

The Early Years

After World War II, the size of the Federal government increased as the United States became the leader of the free world. Many young Byzantine Ruthenian Catholics came to Washington, DC. to serve in the Federal government, the support consulting companies, and the military.

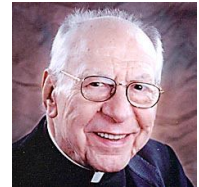
These first young Byzantine Catholics attended Holy Family Ukrainian Catholic Church, Washington, DC or Latin Catholic parishes.

A young Byzantine Catholic, John Himchak, from Holy Ghost Church, Jessup, Pennsylvania, wrote a letter to Archbishop Amleto G. Cicognani, the apostolic delegate, the pope's representative in the United States residing in Washington, DC, requesting that a Byzantine Catholic parish be established in Washington. The delegation sent the letter to the Exarchate of Pittsburgh.

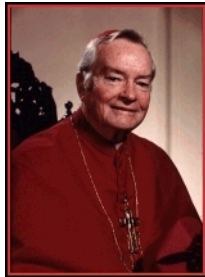


[Bishop Nicholas Elko](#)

The newly appointed Bishop of Pittsburgh, Bishop Nicholas Elko, sent Father Paul Shogan from Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church, Levittown, PA to meet with fourteen young, eager Byzantine Catholics December 5, 1955. In two weeks their numbers had doubled. On January 22, 1956 Bishop Elko celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the National Shrine in Washington and announced a new parish was being formed. On February 22, 1956 Bishop Elko named the parish Saint Gregory of Nyssa. On May 16, 1956 Father



Edward V. Rosack, S.E.O.B. , newly returned to the United States from [Msgr. Edward V. Rosack](#) graduate studies in Rome, was named first pastor.



[Bishop Philip Hannan](#)

The new parish received needed assistance from Bishop Philip Hannan, auxiliary bishop of Washington, who gave permission for them to use Saint Patrick's Academy for the Divine Liturgies. Later, Archbishop Hannan, who had served as a combat Army chaplain in the 82nd Airborne during World War II, wrote in his autobiography, *The Archbishop wore Combat Boots* (2010) about his recollections about Father Rosack and the new parish. He also recalled the beginning of a feature of Saint Gregory and Epiphany Sunday custom when he explained that Father Rosack was very devout, that the Byzantine liturgy was over two hours long, that the people came from Washington and from some distances away and that they had many children who were hungry from fasting from midnight to receive Holy Communion. As a result, the Archbishop wrote, they needed the use of the kitchen. And so, the practice of coffee & doughnuts and other meals after Liturgy began (*The Archbishop*, page 188).

A dream came true when a church, rectory and hall was purchased on Gallatin Street, NW. The founders called it "Our home for God in the Nation's Capital."