



Mission Society of the Mother of God of Boronyavo, Inc.

Volume 4, Number 1

Pascha 2002

Christ Is Risen! Indeed He Is Risen!

BISHOP MILAN COMING TO U.S. FOR NEXT CONFERENCE

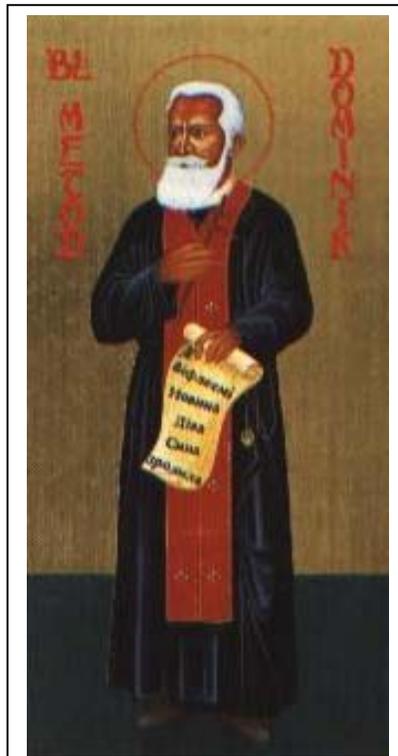
The Mission Society 2002 Conference promises to be outstanding and everyone is urged to come to Denver, Colorado for our meeting on Saturday, August 3, at Saint Vincent de Paul Church, Denver. Bishop Milan Chatur, CSsSR, the Bishop of the Kosice Exarchate, will be present, coming from World Youth Day in Canada. Bishop Milan is a dynamic young Redemptorist bishop, from the Monastery of Michalovce where Blessed Methodius Dominic Trčka is buried. He has led the Exarchate in its first five years, pushing for solid liturgical reform, expansion of parishes, youth work, and promoting vocations. The Exarchate is now producing more young priests than it has parish assignments!

Denver is easily accessible for air travel, and Union Station still has Amtrak service downtown. It's a beautiful city, and the Byzantine Catholic parish of

"Conference," continued on page 3

TWO NEW BLESSEDS

Father Chris attended the beatification of two more Blesseds of the Byzantine-Ruthenian Catholic Church, who died as martyrs in Communist Czechoslovakia. When their portraits above the main doors of Saint Peter's



Blessed Methodius Dominic Trčka, CSsSR

Basilica were unveiled, the faithful roared their delight and applauded.

Bishop Paul Peter Gojdich, OSBM, intended to lead a quiet monastic life, but was called instead to head the Eparchy of Presov in what was then central Czechoslovakia. He had a great devotion to the Mother of God, and was known as "Father of the Poor" during the Great Depression.

During World War II, Bishop Gojdich was one of the few Church leaders in semi-independent Slovakia who spoke out to the government against the deportation of the Jews, in response to the Apostolic Nuncio and Pope Pius XII. He wrote letters to the Slovak Government denouncing the deportations as inhumane, when Slovakia was a Nazi ally, which was quite dangerous.

Further, Pope John Paul II pointed out in his sermon that Bishop Gojdich bore the names of the two great Apostles of Rome, and that this became symbolic of his attachment to the Holy See.

After the War, Bishop Gojdich was also Administrator for parishes of the Mukachevo and Hajdudorogh Eparchies that found themselves inside the new

"Blesseds," continued on page 4

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

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

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

*Mailing address:
1838 Palomas NE
Albuquerque, NM 87110
telephone:
(505) 265-5350.
Website:
www.missionboronyavo.org*

**LOCAL
REPRESENTATIVES:**

**Denver: Fr. Deacon
Andrew and Olga Bodnar -
(303) 932-1490
Phoenix: Diane Rabiej -
(480) 460-0902
Albuquerque: Sven
Svensson (505) 292-4271**

**NATIONAL LEVEL:
Chaplain-Moderator Rev.
Chris Zuger**

**Directors:
Rose Mary Mastripolito
Cassandra Epstein
National Officers:
Olga Bodnar - Director
Diane Rabiej - Assistant
Director
Joanne Popovich - Secretary
Brian Escobedo - Treasurer**

**Newsletter Editor: Rev.
Chris Zuger
Newsletter Layout:
Stephanie Block**

Letter from the Byzantine Catholic Seminary of SS Cyril and Methodius

March 12, 2002

Glory to Jesus Christ!

Dear Father Chris and Members of the Mission Society of the Mother of God:

I am writing to gratefully acknowledge your generous gift of \$250.00 to the Byzantine Catholic Seminary that we received on 12/30/00. Your gift, along with the gifts of other generous supporters, will assist the Seminary as it continues its mission of forming spiritual leaders for the Byzantine Catholic Church.

The education of seminarians is vital to our Church since it provides us with the spiritual leaders needed to further the teachings of Christ. You, the People of God in our various parishes, deserve spiritually mature and educationally well-prepared priests to serve you, your families and your loved ones. Our task and our mission are to prepare such men for ministry. It is especially important, in this regard, that our facilities and programs be up-to-date and fully accredited by the Association of Theological Schools. Your donation will be used toward those ends.

As we go about the daily activities of the Seminary, but especially in our prayers and liturgical services, we will remember you, our benefactors. We hope one day you will be able to visit the Seminary in Pittsburgh, PA, and see the fruits of your kindness.

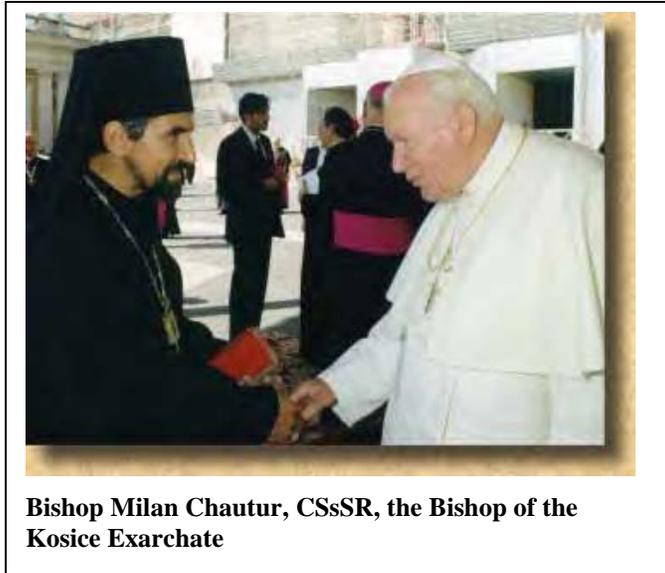
On behalf of the seminarians and staff and faculty of the Byzantine Catholic Seminary, we extend our sincere gratitude for your kindness and generosity. We pray that the blessing of the Lord be upon you and your loved ones.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

(Very Rev. Archpriest) John G. Petro
Rector

“Conference,” continued on page 3

the Dormition is observing 27 years in a lovely little church near our meeting center. Both churches are in the Cherry Creek area and downtown Denver is a real treat. Watch for your invitation and mark your calendar to join us. This is your chance to ask questions about the needs of the Church in both Slovakia and Trans-Carpathia, and hear from those who live there or visit there regularly. Join us August 2-4 – it's important! ✚



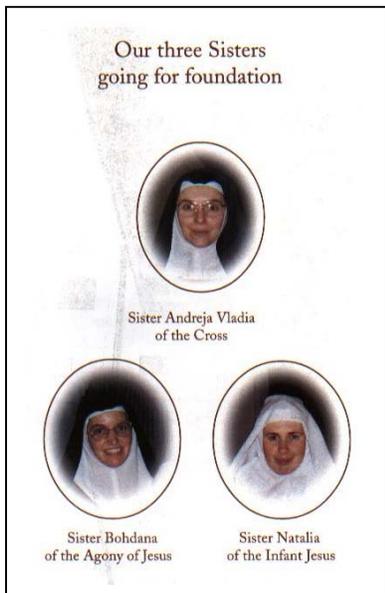
SUCCESSFUL CARMELITE FOUNDATION

The Byzantine Catholic Carmel of Saint Therese is now open in the town of Koritnany, between Mukachevo and Uzhorod. An Orthodox family, the Lazarenkos, sold the property to the Carmelites in 1997 and the house and courtyard have been renovated for monastic use.

The Sisters are enclosed in the traditional style and, in what also seems to be traditional for Carmelites, have a large dog, Dan, guarding them. Father Chris met him through the fence last summer and Dan is indeed a very, very large dog, but devoted to the Nuns.

Three Sisters are in the new Foundation, and they hope to receive aspirants soon. The Carmel has a vegetable and flower garden, kitchen, “speak room” – where guests speak to the Nuns through the grille – and a nicely re-done interior in brick and wood.

This is the first contemplative women's monastery to be established in the Eparchy of Mukachevo ever. From the outside of the little monastery, the steeples of a joint-use parish can be seen in the town. Roman and Byzantine Catholics alternate worship there, and it is hoped that the Carmelites’ prayers will bring about not only more vocations, but healing among the divisions in Trans-Carpathia and spiritual strength to the Eparchy of Mukachevo. ✚



TREBISOV ICONOSTAS

The Church of the Assumption, in Trebisov, Slovakia, had its new iconostas blessed by Bishop Milan during Great Lent. The iconostas is an exact replica of the one destroyed in the 1950s, with the icons written in the baroque style so popular in the 19th century in our churches.

Special thanks are due to Father Ed Cimbala and the parishioners of Saint Mary of the Assumption Church in Trenton, New Jersey. Founded by immigrants from Trebisov, this parish raised \$2,200 in donations. Father Dusan, the pastor in Trebisov, calls Father Cimbala "a hero" for his parish's generosity. What a great example of trans-oceanic cooperation.

The money from Trenton and other donors will be used to pay off the parish's debt to the iconographer and wood-carvers, and is a great blessing. ✚

Czechoslovakia. He was bitterly persecuted by the Communists precisely because of his social action for the poor (which contrasted sharply with the Communists' own poor performance) and his loyalty to Rome. He died, as he had prayed, on his birthday, which is now his feast day, July 17.

Father Methodius Dominic Trčka, CSsSR, should stand as a model for many of the people in our American Byzantine Catholic Church and supporters of the Society. Like many of us, he came to the Greek-Catholic Church out of love for its spirituality, prayers, music, and devotions. He founded the Byzantine Catholic Redemptorists among the Ruthenian Eparchies of Presov and Mukachevo. His bright white beard became symbolic among the people of his holiness, and earned him great respect. He is commemorated on March 23, the day of his death, and August 24.



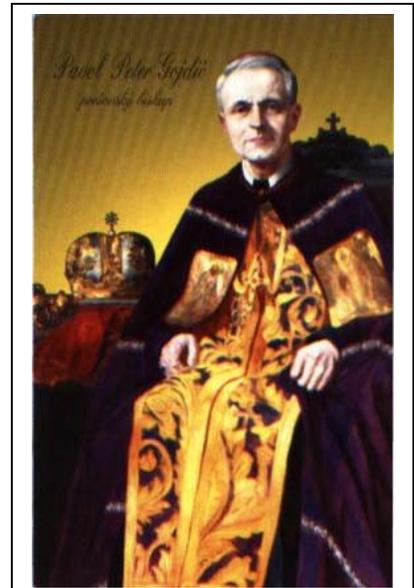
MISSION SOCIETY "THANK YOU'S"

The Mission Society has given \$250 to the **Seminary in Pittsburgh** as part of its endowment campaign. The Seminary currently has four men studying for holy priesthood - pray for both of them, and for more good, solid men to answer the call of Jesus to work in the harvest.

There is a great interest in Eastern Christianity in the USA, and our Byzantine Catholic Church can reap a rich harvest of souls for God, if only we have more priests, more deacons, more religious, and active believers who welcome everyone who shows interest in our Church.

May Blessed Methodius Trčka show us the way to build up our Church and to reach out to the 60% of Americans who do not attend church every Sunday!

As the Mission Society is headquartered in the territory of the Eparchy of Van Nuys, the Board of Directors thought it appropriate to help newly-ordained **Bishop William Skurla** with the high cost of his new vestments. The Mission Society donated \$300 to Father Skurla for his new crown, made by the Sister Servants of Canada, and he sent a most kind thank you note. Father Chris' parish, Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church, also collected spiritual bouquets, and an icon of Bishop's patron, Saint Basil, for the new bishop. The parish's portable iconostas was used in the services at Saint Helena Roman Catholic Church for the ordination and enthronment. *May God grant to his servant, Bishop William, many blessed years in health and happiness!*



Bishop Paul Peter Gojdich, OSBM

GREAT SUPPORT FOR THE VINOHRADIV ORPHANAGE FOR INFANTS TO AGE 9

When Father Chris was in Ukraine and gave \$50 to the director of the Vinohradiv Orphanage, the director wept because that small amount would buy a new refrigerator for the milk and medicines. This Orphanage is visited regularly by Father Taras Lovska, a sterling priest who has been leading the construction of the new Greek-Catholic Church for the main parts of the town. He finds godparents for the



**Lou Rabiej, cook for 3rd
Annual St. Stephen Pancake
Breakfast**

baptisms of each child, who are instructed not only to insure that the orphan or abandoned child continues to practice the Greek-Catholic Faith, but also to assist the child as much as possible

with clothing, any needed medication, books, and devotional items.

The Orphanage has a large room lined with icons and holy pictures where the children pray. Thanks to members Diane and Lou Rabiej in Phoenix, Arizona, and the kindness of Archpriest Stephen G. Washko, Rector of Saint Stephen's Pro-Cathedral, a pancake breakfast was held for the Orphanage and raised \$911.00 from breakfast sales and donations. Think of the good that Father Taras can do with so much money for these little ones!

www.missionboronyavo.org

*Want to help the Mission
Society?
Send the Mission Society
web address to everyone on
your email list!*

ORDER CONFERENCE TAPES

\$10 per set.

The three cassette tapes include inspiring talks by:

- ❖ **Bohdan Zeikan (on the needs of the Church in Trans-Carpathia)**
- ❖ **Father Tomas Muszka (the history of the persecution in Communist Czechoslovakia and the problems of moral reconstruction)**
- ❖ **Robert Jager (the spiritual and moral needs of youth in Slovakia today)**
- ❖ **Olga Bodnar (the plight of children in the orphanages and their difficult future)**
- ❖ **Father Chris Zugger (on listening to the pleas of Our Lady at Fatima as her message applies to our apostolate, history of our Church in Central Europe, problems in Ukraine).**

All this for only \$10 - please order from the Mission Office.

DIVINE LITURGY FOR MEMBERS AND BENEFACTORS

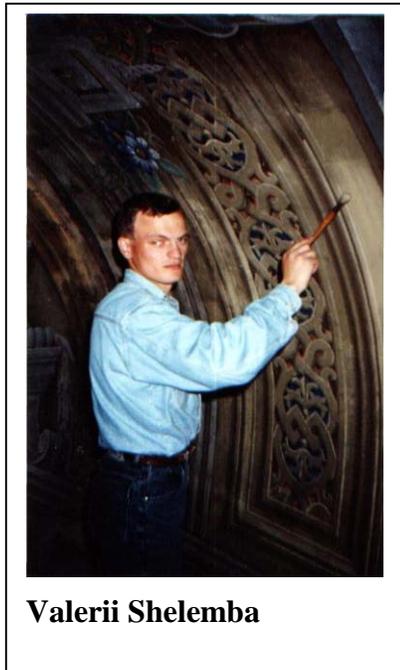
The Feast of the Annunciation, the day when Our Lord became Incarnate in the womb of the Virgin Mary, was observed with a concelebrated Divine Liturgy on the evening of March 25th. Father Chris offered the Liturgy for the intentions of all of our members and benefactors, as this is one of the feast days of the Boronyavo Icon.

Even though March 25th was also Holy Monday, the Byzantine Catholic Church continues to keep the feast on its exact date because of its great importance in our salvation, and as an affirmation of the Conception of Our Lord and His Humanity and Divinity instantly united in One Person. In this era of anti-life activism, the Annunciation, nine months before Christmas, stands as a profound witness to the sacredness of human life from the moment of conception.

The next Liturgies for the members and benefactors will be on July 20, Saint Elias Day, and August 15, Dormition/ Assumption of Our Lady Day. ✚

THE WORK OF THE SHELEMBA BROTHERS

Father Vitalii Shelemba is the pastor of a village parish, Kugor, in Bereg Raion of Trans-Carpathia. The village remained crypto-Catholic during the years of Russian Orthodox priests being assigned to it, and after 1989 registered as a Greek-Catholic parish



Valerii Shelemba

again. This young priest really impressed Father Chris with his devotion during the Divine Liturgy at the Pilgrimage (Otpust) in honor of the Holy Spirit last summer.

He has three happy little boys, Mikhail, Vitalii, and Valerii. Liturgy stipends and food parcels to Father Vitalii mean a better living not only for this family, but for the poor

in the village.

One connection leads to another – Valerii Shelemba is shown at work (to the left) on the ceiling of the Church in Bilki. This beautiful church was decorated and painted in Austrian Baroque style in the mid-18th century in the late baroque style by Austrian artists Ferdinand Wrtta and Jan Wahrich, covering 450 square meters of ceilings and pillars. During Soviet days, it was used as a “club.” Most of the church items were taken by parishioners in 1950 and hidden in their homes. When the believers regained the church, they first had to sweep out the layers of bottles of vodka and cigarette butts.

The church is filled with scaffolding, and the iconostas and altar were the first items to be restored. The ceilings are literally black from smoke from drinking parties, but the beautiful frescoes survive underneath. Full restoration will take \$20,000, an unbelievable amount of money in Ukraine.

This church has the

“Father,” continued on page 7



Mikhail, Vitalii, and Valerii

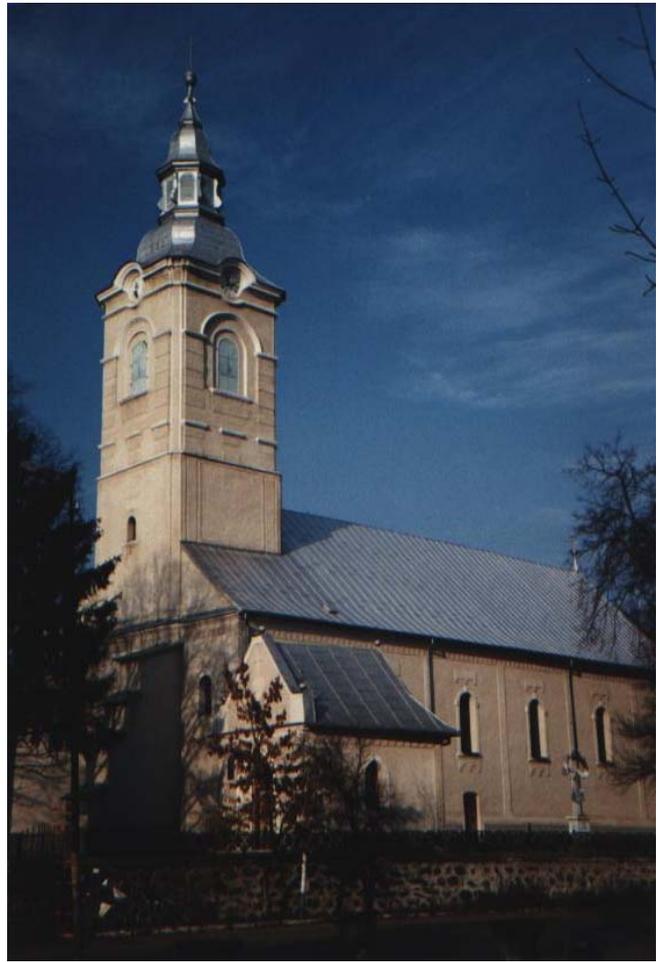
"Father," continued on page 7

distinction of being the burial place of Bishop-Martyr Petro Oros, executed in 1953 in Irshava, and now resting in a special chapel outside the main church under an image of the Sacred Heart.

If you are interested in helping this restoration project, where the Shelemba brothers' father, Mikhail, is the parish priest, please write to us. ✚



FATHER VITALII AT LITURGY



Church in Bilki

Early in the summer of 1914, twenty-two Greek Catholic peasants were mowing hay in the fields near a Greek Catholic chapel dedicated to the Blessed Trinity outside the fields of Hrushiv, in Galicia, Austria-Hungary (now located in western Ukraine). The chapel surrounded a water well blessed with healing powers and commemorating several appearances of the Virgin Mary and a revelation of the Trinity at the site. Suddenly, the Mother of God appeared to the farm workers. She announced that there would be a terrible war and that Russia would become godless, bringing suffering for the next eighty years to believers and bringing all humanity to the edge of destruction – unless Russia would turn to Christ.

The message bewildered the peasants. The Russian Empire was officially Eastern Orthodox in religion, yet no one in rural Galicia had ever heard of a nation becoming godless. Yet the Virgin 's predictions would come true and dramatically change the lives of Catholics in the Russian Empire. Eventually the village of Hrushiv would be affected as well (while under Soviet rule, the village would be the scene of another series of apparitions of the Mother of God in 1987— long after the Greek Catholic Church had been officially extinguished).

Excerpt from The Forgotten: Catholics of the Soviet Empire from Lenin through Stalin, by Rev. Christopher Zugger



Father Daniel Bendas and his son George, in front of the parish house

PROGRESS IN MALA KOPANYA VILLAGE

Father Daniel Bendas and his son George stand before the new parish house in Mala Kopanya, in the foothills of the Carpathians on a winter day. Your donations paid for all the new windows and doors - only \$250!

The chapel includes the stone altar of the 15th century church, and the parish house is used for daily Liturgy in winter, parish library, education classes, and children's classes. There is a loft for guests.

The "new church" of Saint Basil stands next door, and was built in 1752. This is another village that remained successfully crypto-Catholic throughout Communist times. There is still work to be done if you wish to donate to this parish house. ✚



Mala Kopanya Ikonostas



Mala Kopanya parishioners at prayer

Reports of Abandoned Newsletters

What a crime! Make copies of your Mission Society newsletter and pass them out at church, GCU Lodge meetings, Knights of Columbus, and other groups. Don't abandon your newsletter:

Spread the word!

CONSTRUCTION OF NEW VINOHRADIV CHURCH

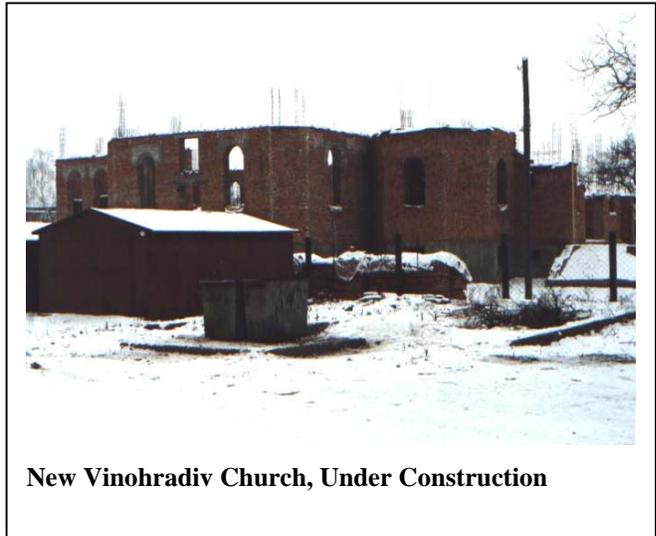
The new Vinohradiv church will replace the cramped parish house currently used for worship. It is being built under the direction of Father Taras. The construction is completely by volunteer labor, and is being accomplished at an astonishing rate, given the poor economy.

What happened to the old church? Well, it still stands on the main square, near the parish house. It is now used by an Orthodox group, who held the church after 1950 and had promised Father Taras that if he donated 10,000 bricks to the construction of a new Orthodox church, they would return the old one. So he did, but the church was not – and never will be – returned to Greek-Catholic use.

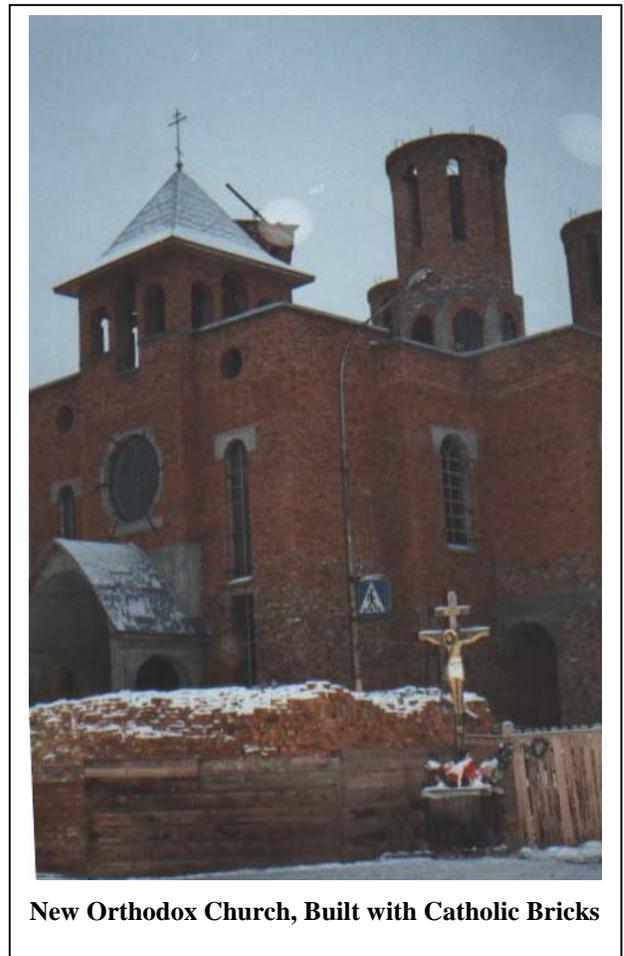
The new Russian Orthodox church (photo to the right) is used every day, though not completely finished on the interior. Nevertheless, the Byzantine Catholics are not permitted to return to the old church, as promised. The Orthodox community insists on keeping both the old church as well as the new one, for use by the Russian and Ukrainian factions, and will not give any reimbursement for the 10,000 “donated bricks to the Catholic parish. The title to the old church is held by the local government; generally local governments in Trans-Carpathia are reluctant to return any more of the old churches to Greek-Catholic use on a permanent basis.

Such is the case in many towns. The only consolation is that the new church will belong solely to the Greek-Catholic Church, not the Ukrainian Government.

Father John Zeyack of St. Thomas Church in Rahway, NJ, has been instrumental in helping Father Taras with funding this church and helping the local poor. ✚



New Vinohradiv Church, Under Construction



New Orthodox Church, Built with Catholic Bricks

THE VINOHRADIV PARISH HOUSE

Parish houses are extremely important to our Byzantine Catholic parishes in villages where the population is now split between Greek-Catholics and Orthodox. In some churches, Catholics are restricted to a few hours of worship; in other villages, no Catholics are allowed at all in the church, even if Greek-Catholics outnumber the Orthodox. A parish house provides worship space, classrooms, and a library; priests generally have to find their own lodging elsewhere.

The altar (pictured on the right) of the current parish house in Vinohradiv, is served by Father Taras Lovska. A survivor of the Gulag, Father Ivan Roman, who was one of the priests who “took to the mountains” with Bishop Oros in 1946, was the first priest to serve here. In this cramped house on the main square, Divine Liturgy is offered, classes are held, and parish meetings take place. Usually the worshippers spill outside the doors and listen to the Liturgy through open windows, and Holy Communion has to be given outside in the courtyard as well as inside. ✠



Parish House Altar



Fr. Taras Lovska of Vinohradiv Church in Trans-Carpathia and Fr. John Zeyack of St. Thomas Church in Rahway, New Jersey

IN MEMORIAM

We have received several donations in memory of Katherine Vislocky Gibson, daughter of one of our pioneer priests, who fell asleep in the Lord in March. We have received \$1,450 to date, with the request that Father Chris use the money where it is needed most, and for some liturgies for the repose of her soul to be offered in her father's homeland. This is a wonderful, lasting way to help our poor brethren overseas – simply put in the obituary notice: in lieu of flowers, please send donations to

*The Mission Society
Of the Mother of God of Boronyavo, Inc.
1838 Palomas NE
Albuquerque, NM 87110*

Mission Society's Disbursements

- ❖ **Church of the Assumption, Trebisov, for Iconostas: \$2,500**
- ❖ **Church of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary, Michalovce, for repairs to walls and roof: \$345**
- ❖ **Vinohradiv Orphanage, through Father Taras Lovska: \$1,000**
- ❖ **Liturgy Stipends to Priests in Slovakia and Trans-Carpathia: \$300**
- ❖ **Food Parcels to Priests in Trans-Carpathia, Ukraine, for their families and the poor: three large packages, \$179**
- ❖ **Exarchate of Kosice for Youth Work: \$100**

Increase Your Devotion and Knowledge

- ___ Bishop Romzha Icon: framed, from portrait of him as student in Russicum- \$12;
- ___ Bishop Romzha: small wooden standing icon - \$11
- ___ Our Lady Of Boronyavo icon, to stand up or hang on the wall: 5 x 7 print in simple gold frame - \$3.50;
- ___ Our Lady Of Boronyavo icon, 5 x 7 in slate frame - \$15
- ___ A Spiritual Psalter, or Reflections on God - a collection of the writings of the great mystic and Doctor of the Church, Saint Ephrem of Syria, in psalm form under certain categories (mercy, hope, love, love of God, Mary, Jesus), leather-bound with gold trim and gold stamping, pocket size but 255 pages - \$31.95
- ___ "Mary Save Us!" Reprint of a little prayerbook, handwritten by Lithuanian girls arrested for tearing down posters that ordered the closing of churches in Soviet Lithuania Their beautiful, simple prayers written from the Gulag in 1953 and smuggled home to Lithuania are deeply touching - your cost is only \$2.50
- ___ "Eastern Catholics in the United States of America:" For our Roman Catholic supporters and our Byzantine Catholics who want to spread knowledge about the Eastern Catholic Churches, this is a great booklet put out by the United States Catholic Conference, \$2
- ___ "Light of the East: A Guide to Eastern Catholicism for Western Catholics" by Father George Appleyard - 88 pages of simple but solid explanation, \$7.75

Place your orders at The Byzantine Gift Shop/ 1837 Alvarado Drive NE/ Albuquerque, NM, 87110-5101.

Credit Card: Circle One
 Master Card + VISA + Discover + American Express
 Expiration Date: _____
 Name on Credit Card: _____
 Billing Address: _____
 Shipping Address (If different from billing): _____
 Items Ordered (Check spaces above)

Paying by check: Make check to "Our Lady of Perpetual Help Byzantine Gift Shop"

SHIPPING COSTS:
ADD 10% OF YOUR TOTAL

Paschal Gift to the Mission Society of the Mother of God of Boronyavo, Inc.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Enclosed Is My Donation:

\$10 \$25 \$50 Other \$ _____

Please Use My Donation to Support the Following Projects in Central Europe

TRANS-CARPATHIA

- Youth Center and School in Korolevo
- Vinohradiv Orphanage
- Vinohradiv Greek Catholic Church
- Restoration of Church in Bilki
- Mala Kopanya Parish House

SLOVAKIA

- Trebisov Youth Center
- Repairs to walls of Michalovce Church

Where the need is greatest

Liturgy Stipends (\$5 for each Divine Liturgy - please state your intention clearly)

Conference Tapes \$10 each (how many sets?)

Use the envelope provided with this mailing. Please use this form or mark your check accordingly:

“Mission Society of the Mother of God of Boronyavo”

In This Issue...

Next Mission Conference.....page 1

Two New Blesseds.....page 1

Letter from SS Cyril and Methodius Seminary.....page 2

Carmelite Foundation.....page 3

Trebisov Iconostas.....page 4

Mission “Thank you”.....page 4

Vinohradiv Orphanage.....page 5

Conference Tapes.....page 5

Divine Liturgy for Mission Members and Benefactors....page 6

Work of Sheleme Brothers .page 6

Progress in Mala Kopanya...page 8

New Vinohradiv Church.....page 9

Growth and Conflict in Trans-Carpathia.....page 10

In Memoriam.....page 11

Society Disbursements.....page 11

Gift Shop and Book Order Form.....page 11

