



SERRAPOST

May 2012

Jim Meyer Editor 416-446-0008
jmeyer7745@aol.com



Mary, Mother of Vacations,
Pray for Us

The Ukrainian Catholic Church in the 20th Century

Father Peter Shumelda, born in England, is an Eastern-Catholic Priest for the Ukrainian-Greek Catholic Eparchy of Toronto and Eastern Canada.

He worked for 25 years in the computer industry as a software developer. He was ordained in 2002 after attending the Ukrainian Minor Seminary and later the Major Seminary in Rome. He spoke to our club May 16.

Father stated that many Roman Catholics view with skepticism and astonishment when told that the Universal Church consists of 23 Churches of which the largest is the Roman Catholic Church numbering some one billion faithful and the other twenty-two churches being Eastern in communion with Rome. They all have the same faith, the same morals, the same sacraments, the same succession through the Sacrament of Holy Orders, and all recognise the Pope as the Visible Head of the Universal Church.

Father then described the Great Church Schism of 1054 which divided Christian East from the west and, the vast destruction caused by the Mongols in the city of Kiev, also the disputes between Constantinople and Rome.

The Kyivan Church was challenged by the Protestant revolution and was suffering a serious internal crisis. It was then that the Synod of Bishops decided to break from the Patriarch of Constantinople and to clearly establish communication with the See of Rome, confirmed at the Council of Brest in 1596, which is the beginning of the Ukrainian-Greek Church as an institution.

In conclusion, he said nothing has changed. The Catholic Church is still under attack. The Lord warned us "And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end shall be saved." Mk 13:13"



A Canadian Connection: In 2001 Pope John-Paul made a historic visit to the Ukraine and Lucien Beaulieu & Fr. Peter beatified 27 people among the martyrs, Bishop Vasyl Velychkovskyi, a Redemptorist, who was assigned to Missionary work. He turned out to be a powerful preacher. In 1940, the feast day of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, he led a huge procession in Lviv. For this he was arrested by the Communist and interrogated. On July 29, 1945, He was arrested by the KGB and given the choice of leaving the Catholic Church to which he replied "No Never!"

After two years the Kiev regional court sentenced him to death for two anticommunist phrases ("red hord and red gang") which occurred in a pocket calendar issued six years earlier in 1939. He was sentenced to die by firing squad. After three months his sentence was changed to 10 years of hard labour in a Goulag on the Arctic Circle. The sentencing was intended to be a slow painful death. Accused of inciting a strike of prisoners, he was assigned to an even harsher prison. After completing his sentence he was sent back to the city of Lviv, where he administered to the underground church. In 1959 Rome appointed him Bishop. Unfortunately there was nobody to consecrate him. In 1963, through the intercession of Pope John XXIII and President Kennedy he was released after 18 years to the West. He was requested to come immediately to Moscow where he was ordained to the episcopacy in a hotel room, becoming the only living hierarch for the Catholic Church in the Ukraine. He returned to Lviv and continued his work as pastor, ordaining priests and a Bishop.

In 1969 he was arrested again for writing a book on the "Mother of Perpetual Help." He was sentenced to three years of severe prison, underwent chemical torture, given drugs to cause heart disease, tortured with electric shocks and beaten severely. He said nothing to incriminate the Church and refused to sign papers. Although sick he survived his three year sentence.

He was exiled from the Ukraine in January 1972 and after going to Yugoslavia to visit his sister, then to Rome to visit the Pope he arrived in Winnipeg where he gave retreats and visited many church communities.

On June 30, 1973 Bishop Velychovski died at the age of 70. His beatification process was started on the occasion of the Jubilee Year. The Holy Father John Paul II signed a decree of beatification April 2001.

Bishop Velychovski was interred in Winnipeg, and his relics are permanently enshrined at St. Joseph's Ukrainian Catholic Church, Jefferson Ave, Winnipeg. His body is said to be incorruptible. His feast day is celebrated on June 27.

Marilyn and Hart Bezner, our May 2 speakers, outlined their devotion to Catholicism often quoting passages from the bible.

Marilyn is a graduate nurse specialising in Pediatrics, Obstetrics, Medicine and Geriatrics. Hart taught Physics, Computing and Applied Mathematics at Wilfred Laurier University for 36 years.

Upon retirement they indulged in their interest in the North and started to travel there by car, visiting Arctic places such as Inuvik, Tuktoyaktuk in the NWT and Deadhorse, on Alaska's Arctic coast.

Being aware of the acute shortage of clergy in the Diocese of Whitehorse, they offered to serve there in early 2005. In September they moved into the rectory of the Immaculate Heart of Mary parish at Teslin, to begin their five-year ministry as Pastoral Administrators. Teslin is a native Tlingit village of about 450, located on the Alaska Highway. About 180 kilometres east of Whitehorse, Yukon's capital.

Hart mentioned that they had satellite TV, phone service, computer and internet and a paved highway. However, when they heard news from Ottawa it seemed that they were living in a foreign country.

Marilyn said she spoke by phone to a friend recently who told her a young priest had visited the parish bringing a number of university students who were to perform for the parish. Sadly five people showed up for Mass and three for the concert at night. The reason being that there was Bingo nearby.

They had five grandchildren arrive while they were away but it was the best five years of their lives.



Life isn't about how to survive the storm but how to dance in the rain

Coming Events:

- June 6 Prof. Jack Freiburger, "A year in Churchill Falls"
- June 20 Fr. Philip Kennedy Pres. Catholic Missions in Canada- Pope Benedict's publication *Verbum Domini*
- June 21-23 Serra's 70th International Convention, Providence, Rhode Island
- July 18 Annual BBQ. 37 Bannatyne Drive, 6.15 P.M. Induction of officers and new members.

Bishop of Rome Ordained Eight for Diocese

On Sunday April 27, 2012 (World Day of Prayer for Vocations) The Holy Father conferred priestly ordination on nine deacons, eight for the Diocese of Rome and one for the Diocese of Bui Chu, Vietnam.

The group included Piero Gallo, 42, who was a magistrate and an attorney of the state and Alfredo Tedesco, who had a degree in chemistry and engaged. Realising "the reality he was living was too narrow", he entered the seminary at 22. Attending the ordination was his former fiancée and her future husband.

Marco Santrelli, 30, a private pilot with a dream of flying a Boeing 747, said The World Youth Day in Toronto in 2002 was the occasion when the Lord's call reached him .

Amazing

The northeast corner of India is the place where the Catholic Church has grown most over the past 30 years. There is an average of about 10,000 adult baptisms every year, despite the fact that for many generations missionaries were banned.

St. Peters Square Rome

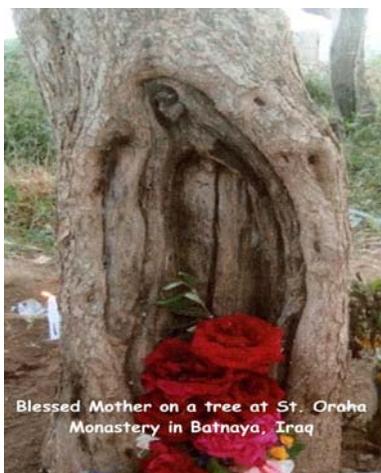
The centerpiece of the square , the obelisk, brought by Emperor Caligula in 37 AD from Egypt, remains the only one in Rome to never have been broken. It is also the only obelisk without hieroglyphics making it very difficult to gauge the date (the range is 1900 to 500 B.C.). It does, however, hold a special place in the history of Christianity. Erected in the private imperial horse racing circus by the Vatican hill, the obelisk witnessed the martyrdom of St. Peter and the other 900 Christians wrongfully accused by Nero of having set the Great Fire of Rome of 64 AD.

Moved in 1586 by Pope Sixtus V to be a beacon for pilgrims, it will assist in reminding people of St. Peter's witness for years to come.

The obelisk is part of a massive restoration now being carried out by Vatican restorers.

Pray the Rosary

A beautiful accompaniment to praying,, not alone but with others on the internet, accompanied by Holy Land images from within St. Pascal Baylon Church in Thousand Oaks CA
<http://www.comepraytherosary.org>



Cookies for Life

Several years ago the Girl Guides partnered with Planned Parenthood to provide a "good" sex education. When Grace Swanke, 10, of Boise, Idaho found out, not only did she decide to quit her troop but as someone who loved to sell cookies, she decided to make and sell her own brand of cookie. "Cookies for Life" was born and has raised thousands of dollars for pro-life.

No Visas for Vatican Officials

Visas for a delegation to visit Vietnam for Cardinal Francis Xavier Nguyen Van Thuan's canonization cause March 23 to April 9 was revoked.

Cardinal Van Thuan was the bishop of Nha Diocese from 1967 until appointed coadjutor bishop to the Archdiocese of Saigon, April 23, 1975 at the age of 47, Just days before the city, now named Ho Chi Minh City, fell to North Vietnamese forces.

After a few months he was arrested and spent the next 17 years under arrest, without a trial.

Religious Freedom at Risk

The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom recommended that the following nations be included on the list of "countries of concern" – Burma, China, Egypt, Eritrea, Iraq, Nigeria, North Korea, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Vietnam.

To an alarming extent, freedom of thought, conscience and religion or belief is being curtailed threatening the safety of innocent persons, including religious minorities.

The report stated only eight countries have been listed by the State Department and two Presidential waivers have been granted, meaning no action was taken.

Coptic Christians and their churches have suffered repeated attacks and instead of defending them military forces have turned their guns on Christians. During 2011 around 100 Coptic Christians were killed in upper Egypt, more than in the previous 10 years. There are only a few members of parliament and none who are university deans or judges.

In Nigeria, since 1999 more than 14,000 were killed in religious related violence and over 450 churches destroyed.

Pakistan has repressive blasphemy laws, and the government failed to bring to justice those who persecute or kill Christians. In January a group of men vandalised a church and hit children for singing carols. Local police took no action and the Christian community had to apologize to the assailants.

Christian girls are also under attack. At least 700 are kidnapped and forced to convert to Islam every year.

The Chinese government continued to violate its international obligations to protect religious freedom. Tibetan Buddhists, and Christians belonging to unregistered churches face persecution. Up to a thousand unregistered Protestants were detained last year. Dozens of unregistered Catholic clergy remain in detention or have disappeared and at least 40 Catholic Bishops remain imprisoned.

The report spoke of hundreds of millions of Chinese who now openly manifest their faith and some senior government officials have praised the work of religious communities.

Sign of the Cross

For some, it is just a mechanical part of "logging on and logging off" of our time "connected" to God via prayer. For others it seems no more than a good-luck charm to make superstitiously before stepping up to bat.

In baptism, a cross is traced on the foreheads of the baptised. The same happens in confirmation, when it is done with sacred oil called "chrism." As the cross is traced, the name of the triune God is pronounced, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

This sign means even more than belonging to the triune God. It indicates how and why we've come to belong to God and to be entitled to his protection.

Each time you make this sign, it is a renewal of your "decision" for Christ. In this simple little sign is contained the very essence of the gospel.