

The beginning of wisdom is this: get wisdom,
and whatever else you acquire, obtain insight.
Prize wisdom highly, and she will exalt you;
she will honour you if you embrace her.

Proverbs 4: 7-8



BEGINNINGS



The following is an abridged account of the Sheptytsky Institute's beginnings as a summer program accredited by Catholic Theological Union in Chicago. It is by Fr. Andriy Chirovsky, the Institute's founder and first director.

In 1985 I was hired as a full-time instructor by Catholic Theological Union (CTU) in Chicago. Prior to that I had taught several courses there as an adjunct. CTU's commitment to cross-cultural ministry was no doubt a factor in their openness to hiring an Eastern Catholic. It was precisely this cross-cultural milieu that made CTU a natural home for such an endeavor. I believed that we might create something small from which Eastern Catholic theological education could grow. I had not even completed my doctorate at the time, but an opportunity presented itself and I knew it had to be seized.

During the academic year 1985–1986 I met with every CTU faculty member – sometimes twice or more. During approximately fifty meetings I presented a plan for a summer program in which fifteen to twenty students could live in an Eastern Catholic monastery, participating in the full monastic schedule of fasts, feasts and worship, and at the same time earn six graduate credits in Eastern Christian theology. The proposal was to a certain degree modeled on CTU's successful Israel Study program, in which students were encouraged to study the Bible by

living in its physical environment. It was my contention that studying Eastern Christianity while living in an Eastern Catholic monastery would furnish a similar immersion experience. Students, incidentally, would have an opportunity to participate in up to six hours of worship every day.

Of course, the monastery would have to agree to host such an experimental program. This was assured by Fr. Boniface (Luykx), the hegumen of the then vibrant Holy Transfiguration Monastery (popularly known as Mount Tabor) in Redwood

Left: In the summer of 1987, the Sheptytsky Institute offered its first accredited summer semester through Catholic Theological Union. Sixteen laypeople, ten monks and two nuns formed the student body. Courses were taught by Archimandrite Boniface Luykx (centre front – with cross) and Fr. Andriy Chirovsky.

Right: Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, where Fr. Andriy Chirovsky taught as a professor, was active in promoting the Sheptytsky Institute's summer intensive program at Mt. Tabor Monastery in Northern California.