

**A Sincere Thank You from Fr. Peter Galadza to Bishop Stephen and the Concelebrating Clergy, As Well as the Members of the Eparchy of Toronto Who Attended the Blessing of the Sheptytsky Institute's New Home at the University of St. Michael's College**

As director of the Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky Institute of Eastern Christian Studies (MASI) – now at the University of St. Michael's College in the University of Toronto – allow me to sincerely thank all those clergy and faithful of our Eparchy who participated in different ways in the blessing of the Institute's new home. (For more about the event, see the story posted here.)

First of all, Bishop Stephen was most gracious in appointing Bishop Borys Gudziak as his representative to the event when he learned that he would not be able to attend personally. Bishop Stephen has always supported the Sheptytsky Institute, and added proof is the work and constant co-operation of his Episcopal Vicar, Fr. Bohdan Bilinsky. As I wrote to Fr. Bohdan when he RSVP'd us that he would be present for the event: "You have always been there for us!" Thus, a sincere thank-you to him, Bishop Stephen, and all the chancery staff!

As is frequently the case, we were not able to have all the clergy concelebrate at the tetrapod, but those who were invited represented a cross section of our clergy and parishes. They have helped the Sheptytsky Institute in different ways for decades. Naturally, we thank all of the other parishes and clergy who have generously assisted us throughout the years, but below are several stories of unique support.

Fr. John Tataryn, the second concelebrating priest, not only housed a delegation from the Institute when it travelled to Toronto almost six years ago for the very first negotiations with St. Mike's about re-location, he has also opened his rectory and St. Demetrius Parish to various activities associated with the Institute for decades. The subdiaconal candidates at St. Demetrius are a joy to work with – and Deacon Eugene Doroniuk, along with some of those candidates, provided invaluable help during our relocation.

Fr. Roman Galadza (and *Dobr.* Iryna) of St. Elias Church, have done everything from billeting large groups of singers from the Sheptytsky Institute Choir – with their small children – to donating the iconostas and other furnishings for the Institute's chapel, to teaching in our Institute Study Days. Their rectory has become a free "bed and breakfast" for hundreds of people associated with MASI.

Fr. Michael Loza (and *Dobr.* Oksana) sponsored the debut concert of our Institute Choir at St. Joseph's in Oakville almost three years ago. They also served as MCs at the Institute's very first fund-raising banquet at St. Mike's in 2014, when Patriarch Sviatoslav, the Institute's international patron, first announced his dream for the Institute's relocation to Toronto.

The Institute's alumnus, Fr. Alexander Laschuk of St. Nicholas Church, has become a beloved "fixture" of MASI. He served as acting director in 2013-2014 and continues to teach as a sessional lecturer. He and *Dobr.* Olenka are part of a growing generation of young clergy families – graduates of MASI – who have a special bond with the Institute. St. Nicholas Church, through the good offices of its pastor, Fr. Roman Lobay, also provided invaluable storage space

for MASI publications during the last several years of transition, not to mention accommodations for MASI clergy when we needed to stay downtown.

While Fr. Stephen Wojcichowsky now serves in Edmonton, he hails from Montreal and got his start as a deacon at St. Demetrius in Toronto. In 2006 he agreed to move to Ottawa with *Dobr. Maria* to serve as director of MASI during a crucial time in the Institute's history. Those six years were among the most blessed in MASI's history. As I have frequently said, Fr. Stephen provided all of us with important lessons in "directorship." And we are still hoping that someone who has been privileged to hear Fr. Stephen preach, will fund a "Stephen Wojcichowsky Chair in Homiletics" at MASI!

Fr. Michael Winn is also not technically a priest of our Eparchy, but he has served with outstanding distinction as rector of the Intereparchial Seminary in Ottawa. He is a joy to work with. He is also the most edifying example of priestly commitment that any seminarian could hope for. Moreover, Fr. Michael has done teaching as a sessional for MASI. We continue to hope that the Seminary will find a building in Toronto. Saints of Ukraine and Canada – pray for us!

We were very blessed to be able to benefit from the ministry of Protodeacon David Kennedy of St. Elias in Brampton. The organization of the service enabled all of us to immerse ourselves in prayer. The task of a deacon is to facilitate this, and Fr. David did it with his customary meticulous attention to detail. Because he attended to these issues, we, for our part, were able to pray.

And where would we have been without the conducting of Subdeacon Brian Butcher and the cantoring of Larisa Cronin? Dr. Butcher, one of the most outstanding scholars that MASI has ever employed, also had to step in last minute to read the Our Father in Syriac, when the Maronite priest was unable to attend. And under his direction the Sheptytsky Institute Choir sang beautifully. The entire assembly was able to join in sung prayer under Larisa's professional direction. Articulate and inspired reading was provided by Larisa's daughter, Taissa Cronin, and Subdeacon Andrew Bennett, former ambassador of the Office of Religious Freedom.

Turning to our other participants, MASI was so gratified to see *Dobr. Marion Barszczyk*, national president of the UCWLC, at our event along with the distinguished members of her executive, Tamara Woloschuk and Olga Danylak. (I apologize if there were others that slipped my attention.) As national spiritual advisor for the UCWLC I have had a chance to see up close what a marvelous group of women our national executive is! The UCWLC across Canada has helped MASI in numerous ways, and we know that the relationship will become even stronger.

Finally, our Ukrainian Catholic Knights of Columbus were ably represented by Sir Knight Bohdan Oleksyshyn and Sir Knight Andrew Stamler. MASI looks forward to working closely with the Sheptytsky Council of the Knights of Columbus. Along with a prominent Melkite Knight, our Sheptytsky Council Knights added dignity to the evening, escorting Cardinal Collins during the service.

Speaking of Melkites – and Middle Eastern Christians – I strongly encourage all of our clergy and faithful in the Toronto area to visit two communities that were represented by the following

clergy: Fr. Ibrahim El-Haddad and Fr. John Boutros. Fr. Ibrahim is the new pastor of Jesus the King Melkite Church. On Sundays, the Melkites now worship in heavenly splendor in Transfiguration Church in Markham (the former Slovak Byzantine Catholic Cathedral). You owe it to yourself to get to know these Christians from Lebanon, Syria and Jordan. Incidentally, September 1-4, their parish is sponsoring a national convention of Melkite youth. More than 300 young Greek Catholics will descend upon Markham that weekend.

Representing the Coptic community was Fr. John Boutros. He is the new pastor of a very unique parish near the corner of Bathurst and College. The parish provides committed ministry to students. It's another church that you really want to get to know. All Copts, and especially this community, are exemplary in their ability to transmit the faith to the next generation. At our blessing, their young people concluded the service with hymns from the Coptic tradition. With the Ukrainian Catholics, the Copts share a tradition of suffering for the faith. They may not be our "blood brothers," but they are bonded with Ukrainian Greco-Catholics with an infinitely stronger link: the blood of their martyrs has soaked the land of Egypt as testimony to the power of the Resurrection.

We were very happy to see so many members of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church present at the event, and Bishop Andriy Pashko personally communicated to me his regrets that he would not be able to attend. However, Bishop Andriy was present at both of our previous evenings at St. Michael's and we are gratified by his positive sentiments.

In conclusion, the evening simply would not have been the same without the presence of our two Ukrainian Catholic Eparchs, Bishop David Motiuk of Edmonton and Bishop Bryan Bayda of Saskatoon. Bishop David has been outstanding in his moral – and financial – support for MASI. As I like to say, the Institute may be located in Ontario, but without Alberta, it would probably cease to exist. Peter and Doris Kule, the Institute's greatest benefactors, hail from Bishop David's Eparchy.

As for Bishop Bryan, he has marvelously stepped into the role of liaison Bishop between the Ukrainian Catholic hierarchy of Canada and the Sheptytsky Institute Foundation. His commitment has been most inspiring. And as a former student of the University of St. Michael's College, Bishop Bryan has been unsurpassed in his support for our re-location to Toronto.

Naturally, acknowledgements will be sent to various other individuals without whom the blessing and inaugural address by Bishop Borys would not have been as successful. But it seemed appropriate that our Toronto Eparchial website carry this more focused expression of gratitude. *Velyke spasnybi vsim Vam!!!*

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