

The Ukrainian Catholic Metropolitanate of Canada

The Ukrainian Catholic Metropolitanate of Canada was born of a deep faith and devotion of the people to their Church. The efforts of the faithful combined with the dedicated service of the pioneer-priests to God and nation, and subsequent leadership of the Bishops, resulted in the establishment of several hundred houses of worship.

Its establishment, almost 44 years after the most welcome arrival to Canada of the first Ukrainian Bishop, Nykyta Budka, provided further impetus toward the development and expansion of the Ukrainian Catholic Church throughout this vast country.



On November 3, 1956, Winnipeg was designated as the Metropolitan Seat by a special Papal Bull of the same date which read, “Greetings and Apostolic blessings are conveyed to our Most Reverend Brother, Maxim Hermaniuk, who held to the present the position of the Bishop and Apostolic Administrator of the Winnipeg Exarchate and this month was appointed as the Metropolitan. “It continued, “...desiring to bestow upon this community the kind of Supervisor who’s wise leadership would be of great spiritual benefit, we deemed it appropriate to appoint you to this post as you not only have demonstrated exemplary talents but also great administrative skills in your responsibilities as the coadjutor and the Apostolic Administrator. “And further “...we empower you to carry out the management and administration of religious matters along with the accrued material wealth. We grant you the rights and privileges of this prestigious position but also burden you with the tribulations and responsibilities which go hand in hand with it.”

As a result of the Papal Bulls with which Pope Pius XXII established the Canadian Metropolitanate, the jubilant enthronement of the Archbishop Metropolitan Maxim Hermaniuk took place on February 12, 1957, in the Cathedral of Volodymyr and Olha. (see “The First Catholic Metropolitanate in Canada”, February 12, 1957, published by the Metropolitan Ordinarius, Winnipeg, Manitoba.)

For over 3 decades Metropolitan Maxim has molded and administered the Canadian Metropolitanate. As the son of Mykyta and Anna (nee Monchuk) of Nove Selo, Zhovka county in Western Ukraine, his empathy and understanding of the physical and spiritual requirements of his faithful, many of whom are descendants of pioneer farmers, have assisted him in carrying out the heavy duties and responsibilities of his office. Our Metropolitan gained great insights into the needs of people during the massive influx of World War II refugees to Belgium, where he was an instructor at the Redemptorist Father’s Seminary in Beauplateau. There he assisted the homeless refugees in restructuring their lives and ensuring that they would not be forcefully repatriated to the U.S.S.R. Service to the faithful was foremost in his mind when in 1945 Father Hermaniuk became one of the initiators and founders of “The Ukrainian Assistance Committee in Belgium”. Between 1946 and 1948 he assisted editing the monthly, “The Voice of Christ, the Lover of Mankind” and other publications of the Redemptorist

priests in Louvain. In 1947 he was one of the initiators and the first president of The Ukrainian Cultural and Educational Fellowship in Belgium and in 1948 he organized a press bureau, "PB Louvain", which served the Ukrainian press with news from Belgium. Special personal attention was given to Ukrainian students. Father Hermaniuk helped them to get accepted at the University of Louvain, helped establish a student residence and procured for them scholarships for further studies. He became the spiritual advisor for the Ukrainian Catholic Students' Organization, Obnova, and took part in the International Congress "Pax Romana" in Salamanka, Spain in 1946 and also that year in the International Congress of Students' Organizations of Ukrainian Catholic University Students in Fribourg, Switzerland.

Our Metropolitan's work among the faithful in Belgium and his post graduate studies there, greatly enhanced educational and leadership opportunities in Canada where he arrived on October 10, 1948. He was appointed Protoeumen of the Ukrainian Redemptorist Vice-province of Canada and the United States. It is fitting that we mention here that upon completion of a series of scholarly works and defending the twenty points in his dissertation, the Metropolitan was awarded a doctorate in biblical theology at Louvain University. He also received a Maitre Agrege degree in theology, the highest degree awarded by the Louvain Catholic University, on the basis of his seventy-two point thesis on the theme of "The Parables in the Gospel". The Metropolitan has also studied Assyrian-Babylonian and Hebraic in Middle East Philology, and many scholarly works written in Ukrainian, English and French. With this experience and education, the Metropolitan became a full member of the Shevchenko Scientific Society (N.T.S.) in 1951. In 1962, he became a member of the College of Editors of the Catholic University in Washington. The spiritual strength of our Metropolitan was especially evident during the Second Vatican Council, in his role as a member of the Pre-Council Theological Commission, and from 1963 when he became a member of the Commission for Promoting Christian Unity. As the representative of our Church along with 15 Ukrainian Bishops in the Free World, the Metropolitan facilitated on November 21, 1962, a statement that brought to world attention the notable absence of His Beatitude Yosyf Slipyj at the Ecumenical Council. There can be little doubt that this statement was influential in the release from prison in exile and the unexpected arrival of His Beatitude in Rome of February 10, 1963. Our Metropolitan was also instrumental in other significant developments within our Church such as the establishment of the Apostolic Exarchate in Australia. Organizational and political concerns of the Ukrainian community in general are also important to our Metropolitan as is his membership in the Presidium of the World Congress of Free Ukrainians as early as 1967 indicates. For his many faceted contributions to the Canadian scene, in 1982 the federal government awarded our Metropolitan the Order of Canada.

In this instance it is impossible to give a precis[sic] of the rich content of all the sermons, speeches, lectures and greetings that our Metropolitan delivered during congresses, conventions and other special gatherings of the Ukrainian community. In his epistles to the faithful and visitations even to the smallest parishes in the Archdiocese, he demonstrated his willingness to share his wisdom and understanding with the faithful and to serve his flock in a loving, fatherly manner.

The Ukrainian Metropolitanate of Canada under the leadership of its first Metropolitan and Archbishop, Maxim Hermaniuk, met the millennium of Christianity in Ukraine and the Centennial of Ukrainian Settlement in Canada and with four Eparchies under the leadership of their Bishops and an Archeparchy with its Auxiliary Bishop, 174 active priests (in addition to approximately 29 priests in semi or full retirement and those engaged outside their respective eparchies), and 37 Rev. Deacons. This number is supplemented by 40 priests of the Basilian and 32 priests of the Redemptorist Orders which are based in Winnipeg and 4 Studite priests with their domicile in Woodstock, Ontario. In total over 250 thousand faithful are united in over five hundred parish communities which have their own churches or chapels. The recently established seminary in Ottawa will provide theology graduates to minister to these faithful in their Ukrainian Catholic Churches.

We stand at the threshold of the next Millennium of Christianity in Ukraine and a new century of Ukrainian Settlement in Canada with arms full of God's gifts. These gifts are the talents in Our Lord's timeless parable, where he bestowed bountiful blessings on those who not only safeguarded, but also made special efforts to nurture and enhance that which they had received.

Inspired by the life and martyr death of their first Bishop, Confessor of the Faith Bishop Nykyta Budka, and under the leadership of their first Metropolitan, Maxim Hermaniuk, the Ukrainian Catholic Church in Canada with God's help courageously goes forward into the new Centennial, yet always mindful of its roots in Ukraine and the Mother Church; the Church which has spawned heroes, martyrs and defenders of her existence.

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