

TOWARD THE MILLENIUM (Dec 1992 – 1999)

Bishop Dudick appointed Father John Basarab as pastor of Epiphany of our Lord parish December 1, 1992. Bishop Dudick, as chief shepherd, shared his vision for the parish and faithful and directed Father Basarab to accomplish it.

Father John immediately met with the deacon, counselors, and chair of the parish building committee and Thomas Kerns and Andrew Cheng the month he arrived to become informed about the parish and its plan to build a church.

Meanwhile, the parish continued to receive the assistance of Monsignor Dobes. Father James Carroll, O.F.M. who was assigned to the Byzantine-Franciscan house in Silver Spring, MD began to provide assistance.

Vincent Obsitnik and Richard Kanar were ordained to the holy diaconate at Epiphany parish on June 13, 1993, and after a year of further study, Deacon Richard was ordained a priest on July 17, 1994.

The parish celebrated its 25th anniversary on September 24, 1995 at a Divine Liturgy concelebrated by Bishop Dudick and Bishop Keating with the assistance of hundreds of faithful. A festive banquet at the Marriott completed the festivities. In a short time the parish debt of over 1 million dollars was retired. Bishop Dudick directed that 50% of the estimated cost of a new church must be in savings before permission would be given to begin the planning for the new church.

Bishop Dudick visited areas in Maryland and Northern Virginia and then met with the priests of the area to share his plan for missions.

Elmer Pekarik was accepted into the diaconate program for the Eparchy of Passaic. Jack Figel who was in the Master of Theology program at Catholic University was accepted into the diaconate program. Later, he was enrolled as a member of the first deacon formation class of the Eparchy and was ordained a lector in July, 1999.

The feast of the Entrance of the Mother of God in the Temple, November 21, 1995, it was announced that Pope John Paul II accepted the retirement of Bishop Dudick who was named Bishop Emeritus of Passaic while he named Bishop Andrew Pataki as Bishop of Passaic.

Bishop Pataki established Epiphany Mission at the Mother of God School in Gaithersburg, Maryland in 1996 to care for the spiritual needs of Byzantine Ruthenian Catholics in upper Montgomery County, Maryland. At the mission, Father Basarab had the assistance of a number of priests on a regular rotation, Father Alexei Mihalenko, Father Richard Kanar, Father Jack Custer and other priests such as Father Joseph Loya, O.S.A., Father Daniel Grigassy, O.F.M., and Father Conan Timoney. Beginning in 2004 the mission has been assisted by Father Lee Gross, dean of students at Mt. St. Mary Seminary, Emmitsburg, Maryland.

The Wedding anniversary celebration begun at Epiphany by Bishop Dudick was continued by Bishop Pataki. Other traditional events received a new approach like the Father-Son Camp-out became the Parent-Child Campout. The Slava Men's Chorus and the parish cantors and members participated in the annual Pro-Life Vigil at the Basilica of the National Shrine. The parish also hosted an Eparchial Pilgrimage to the Byzantine Ruthenian chapel at the Basilica of the National Shrine, and for the 25th anniversary of the Byzantine Ruthenian Chapel a pilgrimage of teens from the eparchies was facilitated by members of the parish, a harbinger of the Byzanteen Youth Rallies.

The parish also participated in the Orientale Lumen Conferences in Washington begun by parishioner Jack Figel with the Catholic University of America and the Society of St. John Chrysostom and hosted speakers at this ecumenical event as distinguished visitors to the parish including William Cardinal Keeler, Catholic Archbishop of Baltimore and Bishop Kallistos Ware, Greek Orthodox bishop and professor at Oxford.

The property at 3424 Woodburn Road was acquired on May 31, 1999 for \$217,000 which, with the donated property of 3420 Woodburn Road would be the future site of the new church, and when the monies of the Building Fund reached the specified amount Bishop Pataki was asked for permission to begin the building planning.

Initially, Bishop Pataki had directed that a poll of the parishioners be taken to determine the interest of building a new church. After three meetings in November 1997, the result of the poll was that a majority of the parishioners favored building.