



Ukrainian Catholic Education Foundation  
Rebuilding the Church in Ukraine

# Ukrainian Catholic NEWSLETTER

## Church Speaks in Defense of Justice

"The Church of Christ is always with its people. It is their conscience and in every critical situation goes in their defense." With these words, the Ukrainian Catholic bishops explained their position regarding the massive protests that followed Ukraine's presidential election on November 21. Hundreds of seminarians, other students, and staff of the Ukrainian Catholic University (UCU) and Holy Spirit Seminary in Lviv joined in the protests.

Cardinal Lubomyr Husar, head of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, summed up the results of the November 21 election: "Considering the numerous accounts of mass violations of electoral law and falsifications of the election's outcome, we regretfully state that the Ukrainian people were deprived of their lawful right to a free and fair election."

### Praying and Protesting in Kyiv

Hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians, young and old, took to the streets, filling frosty Kyiv's Independence Square with a "tent town" for weeks, and also catching people's attention on squares in numerous cities and towns throughout the country. To express their outrage at the grave injustice, hundreds of UCU students traveled to their country's capital.

"Chaplains should be together with their students, so we are trying, by our presence here, to support them." Fr. Pakhomii Kovalov, a chaplain at UCU, thus explained the presence of numerous clergy in the Kyiv tent town in November and December. Among their activities, the priests celebrated daily Liturgies and vespers on the Square.

Those unable to travel to Kyiv filled the streets of their home towns. On November 22, for example, UCU and Holy Spirit Seminary organized a prayer service before the statue of the Mother of God in downtown Lviv. Thousands of local residents joined in.

### Asking God for Wisdom and Strength

The service in Lviv was led by Ukrainian Catholic Bishop Hlib Lonchyna. "Many are feeling fear, insecurity and injustice," said the bishop. "That is why the faithful turn to the Lord with prayer, so that the enlightened may act for the triumph of



*An image of Mary and Jesus accompanies Fr. Borys Gudziak, rector of the Ukrainian Catholic University (right), as he speaks before crowds in Lviv protesting the massive election falsifications of November 21.*

good over evil. However, being Christians, we must keep our hearts from all hatred, desire of revenge, and manifestations of anger," Bishop Lonchyna stressed. He called the faithful to ask God for wisdom and strength to act worthily in Ukraine's crisis situation.

"The Church stands by the people who are pinning their dignity on these elections, because dignity is rooted in truth," said Father Borys Gudziak. Fr. Gudziak, rector of UCU, took part in the Lviv prayer service and also celebrated Divine Liturgy near Independence Square in Kyiv.

### Repeat Election

In a decision applauded by Cardinal Husar and numerous Christian leaders of Ukraine, the country's Supreme Court on December 3 rejected the results of the Nov. 21 election. A repeat election was held on December 26, which was won by opposition candidate Viktor Yushchenko. Yushchenko was inaugurated as the third president of independent Ukraine in mid-January.

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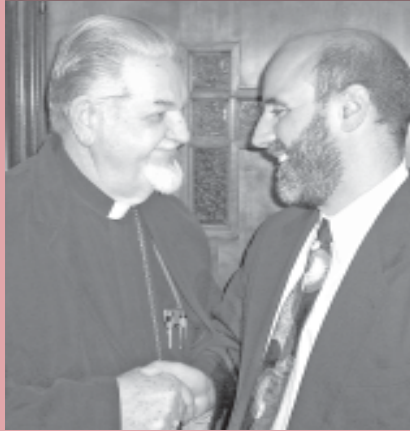
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**Update from the U. S.**

**“The  
Outpouring  
of the Spirit”**



Dear Friend in Christ:

2004 was a blessed year for the Ukrainian Catholic Education

Foundation and its supporters. We saw historic changes in Ukraine and a year of unprecedented success for the UCEF!

Thanks to the donors to the Ukrainian Catholic Education Foundation, the Ukrainian Catholic University in Ukraine was able to give college students a Catholic education for another year. These students, including seminarians, nuns and lay students, will bear the Gospel message throughout Ukraine and the world. How exciting!

Fr. Borys Gudziak, Rector of the Ukrainian Catholic University, visited New York and Chicago on official trips (and made a quick stop in Philadelphia) and was greeted by many with warmth and generosity. Many thanks to Bishops Basil Losten (pictured) and Richard Stephen Seminack for their invitations and encouragement.

These happenings are all, of course, evidence of the overflowing love and power of the Holy Spirit, and His role in the development of the UCEF and the Ukrainian Catholic University. Since 2002, as gifts to other charities in America have suffered, gifts from generous donors to the UCEF have more than doubled! The Holy Spirit is at work here!

And so, in closing, I thank you for your kind support, and I pray that God may bless you for your generosity, now and always.

Gratefully yours in Christ,  
John F. Kurey, Esq.  
President

**Underground Bishop Passes to Eternity**

Bishop Pavlo Vasylyk, who served the Ukrainian Catholic Church throughout its underground existence, went to his Creator on Sunday December 12. Born in 1926, Pavlo Vasylyk started underground studies as a seminarian in 1946. The next year he was sentenced to 10 years of imprisonment and 5 years without civil rights for aiding the Ukrainian Insurgent Army, which fought both Nazi and Soviet invaders of Ukraine.

He was ordained a deacon in a hard labor camp in 1950, released in 1956, and ordained a priest that same year. In 1959 he was again arrested and sentenced to 5 years in a camp in Mordovia. That camp was called the camp of the faithful, because more than 50 priests were serving terms there.

In that camp, Fr. Vasylyk met Metropolitan (later Cardinal) Josyf Sliptyj, the head of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, who himself labored in various work camps for 18 years before being exiled from Ukraine. "He was a truly holy man," recalled Bishop Vasylyk. "Even in the camp he struggled to train the priests, because there was no appropriate theological literature. The lessons of Cardinal Sliptyj helped me many times later in life."

Upon release from that camp, Fr. Vasylyk was still forbidden to return to western Ukraine for 5 years. So he continued priestly ministry in eastern Ukraine and Crimea. In 1974, he was ordained bishop and trained and ordained underground priests.

When the KGB found out that he had been ordained a bishop, they started calling him in for "conversations," trying threats and deceit. In such instances, Bishop Vasylyk was afraid, like anybody else, "but I knew," he said, "that nothing would happen to me without the will and consent of God. I was convinced of this and entrusted my life to the Lord."

They seized his liturgical vestments and books many times, threatening arrest. But he calmly replied: "Take my vestments away from me and they will sew me new ones. You don't allow us to have churches, but we have hundreds, for the home of every Ukrainian Catholic family is a church for us."

He took active part in the revival of the Church in the 1980s and was named first bishop of the newly-created eparchy (diocese) of Kolomyia and Chernivtsi in 1993.

May he be remembered forever!



**Ukrainian Catholic Newsletter**

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## *In the Mission Fields*

# Seminarians Bring the Gospel to Farthest Corners

The Donetsk-Kharkiv exarchate of the Ukrainian Catholic Church covers a wide territory, filled with people. Yet the Church has only 47 parishes there, served by 30 priests. Thanks to Divine Providence, energetic and forward-thinking Bishop Stepan Meniok leads the exarchate (like a mission diocese in the Latin rite). The bishop, who was the rector of Holy Spirit Seminary in the 1990s, has encouraged and gratefully received the help of numerous graduates and present seminarians and other students of the Ukrainian Catholic University (UCU) for mission work.

Donetsk, Kharkiv and the 5 other regions that make up the exarchate cover 75,800 square miles, bigger than New York state and with more people. With a population of 19 million, these 7 regions contain about 40% of Ukraine's 48 million people.

### **Parishes Small and Scattered**

But most of the Catholic parishes are very small, and 26 of these are in the Donetsk region. Fairly prosperous with mines and industry, this region became infamous after Ukraine's "orange revolution" of November-December 2004 for incredible falsification of the returns of the November 21 election. The number of unbelievers in Donetsk, which is the see of the exarchate, is conservatively estimated by the government to be about 40%.

Consequently, faith needs a big push in the area, which it received in summer 2004 thanks in large part to the financial support of the UCEF's Bryon Brindel Fund. As part of the mission efforts in the exarchate, 29 volunteers, including graduates and present students of UCU and Holy Spirit Seminary, conducted the Vacation with God program in 6 of the exarchate's parishes in August. In addition, a separate program for teens and young adults was conducted in the Dnipropetrovsk region in summer 2004. Young men from Holy Spirit Seminary helped there, too.



*Seminarian Pavlo Tsviok (standing) gives out icons of the Mother of God to participants at a 2004 scout camp in Dnipropetrovsk.*

### **"Witness your love."**

Coming from the far western regions of Ukraine, where the faith is on stronger footing, some of the young missionaries were surprised. "Our volunteers did not expect that a parish in the east of Ukraine might consist of 8 people," explains UCU graduate and mission leader Maria Kryzhanivska. "So our special challenge was to change our expectations, and accept the reality as it is: when there are a few people, they need to be ministered to. Don't judge others, but simply approach them and witness your love."

The missionaries began preparing in May, receiving training at UCU on interacting with different age groups, catechetical strategies, and so on. Among the themes prepared were: God's love, sin and redemption, personal prayer, community, serving others, and life in the Church.

Separate programs for small children, teenagers, and adults were offered in the parishes. The mission included participation in religious services, group meetings, recreation, and discussions in which the missionaries shared the experience of life with God and gave personal accounts of how God acts in our lives. The missionaries also brought gifts: five parishes in western Ukrainian Lviv collected more than 1000 religious books, which were then distributed in the far eastern Ukrainian parishes.

### **Real New Evangelization**

"Now I see real new evangelization," said Bishop Meniok, commenting on the summer mission activities. "We need to do small things and build a house, like ants do, and this work will give fruits one-hundred-fold." The bishop would like the Church to establish a permanent mission center, and he suggests that UCU graduates provide the manpower.



*Donetsk-Kharkiv Bishop Stepan Meniok (left) speaks with Dr. Oleh Turij (right) of UCU's Institute of Church History.*



*The Donetsk-Kharkiv exarchate covers a large territory, filled with people. But the Church only has 47 parishes there. (The number of parishes in each of the exarchate's 7 regions is listed on the map.)*

In addition to help during summer and vacations, Bishop Meniok receives extra mission help on a regular basis from other UCU students and seminarians. Seminary graduate Nazar Kraivskiy, who is now based in Lviv but comes from the Zaporizhzhia region, has been the editor of the exarchate's only

Catholic newspaper, "Today," for a number of years. The UCEF provides financial support for Kraivskiy's publication.

Graduates of Holy Spirit Seminary also serve in the Donetsk-Kharkiv exarchate as priests in the area's scattered parishes.

## Pastoral Work Begins at Kyiv Cathedral

As previously reported in the *UC Newsletter*, the Ukrainian Catholic Church is moving its administrative center to the country's capital, Kyiv. Construction of a sobor (cathedral) is well underway and the crosses for the cathedral domes were consecrated and placed on October 10. Pastoral work has also begun in a small chapel that is being used until the actual cathedral opens. Fr. Vasyl Zakharus, a priest and monk of the Studite order and graduate of Holy Spirit Seminary, is the pastor of the chapel.

"For all of us, residents of Kyiv and other towns and villages of Ukraine, and for those who live outside our country, this church will become a sign that leads us to God," said Cardinal Husar in his sermon on October 10.



*Cardinal Lubomyr Husar (right) blesses a cross for the cupola of the new cathedral in Kyiv.*

## West Point Graduate Helps Lviv Charities Thrive

A graduate of West Point, Nick Stankovich is a former U.S. military officer who served from 1998-2003, including in the Balkans. Since August 2003 he has been volunteering at the Ukrainian Catholic University (UCU) in Lviv, Ukraine.

As often happens, Stankovich learned about UCU by word of mouth. Retired Major Dan Parker and his wife and daughter volunteered at the university's English Summer School for a number of years. At the Parkers' house in Germany, Nick met Olena Dzhezhora, dean of the Humanities Faculty at UCU. She invited Stankovich to come and see.

Finishing his term of duty, he was "interested in serving the Church in Eastern Europe and working in a university environment," he says.

"My grandparents are Serbian Orthodox, my mother is Roman Catholic," notes Stankovich. "The Eastern-rite Church is the right fit for me. The students want to learn... It's the motivation of the students that interested me."

Stankovich has spent most of his time administrating and teaching at the university's Institute of Non-Profit Management, where his leadership skills are well-utilized. "One of the primary reasons for the establishment of our Institute," he explains, "is to better train and prepare leaders



*UCEF Volunteer Nick Stankovich (left) team teaches a course at Lviv's Institute of Non-Profit Management with UCEF President John F. Kurey, Esq. (right).*

for the non-profit community to succeed in Ukraine's difficult operating environment."

With Stankovich's help, numerous charitable endeavors in western Ukraine, including Caritas and the Dzherelo (Source of Hope) Center for the developmentally disabled, have become better prepared to serve those in need.

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## East and West Celebrate Christmas Together

To thank the people of Kyiv for their hospitality, feeding and sometimes housing protesters who came from all over Ukraine in November and December, the Ukrainian Catholic University (UCU) helped organize Christmas Together. This event brought thousands of students from northern, southern and eastern Ukraine to the country's western regions "to celebrate Our Savior's coming to earth in a spirit of brotherly love, in peaceful prayer, and with joyful carols at the Holy Supper of Christmas Eve," as Fr. Borys Gudziak, rector of UCU, explained.

"We come to Christmas 2005 with the experience of the 'orange revolution,' thanks to which citizens of Ukraine from east and west have in a new way felt a family closeness towards one another," said Fr. Gudziak. "Today's events place a great task before us all: to confirm the unity of the Ukrainian people in the richness of its variety. Students of the western regions of Ukraine came up with the initiative." In addition to UCU and Holy Spirit Seminary, 16 other institutions of higher education in Lviv coordinated the project.

"This joint celebration shows that we are a single people," said Prof. Ivan Vakarchuk, rector of Ivan Franko National University in Lviv. "The results of the Christmas Together project are an awareness of this unity. Students now studying in institutions of higher education will, in some time, rule the

country on various levels; the light of these celebrations, our brotherhood, will help them in the future to find a common language more easily. This project will show results for many years."

The city of Lviv had more than 2000 guests from outside western Ukraine for the Christmas holidays.

Because the Ukrainian Catholic Church has long been so strong in western Ukraine (called Halychyna or Galicia), even under Communist persecution in the underground, traditions for Christmas and other holy days have been better maintained there than in other parts of the country.

Families in Lviv and the other regions of Halychyna opened their doors to their young visitors remembering the Ukrainian proverb: "When a guest is in your house, God is in your house."

From January 5 to 9 (Julian calendar Christmas is January 7) the Galicians taught their guests how to make traditional Christmas foods; they sang carols, presented Nativity plays, and celebrated the winter holidays as only Ukrainians can.

Cardinal Lubomyr Husar, head of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, Patriarch Filaret Denysenko, head of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church-Kyivan Patriarchate, and Archbishop Ihor Isichenko, head of the Kharkiv and Poltava eparchy (diocese) of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church, gave their blessings to the effort.

## Sharing the Wealth of the Underground Church

Ukraine is very grateful for the material and prayerful support that donors from North America provide through the UCEF. Now the Ukrainian Catholic Church in Ukraine is glad to be able in turn to share some of its own wealth: the spiritual riches of the Church's new martyrs and its experience of life under communist persecution.

Collecting testimonies and photos to document the life of the underground Ukrainian Catholic Church during Soviet persecution has been the focus of Lviv's Institute of Church History since it was founded in 1992. So the Institute was delighted to learn that nuns in the United States were looking for similar materials.

### **"How did they keep the faith?"**

Sisters Margaret Nacke and Mary Savoie of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Kansas are collecting materials about Catholic nuns under European communism. They have had ongoing contacts with neighboring Romania for over a decade, and with other countries, but when they learned of the existence of the Institute of Church History, a research branch of the Ukrainian Catholic University (UCU), the American nuns immediately proposed a program for cooperation.

The Institute has assigned UCU graduate Sr. Anastasia Zabrotska (2002), a junior researcher, to assist the American nuns.

The life of the Church under communism "is an example of pastoral service for the young," explains Sr. Zabrotska. "It inspires faith. How did the sisters survive, how did they keep the faith? They went through martyrdom, concentration camps... This is a spiritual treasure-chest that supports and enriches nuns in the West."

### **"A Source of Inspiration and Hope"**

Though the Institute already has conducted over 1500 interviews, Sr. Zabrotska has been assigned to do more interviews, now with nuns of the Latin rite who lived in Soviet times. The Roman Catholic authorities give her some contacts for sources of first-hand information, and she proceeds, one by one, to conduct a series of interviews. She also does research in state archives and then translates the materials from Ukrainian, Russian and Polish into English for the American nuns.

The two Sisters of St. Joseph made their first visit to the Institute in October to get acquainted with its work. They were impressed with the amount of materials that have been collected in the Institute's archives. In addition to the work of full-time researchers, the Institute's archives have been enriched by seminarians, religious, and lay students of UCU who do interviews and gather archival photographs as part of their course work on the history of the underground Church. The



*Sr. Anastasia Zabrotska, a graduate of the Ukrainian Catholic University, is gathering materials on the underground Church and translating them into English for nuns in the U.S.*

Institute has more than 5000 photographs and 4000 original documents in its archives.

The goal of the American Sisters is to document the life of nuns who lived under Communism and "demonstrated their extraordinary faithfulness to the Church... Such research will help to show how faithfulness can become a source of inspiration and hope," say the Sisters.

### **A Lasting Gift**

Have you considered including the UCEF in your will? A will is an expression of your commitment to the people and groups that you cherish here on earth. As a supporter of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, a bequest in your will ensures that the training of priests and rebuilding of the Church in Ukraine will continue after you are gone.

*Suggested wording for a bequest:*

"I give and bequeath to the Ukrainian Catholic Education Foundation, an Illinois not-for-profit corporation, \_\_\_% of the residue of my estate (or) the sum of \$\_\_\_ for its charitable, educational and religious purposes."

You can also make a special gift by sponsoring a seminarian or other Catholic student at the Ukrainian Catholic University this year. Please contact the UCEF for further information.