



# Ukrainian Catholic NEWSLETTER

*Rebuilding the Church in Ukraine*

## What Does a Good Book Cost?

What can a student learn without the right books or any books? In the West, a college student can be overwhelmed by the exhaustive amount of available research material. In Ukraine, students are exhausted simply by looking for books since that country lacks quality learning materials.

Despite this challenge, the library at the Lviv Theological Academy "is already the largest source of information in the Ukrainian Catholic Church, and it has one of the most important collections of religious information in the country," says Ivan Herasym, library director.

Thanks to generous donors, UCEF has provided nearly 15,000 of the library's 60,000 volumes, most notably Western published theology and philosophy books. In these areas of study, few such books were published in Ukraine during the Soviet regime. From 1949 until 1989, all religious material was illegal, creating a tremendous deficit for those seeking theological works, much less Bibles, prayer books, and catechetical material.

In helping the library begin again in 1995, many private individuals and educational institutions played a key role, including Fr. Robert Taft, SJ, vice rector of the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome, as well as the Ukrainian Catholic University in Rome, and the Pontifical Biblical Institute.



Just within the past few months, a bounty of more than 500 religious books arrived at the LTA's library through the kindness of the late Fr. Demetrius P. Kowalchik, OSB. The son of Ukrainian immigrants who fostered his Eastern Catholic identity, Fr. Kowalchik amassed volumes of liturgical books. His collection provides rich resources for teachers and students alike. (*See page 3 feature on Fr. Demetrius.*)

The LTA's library doors are open to all. Recognizing this as a premiere university library, students and researchers from other local colleges and universities use the LTA's library. Some even travel the 700 miles from their home in the capital city of Kyiv. Said one Kyivan visitor, "I don't see the majority of these books in Kyvian libraries. The LTA library's collection is indispensable to my studies."

When the LTA library reopened its doors five years ago, the then director of the library, Mykhailo Petrovych, looked at the first handful of donations and declared, "From this pile we will create a great library for the Academy!" Indeed, the library has grown from two to 14 workers who have launched an aggressive acquisition campaign. Regarding these efforts, library director Herasym says, "We need high quality educational materials for our students and faculty. Books from the West allow us to get well-balanced, nonbiased information. This is valuable."

An LTA student perusing a library book echoes Herasym's thoughts. "Look, people from other universities around Lviv are studying here with us. They just cannot find these books from the West in their libraries."

UCEF continues to collect recent scholarly books in theology, philosophy, religion, art, and history for the LTA.

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*LTA librarians catalogue stacks of Western published academic books quickly so that students and faculty can peruse them.*



## The President's Word

by Jeffrey Wills

# These Are Exciting Times

These are challenging but exciting times for the Church in Ukraine. One of the major challenges of the post-Soviet period has been the shortage of experienced and educated priests to lead the Church. But now there is a new generation of leadership filling this gap.

The most visible sign of this was the installation of Fr. Borys Gudziak as Rector of the Lviv Theological Academy on September 14. That day (September 1 on the Julian Calendar) is also the beginning of the liturgical year for the Byzantine Rite, when the Church hears Jesus teach in the synagogue that he has come "to release the oppressed and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." Please pray that this may indeed be a year of the Lord's favor.

Fr. Borys is a Ukrainian-American who returned to the land of his parents a decade ago to rebuild the Church. He organized Youth for Christ rallies and founded the Institute of Church History which has now recorded over 1,200 interviews with members of the underground. But perhaps the most important work of that period began in 1992 when he was asked by Cardinal Liubachivsky to head the commission to revive the Theological Academy. For two years he visited Catholic seminaries worldwide, recruited faculty, and raised funds. He served for six years as vice-rector and now becomes responsible for the overall vision and direction of the Academy as it develops into a university.

In addition to being a respected scholar, Fr. Borys is well-loved as a priest and spiritual beacon of inspiration in a country with tremendous social and economic crises. Through his efforts, many volunteers (including myself) have come from the West to serve the Church in Ukraine.

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## News Briefs

# Premiere Textbook Lauded

The Lviv Theological Academy (LTA) has published an award-winning academic book. Titled *The History of European Civilization* and authored



by LTA faculty member Olena Dzhedzhora, the work won an award at the National Book Forum in Lviv in September. It is the first textbook about Western civilization to be published in Ukrainian. This

volume studies the geopolitical, social, religious, and cultural processes that formed modern Europe over a 5,000-year history up to the French Revolution. This success leads the way for the LTA to pursue publishing textbooks about the history of France and Germany.

# 'Preserve the Treasure'

The LTA graduated its second class this summer after having been closed for half a century under communist rule. Speaker Rev. Robert Taft, SJ, encouraged the 34 graduates to use their education as a positive influence on the world. He called on them to be living witnesses to the 'truth' and cautioned them never undermine one's loyalty to one's Church.

"Preserve like a treasure the spirit of ecumenical communion built up among Orthodox and Catholic fellow students," he offered. "Do not let this spirit die, for on it rests the future hope of a better, much better Ukraine." Rev. Taft is vice rector of the Pontifical University in Rome, and a renowned specialist in Eastern liturgy.

# Sharing the Mission

UCEF has named Rev. Mark Morozowich to its Board of Directors. Morozowich is a Ukrainian Catholic priest serving the Eparchy of St. Josaphat, Parma, Ohio. Rev. Morozowich is a young, charismatic priest with a vision," said UCEF president Jeffrey Wills. "His service to the Catholic Church as a priest enhances the Foundation's mission to help rebuild the Church in Ukraine."



The Church in Ukraine has suffered terribly and the people need strong moral and religious education to overcome the years of atheistic repression. Much work needs to be done to help re-establish the Church to its rightful presence. UCEF is making significant contributions to this cause and I am pleased to be a part of this ministry," says Rev. Morozowich.

# Looking to the Future: A Legacy of Catholic Education

*Rev. Borys Gudziak has been installed as the new rector of the Lviv Theological Academy. In building toward a strong Catholic educational presence in Ukraine, Fr. Gudziak said, "We have a unique opportunity in Ukraine to model a new type of Catholic university with a new vision. My mandate is to bring that model to fruition fully grounded in the legacy of our Church leaders."*



## Remembering a Friend

*Fr. Borys Gudziak remembers LTA supporter and generous book donor, Fr. Demetrius Kowalchik.*

Well into his eighties, Fr. Demetrius Kowalchik, a Ukrainian-American Benedictine of St. Procopius Abbey in Lisle, IL, heard a call to go to the land of his forefathers to assist in the rebuilding of the Church after decades of communist persecution.

He attacked the problems of building, reconstruction, cleaning, and facilities planning at the Studite monastery and at the Lviv Theological Academy (LTA) with a vengeance, like a man who knew his days were numbered. And woe to the unwitting soul who could not understand how things should be done. With a grin and a firm resolve, the frail looking elder would bring the faltering soul around to the faith. His vision was broad. In a short time he succeeded in transporting from decommissioned American army bases in Germany tons of beds, kitchen ovens and utensils, furniture, building tools and supplies, vehicles, and just about everything else required by the Studites to operate their various pastoral and charitable activities.

### *Fruitful Labors*

Understanding well that the abundance of his country needed to be shared with the land of his ancestors, hallowed by the sacrifice of martyrs but ravaged by the decades of Soviet social scheming, the indefatigable octogenarian did not limit his scope to the pressing needs of the hour. As a man who sought to get to the heart of the spiritual life, he was a great enthusiast of the oral history project of the Institute of Church History fighting against time to

record the life stories of thousands of confessors of the faith.

As his last project, he focused his charitable efforts on rebuilding the LTA so as to guarantee the formation of future leaders. Fr. Demetrius, with the support of his Abbey, was able to secure a major grant for the LTA that served as a cornerstone for the refurbishing of the new Academy building, a job that he will see completed from his eternal abode.

Fr. Demetrius' practical labors were so fruitful because he was a man of prayer. Dedicated to the Byzantine monastic office, which he celebrated regularly and carefully, using a veritable library of liturgical books, Fr. Demetrius was an icon of the Benedictine motto *Ora et Labora* (Pray and Work). His liturgical library generously bequeathed to the LTA by the Abbot of St. Procopius Abbey, Very Rev. Hugh Anderson, OSB, will remain as another lasting legacy of Fr. Demetrius Kowalchik in Ukraine, a world to which he brought change as well as an unforgettable smile.



*Religious books donated by Fr. Demetrius are spiritual resources for students.*

## Notes From the Underground

# Living as an Exiled Priest

The story of Fr. Volodmyr Sen'kivsky

I am a priest who has lived through the history of our Catholic Church: the old Church, then the underground Church, and today's free Church. I have lived through a turbulent time in history, and I am very lucky to have survived the terror that occurred in this century.

When I began serving as a priest, I had two parishes and I was arrested at one of them when I categorically refused to convert to Russian Orthodoxy. My arrest did not happen immediately. I was left alone for awhile, and Soviet officials tried to coax me to become an agent, a spy. I would not. I was arrested and accused of collaborating with the underground Ukrainian resistance movement.

I actually did have connections to the underground movement, though no one really knew about them. It was all secret. But somebody exposed me. So, when the KGB arrested me, it was known that I had ties with the movement, although they couldn't prove it. I always demanded a witness. They tortured me for a long time. I was sentenced to 10 years of imprisonment. Interestingly, if the Soviets had proved my ties to the movement, both my wife and I would have received a 25-year sentence. (Priests of the Byzantine tradition can marry before ordination.) Since officials could not prove this, I ended up in prison alone.

The Soviets murdered my brother, a priest, in Drohobych prison in western Ukraine. When they were retreating from the Germans, the Soviets simply "cleansed" the prisons by killing all of the prisoners, including my brother. I ended up in the same prison also.



*While sitting at his kitchen table, Fr. Sen'kivsky recounts his life in the Church.*

## **Blessed Mother's Protection**

The one thing I always take pride in is being under permanent protection of the Holy Mother. One day, one of my jailmates, a young student, whispered in my ear, "Be careful what you say. That guy that stays near you is a 'rat.'" This warning was the first sign of the Virgin Mary's protection. She constantly assisted my family, saving my wife from a prison sentence, and saving me from a 25-year sentence to a more "lenient" 10-year sentence.

I was incarcerated in Stryj prison along with 10 college students. I openly told the students I was a priest. Among them was a Jehovah's Witness, who discussed Scripture with me. One time he quoted from St. Paul, "the pack returned to its den, its lair." The prison guards overheard this remark, didn't like it, and slapped him. They didn't know he was quoting from the Bible. In May we had religious services dedicated to the Virgin Mary and this Jehovah's Witness ignored our prayers, keeping to himself. But you know, at the moment of our release from prison, the Jehovah witness gave me a cloth napkin with an image of the Virgin Mary embroidered on it, which he had done. I took that as another blessing from the Virgin Mary.

Another miracle occurred when I was being sent to a labor camp in Omsk, Russia. It was unbearable to work outside because of the severe Siberian frost. One man, knowing about my priesthood, rescued me from hard labor and helped me get office work.

I was released from prison in 1956, and returned to Lviv. My wife was already there working as an accountant, and I worked as a librarian. Books were my passion. I was a priest secretly until our country became free. Then I became free to publicly serve as a priest. My conviction is that every priest should have a true vocation to the priesthood.

***You can help rebuild the Ukrainian Catholic Church by remembering UCEF in your will or bequest.***



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