

GROWTH AND MATURITY (1974 – Sept 1992)

On June 14, 1974, Father John Lazarek was assigned as assistant pastor of Saint Gregory of Nyssa Church to assist Father Danilak chiefly at Epiphany of our Lord. On October 1, 1974 Father Lazarek was assigned as first pastor of Epiphany of our Lord parish. Father Lazarek took up residence in the farmhouse on the property. As the enthusiasm of the parishioners grew new organizations were added to the first organizations, the School of Religion and The Epiphany Ladies Guild, namely, the Byzantine Catholic Youth organization, the choir, ushers, cantors, altar servers, and in 1982, Epiphany Men's Club. In addition, parish social life was enhanced by many events: Epiphany Supper, Thomas Sunday, the Annual Picnic, Fall Dinner-Dance, New Year's Eve Dinner-Dance, Father-Son campout, Halloween party, Talent Show, and the Saint Nicholas children's program and dinner and many others.

The pastor and counselors of the parish undertook studies with architects for a permanent church. Rather, Bishop Dudick directed that the parish undertake a building program to raise funds for a parish center with a hall for fund raising and social events and classrooms for religious education and a needed rectory. The parishioners put their dream of a permanent church on hold while they responded to the Bishop's directive. Adjacent parcels of property, at the corner of Woodburn and Tobin, and at 3420 Woodburn Road, which would become the site of the future church, were donated to the parish. The original iconostasis was replaced with a new iconostasis and icons. On June 14, 1987, Bishop Dudick and Bishop George Kuzma blessed the new rectory and the parish center and iconostasis.

During these years, Father Lazarek had the assistance of several priests in the area, Father, later Monsignor, George Dobes, a chaplain in the US Navy, and Father Sal Pignato, a psychologist. Father Lazarek had begun missions that would lead to parishes in Williamsburg, Virginia and Cary, North Carolina.



Saint Nicholas Church, Husnyj, Transcarpathia, a church of the Eparchy of Mukachevo built in 1745.

The Lord called Philip Scott to the priesthood and he celebrated his first Divine Liturgy at Epiphany parish October 21, 1979. The Lord called an active parishioner, Gerry McDonnell, to the holy diaconate and the grace of the Holy Spirit through the hands of Bishop Dudick ordained him June 11, 1989. Two other men of the parish, Vincent Obsitnik and Richard Kanar, were accepted into

the diaconate program for the Eparchy of Passaic.

The parish addressed the debt incurred by the construction of the new buildings with zeal. The classrooms were leased to Carousel Day Care. Lenten Dinners, Paska and kolachi baking and the candy project, sponsored by the Ladies Guild, and weekly bingo, Christmas tree sales, Easter meat sales by the Men's Club and catering, the Slavic-American Festival, and other fund raising events as young, middle aged and senior parishioners cooperated in labors, were added to the parishioners' sacrificial offerings to the building fund to pay the debt.

In 1992 the parish contracted Thomas Kerns and the Kerns Group Architects to begin the planning for a new church. In September 1992 the soil studies was done and a preliminary style based on the wooden churches of the Carpathians was selected.