

**History of the First 75 Years
of
St. John the Baptist Ukrainian Catholic Church
Syracuse, New York**

1900 – 1975

**Michael Kany
1992**

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Preface

Soon after the celebration of the Diamond Jubilee (75th anniversary) of St. John the Baptist Ukrainian Catholic Church on Sunday, October 12, 1975, there was a great interest in the history of the parish among the present members--especially the young people. They wanted to know more about the formation and development of the parish throughout the 75 years. They were hoping that someone of the "old-time" parishioners would record a more detailed history of our parish and church. Some of these young people, especially members of the Holy Name Society, approached me and asked me to write this detailed history.

After looking through material I had gathered over the years, which included excerpts from church records that I had recorded in notebooks as well as news items from other sources, I decided to attempt to write the church history. From September 1919, when I registered for classes in our parish evening school to the present time, I was an eyewitness and/or participant in most of the events that occurred. I arranged the material in a somewhat orderly fashion and began to write an account of the trials and development of our parish during these 75 years, adding information that I recalled as I was writing.

Recording the history of our parish from the date of the 75th anniversary celebration to the approaching centennial celebration in the year 2000, I leave to some young member of the present generation of our parish.

Dedication

I dedicate this compiled history of St. John the Baptist Ukrainian Catholic Church of Syracuse, New York to:

- the pioneers of our parish, respecting the memory of their deeds and sacrifices in laying down its sound foundation.
- the first generation of children born in this country who gave up their play time while growing up to attend the church's evening school where they learned basic religion and instruction about their rite. They also learned to read and write the native language and the traditions and customs of their parents' native land. By practicing and retaining this knowledge, they were able to pass on some of it to their own children.
- the present generation and parishioners who are now following in the footsteps of the past generations, sacrificing their time, efforts and financial assistance for the betterment of the parish. Your present deeds and accomplishments will be recorded on the pages of parish history, leading to the centennial celebration in the year 2000.
- the memory of my beloved parents, Wasyl and Anna Kany.

"Respect the past, appreciate the present and look forward to the future with great expectations."

Michael Kany

Early Ukrainian Immigration

Early Ukrainian immigrants in the Syracuse area came from Ukrainian lands occupied by Austro-Hungary and were known by different names from their origin of nationality, depending on what section of the country they came from. Raised in the culture of the occupying nation and educated in their schools, they knew very little about their own true history and the background of their own country and people.

The first Ukrainian immigrants to settle in the Syracuse area arrived during the years of 1885 and 1888 from a section of Austro-Hungary dominated by Hungarians and were raised and educated under Hungarian influence. They were known here as Hungarian Rusyns, or Rusyny or Rusnacky. Some of these early immigrants called themselves Austrians because their immigration passports showed the country of origin as Austro-Hungary and nationality as Austrian.

The second group followed in the years of 1890-95, a much larger group from the part of Ukrainian lands known as Lemkivschyna, and was known as *Lemkos*.

Around 1900, a third group of Ukrainians started to arrive from the region called Eastern Galicia, or Halychna; later known as Western Ukraine (Zahidna Ukraina). In this region, Ukrainians had a chance for a better education in their own language, in Ukrainian schools, with a better knowledge of Ukrainian history.

Regardless of what section of Austro-Hungary they came from, these early Ukrainian immigrants had been forced to leave their native lands—not because it was poor but because the soil belonged to the rich landowners and not enough was left for the people to make a decent living. In the United States there was hope for greater economic opportunities as well as a chance to make the most of their abilities.

These first immigrants worked hard, from early morning to late evening, for low pay and under very hard conditions in the steel and wire mills, foundries, factories and on the railroad as common laborers. Despite the various hardships that confronted them, they gradually forged ahead. With the first savings from their small earnings, the Ukrainian men (who often came to America alone) sent for their families. As the families became established and increased in the Syracuse area, they directed their thoughts to building a place of worship. After working in the factories or on the railroad for a few years, many of the early immigrants bought farmlands and became farmers—something they were familiar with in the old country. Most of the farmlands purchased were situated in East Syracuse, Minoa, Mattydale, Camillus, Split Rock, Jamesville, and as far as Constantia and Cazenovia.

The Beginning of Organizing the Parish

The arrival of more Ukrainian immigrants between the years of 1890-1895 increased the worry of losing their children and young adults to the Latin Rite churches where they were frequently attending mass. The paramount issue of these early immigrants became the establishment of their own parish and building a church of their own rite.

In 1896, a committee of 14 men met in a room at Frank Petruniak Beverage, a residence at 1021 W. Fayette Street, to discuss plans for the establishment of a parish and building a church. These 14 men were: Maksym Pysnack, Fedir (Frank) Petruniak, Pawlo Kamenecky, Mathew Komar, Mr. Parashak, Mr. Solomon, Andrej Waryan, O. Kurylo, Wasyl Kyryk, Philip Kudlick, Harry Hnotko, O. Harasym, Mr. Kusnir and Panko Macko.

At this meeting, the first Church Committee was formed. Maksym Pysnack, Pawlo Kamenecky, Andrej Waryan, Fedir Petruniak, Mathew Komar, and Mr. Parashak were elected as trustees of this committee (six trustees). Their first duties were to find a suitable place for a church and the collection of needed funds for the building of the church.

Since there was no church of the Greek Catholic faith in this vicinity, the Ukrainian immigrants in the early days attended churches of the Latin Catholic Rite. Some attended St. Joseph's German Roman Catholic Church on Seymour Street. Most attended Sacred Heart (Polish) Roman Catholic Church on Park Ave., while others attended churches in their neighborhood.

Many parents among the early immigrants, not wishing to wait until a visiting priest of their own rite came to Syracuse—had their children baptized at Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Church. Also, some of the young couples were married there. The older generation feared that these children and young people would be lost to their church because they were baptized or married in the Latin Rite and not their own rite. Other parents waited patiently until a visiting priest of their own rite arrived in Syracuse so they could have their children baptized by their own priest and in their own rite.

Although there were several children baptized at Sacred Heart, known records show the following children baptized:

Anna Piston, daughter of Wasyl and Tecla Piston, baptized May 24, 1897
Maria Kyryk, daughter of Wasyl and Maria Kyryk, baptized August 14, 1902
Dmytro Namisniak, son of Hryhorij and Anna Namisniak, baptized August 25, 1902

Fr. Rusyn of Sacred Heart Church baptized the last two children.

The First Church Committee

The first Church Committee consisting of the six trustees became very active at once. They first personally visited each of the new Ukrainian immigrants in Syracuse and signed them as members of the new parish to be formed. Later they contacted all new immigrants, who were arriving in greater numbers. The next grave problem was the financial question—gathering the necessary funds for the purchase of a building to be used as a place of worship.

The committee was very successful in gathering funds because all the immigrants were happy to have their own church. From their small wages, they gave generously so they could start on the church as soon as possible. In 1897, the committee was successful in buying a home and a plot of land on the corner of Wilbur Avenue and Tompkins Street. They thought it would be a suitable location for a church because it was within walking distance for most of the parishioners who lived in the West Fayette, Marcellus, Otisco, Geddes, Delaware, Wilbur, and Ulster Streets area, as well as the Sacred Heart Church area.

The wooden structure they bought was to be restructured into a church. Building of the church was delayed because of opposition from the neighbors who feared the intrusion of the new immigrants into their neighborhood.

In 1898, REV. W. Obuskewych of Wilkes Barre, PA celebrated the first Divine Liturgy according to the Ukrainian Rite (Greek Catholic) at the private residence of Mr. Frank Petruniak, 1021 W. Fayette Street. After the Divine Liturgy, a great number of children were baptized.

As there was no permanent priest assigned to the new parish, many visiting priests served the parish. Among those were Fathers T. Tsar, B. Hrevnak, I. Hanulya, I. Zaklonsky, T. Dvolit, T. Dorozynski, O. Humenecky and A. Merenkiw. During the visits of these priests, the baptism of children took place after the celebration of the Divine Liturgy.

In 1900, the Ukrainian people organized a parish and applied for a church charter, incorporated under Article VII of the Religious Corporation Law of the State of New York under the name of St. John the Baptist Greek Catholic Church of Syracuse, New York.

In 1900, a committee consisting of Mr. Andrew Waryan, Mr. B. Lah, Mr. Fedir Petruniak, and Mr. Paul Kamenecky collected \$1,465.40 for the building fund. The largest single donations were Andrew Waryan \$18.00 and Fedir Petruniak \$15.00. Also, a raffle was held for a gold watch, which brought a clear profit of \$104.55.

The First Parish Church

Shortly after obtaining the church charter in 1900, the restructuring of the wooden house into a church began. Soon after, additional parcels of adjoining land were bought in 1902, 1905 and 1906. The wooden church was completed in 1903 and blessed by the first permanent pastor officially appointed, Rev. Iwan Welyhorsky, who served the parish every second Sunday. This first church served the parishioners until 1913.

According to church chronicles, the first baptism in the parish was that of Mathew Namisha in 1902; the first marriage between John Bihuniak and Mary Harbaj; and Michael Kasarda, the first parish death in 1903. The following were also married by Fr. Iwan Welyhorsky: Maksym Festone and Eva Kowalczyk; Simeon Sewak and Christina Ridosz; Simeon Sywak and Maria Ridosz and John Dribczak and Ustyna Spin.

In 1903, fifteen children were baptized: Anna Lutz, Bailus Hlywac, Michael Kasarda, Anna Kulba, Anna Metrick, Maria Wachna, John Macko, Maria Basarab, Anastasia Kyrek, Michael Korolyszyn, Helena Szuszereba, Joseph Marko, Maria Drabyk, Helena Kuszniir and Gregory Kuryla.

In 1904, twenty nine children were baptized: Anna Panczyszyn, John Bitzel, Maria Fecych, Anna Procanyk, John Haszczak, Gregory Ducar, Maria Kudlyk, Maria Kamianecky, John Ozogar, Simeon Spiwak, Julia Mowczan, Michael Welyczko, John Kowulycz, Alexander Fetsytch, Helena Marasym, John Pudjak, Anna Sewak, Maria Pyszniak, Julia Garbinska, Maria Zbur, Maria Peltz, Maria Fecych, Michael Smola, Anna Kasarda, Michael Komar, Andrew Dmytryk, Julia Kuszner, Nicholas Smelnycki and Wasyl Robich.

In 1904, the twenty two couples were married: Andrew Kochan and Ustyna Lenko, Wasyl Kost and Maria Kuzniir, Theodore Smolnicki and Catherine Macko, Wasyl Krajnyk and Anastasia Kamianecky, Andrew Budjac and Katharyna Szczuryk, Basyl Patala and Anna Muryn, Philip Ruckyj and Maria Tyra, Michael Stojka and Maria Babczak, Anthony Kostyk and Maria Wynarczyk, Ellia Heights and Katharyna Petryk, Dmytro Dorosz and Tatiana Kravetz, Gregory Bildnesik and Uliana Mazur, Petro Michalek and Katharyna Dolzycky, Leo Tymczko and Katharyna Janko, Andrew Kawulycz and Maria Kir, Andrew Hubicki and Maria Winnicka, Andrew Galo and Maria Marko, Dmytro Kravetz and Anna Dmytryk, Petro Ruszczak and Paraska Sewak, Simeon Dekoszczak and Melania Pistun, Wasyl Gabak and Maria Bilanycz, Wasyl (Basilus) Kitsak and Ustyna Kostyk.

There were five deaths recorded in 1904: Maksym Fishowetz, Michael Robich, John Haszczak, Peter Janko, and Anastasia Wasylczak.

The parish income in 1902 was \$1465.70, with expenses of \$1432.40. The income in 1903 was \$1015.87, with expenses of \$905.57.

According to church chronicles, the following data was recorded as taking place in the first parish church:

<u>Year</u>	<u>No. of Baptisms</u>	<u>Marriages</u>	<u>Deaths</u>
1905	29	16	5
1906	36	10	7
1907	41	18	13
1908	49	24	13
1909	74	7	9
1910	62	4	10
1911	103	15	9
1912	106	58	5
1913	105	47	13

(including new church)

The First Ukrainian Catholic Bishop in America

In 1907, Rev. Soter Ortynsky was consecrated bishop for Ukrainian Catholics in the United States. Simultaneous with Bishop Ortynsky's departure for the United States, Pope St. Pius IX issued the Papal Bull, "Ea Semper" which specified the rules, regulations, privileges, as well as the obligations of the Ukrainian Catholic Church and the new bishop.

On October 15-16, 1907, Bishop Ortynsky and his clergy met at St. George's Church in New York City to discuss the major issues and problems of the Ukrainian Catholic Church in the United States. As a result of this meeting, the bishop decided that his immediate task was to visit all the existing parishes and churches and to meet with the parishioners to learn more about them, about their living conditions in each parish and their needs. Secondly, he had to unite these churches under his jurisdiction. He had these churches incorporated under his jurisdiction under the law of Pennsylvania of the Religious Corporations Law of the State of Pennsylvania, especially designated and accepted for the followers of the Ruthenian Greek Catholic Church in the United States. This corporation provided for five directors—three of which were the bishop, the vicar-general and the pastor of the church, and the other two, lay member or lay members of the congregation, the "lay" member or members thus chosen to be approved by the bishop.

The Ukrainian Catholic Church in America was growing. In 1909, there were 140 churches and 100 priests. In 1914, there were 206 churches and 159 priests.

The Parish Placed Under the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction of Bishop Soter Ortynsky

At a special meeting on October 17, 1907, the parishioners of St. John the Baptist Ruthenian Greek Catholic Church of Syracuse, receiving advance notice of the appointment of a bishop for our churches in the United States, voted unanimously that they would financially support the bishop of the Ruthenian Greek Catholic Church in the United States by donating 5% of the church income. The pastor was Father B. Hrywnak.

At a parish meeting held on March 5, 1910, it was approved by a majority of votes, to place our church and parish under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of Bishop Soter Ortynsky.

In 1913, a Certificate of Incorporation patterned after that in Pennsylvania for our churches was received.

A special meeting was called on Monday, March 31, 1913, regarding the matter of incorporation of our parish church, the Greek Catholic Church of St. John the Baptist. The meeting was held at 6:00 p.m. at the home of Mr. Fedor Petruniak, 1021 W. Fayette Street. There were 75 qualified church members present at this meeting who voted and unanimously accepted the new charter.

At the semiannual meeting on June 30, 1913, a resolution was duly introduced and passed, adopting and confirming fully the resolution of a special parochial meeting held on March 13, 1913, by which said body adopted and confirmed the Articles of Incorporation of this church, which were recorded in Onondaga County Clerk's office, Syracuse, NY on June 2, 1913, and dated at Syracuse, New York on June 30, 1913, Rev. Alex Prystay, President, and Mr. Wasyl Krasnewich, Secretary.

Planning and Building of the New (Present) Church

During the pastorate of Rev. John Welyhorsky, the wooden building, which was purchased in 1897, was converted into a church in 1900. This building served the parishioners as a church until 1913. Within a few years, the first church became too small due to more immigrants arriving each year and becoming members of the parish. The main and foremost problem at this time became the building of a new church to accommodate the growth of the new parish. In 1910, the first campaign was started to erect a new church building. Parishioners were asked to present ideas and plans to the Church Committee so that the officers could have some basic ideas of what type of a church building the parishioners were interested in and also how we could finance such a building.

The Church Committee's recommendations would be presented at a parish meeting after studying the preliminary ideas and plans given by the parishioners.

On June 5, 1911, a special meeting was called by the church officers to discuss the topic of building a new church. The meeting was called to order by Rev. B. Merenkiw with 50 members of the parish present. The following proposals were accepted at this meeting:

1. To build a church for the sum of \$30,000 in the style and structure of our Greek Catholic Church in Shamokin, Pennsylvania.
2. The architectural firm of Armstrong of Auburn, NY was to draft the plans for the church at a cost of \$900. The sum of money to be paid to them in three installments.
3. The contract with Armstrong of Auburn, NY was to be signed in the presence of the meeting of the parishioners.
4. The trustees were to call the architectural firm as soon as possible so that we could begin the preliminary steps. The church officers sent a letter to Bishop Soter Ortynsky telling him about their plans to build a new church.

At a parish meeting On June 25, 1911, it was again agreed and voted on by the majority (34 for and 14 against) to build the new church for the sum of \$30,000 over some minor objections in a letter from the bishop. It was also unanimously accepted that the parishioners must pay a \$5 assessment towards the new church building fund.

On February 11, 1912, a special meeting was called to discuss the building of the new church. It was attended by most of the prominent members of our parish and those who had their church dues paid up. The total attendance was 27 members. Six church members were appointed to the Church Building Committee: Paul Kamenecky, Mathew Komar, Mathew Welyczko, Olecka Harasym, Fedor Petruniak, and Ilko Kopko.

The second topic brought up and passed was to build the church for the sum of \$25,000 by cutting out some of the features in the preliminary plans. The third topic was decided to hold a special meeting of the church officers and the members of the Building Committee on February 19, 1912, at the home of Mr. Frank (Fedor) Petruniak, 1021 W. Fayette St.

At a meeting held on February 24, 1912, by the Building Committee and the architect, Mr. Frank H. Armstrong of Auburn NY, it was decided to build a church with a seating capacity of 400 persons, excluding seating in the choir loft. It was also decided to give the architect any new ideas or specifications that we might want to be included in the final plans.

On April 15, 1912, the architect presented the contract for drafting the plans for the new church, which was accepted by the trustees of the Greek Catholic Church of Syracuse, NY, signed by the contractor; Frank H. Amstrong, architect; and R. C. Swards of Auburn, NY; Rev. Alex Prystay, President of the Congregation; and Mr. Prokop Tkaczyk.

During the early part of February 1912, the Building Committee visited the various banks in the Syracuse area seeking a loan for building the new church. They ran into financial problems, as no bank in Syracuse would give them a loan. This delayed the construction of the church and later also caused frequent changes in the original plans of the church building in order to cut the cost. The Building Committee was seeking a loan of \$50,000. They finally were offered a loan of \$30,000 from Auburn Savings Bank.

While the negotiations were going on for the loans and all legal papers were being prepared, the first bids for the construction of the church came in. At a special meeting of the Church Committee held at Mr. Petruniak's home on July 15, 1912, the bids for construction of the church were opened. The following firms sent in their bids:

T. H. McHale and Son	\$56,512
J. W. Dawson – G. O. Dawson	\$49,375
John W. Gee	\$44,980

The Building Committee accepted the bid of John W. Gee and planned to meet with him.

On August 11, 1912, the Building Committee met and unanimously agreed to abide by the agreement voted on at the Annual Parish Meeting to build the church at a cost of \$25,000, which would mean a change in the plans by the architectural firm of Armstrong. Mr. Armstrong agreed to alter various features in the existing plan (cost \$48,000) due to the inability of the trustees to secure sufficient mortgage funding to construct the church under the current proposal.

On January 27, 1913, a special parish meeting was held in Mr. Petruniak's home on the subject of building a new church. After reviewing the proposed changes in the construction of the new church, a majority disapproved the changes by a vote of 27 to 4 agreed to build the church according to the original plans for the sum of \$30,000, with some minor changes.

Secondly, six members were appointed to the Building Committee: Mr. Andrew Waryan, Mr. Olekca Harasym, Mr. Ilko Kopko, Mr. John Kozura, Mr. Mathew Komar and Mr. John Karnafel. It was decided to try to get a bank loan for \$25,000.

After the revised plans were presented to the various building contractors, new bids were received. At a special meeting of the church officers and the Building Committee on March 29, 1913, Father Prystay presented the bids according to the revised plans from the following firms:

Mr. John W. Gee and Son	\$49,980
T. H. McHale and Son	\$56,512
Tunka	\$55,000
Dawson Bros.	\$49,225

It was unanimously accepted to accept the bid of Dawson Bros. for the sum of \$49, 225.

On June 30, 1913, the church trustees agreed to the following:

- To authorize and secure a loan from Auburn Savings Bank or from any other bank either in or out of Syracuse for the amount not to exceed \$30,000
- That all of our real property located at the southwest corner of S. Wilbur Avenue and Tompkins Street to be used as collateral.
- This special meeting of the Board of Trustees was attended by: Rev. Alex Prystay, Pres.; Mr. Basil Krasnewich, Rec. Sec.; Mr. Philip Kudlik, Fin. Sec., Mr. Paul Komanecky, Treas., Mr. Harry Hnatko, Vice Pres.; and Mr. Denys Metwiew.

The construction of our present church began in 1913. Later in the year, even though it was not completely built, the church and cornerstone were blessed by the late Bishop Soter Ortynsky, O.S.B.M., the first Ukrainian Catholic bishop in the United States.

At the annual meeting on January 13, 1929, it was announced that the mortgage on the church was paid in full to Auburn Savings Bank in Auburn, NY.

Iconostasis

At the monthly meeting of the church trustees on July 2, 1915, the subject of building the iconostasis for the interior of the church was taken up. At the previous meeting, it was decided to build the iconostasis, and an agreement was made as to who would build it. At this meeting, Mr. Stephan Mishansky, the builder, agreed to finish building the iconostasis even though the parish had not paid him for the material and labor due to a shortage of funds. He agreed to finish building the iconostasis as well as the two side altars at his own cost and wait for payment until such time when there would be money in the parish treasury.

On June 10, 1917, at a meeting of the church officers, Mr. A. Lukoviak, who helped in the completion of the iconostasis, complained that he lost money in building the iconostasis. The church officers agreed that after completion of the iconostasis, they would pay him the money due as soon as possible.

Bells

On December 1, 1919, members of the Church Committee met and decided to send out a group of carolers from the parish at Christmas time to collect funds for the purchase of bells for the church. Each group was to be headed by a member of the Church Committee. Leaders were designated for the various areas where people lived: Prof. Jacob Hayduke – Split Rock, Mr. Markiw – Solvay, Mr. Michael Lutheran – Geddes St., Mr. Kowalczyk – East Syracuse, Mr. Iwan Lutheran – Jamesville, and Mr. Dmytryk – Minoa. Also, leaders were chosen for the immediate vicinity of the church and the Marcellus, Delaware and South Geddes Street sections.

The Church Committee, meeting on December 4, 1919, decided to buy three bells at a total cost of \$1,800.

Pastors/Administrators of the Parish

The Reverends:

John Welyhorsky (1900-1904)	Nicholas Strutynsky (1922-1923)
Theodore Car (?)	John Zuk (1923)
Basil Hrywnak (1904)	Lev Lewicky (1923-1924)
Joseph Hanulya (?)	Evstachij Sydoriak 1925-1934)
John Zaklynsky (1905)	Michael Kuziw (1934-1951+)
Eugene Wolkay (1905)	Joseph Batza (1951-1952)
Theodore Dwulit (1906)	Basil Seredowych (1952-1985)
John Dorozynsky (1906)	George Lukaczyk (1985-1987+)
Alexander Humetsky (1908-1913)	Peter Dudiak (1987-1996)
Alexander (Oleksa) Prystay (1915-1918)	James M. Karepin, O.P. (1996)
Alexander Rotko (1918-1919)	Jeffery A. G. Rodeghero (1997-2001)
Constantine Kuryllo (1920-1921)	Ivan Kaszczak (2001-Present)

Assistants

The Reverends:

Ihor Pelensky (1944)	Philip Bumbar (1971-1975)
Constantine Berdar (1945-1947)	Roman Golemba (1975-1976)
Stephen Chomko (1948-1950)	Bohdan Kin (1977-1979)
John Lazar (1948-1950)	Stefan Fabregas (1980-1981)
Paul Harchison (1950-1951)	John Ropke (1982-1984)
John Zrada (?)	Bohdan Kin (1984-1985)
Marian Kucher (?)	Ivan Kaszczak (1986-1987)
Bohdan Smyk (?)	Robert Batcho (?)
John Bobyock (?)	Christopher Rogalski (?)
Dmytro Fedosiuk (1953-1954)	Wasyl Hrynkiw (?)
Joseph L. Shaloka (1955-1968)	Volodymyr Kucaj (?)
Onophryj Wolansky (?)	Stepan Kuklich (?)
Richard Bryda (1968-1969)	Deacon Stepan Bilyk (?)
Mathew Litwak (?)	Wolodymyr Pys'o (2000-2001)
Roman Bilecky (1969-1971)	Mykhaylo Dosyak (2001-2003)

Diaks – Cantors – Teachers

Mr. Wulchin
Mr. M. Matwijiw
Mr. Sokolowsky
Mr. J. Zaremba

Mr. J. Hayduke
Mr. M. Klymko
Mr. Medwid
Mr. J. Zayatz

Vocations From Our Parish

Priests Ordained

Rev. Basil Sheremeta	ordained January 14, 1942
Rev. Gregory Tom	ordained in 1946
Rev. George Lukaczyk	ordained June 14, 1954

Deacons Ordained

Rev. Deacon Myron Kotch	ordained October 23, 1982
Rev. Deacon Edward Galvin	ordained October 14, 2001

Sisters From the Parish

Sister Antonella SSJ
Sister Modesta OSBM
Sister Damiana SSMI
Sister Calista OSBM
Sister Antonia MSMG

Missions, Recollections and Retreats

Special attention was given to the preservation, cultivation and strengthening of our beautiful rite at the early Missions held at the parishes. Most Missions were held during Lent, preceding the Easter holy days and until 1980, most of the Missions were held for a week. This gave all parishioners an opportunity to prepare themselves spiritually for Holy Week and Easter by attending the Mission services, hearing the sermons, preparing for a good confession and receiving Holy Communion. It was usually Thursday evening of Missions week that priests came from nearby parishes to assist in hearing confessions.

It was also customary in our parish during the years of 1920 through 1940, that parishioners were expected to pay up their dues and special assessments. The parishioners were also issued a confessional card by the priest or trustee. This card was deposited into a box in the confessional booth at the time of his or her confession. These were the qualifications and requirements of a qualified member of the parish in good standing in those years.

I have not found any reference to the "first" Mission held in our parish. However, I do recall an early Mission held in 1923, on the tenth anniversary of the blessing of the present church, which some parishioners believe to be the first held in our parish. During this week-long Mission, a large cross was blessed—the one that has been used throughout the Lenten services during the past years. It was blessed by the missionary in the evening during the middle of the week-long service. The cross was laid on a platform and carried by young men in a procession around the church, which was led by the priests, and followed by parishioners carrying lighted candles and singing hymns.

After the procession, the cross was placed in front of the center aisle. After completion of the service, the people came forward to kiss and venerate the cross. During this Mission, a holy picture of the Blessed Virgin Mary was also blessed, and the parish was placed under the Patronage of the Blessed Virgin Mary. After the Mission was completed, the cross was placed on the men's side of the main altar and the holy picture of the Blessed Virgin Mary was placed on the women's side of the altar where they remained for many years.

Other recorded Missions held in the parish:

Year	Missionary	Pastor	Assistant
1947	Rev. Joseph Ananevich, OFM Rev. Albert Martin, OFM	Rev. Michael Kuziw	Rev. Constantine Berdar
1958	Rev. Nicholas M. Kohut, OSBM	Rev. Basil Seredowych	Rev. Joseph L. Shaloka
1959	V. Rev. Gregory Shyshkowych Rev. John Fetsco, Redemptorists	Rev. Basil Seredowych	Rev. Joseph L. Shaloka
1960	Rev. Michael Schudlo, CSSR	Rev. Basil Seredowych	Rev. Joseph L. Shaloka
1961	Rev. Francis Lukachyk, OFM Rev. Marian Audakevich, OFM	Rev. Basil Seredowych	Rev. Joseph L. Shaloka
1962	Rev. Michael Hrynchyshyn, CSSR	Rev. Basil Seredowych	Rev. Joseph L. Shaloka
1963	Rev. Peter Laptuta, CSSR	Rev. Basil Seredowych	Rev. Joseph L. Shaloka
1964	Rev. Thaddeus Krawchuk, CSSR	Rev. Basil Seredowych	Rev. Joseph L. Shaloka
1965	Rev. Michael Schudlo, CSSR	Rev. Basil Seredowych	Rev. Joseph L. Shaloka
1966	V. Rev. Laptuta, CSSR	Rev. Basil Seredowych	Rev. Joseph L. Shaloka
1967	V. Rev. Michael Schudlo, CSSR	Rev. Basil Seredowych	Rev. Joseph L. Shaloka
1968	Rev. Myroslaw Dzurman Rev. Jaroslaw Dybka, Redemptorists	Rev. Msgr. Basil Seredowych	Rev. Joseph L. Shaloka
1969	V. Rev. Paul Maluga, CSSR	Rev. Msgr. Basil Seredowych	Rev. Mathew J. Litwak
1971	Rev. Modeste M. Genesku, OSBM	Rev. Msgr. Basil Seredowych	Rev. Mathew J. Litwak
1972	Rev. Orest Slobodian, OSBM	Rev. Msgr. Basil Seredowych	Rev. Philip Bombar
1973	Rev. Maurice Dzurman, CSSR	Rev. Msgr. Basil Seredowych	Rev. Philip Bombar
1974	Rev. Joseph Denuszuk	Rev. Msgr. Basil Seredowych	Rev. Philip Bombar
1975	Rev. Thaddeus Krawchuk, CSSR	Rev. Msgr. Basil Seredowych	Rev. Philip Bombar

These missionaries also held Missions in our parish but there is no record of the year:

Fr. Marianos Horishny, OSBM
Fr. Serevian Yakymyshyn
Rev. Evtymiy Wolynsky

Parochial School

Since the beginning of our parish, both priests and parishioners understood the need for a parochial school. They knew that lacking religious training, the children would be unable to become virtuous people and good American citizens. Without knowledge of their customs, traditions and rite, they would soon be lost to their church and parents. Parents also noticed that in going to the public schools, their children were talking with their parents more frequently in the English language rather than their native language. For these reasons, an evening school was established at an early date, which was taught by qualified members of the parish.

In 1911, during the pastorate of Rev. A. Prystay, the first cantor-teacher, Mr. Wulchin, arrived and took up the duties of cantor during church services and as teacher in the evening school. Following Mr. Wulchin were additional cantor-teachers who taught in the parish; Mr. Michael Matwijiw, Mr. Sokolowsky, and Mr. J. Zaremba. Beginning in the 1920's, Mr. Jacob Hayduk, Mr. Klymko, Mr. Medwid, and Mr. J. Zayatz were the cantor-teachers of the parish. Many of the cantor-teachers from the 1920's are well remembered by the children of the first and second generations.

The primary duties of the cantor-teachers were to take part in all religious services and to form and instruct the choir so they would be able to participate in the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. They would also conduct evening classes for the school children to learn to read, write and speak the Ukrainian language, basic Ukrainian history and geography; and some religious instructions, especially understanding and responding at the Divine Liturgy. The pastor gave most of the religious instructions, but in case the pastor was unavailable, the cantor-teacher took over the class.

After construction of the new church was completed, class instruction was conducted in the church hall. Desks, blackboards and other school equipment were purchased for the new school. The evening classes were held daily from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m., after the children returned home from public school.

During the time that Mr. Matwijiw and Mr. Zaremba taught school, all the children (about 40 or 50 pupils) were in one class. They attended classes every evening Monday through Friday. The basics of reading and writing the Ukrainian language were taught under strict discipline by these instructors who knew that it was difficult for the students to concentrate on learning after spending a whole day of instruction at the public school. Instructions in reading and writing Ukrainian were held from Monday through Thursday. On Friday evening, religious instruction was taught by the Pastor. Early in December, the school children started to get their first singing instructions in preparation for the St. Nicholas play. They learned to sing the song to St. Nicholas—O kto, kto Mykolaya lubyt! (O, who, who loves St. Nicholas)—which they sang during the presentation of the play in honor of St. Nicholas. The school children all waited patiently for the visit of St. Nicholas during which time they each received a brown bag of candy, nuts and fruits for being good children and good students. All children attending the play

received a bag of goodies, regardless of whether or not they attended evening school. During December, the children were also taught to sing Ukrainian carols (koliadas).

With the arrival of our fifth cantor-teacher, Mr. Jacob Hayduk, the current system of teaching in the school was evaluated. He began a serious restructuring of our education system. It should be noted that the arrival of a new cantor-teacher in our parish meant that all the pupils had to go back to the basics of the reading and writing in Ukrainian regardless of their earlier progress. Those who received instructions during the time that Mr. Matwijiw and Mr. Zarembo taught, were once again placed in the beginner's class.

Mr. Hayduk ordered new Bukvar (primary book and speller) as well as a First Reader book. The first year under his supervision, the education of the children was still conducted in the church hall in one large class of about 50 or 60 pupils, Monday through Friday, from four to five o'clock. The following year, the enrollment grew to more than 100 pupils and the class was becoming harder to control. Also, there was not enough room for additional desks in the church hall.

For the first time since evening school education started in our parish, Mr. Hayduk decided to divide the pupils into two classes. Those who were more advanced in reading and writing Ukrainian were placed in the second class, while the remaining pupils remained in the first class for further primary instructions. One group attended classes on Monday and Wednesday evening and the other group attended classes on Tuesday and Thursday evening. The pastor taught all the pupils religious instructions together on Friday, in a crowded classroom. When the pastor was busy or occupied with some other parish duties, then the cantor-teacher took over the class.

Mr. Hayduk, who kept in touch with most of the cantor-teachers in the United States at that time, discussed the subject of textbooks for use in the parochial schools. He ordered the textbooks for all grades as recommended by most of the cantor-teachers. He was also in the process of organizing all the cantor-teachers into one organization, but he failed in this effort due to some opposition.

The education in our evening classes began in earnest in during Mr. Hayduk's second year of teaching. The regular subjects of reading and writing in Ukrainian were taught as well as some Ukrainian history and geography. The pupils memorized short verses in Ukrainian and were taught to respond in unison during the Divine Liturgy. At first, the only responses said were: "Lord, have mercy," "Grant it, O Lord," and "Amen." The diak-cantor recited the rest of the responses. Slowly, as they learned additional parts of the Divine Liturgy, they then recited these parts. The school children recited these responses during the early Sunday morning Divine Liturgy (held at 8:00 a.m.) which became known as the "Children's Divine Liturgy."

It was also about this time that pupils in the second class began their basic studies in the Church Slavonic language by their cantor-teacher. Most of the prayer books of that time had the Divine Liturgy printed in Church Slavonic. The daily prayers were printed on the left side of the page in Old Slavonic and on the right side in Ukrainian. All other prayers, vespers, molebens, etc. were printed in the Ukrainian language. Those who became more proficient in learning to read Church Slavonic were the altar boys, who responded during the Children's Divine Liturgy.

Since the altar boys were responding at the Divine Liturgy, Mr. Hayduk decided that the school children should learn to sing some of the prayers. Since there was not enough time during the hour-long classes held weekly to teach the children to sing the responses, Mr. Hayduk decided to hold additional classes from 10 to 12 o'clock Saturdays mornings. They were taught to sing the 'Hymns of Incarnation' (Slava Yedynorodny), 'Holy God, Holy and Mighty', the 'Alleluia' and 'Let us who mystically represent the Cherubim'. They recited the Creed in unison. They also sang 'It is truly proper to glorify you', the 'Our Father', 'May Our Lips Be Filled With Your Praise', and a hymn to close the Divine Liturgy. Once the school children learned the various parts of the Divine Liturgy, they began to sing at the Sunday's first celebration of the Divine Liturgy. While they were singing, the altar boys would respond quietly at the altar. This celebration of the Divine Liturgy became popularly known as "Tyha Sluzba Bozha", (Quiet Divine Liturgy).

Soon after, Saturday classes became a must in the educational system. A year or so later, Mr. Hayduk started a children's choir in three voices—tenors, sopranos and altos—with rehearsals held on Saturday mornings. As soon as they became proficient enough to sing the parts of the Divine Liturgy, the children started to take an active part in singing the responses during the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. The children's choir was positioned by the altar on the ladies side during the Divine Liturgy.

In later years, the Saturday classes also became the time when rehearsals were held for plays, concerts and for a review of subjects in preparation for the school closing exercises in the summer.

By the mid 1920's (around 1925-1926), as the school years advanced, some of us reached the third and fourth reader under Prof. Hayduk. There were two very important events that took place in our education system at that time. The first was the completion of our term of education in June. Prof. Hayduk would conduct an oral examination of the subjects taught in school in front of an audience of parents and parishioners in the church hall. The school children stood on the stage in the church hall nervously waiting for the question and answer period to take place. The crowd at this event was always overflowing with people filling every available space in the hall. The children started and ended the program with songs that they learned during the school year. The program always ended well with plenty of applause for the children's efforts.

About a week or two later, the parish sponsored a school picnic for the children which was held at Burnet Park. This ended the school semester and started our vacation from lessons.

The second important event that took place during those school days was during the time that Fr. Zuk was pastor. He taught religion on Friday evenings as was the custom. He always liked to

conduct a question-and-answer session on Religion the following Sunday after the 4 o'clock Vespers. The school children were urged to attend Vespers and they sat in the front pews of the church. At the conclusion of the services, the question and answer period would begin. The church was always filled with parents and parishioners who enjoyed seeing the progress made by the children. The children who gave the correct answers were rewarded with a holy picture for their efforts. Then Fr. Zuk would often look around among the children and question those who were not too eager to raise their hands to answer the questions. The people often smiled at some of the answers that were given.

It should also be mentioned that after Saturday morning classes, the boys who attended had to clean the area around the church, rectory and the orchard in back of the rectory so that the surroundings would be neat and clean for Sunday services. This was our first training in doing something for the good of the parish.

At the Annual Parish Meeting on January 1, 1921, the subject of building a school was brought up and the following resolutions were unanimously adopted:

- That the parish would start collecting funds for the building of a school by accepting donations from parishioners. Those giving large sums of money would be designated as founders of the school,
- Each parishioner was to pay one dollar additional to their annual church dues towards the school-building fund and
- At each Baptism and wedding ceremony, a fee of two dollars would be assessed for the school fund.

The first school committee chosen. Mr. Onufrij Sheremeta, Mr. John Namisniak, Mr. Nicholas Klicz and Mr. Olekca Harosym were the first to serve.

The subject of a National Home with a school in that building was brought up at the semiannual parish meeting held on July 24, 1924, during the pastorate of Rev. E. Sydoriak. A committee of three was appointed to gather ideas on such a project. Mr. Walter Czebiniak, Sr., Mr. George Dashkevich, and Mr. Onufrij Sheremeta were the three members of this committee

The Annual Parish Meeting on January 4, 1925, determined that:

- the newly elected officers should make arrangements to have the church hall checked for dampness and have this matter corrected as soon as possible as it was a health hazard for the children attending evening classes. Also, the dampness was damaging the interior walls of the church hall
- they should look for a house near the church which could be used as a temporary school after remodeling
- a committee of three members--Mr. Anthony Dorosz, Mr. Tymko Herczak and Mr. Mykola Sloyka be appointed to look for a house and
- a school fund for the purchase of such a building be established.

At the Annual Parish Meeting on January 27, 1926, it was unanimously accepted to have a school fund and to accept donations.

Shortly thereafter, the committee was successful in finding such a home near the church. In 1938, during the pastorate of Rev. Michael Kuziw, the parish purchased the two-family house at 118-120 Tennyson Avenue. Part of this property extended to the back of the orchard.

However, due to internal strife within the parish, the opening of the school was temporarily postponed until 1946 when Rev. Kuziw requested the Sisters of St. Basil the Great to undertake the task of organizing a parish school.

The school opened its doors to the children of our parish on September 8, 1947. This initial year saw the inauguration of the first two grades with a student body of 15 under the supervision of Sisters Aquiline and Christopher, OSBM. Sister Christopher served as school principal.

The 1948 school year realized an increase in enrollment from 15 to 33 pupils. To accommodate the new influx, two additional grades were added. In each ensuing year, one additional grade was added until there were eight grades established.

The first graduation of St. John the Baptist Ukrainian Catholic School was held on June 19, 1955, with then pastor, Rev. Basil Seredowych, presiding. Diplomas were presented to the class of ten graduates:

Carol Maliwesky	Lenora Zobkiw	Ann Marie Smith
Mary Ellen Kulba	Mary Hayduke	Mary Elaine Kianka
Mary Ann Macko	Ihor Hapij	Paul S. Prybyla
Leo Bachynsky.		

By now the original school building was too small to accommodate all the students. Kindergarten classes had to be held in the church hall. To meet the needs of a growing enrollment, a new school building was constructed at South Wilbur Avenue under the pastorship of Rev. Basil Seredowych.

Due to the influx of new immigrants to Syracuse after World War II, enrollment increased, so that by 1960 it reached a peak of 275 students. In 1975, the teaching staff at St. John the Baptist Ukrainian Catholic School was composed of three sisters and six lay teachers with an enrollment of 154 students under the supervision of Sister Anselem, OSBM, principal. In spite of some difficulties, the school continued to educate its youth and to train them as future parishioners of which our forefathers would be proud.

Music

During the celebration of the Divine Liturgy in the early days of our parish, the congregation recited the response in unison. Later, when a qualified leader was found who could lead the congregation in singing the responses, the entire congregation would join in.

A few years later, the first cantor-teachers (diaks) came to the parish. They led the responses during the Divine Liturgy, Vespers, Matins and funerals as well as all other church services. At first they directed the congregation in singing the responses, later a church choir was organized. As early as 1921, St. John's had an excellent church choir. This choir presented an old country mock wedding at the New York State Fair grounds under the direction of cantor-teacher Prof. Zaremba. They received great acclaim and publicity for their fine performance and singing. Mr. Andrew Hucko and his orchestra furnished the music for this performance.

Mr. Hucko and his orchestra were well known and very popular among our people. They played at all our church functions including bazaars, dances and stage plays requiring music. They were also hired to play for the majority of weddings, dinners and dances held by organizations within the parish. They were the best known orchestra in our parish life during the 1920's and 1930's.

For quite some time, the young men of the parish were interested in forming a band. On August 20, 1920, a group of young men approached the Church Committee with the idea of organizing a band. They asked for and were granted permission to use the church hall for rehearsals after they became organized. An instructor for the band was found. He was a member of St. Stephen's (Slovak) Church. Organizing the band, buying the needed instruments and the weekly rehearsals took a couple of years before the players were able to perform as a band.

At the Annual Parish Meeting on January 14, 1923, the band gave its first performance. They played four marching numbers for those present. Father Zuk told the members of the parish that the band was making great progress. Also, he told them that the band required additional money for the final payments on their instruments, and they were asking the parishioners for financial assistance. The band members were paying for the instruments and instruction fees out of their own pockets. Those present at the meeting unanimously voted to help them with the final payment on their instruments. At Christmas time, the band members formed small units of players who went caroling at the homes of parishioners to raise additional funds to help pay for their instruments.

The band gave an outstanding performance at the blessing of the parish cemetery on Labor Day, September 1924. After the 10 a.m. Divine Liturgy, a procession, led by the band, was formed outside the church. Behind the band came the school children, altar boys and priests, members of organizations with banners and organizational badges, followed by the rest of the parishioners. They marched from the church to the cemetery where the blessing took place. The band members were dressed in dark trousers, black shoes, white shirts with black ties and navy and white caps. The band lasted for quite a few years and gave numerous performances for the parish.

Also in the 1920's, Mr. Philip Hayduk conducted violin classes in the church hall. A group of children showed interest and rehearsals were held twice a week. After awhile, most of the boys lost interest in the rehearsals because it cut into their sports activities, such as playing baseball, so this music activity declined rapidly.

In 1931-32, the Ukrainian Sich Society, Branch 282 of the Ukrainian National Association organized a mandolin orchestra under the direction of Mr. Sczupak. This orchestra lasted for a few years and performed at various concerts and other functions held by the church.

Also, with the founding of the Ukrainian National Home in 1933, an "old country musician's group" was formed which played on Saturday nights as well as other nights of the week. This group consisted of Mr. Thomas Herczak (violin), Mr. Elias Kameniuk (Buben or drums), and Mr. Theodore Andrusyszyn or Mr. Kozup (cymbaly or cymbals).

A few years later, in the 1940's and 50's, the younger generation began forming their own orchestras. Some of the leading musicians of these groups were John & Olga (Skapiak) Krull, Michael Tanasyn, Myron Yaworsky, Joseph Wasnik, Marco Diecuch, and others. One of the best known musicians of our parish, Michael "Peanuts" Hucko, played with some of the best well-known bands in the country.

We had many young parishioners who were interested in music and are now playing in various orchestras.

Cemetery

A short while after our newly organized parish applied for a church charter under the Religious Corporation Law of the State of New York in 1900, they decided to look for and buy land, which could be used for a cemetery. Most of the early pioneers of our parish who died were being buried in Sacred Heart Cemetery. In 1902, land was bought for a cemetery on Salisbury Road, Town of Geddes, across from Sacred Heart Cemetery.

At the semiannual meeting of the parish held on July 23, 1911, it was unanimously agreed to build a road in the cemetery. The land close to Salisbury Road was filling up with graves, and it was becoming more difficult to carry the caskets from the hearse to the gravesite as land further away from Salisbury Road was being put to use.

At a meeting of St. John's trustees on October 8, 1917, a resolution was passed:

- to put the cemetery land in order and divide a section into lots for family use, and
- to have receipts (certificates of purchase) printed which would be issued and signed by the parish officers at the time a lot was purchased and the full payment received.

It was also voted that only parishioners could purchase lots and only Greek Catholics could be buried in the cemetery, except on the lots purchased by parishioners, where members of the family might be buried—either Greek Catholics or Roman Catholics.

During 1922, plans were discussed for the blessing of the cemetery; but due to various problems it was decided to delay the blessing until May 30, 1923. This would give the parishioners additional time to clean up the land and make it presentable for the blessing. It was also decided to assess each parishioner \$2 to pay for the cleanup expenses.

At the semiannual parish meeting on July 20, 1924, it was finally unanimously agreed that:

- the blessing of the cemetery would take place on Labor Day (the first Monday in September)
- the bishop would be invited to bless the cemetery
- a final cemetery cleanup would be made, and
- a new entrance arch and gateway would be erected.

Blessing of the cemetery took place on Labor Day in 1924, starting with the Divine Liturgy at 10 a.m., concelebrated by the bishop and the pastor. Following the Divine Liturgy, a procession led by the new church band, altar boys and school children, followed by parishioners and members of various church organizations with their flags and banners, marched from the church to the cemetery. A very large crowd was present and many pictures of the cemetery, the bishop, priests and guests were taken.

At a meeting of the church officers held on August 29, 1927, it was decided to discontinue dividing any more of the cemetery for family plots until we were able to buy additional land for cemetery use. Mr. George Dashkewicz (Dassy) and Mr. Victor Osuchivsky were elected to the committee to seek out further information on the possibility of buying additional land adjoining the cemetery.

At the Annual Parish Meeting held on January 25, 1928, it was decided to have the water system extended into the cemetery.

Parish Veterans

The young men of the parish served with honor in all wars, beginning with World War I to the present time. Many also served in peacetime, especially during the Great Depression when jobs were hard to find. During World II, some of the young ladies of the parish also served in the various branches of service.

The only record kept of parishioners serving in any war was a near-complete record compiled by the parish of those serving in World War II. Nearly 300 young men and women served in all branches of the Armed Forces during World War II in all battle areas.

Among the departed comrades who made the supreme sacrifice at that time were:

Curr, Peter	Nodzo, Peter
Dravek, Crest	Peltz, William
Dravek, Michael	Roik, Michael
Hayduke, H. August	Ryfun, Andrew
Kalenak, T. James	Sopchak, John
Koczan, William	Starushak, Paul
Konutiak, William	Trach, Leo
Mosher, Harry	

Honor Roll of Men Serving in World War II

Andrewson, Joseph	Dashewski, Peter	Hrab, Leon	Kishtok, Walter
Andrewson, Stephen	Diecuch, Marco	Hrab, Paul	Kitt, Nicholas
Andrusyszyn, Anthony	Diecuch, Milton	Hrynyk, John	Kitt, Peter
Andrusyszyn, Paul	Drozda, Andrew	Hucko, Harry	Klaczko, Theodore
Andrusyszyn, Stephen	Ducar, Michael	Hucko, Michael	Klekosky, Alexius
Bagan, Daniel	Ducar, Peter	Hulchanski, John	Klekosky, P. Peter
Bagan, Harry	Ducar, William	Hulchanski, Stephen	Klusyk, Nicholas
Bagan Peter	Dydyk, Alex	Husak, John	Kocunik, John
Bagan, Walter	Dydyk, John	Husak, Walter	Koczan, Michael
Baxter, Francis	Dymus, Stanley	Jamelski, Michael	Komar, John
Betley, Frank	Fadako, Joseph	Jamelski, Stephen	Komar, Stephen
Betley, Michael	Fatcheric, John Dr.	Kalenack, John	Kondra, Leo
Bisick, John	Fisher, F. Kadol	Kalenack, Peter	Kowalczyk, John
Bisick, Peter	Fisher, Michael	Kalwarowski, Stephen	Kowalczyk, John
Bouchan, Michael	Feak, Michael	Kalwarowski, Walter	Kozub, Peter
Bubnack, Donald	Feak, Nicholas	Kameniuk, Michael	Krasnewich, Paul
Bubnack, Frank	Feak, Peter	Kaminski, John	Krasnewich, William
Bubnack, Joseph	Fedorka, John	Kaminski, Mathew	Krebsdak, Michael
Bubnack, Peter	Flesock, Leonard	Kaminski, Nicholas	Krevensky, Michael
Bubnack, Stephen	Flesock, Walter	Kaminsky, Anthony	Krull, Metro
Buczak, Stanley	Frajda, Michael	Kany, Michael	Kucharavy, Miaron
Buhai, Michael	Frajda, Stephen	Kapchek, Andrew	Kucharavy, Milton
Burak, Carl	Furgal, Alexander	Kapchek, Stephen	Kucharski, Frank
Buranich, Peter	Germaine, John	Karbowniczak, John	Kudlik, Joseph
Buranich, Samuel	Godzac, Michael	Karbowniczak, Walter	Kudlik, Michael
Busko, Michael	Godzac, William	Karch, Walter	Kudlik, Paul
Cygan, William	Grounder, Frank	Karcz, Joseph	Kulik, John
Czebiniak, Peter	Gula, Andrew	Kashubinski, Merrill	Kurtak, Michael
Cherema, Michael	Guralny, Peter	Kashubinski, Walter	Kuziw, John
Coyle, Dennis	Guralny, Stephen	Kendrat, Harry	Kuziw, Michael
Coyle, George	Guralny, J. William	Kendrat, Michael	Kyanka, John
Curr, Andrew	Hanjack, John	Kendrat, Nicholas	Leckvar, John
Curr, Stephen	Hayduk, Joseph	Kianka, George	Liscanick, John
Czebiniak, Paul	Henry, Emil	Kianka, John Jr.	Macko, Avdon
Czebiniak, Walter	Henry, George	Kianka, Peter	Macko, Michael, Jr.
Daniel, Walter	Henry, Theodore	Kicak, John	Macko, Paul
Daniels, Joseph	Herczak, Michael	Kicak, Michael	Macko, Peter
Daniels, William	Hess, Harvey	Kicak, Stephen	Macko, Peter J.
Danko, Michael	Hladun, Andrew	Kicak, William	Macko, Stephen
Dankow, Stephen	Horba, Michael	Kin, John	Macko, William

Honor Roll of Men Serving in World War II - continued

Maliwacki, Joseph	Orynych, Simon	Schaffron, Michael	Tatusko, Andrew
Maliwacki, Michael	Osuchowski, Adam	Sembrat, Harry	Tatusko, Joseph
Marko, Michael	Osuchowski, John	Sembrat, John	Tatusko, Stephen
Marko, William	Osuchowski, William	Sembrat, Michael	Tokarek, John
Martin, John	Paulina, Frank	Sembratowicz, Nicholas	Tokarek, Stephen
Maslak, John	Paulina, Walter	Sewak, Andrew	Tom, Joseph
Maslak, Michael	Pigula, Albert	Sewak, John	Troch, Donald
Maslak, Nicholas	Peltz, Andrew	Sherbeck, William	Troch, Frank
Matthews, Thomas	Peltz, Stephen	Sheremeta, Oley	Troch, Jack
Melnick, Walter,	Petrunick, John	Shmokaluk, Alexander	Troch, Nicholas
Melnick, William	Petruschak, William	Sinay, Joseph	Troch, Walter
Michaels, John	Petryshyn, John	Slobodian, Peter	Turkewitz, Nicholas
Micho, Stephen	Pidkaminy, Nicholas	Sloyka, Michael	Uchal, John
Mishak, Walter	Pyndus, William	Slifka, Peter	Uchal, Michael
Mitzo, John	Pocynaluk, Harry	Slifka, William	Vassenelli, Nick
Mitzo, M. William	Porcynaluk, Andrew	Snihur, Ben	Walliski, Stephen
Moran, John	Procanick, Metro	Snihur, Michael	Wasnick, John
Mosher, John	Prokopiak, Andrew	Snihur, William	Welch, Harry
Mosher, Michael	Prokopiak, Joseph	Sopchak, William	Woloszyn, Andrew
Mosher, Peter	Prokopiak, Stephen	Spak, Michael	Woloszyn, Michael
Moziak, Peter	Rozikewicz, George	Spendle, John	Woyciesjes, Americo
Mural, Alex	Rushak, John	Spendle, Michael	Woyciesjes, Michael
Musiak, Nicholas	Rusyn, John	Stefanko, George	Woytan, Nicholas
Namisniak, William	Rusyn, William	Stefanko, John	Wozella, Anthony
Nestor, John	Rybak, Lawrence	Sturick, Mathew	Wozella, John
Nestor, Peter	Rybak, Myron	Sturick, Michael	Wozella, Michael
Notko, Nicholas	Ryfun, Stephen	Sturick, Paul	Yakowiak, William
Notko, Stephen	Ryfun, William	Suhey, Stephen	Zaleski, Michael
Novitsky, John	Sawka, George	Roberts, Andrew	Zaleski, Peter
Novitsky, Stephen	Sawka, Michael	Tanasyn, John	Zaleski, William
Oper, William	Sawka, Peter	Tanasyn, Michael	Zemotel, Adam
			Zasztawny, William

Honor Roll of Women Serving in World War II

Dankow, Mildred	Laba, Olga	Welch, Stella
Giba, Irene	Rybak, Stephany	

It was spring 1946, when the majority of those serving in the Armed Forces returned home and the subject of organizing these veterans was discussed. A meeting was held in the church hall, where it was decided to organize a veterans group. Since nearly all the veterans present were members of St. John's, it was also decided to apply for a membership charter to the Catholic War Veterans.

The veterans group received a charter shortly from the Catholic War Veterans and was known as the "Ukrainian-American Catholic War Veterans," Post 560 C.W.V. At the first meeting, Mr. Nicholas Kitt was elected as Post Commander and Rev. Constantine Berdar was elected as Chaplain, besides a full slate of officers. The primary duties of the Post was to assist at funeral services for their departed comrades as their bodies were brought home to be buried in their family plots. They also provided assistance to the families of their deceased comrades. They took part as pallbearers, provided military assistance at the ceremonies in the church and at the cemetery and served as honor guards during visiting hours at the wake. The tradition continued in the years that followed, when members of the Post would pay honor each year at the cemetery, to those who gave their lives for their country and for all deceased veterans of the parish.

The chaplain, Fr. Constantine Berdar, organized a male chorus composed of the veterans and conducted rehearsals in the church hall. The chorus first learned the Panahyda prayers for the deceased, which they sang in church and at the cemetery on Green Sunday during the services honoring our deceased service men and women.

On June 30, 1946, the Ukrainian National Home sponsored a grand testimonial banquet in honor of Ukrainian servicemen and servicewomen of Syracuse, NY. Theodore Michaels, Executive Chairman; Ivan Pihuliak, General Chairman; and Victor Osuchivsky, Co-Chairman headed the banquet committee. The large affair was held at the Ukrainian National Home with a capacity audience. The invocation was given by the Very Rev. Michael Kuziw, followed by the singing of the "Star Spangled Banner" by the newly-formed Ukrainian-American Catholic War Veterans Male Chorus under the direction of Rev. Constantine Berdar. There were a number of speakers for this event, the Honorable Frank J. Costello, Mayor of Syracuse, gave the welcoming address. Ivan Pihuliak, Chairman; Rev. Berdar, Toastmaster and Aaron Levy, President of the Americanization League also spoke. Myron Parkinson, Postmaster General of Syracuse; Americo Woyciesjes, a US Marine veteran; John Kinney, Chief of Police and Theodore Michaels, President of the Ukrainian National Home were also among the days presenters. Additionally, Frank J. Manley, State Commander of Catholic War Veterans; Nick Kitt, Post Commander of the local Ukrainian-American Catholic War Veterans, Post 560 and Victor Osuchivsky, Co-Chairman made their presentations. Our pastor, the Very Rev. Michael Kuziw gave the benediction.

The Ukrainian National Home played a key role in assisting the newly organized veterans group. They purchased the new Catholic War Veteran's flag and the American flag. They offered the facilities of the Ukrainian National Home free for the meetings of the veterans organization. They offered the ballroom at a reduced rate for any functions the veterans might hold for fund-raising purposes. Later, when the veterans organized a basketball team, the Ukrainian National Home allowed the free use of the hall for practices and games. As time went on and the veteran's organization became sound financially, they were able to pay their fair share for the hall from the admission fees they received. The basketball games drew great crowds to the benefit of the veterans and the Ukrainian National Home.

The Ukrainian veteran team played in all the top competitions in the Syracuse City League, Catholic Youth League and among independent teams in and around Syracuse. They also played against the Ukrainian Veteran Leagues from Auburn, Rochester, Binghamton, and Sayre, PA, as well as teams from other cities. The team won many honors and a great number of trophies. It had one of the greatest followings of spectators wherever they played.

The fall of 1946, at the request of Fr. Berdar, the veterans organization opened membership in the chorus to all male parishioners. With the addition of new members, the choir developed into a very reputable singing group. They sang the responses at the Divine Liturgy one Sunday a month and they sang patriotic songs at concerts and on the radio. They also sang Christmas carols on radio and television programs. The choir existed for many years. After Fr. Berdar was transferred to a new parish, Myron Yaworsky assumed the responsibility of teaching and directing the male choir for many years.

Although the veterans organization no longer exists, it has left many pleasant memories of dedicated work to the church, country, city and parish as well as to the Ukrainian people of Syracuse.

Parish Fund Raising Affairs

Visiting priests served the religious needs of the first Ukrainian immigrant settlers in the Syracuse area in their own Greek Catholic Rite. A plate collection was usually taken to defray the expenses of the visiting priests and other costs connected with the celebration of the Divine Liturgy.

In 1896, a 14 member committee was appointed from the first organized parish group to collect donations for the purchase of a building and land, suitable for a church. In 1897, the committee bought a house and lot on the corner of Wilbur Avenue and Tompkins Street. Soon after, this house was converted into a church building that served the parish until the present church was built in 1913.

In 1900, a committee was appointed to collect funds to cover the cost of converting the house into a church. The committee members were Mr. Waryan, Mr. Lah, Mr. Petruniak and Mr. Paul Kamenecky. They collected \$1,465.40 during the first year. The same committee held the first known and recorded fund-raiser for the church building. They held a raffle for a gold pocket watch that brought a profit of \$104.55 (a large sum of money in those days).

The semi-annual meeting held on June 25, 1911, called for a vote, that each member of the parish would be assessed \$5 annually towards the building of a new church. It was unanimously approved. This first assessment later became known as our "Annual Church Dues," which continued after the new church was built.

At the semiannual meeting in June 1920, it was voted that all young people reaching the age of 20 years should pay annual dues of \$5.

The meeting of trustees and officers held on August 29, 1920, unanimously agreed to hold a large bazaar in the church hall to raise additional funds to help pay the installment payments on the new church. The trustees and officers asked for the cooperation of the parish's young men and women in getting donations from grocery stores and other food businesses, as well as other articles to be raffled off at the bazaar. They also asked for the cooperation of our prominent parishioners who were in business or the professional field. The diak-cantor would prepare a concert and a play would be presented during the bazaar.

The Annual Meeting of January 1, 1921, decided to seek donations to build a parish school. Those members giving larger sums of money were to be designated as founders of the school. In addition to parish dues, each parishioner would be asked to pay \$1 annually towards the school fund. An additional \$2 would be added to the fees charged for each Baptism and marriage ceremony.

At the semiannual meeting in June 1922, it was voted that each parishioner would be assessed \$2 towards the upkeep of the cemetery.

In September 1922, a meeting of the church trustees and officers voted to hold a bazaar in November for the benefit of the church.

The semiannual meeting held on July 19, 1925, voted that all young people reaching the age of 20 years should pay dues of \$5 annually, as previously approved at the June 1920 meeting.

In the fall of 1926, when George Dashkewicz (Dassy) was the parish's Vice President, a "Bazaar of Bazaars" was held. It was a week-long affair held at Pat O'Days Hall on the corner of W. Fayette and Geddes Streets. During the week of the bazaar, each evening was designated for an organization or organizations (depending on the size of the membership). The bazaar was held in the evening from 7 to 10 p.m. On their designated night, members of that days organization(s) were expected to take an active part in the activities of the evening. This meant assisting at the various booths, selling tickets for articles to be raffled that evening and assisting at the bar — in other words, helping where needed. The members of the organization(s) designated for the evening were honored when the orchestra would play a "marching" tune. All the members of the designated organization would march around the dance hall a couple of times to the applause of the audience and also to show the number of their members in attendance at the bazaar that evening.

On Saturday and Sunday, the bazaar started in the afternoon, with Saturday being designated "the day for the youth of the parish" followed by a few hours of ballroom dancing in the evening.

On Sunday, the afternoon hours were designated as "children's afternoon" with a concert presented by the children and a program especially planned for them, which usually lasted from 4 to 6 p.m. After the concert, the bazaar chairman greeted the children with a short speech and encouraged them to work for the church and our people, because "the children of today are the future of our church and our country." Afterwards there was a shower of candy and coins (pennies, nickels, dimes and an occasional quarter) thrown by the chairman amidst the children gathered in front of the stage, with best wishes to all. This was called "Bozha Manna" (God's gift). There would be a rousing scramble by the children as they tried to pick up as many pieces of candy and coins as they could find.

On Sunday evening, as part of the youth program (grown-ups) of the day, the church choir sang a selection of songs. Later on the dance began with an orchestra playing.

During each afternoon and evening of bazaar week, refreshments were sold and various booths sold tickets for raffles and chances for prizes. This event proved to be a great money raiser for the church.

From 1920 through the 1930's, some of the social events held by the parish were an annual dance, bazaar and picnic, which were the source of additional income to meet some of the improvement costs or projects in the church.

Another custom that existed in the parish from its beginning to about World War II was caroling at Christmas time for the church as well as for other charitable needs. In the early days, the carolers would be organized in small groups of about six older members of the parish headed by

some member of the Church Committee, and they would visit the homes of parishioners in designated sections of the city, collecting donations for the church. The city was divided into sections. Some of the well-known sections of the city at that time were St. John's Church area, Sacred Heart Church section, Marcellus and Delaware Streets section, Solvay, Eastwood, East Syracuse, Minoa and Mattydale. Later on, sections of Jamesville, Split Rock, the Village of Marcellus and even Fulton were added to the list.

The choir members began caroling in the early 1900's. Later, the school children took over by going with an adult leader around 1920. Many, who began caroling in the early days when they were students of the evening classes, continued to carol for the next 20 years or more when they became members of the church choir. They enjoyed doing this and were welcomed year after year into the homes of parishioners. Many of the carolers had very pleasant memories of those days. The parish received quite a large income through the efforts of the carolers.

During the mid-1930's, a very popular fund raiser was Ukrainian Day, or Ukrainian Seminary Day, which was held to raise funds for the upkeep of the Seminary and the education of future priests. Each deanery sponsored this event. At that time, Syracuse was part of the Buffalo Deanery, which included parishes of Syracuse, Auburn, Rochester and Buffalo. This event was held in each city in the deanery during a designated year. There was a great interest in these events by all parishioners of the deanery, especially the young people and a large amount of time and energy was put into preparation of the day's program. These events not only attracted the participation of various parish members, but it also attracted people from other cities.

Ukrainian Day in Syracuse, which I recall, was held on May 30, 1936, by the Church Committee in conjunction with the Ukrainian Central Committee of Syracuse, NY and consisted of all church and fraternal organizations. Mr. Ivan Pihuliak, President of the Ukrainian Central Committee, became Chairman of the Ukrainian Day Committee.

The Ukrainian Day Festival was held in one of the buildings at the New York State Fairgrounds. The day began with a Pontifical Divine Liturgy concelebrated at 11 a.m. by the bishop and priests of the Buffalo Deanery. Each choir from the visiting parishes and the local choir sang part of the responses of the Divine Liturgy, with the closing hymn sung by the combined choirs.

Immediately following the Divine Liturgy and throughout the day, Ukrainian food and refreshments were available to the public. At 2 p.m., a colorful program of Ukrainian singing and dancing began. Their choir and dancers in native costumes represented each parish that took part in the concert program. The program began with the combined choirs singing the American and Ukrainian anthems.

Throughout the program there were short speeches or remarks by church dignitaries, leaders of the community—including political figures—as well as leaders of the various organizations.

The program lasted nearly three hours and was always well received by the audience. After completion of the program, the people mingled for a long time. Some of the people returned to the Ukrainian National Home where festivities continued.

Ukrainian Day was not only a great source of income for the Ukrainian Catholic Seminary, but it was also a great event for the youth of the various parishes of the Deanery to get together. It was an event that allowed them to get to know each other and to take part in religious and cultural events of our own Ukrainian heritage. They always looked forward to the following year to attend Ukrainian Seminary Day.

After the new school was built, the Mothers' Club (organized in 1955) began fund raising for school support and supplies. They held bake sales, rummage sales, flea markets, mini bazaars, raffles, and many other affairs to raise money for school expenses.

The Sacred Heart Society and the ladies of the parish held pyrohy sales for several years for the benefit of various church projects and donated many thousands of dollars to the church.

Arrival of Displaced Persons After World War II

During and after World War II, a large number of people from various countries became refugees on foreign soil away from their native lands. Some were freed by the Allies from forced labor camps in Germany, while others were desperately running away from the invading armies. All were in need of food and shelter.

As the Allies advanced eastward and deeper into Germany, more refugees were freed. These refugees were told to keep walking westward—away from the fighting—to areas where kitchens and living quarters were being set up as temporary shelters by the Allies. Later, camp areas were established for each nationality and were designated as "Displaced Persons Camps."

Among these refugees were thousands upon thousands of Ukrainians who fled their lands because of the German invasion as well as the destruction and ruthless treatment by the Russians. A majority of these people settled in the Ukrainian Displaced Persons Camps where they organized a school system for children and adults, provided for religious worship, cultural education and all phases of daily life. They also set up a governing committee to help run the affairs of the camps as well as a postal system within the camp. Some of the larger camps also issued their own postage stamps for internal use.

Many of the Ukrainians who were in these camps began writing to relatives and friends in other parts of the world telling them where they were and seeking some help. Not all of the letters reached their relatives because of old or incomplete addresses.

The Ukrainian press in the United States and Canada offered free space to any refugees who wished to place an announcement seeking information about relatives or friends who might still be living in the United States or Canada. Under the new immigration laws that permitted the reunion of family members and former citizens of the United States and Canada, many refugees were able to contact relatives and friends. They were among the first to be sponsored by these families to be admitted to these countries.

Immigration laws in the United States and Canada were liberalized, thus permitting thousands of displaced persons without family sponsors to come to their countries if they so desired. The first displaced persons sponsored by relatives who arrived in Syracuse were Michalina Oliynyk and Stephania Jaworska, followed by Mykola and Wolodymyr Godzak (brothers). Also, Mr. & Mrs. Suhey of Cazenovia sponsored a nephew.

The Ukrainian-American Relief Society was organized to assist in the smooth and swift immigration of the displaced Ukrainian people in the camps throughout Europe to come to the United States. Special committees were set up in practically every city in the U.S. where Ukrainians lived to assist and speed up the process of feeding and lodging the new immigrants who started coming daily.

In the Syracuse branch of the Ukrainian American Congress Committee, consisting of all local church and fraternal organizations, this was already in existence for a few years. They took it upon themselves to help with the needs of the arriving displaced persons of Ukrainian heritage in and around the Syracuse area. They provided monetary assistance, food, and also temporary lodging with various Ukrainian families. Later on they assisted them in finding employment and adjusting to American life.

There were close to 300 people who arrived in Syracuse within a span of a few years. Most were of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic faith and some were of the Ukrainian Orthodox faith. Many Ukrainian families and individuals living in Syracuse gave great assistance to these newly arrived immigrants—many by sharing a room in their homes, feeding and clothing the family at their own expense until such time they found employment and were able to go out on their own.

Among those who gave assistance to these newly arrived Ukrainians was Mr. Ivan Pihuliak who did an outstanding job in finding employment for the men—their first jobs in the United States. Through his efforts and influence at the Stanton Foundry, many of the men found employment there. It was said that in the working area of the Stanton Foundry, the Ukrainian language was heard as frequently as the English language. There were many others who also assisted the newly arrived immigrants in finding employment.

Most of the new immigrants took whatever work was available so that they could adjust to the American working conditions and their new life in the United States while learning the English language. Many others who had professional degrees worked for a while before going back to college to further their education so they could qualify to work in the United States. Those in the field of medicine entered as interns in the local hospitals to earn the right to practice medicine in the United States.

Since most of the new immigrants were of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic faith, they immediately became members of St. John the Baptist Ukrainian Catholic Church. Many of those who were of the Ukrainian Orthodox faith attended services in the Orthodox churches in Syracuse. As more Ukrainian Orthodox immigrants came to Syracuse, they purchased a small church structure on N. Lowell Avenue and called it St. Luke's Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

The Ukrainian Catholic refugees were pleasantly surprised to see our beautiful church and the Ukrainian National Home that was built by Ukrainians with their own funds. They were also surprised to see the beautiful homes the Ukrainian people had in this beautiful city with large trees, beautiful parks and surroundings. They were also pleased to see the various religious and fraternal organizations started by our Ukrainian people to meet their religious and social needs. However, they were disappointed to find many of the younger generation did not speak Ukrainian and knew very little about the history or the present living conditions of the Ukrainian people.

The Ukrainian National Home became the center for all their activities. Most of them became members of the Ukrainian National Home as well as the fraternal organizations where they insured their families with various types of insurance policies. They also joined the various religious groups within the parish.

As time went on, these new immigrants saw that the existing Ukrainian organizations did not meet all their needs, so they started new organizations to meet the needs of the men, women and children and the new programs and activities which they wanted to develop.

Some of the new organizations they started were the Organization for the Defense of Four Freedoms of Ukraine and the Women's Organization for the Defense of Four Freedoms of Ukraine. They organized for the youth, The Ukrainian Youth Association and Plast. The children's organizations also included Plast and SUMA. They also organized Saturday classes called, "Ridna Shkola of Lesia Ukrainka" where all the children of the parish had the opportunity of enrolling and learning the language, history and culture of the Ukrainian people. The children put on stage plays, concerts and gave recitals throughout the year to display their talents and the progress made in their studies. The best-qualified instructors in each subject staffed the school.

The men organized a male choir, which became one of the most prominent Ukrainian male choirs in New York State. They appeared in many cities throughout the state and took a very prominent part in all concerts, festivals and different affairs held within the Ukrainian community in Syracuse.

They started Ukrainian dance classes for the youth with Mr. Ivan Pihuliak and Mr. Peter Lucyszyn as the instructors. These dancers took a very active part in the life of the Ukrainian community.

Due to the influx of new immigrants to Syracuse after World War II, enrollment in the parish school increased each year so that a new school had to be built in 1953 to meet the needs of the new students. By 1960, the enrollment reached a peak of 275 students.

All of these newly arrived immigrants have greatly enhanced and enriched the religious and cultural life of the Ukrainian community in Syracuse.

Sports

Although the parish did not take an active part in sponsoring athletic events, our youth were always encouraged to participate in good wholesome sports. The parish priests would always announce sporting events, which would be taking place and encouraged parishioners to attend the games and show their support for our teams.

With the founding of the Rusky-Ukrainian Club in the 1920's and with a clubhouse in the 1300 block of W. Fayette Street, the young men of the club organized a baseball team, which was highly rated in Central New York competition. Through the 1920's and early 1930's, they played against most of the semi-professional teams in Central New York and each season they were among the top teams in the competition. Their home field was at Burnet Park, but they played at all the parks where games were scheduled.

A great feature of the baseball season and a big social event was the annual baseball games with the Auburn and Elmira Ukrainian teams. Whether they played at home or out of town, these games always attracted large crowds of Ukrainians. The home games usually ended up with a reception for all the players and a gathering of all the young people at the Rusky-Ukrainian Club.

In 1929, the Rusky-Ukrainian Club built a new three-story brick building. In the following years, after a reception for the players, a dance usually followed and a good orchestra played for the entertainment of young and old. With the building of this spacious new facility, the Rusky-Ukrainian Club tried to expand their membership by encouraging parishioners to join—especially the youth of the parish.

The young people were encouraged to organize a basketball team and to use the facilities of the Rusky-Ukrainian Club for practice sessions and games. The ballroom on the third floor was converted for use as a basketball court. Soon they not only had a men's basketball team but also a good women's basketball team. As the teams progressed, they played more games with popular basketball teams in Syracuse and Central New York. These games drew capacity crowds at the Rusky-Ukrainian Club.

In the early 1930's, another popular basketball team was organized which was known as the "Fatcheric Brothers," composed of Fatcheric family members who were members of our parish. They played against all the popular teams in Central New York and were well known. The games between the Rusky-Ukrainian Club and the Fatcheric Brothers always drew capacity crowds at the Club's basketball court.

Around 1928-29, the teenage sons of members of the Ukrainian Sich Society, Branch 282, Ukrainian National Association decided to organize a Ukrainian Boys Club. They were given permission to hold meetings in one of the back rooms at 409 N. Geddes Street. They came on the monthly meeting date and played in the back yard or went to the baseball games at Frazer Park while their parents attended the meeting. All of these young men were from the West End of the city and played together during the week.

In 1930, the members of the Club agreed to organize a teenage baseball team with their own finances. They opened their membership on the baseball team to other Ukrainian teenage boys who were not members of the Sich Society and started their practice sessions at Burnet Park where they also played their first games with teams who also used the park for practice and games. The following year they joined the City Park League for teenage teams and gained quite a reputation. They also played non-league games with various teams at different parks.

In the spring of 1933, the officers of the Rusky-Ukrainian Club donated to this team their old dark blue and yellow insignia uniforms of their former baseball team. Up until that time, the team played without uniforms. The team was very proud of their new uniforms. The only change they made to the insignia was to cut out the letter "R" for Rusky and left the "U" and "C," denoting "Ukrainian Club." This group of boys played baseball together for a few years while they were in their teens.

The Rusky-Ukrainian Club faced financial difficulties during the depression years and was taken over by the Ukrainian National Home, which was organized in the fall of 1933. Since interest in sports continued and basketball was encouraged for both young men and young ladies, the facilities of the basketball court were made available for the teams.

It must also be noted that in the late 1930's and early 1940's, our parish was honored with two outstanding athletes in their college days. Both were sons of early pioneers of our parish—Stephen Suhey, an all-American football player at Penn State and Americo Woyciesjes, a champion boxer at Syracuse University. Both were outstanding students and athletes with outstanding reputations.

In 1946, the veterans of the parish formed an organization called the Ukrainian-American Catholic War Veterans, Post 560. The following year, the Post entered the sports field by organizing and financing a basketball team. They used the Ukrainian National Home facilities for their practices and games. The Ukrainian Veterans team played in all the top competitions for several years in both the Syracuse City League and the Catholic Youth League (in this league they represented our parish). In addition, they played top-notch independent teams throughout Central New York and Ukrainian veteran teams from Auburn, Rochester, Binghamton, and Sayre, PA as well as other cities. The team won a great number of trophies and had a very large following wherever they played.

In 1953, the Ukrainian National Home Bowling Center was started with a grand opening on Saturday, August 28 and Sunday, August 29, 1954. The Ukrainian National Home was now beginning a new era as a social and recreational center for all Ukrainians.

Sports activities were always an important factor in the lives of the parish youth as well as the adult members. It gave them an opportunity to take an active part in the sports as players or as supporters of the teams by their presence at games. Sports also gave the youth an opportunity to get together with young people in the same age group from other parishes, especially after the games at social gatherings where lasting friendships were formed.

The Dark Period in the History of the Parish

It is with sadness that we must recall the church schism that occurred in the late 1930's, during the pastorates of Rev. E. Sydoriak and Rev. Michael Kuziw. This was due primarily to conflicting national differences as well as differences in opinion of whether the church should be under the rule of the church council or the jurisdiction of the bishop.

In 1900, when the Church Committee applied for a church charter under the incorporation laws of the State of New York, the church council had full authority to run the church.

The first bishop for the Ruthenian Greek Catholics, Bishop Soter Ortynsky, O.S.B.M., was appointed by the Pope and arrived in the United States in 1907. His first duty was to make a study of the major issues and problems of the existing Ruthenian Greek Catholic Churches in the United States. On October 15-16, 1907, he met with his clergy of the existing churches at St. George's Church in New York City, to discuss the various problems facing their parishes.

The Ruthenian Greek Catholic Church in America was growing and in 1909 there were 140 churches and 100 priests. By 1914, there were 206 churches and 159 priests. During his first years in America, the bishop visited most of the existing parishes in order to learn more about the life and problems of his people in each location.

In order to serve and unite all of these churches under his jurisdiction, he had them all apply for a new charter and to incorporate under a new state law of incorporation for Ruthenian Greek Catholic Churches in the United States. The new incorporated laws divided the power and regulations of the churches between the bishop, the priest and the parishioners.

At a parish meeting on March 10, 1910, it was designated by a vote of 25 for and 5 against to place the parish under the jurisdiction of Bishop Soter Ortynsky.

On Monday, March 31, 1913, a special parish meeting was held at 6 o'clock in the home of Mr. Fedir Petruniak, 1021 W. Fayette Street, at which 75 members of the parish were present. The main purpose of this meeting was the incorporation of St. John the Baptist Greek Catholic Church under Bishop Soter Ortynsky, and the acceptance of the charter presented by the bishop. The charter was accepted by unanimous vote.

Throughout the years following the acceptance of the new charter, there were always a few members who caused disturbances and were very vocal about the regulations, resolutions and restrictions that were put in place by the bishop in matters of the parish. In the early 1920's and later, they opposed the transfer of priests or the appointment of new pastors. They tried to limit the decisions of the pastors in exercising their duties for the welfare of the parish. They even restricted the diaks (cantor-teacher) in what could be taught at the evening parish school which included reading and writing the "native language" and religious instructions, but no mention of the word "Ukrainian" or "Ukrainian" history could be made. The church choir was also limited to assisting in giving the responses at the celebration of the Divine Liturgy and other church services. They were permitted to stage plays and hold an annual concert in honor of Taras Shevchenko, but no other concert was permitted to honor any "Ukrainian" events. During the

years between 1920 and 1930, this restriction caused the removal of one or two diaks by the parish officers because they presented concerts to honor heroes of Ukraine or other memorable dates in Ukrainian history.

During the late 1930's, the emotional disturbances broke out into quarrels and demonstrations around the church every Sunday. The Divine Liturgy was interrupted on several Sundays by the outburst of loud voices of some people who tried to prevent the men from serving the priest at the altar and the ushers from performing their duties. The altar boys were also told not to serve at the altar.

Many parishioners became discouraged with what was happening and could not stand the humiliation any longer, so they began to attend services in other Catholic churches in the neighborhood. The parishioners who lived in the suburbs began to attend services in nearby churches rather than to travel into the city to attend the Divine Liturgy. Due to this strife, many parishioners were lost - permanently.

The same scenes around the church continued for a couple of years while the trial and court procedures were going on. Agitators in front of the church greeted the worshippers and the police were present to break up any outbursts or demonstrations. Cameras and newspaper people were waiting to take pictures of some "event" that might take place and then publish the latest facts in Monday's newspaper. It was a discouraging and trying time for all those who wanted to worship in their own church and in their own rite. One bright feature during all those years of strife was that the church choir sang responses during the celebration of the Divine Liturgy without interruption Sunday after Sunday—sometimes under difficult circumstances.

Finally, during the pastorate of Rev. Michael Kuziw, the court trial and proceedings ended in favor of the 1913 church charter which divided the authority in the administration of the church among the bishop, priest and parishioners. As a result of this decision, another group of parishioners left St. John's and established their own church.

These troublesome years stunted the growth of the parish, depleted the finances of the church, caused a great loss in membership and caused neglect in the upkeep (interior and exterior) of the church, rectory, and grounds around the church and cemetery.

The next few years after the court proceedings, were a period of healing, forgiveness and possibly forgetting the events that tore the parish apart. It became a period of greater sacrifices for the remaining loyal parishioners. They were asked to give more so that the church and rectory could be renovated and the grounds around the church and cemetery could be brought to order.

All was not lost due to this strife. Over a period of years, people started to forget the bitterness of the division in the parish. Many of the older parishioners returned to their original church, followed by many of the young people who left the parish. Many others became friends again, attending events (weddings, funerals and church affairs) in each other's parishes. Many of those who did not return as members of St. John's made it a point to visit their original parish on Christmas and Easter.

Parish Organizations

- 1893 – Rusins or Rusnaky, as the first immigrants were known, organized the first Fraternal organization—Branch 34 Sojedynia
- 1900 – Lemky, as some of the early immigrants were called, organized the Sts. Peter & Paul Society—Branch 39 Rusky Soyz (Ukrainian National Association)
- 1912 – St. Olga 's Providence Association was founded
- 1921 – Ukrainian Church Choir and Amateur Dramatic Circle was organized
- 1925 – Sacred Heart Society was organized by Fr. L. Lewicky
- 1926 – Ukrainian-American Citizens Club was organized while Fr. E. Sydoriak was Pastor
- 1932 – Catholic Daughters was organized by Mrs. E. Sydoriak
- 1933 – Ukrainian Catholic Youth Organization
- 1937 – Ukrainian Central Committee
- 1946 – Ukrainian-American Catholic War Veterans – Post 560
- 1950 – Junior Sodality and Altar Society
- 1955 – Mothers' Club (school)
- 1955 – Holy Name Society (August 7)

Highlights of Parish Events

1885-1888 – The first Ukrainian immigrants settled in the Syracuse vicinity. Early immigrants were known as Rusins and Lemkos.

1896 – A committee of 14 met at Frank Petruniak Beverage—residence at 1021 W. Fayette Street, Syracuse, NY—to discuss plans for the establishment of a parish and building a church.

1897 – Committee bought a home and a plot of land on the corner of Wilbur Avenue and Tompkins Street.

1898 – The first Divine Liturgy was celebrated in Syracuse, NY in the Greek Catholic Rite.

1900 – The first immigrants organized a parish and applied for a church charter in the state of New York.

1903 – The home on the corner of Wilbur Avenue and Tompkins Street (that was bought after some opposition) was finally restructured into a church. Rev. Iwan Welyhorsky, the first permanent pastor, blessed it.

1910 – At a parish meeting, it was voted to place our church and parish under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of Bishop Soter Ortynsky.

1913 – Blessing of the new church took place. (Today's existing structure)

1922 – Visitation of Most Rev. Andrew Count Sheptytsky, Archbishop – Metropolitan of Lviv. During a second visit to the United States, he visited many existing parishes, among which was St. John's parish. During these visits, he collected funds for more than 20,000 orphans in Halychyn (western Ukraine).

1928 – Visitation of Bishop Constantine Bohachewsky and Bishop Basil Takach.

1930 – During the late 1930's a church schism occurred and ended in a court trial during the pastorate of Rev. Michael Kuziw.

1936 – Ukrainian Day held in Syracuse (Buffalo Deanery) for the benefit of the Ukrainian Seminary.

1937 – Ukrainian Central Committee was organized with Rev. Michael Kuziw acting as chairman.

1948 – Visitation of His Excellency Ambrose Senyshyn.

1954 – Opening and dedication of St. John the Baptist Ukrainian Catholic School.

1963 – Dedication and blessing of the new convent on Tompkins Street.

1967 – Dedication and blessing of the new rectory.

1968 – Visitation of His Eminence Joseph Cardinal Slipyj.

1975 – Celebration of the 75th anniversary of the parish on October 12, 1975.