1923. He emigrated with his family to America in 1927, and they settled in Trenton, New Jersey, joining St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church which had a large contingent of founders from that region of Slovakia. Andrew joined the Marine Corps in 1941, serving during World War II and remaining a reservist until his retirement in 1983 as a Lieutenant Colonel. After the war, he went to Princeton University on a full scholarship, and became one of the first scientists to work on the jet propulsion engine. In 1956 he married Olga Franchak, whose Greek Catholic parents came from a Rusyn village just west of Uzhhorod, and together they raised five sons. He had a successful career as an engineer, and in 1975 moved his family to Denver, where they became members of Holy Protection Church.

After his retirement, the Bodnars devoted two years to teaching English in recently independent Slovakia, spending 1994-1996 teaching doctors, nurses, teachers, disabled children, and high school students. Here they became acquainted with the needs of the Greek Catholic Church in both Slovakia and adjoining Transcarpathia in Ukraine. They made many trips to eastern Europe, bringing donations of medicine and church items, along with money they had collected as well as their own personal donations. In particular they became associated with the Sisters of St. Basil the Great, who were just starting up public ministry again in both countries. They also worked with Father Juraj Terek, the first Greek Catholic chaplain to the International Theological Institute, and partly because of their donations of vestments and liturgical items, the Greek Catholic chapel was established at the first campus in Gaming, Austria.

They were co-founders of the Mission Society with Father Chris in Albuquerque, after hearing stories from seminarians who spent a summer in New Mexico and Colorado. The seminarians told of the great needs of the Church and its parishioners. The Bodnars continued their trips to Europe, collecting for the Church's needs and also shipping items to Slovakia. They also worked with Father Taras Lovska, hosting him on his first tour in the western United States, when he came begging for help for our Church. Father Taras is now the Dean of the eastern parishes of the Mukachevo eparchy, and was rector of the seminary in Uzhhorod. As board members of the Queen of the Apostles Mission Association in Denver, they interpreted Slovak requests and introduced QAMA to the needs of the Greek Catholic Church in Ukraine.

Ordained in 2000 as a deacon, Deacon Andrew served at Holy Protection as long as he could, despite worsening Parkinson's paralysis of his muscles. He rarely complained, and bore his increased suffering quietly and heroically, even when he had to learn how to swallow food because his muscles could not do the task automatically. He had a great love for the Sisters of St. Basil, recalling them as shy, genuine brides of Christ. He was very happy to learn in his last days that the Mission Society is helping with the construction of the new monastery for the Sisters in Uzhhorod. He would often say of his trips to Europe: "We came back after living with those people who trusted us and showed us how they lived and struggled, we came back much better people than when we went there; it changed our lives and how we look at the world and what's important. You gain a lot more than you'll ever give." As a Fourth Degree Knight of Columbus, a chalice will be given in his memory to a new priest in the Mukachevo eparchy.

May his memory be eternal/*vičnaja jemu pamjat.*

SS. Peter and Paul Community in Mokra, Perechin region.



This is a mission parish, as the Russian Orthodox were very successful in keeping 85% of the formerly Greek Catholic families as members of their Church during the 1990s.

The former church is used by this Orthodox majority. Today the Greek Catholic remnant is small and poor. They have been building a church, and need \$10,000 more to put on the roof and plaster the walls. Pictures are attached from community patron feast on July 12 2013 (Old Calendar).*

They need at least 10.000 \$ more to complete the chapel.

*The Ruthenian Greek Catholic Church keeps to the Old Calendar for both Lent-Easter and fixed feasts, as do the Ukrainian Greek Catholic and all of the Orthodox Churches in Ukraine.

Synevir, Mizhiriya district

Synevir village is adjacent to the Synevir Natural Park. The village was originally all Greek Catholic in 1949. Today there is an Orthodox majority of 380 families, and an active Greek Catholic minority of 48 families. There are an additional 25 families who are inactive – many times such people retain their religious identity, but wait to see if the Greek Catholic parish will continue. So there is hope of regaining them.

Divine worship has been held outdoors, by the cross in the church yard, since the 1990s. There was no hope of sharing the old church. The families built a temporary chapel in 1997, and then started a real church in 1998, which was finished in 2002 through the help of benefactors in Slovakia and Germany. In 2012 the village council donated land for a parish house. At present, the priest lives 15 km away; with a resident priest they could be guaranteed permanent pastoral care. The house will contain a residence for him and his family, and a school for the children's catechism classes, as was the case in 1949.

Parishioners have purchased construction supplies and built a shed to protect them, for a total of \$8,000. Now they are finishing the first phase of foundation, walls, electrical, window frames. They are asking for \$13,000 to purchase more materials for the roof, insulation, drain pipes, gutters, and interior partitions.



Lake Synevir is the largest lake in the Carpathian Mountains and center of a national park.

Holy Protection Parish Kamyanske, Irshava district.

The village was entirely Greek Catholic in 1949. In 1995, there were 42 families who registered as Greek Catholic, while 300 remained in the Russian Orthodox parish which occupies the former church. Today 66 families belong to our parish, which regained the old parish house in 1996. This has been converted into a long chapel, broken up by walls. In 2008 they decided to build a regular church, and the village council gave land for this purpose.

Since May 9, 2012, the parishioners have cleared this land, laid a concrete-metal foundation, and purchased 40% of the bricks that will be needed. The next phase is to buy more bricks, and put up walls and a curved roof, with a cupola covered by zinc plates. They are asking for \$10,000 out of an \$18,278 budget.



Ordination of Auxiliary Bishop Nil Yuriy Luschak OFM*, Jan. 12, 2013

Archbishop Thomas Edward Gullickson, Apostolic Nuncio of Ukraine, and Major Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church and numerous Byzantine Catholic clergy and faithful from all over the Ukraine and other countries for which the Eparchy of Mukachevo is the “Mother Church”. There were present also representatives of the local authorities and the diplomatic corps that perform its mission in Uzhgorod. It should be noted that it was first episcopal consecration of a native of Transcarpathia since that of Bishop Ivan Semedi, done secretly in 1991 by the Servant of God Bishop Alexander Khira, himself secretly ordained in 1945.**

Archbishop Thomas Gullickson, Papal Nuncio to Ukraine, attended the ceremonies, with both Byzantine-Ruthenian Metropolitans; four Byzantine-Ruthenian bishops and one Administrator; ten Ukrainian Greek Catholic prelates; the Romanian Catholic Metropolitan of Oradea; two Latin Bishops from Ukraine; and many clergy and faithful, in and around Holy Cross Cathedral on

An honored guest was our own Archbishop Cyril Vasil, Secretary of the Congregation for Eastern Churches (known as “the Oriental Congregation”) who preached. In his homily, Archbishop Cyril Vasil noted that, as a Franciscan, the new Bishop is a spiritual son of Saint Francis. He commended Bishop Nil to always keep Christ in the center of his life so that he may faithfully guide his people, encourage them, and represent the entire humanity before the Lord. To his people, and to all around him, the new Bishop must always and faithfully show the image of Christ, and “being the son of the Transcarpathian land and of the Mukachevo Eparchy, the Greek Catholic Church *sui juris*”, to represent its ecclesiastical peculiarity and its dignity, the Archbishop said.

Pope Benedict XVI appointed Reverend Fr. Nil Yuriy Luschak OFM, as the Auxiliary Bishop of Mukachevo Greek Catholic Eparchy. Bishop Nil was born on May 22, 1973 in Uzhhorod in a believing Greek Catholic family. He completed his studies for the priesthood at the Mukachevo Eparchial Seminary and, on July 2, 1996 was ordained to the Priesthood of Jesus Christ by the late Bishop Ivan Semedi. Following his ordination, he worked in various parishes and later continued his education in Rome where he received a Licentiate in Philosophy. Following his advanced studies, he began his novitiate with the Greek Catholic Franciscans and took the monastic name Nil. In 2012, he made his Temporary Profession of Vows and, during that same year, began teaching Philosophy in the Blessed Theodore Romzha Seminary.

* Edited from the Eparchy of Mukachevo website by Fr. Christopher Zugger

**Bishop Milan is originally a Latin Catholic from Slovakia, and was ordained as a Greek Catholic bishop by Bl. John Paul II in Rome in 2002.

Litmanova, Slovakia: Annual Otpust (Pilgrimage)



The annual pilgrimage to the shrine on Zvir Hora, where it is believed that the Theotokos appeared to Greek Catholic children, was attended by thousands. Archbishop Cyril Vasil presided at the Great Vespers and Blessing of Water on the evening of August 3. Classes were given on Christian responsibility to the needs of the community. On Sunday a Hierarchical Liturgy was concelebrated by Archbishop Cyril with Exarchs from Ukraine, Macedonia, and Hungary.

Sisters of St. Basil Monastery

As you can see, we have sent your donations for the construction of the new monastery of the Sisters of St. Basil, in Uzhhorod, the capital of the Transcarpathian Oblast of Ukraine. This monastery will serve as the badly needed motherhouse, novitiate (for training new Sisters) and infirmary (for elderly or sick Sisters). Whatever you can give will be greatly appreciated; please read the obituary of our late board member, Deacon Andrew Bodnar, who held this intention close to his heart. You can be assured of the Sisters' prayers for years to come!

