

### **Memorandum of the Canadian Clergy<sup>1</sup>**

Prompted by the greater honor and glory of God, the tremendous leakage of Catholics from the Byzantine Rite, and to better morale among the clergy in our eparchy, this memorandum is meant to call attention to (1) certain problems and definite deficiencies existing in our eparchy and (2) to offer positive suggestions and in some instances to offer concrete solutions for the same. Far from intending sterile criticism about the circumstances existing in our eparchy, this memorandum is done solely in a spirit of self-examination, fraternal charity, and with the sincere hope that concrete steps will be taken in the not too distant future to remedy the ills herein outlined.

If our eparchy is to flourish, prosper, and increase, solutions must not be delayed. Another ten years will be too late. The tremendous leakage from the Byzantine Rite Church in our eparchy and in all the eparchies of Canada (79,000 souls left the Church of our rite between the 1950–1960 census, actually more if compensation is made for natural increase by birth) surely is tragic proof enough that the ills in our Church are not only very real but also of vast proportions. This memorandum is the result of much soul-searching among the Canadian-born clergy of the Sask. [*sic*] eparchy in an effort to analyze at least some of the causes which prompted the average Byzantine Catholic of Sask. and Canada to leave his rite, his Church, and his God.

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<sup>1</sup> *Editor's Note:* This document has been transcribed as exactly as possible, allowing for minor changes to correct slight errors of spelling and style. It is reproduced from an old typescript bearing the signatures of six priests noted at the end. Across the top of the first page, in unclear handwriting, are three notes, and then, in the right margin, "Fr. A. Muzyka File No." The title of this document is slightly misleading insofar as it – unlike the preceding document, which was national in origin and scope – was produced by and for the clergy of the Eparchy of Saskatoon.

## I. Our Church – A Foreign, Nationalistic Church

### a) In the Liturgical Services and Preaching

The failure to introduce the English vernacular into parish life<sup>2</sup>, into the Divine Liturgy, into all other liturgical services – and not to speak of introducing English sermons – is probably the greatest single cause of leakage from our rite. There are literally thousands of souls entrusted to our pastoral care who know little if any Ukrainian and find themselves in the unenviable position of belonging to a Church where they understand neither the sermon nor the liturgical services for years on end. This includes some middle-age families, most young families of Ukrainian parentage, and all families of inter-ritual marriages (i.e., a marriage in which the husband is Greek rite and the wife a Catholic of some other nationality).

Some families will tolerate such a state of affairs for several years; others are gone within a year, depending on their patience and forbearance. In questioning people who have left the Church, the language barrier is invariably given as the cause of their discontinuance with our Church. The introduction of the English vernacular into the Latin rite liturgy in Western Canada, coupled with the fact that fewer and fewer of the younger Catholics of Ukrainian origin speak Ukrainian fluently, [means that] the situation will continue to deteriorate, if anything, even more rapidly.

The Solution: The obvious solution will be to introduce immediately the vernacular English wherever needed; certainly in all city parishes and larger centers. To accomplish this, all such parishes must have English-speaking clergy and a Commission formed immediately which will translate into English (1) the Sluzebnyk or Missal, (2) the Trebnyk or Rituale, (3) the Moleben Services, (4) Parastas Services for the Dead, and (5) the Burial Service.

Many are not hesitant to point out and name the priests who may have been in Canada for fifteen, twenty years and still do not know English. Any attempt to justify the fact by asserting that the clergy find it impossible to learn English is

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<sup>2</sup> *Editor's Note:* Presumably the word is life, but the text is unclear at this point except for the final 'e.'

simply refuted by the fact that if uneducated lay people who have been in Canada the same length of time have indeed learned English because it was necessary for their job, how much better and quicker should educated priests do the same for souls. It is indeed a sad reflection of such priests and their zeal and love for souls. Surely what a layman can do for money, a priest of God can do for souls.

Therefore, it would seem justified that strenuous effort be made by the Hierarchy to demand that priests, who have been in Canada, should know English fluently for their pastoral work. Certainly, one of the qualifications of priests, assigned to city parishes, [is that they] should have a fluent knowledge of English. The sad fact remains that in Sask. none except a couple of those priests stationed in our city parishes know any English!

Furthermore, in all lay diocesan conferences, congresses, etc., the official language used should be English and only secondarily Ukrainian. As it is, most young families are made to feel that they are factually second-class faithful when they speak English on such occasions.

## II. Our Church – A Church Promoting Foreign Nationalism

The refusal, failure or hesitancy to introduce the English vernacular into parish liturgical life wherever needed can only be attributed to Ukrainian nationalistic considerations on the part of the hierarchy and clergy by most if not all of the Canadian-born faithful. This failure to introduce English into parish life is indeed a tragedy to be deplored in the most stringent terms in Canada where the vast majority regard themselves Canadians first and foremost, are proud of their Canadian citizenship, and have no desire or wish to further a nationalism foreign to their whole mentality and ideals, not to mention their deep resentment that their Church is being used or prostituted as a means of furthering Ukrainian national aspirations and aims.

The general feeling of our people who have been born in Canada and are proud of their country is that they are made to feel as second-class faithful in a Church which regards itself

[as] foreign to Canada, which is always harping on being in exile and which constantly makes references to the Ukraine as “home-land,” “native land” and to Ukrainian as the “mother-tongue” or “native tongue” and not to Canada and its language, the country in which it exists. The Ukraine is not the native land of approximately 70%–80% of our Church membership in Sask. today, and all statements to the contrary by either the hierarchy or clergy or our Catholic press can only be insulting and outrageous to the Canadian-born. These people are not ashamed of their racial origin but they resent being classed as subjects loyal to a foreign country when they are loyal Canadians and are grateful to this great land in which they live. They understand that the true Church of Christ was never meant to be used by anyone to further nationalism be it Canadian, Ukrainian, or any other.

It is therefore imperative that our Church hierarchy and clergy and our Catholic press be expurgated of all Ukrainian nationalism and this without delay. If we are to keep the Canadian-born souls in our rite and our Church, we must leave Ukrainian nationalism alone or leave it to the lay Ukrainian nationalists, politicians and revolutionaries, professional or otherwise. Ukrainian nationalism should likewise be left to the Ukrainian secular press where it belongs. Catholic newspapers and magazines should only be concerned with propagating the true faith. One concrete example, among the many, was the scarcity of publicity afforded St. Joseph’s College during its campaign for funds. Despite pleading, cajoling, and even threats to print any of the news releases issued, when it did for the first time, it was but a brief paragraph while the opposite page was totally devoted to “Who Killed Stefan Bandera.” Only one conclusion can be formed: that such a paper is chiefly concerned with Ukrainian nationalism under the guise of a Catholic newspaper.

A good Catholic press is an invaluable aid to winning souls for Christ. In this, the so-called Ukrainian newspapers and magazines have failed miserably in direct proportion to their concern and coverage of Ukrainian nationalistic aims. If they refuse to change their policy, to devote themselves exclusively to Catholic coverage, then they should be branded as

secular, nationalistic papers and treated as such. They must not be permitted to exist under the guise of being a Catholic paper.

### III. Calendar

The present ruling of 95% vote needed in a parish before such a parish can change from the Julian, the “Ukrainian Calendar,” to the Gregorian is unfair and discriminating against the Canadian-born. Why should not an absolute majority vote prevail (65%) as in everything else? If this is not done, is it any wonder that most of the Canadian-born have concluded that our Church is blatantly unfair and favors the Ukrainian nationalist who rightly or wrongly has assumed the Julian calendar as part of “Ukrainianism?” This and all the facts outlined above cannot but leave the impression with our Canadian-born faithful that our Church is a foreign Church, a Church favoring a nationalism foreign to the vast majority of its faithful in Canada.

### IV. Clergy

This opinion is further bolstered by the fact that there is not one Canadian-born priest, nor has there been, on the diocesan board of consultors to the Bishop in Sask. nor, as far as it is known, in all of Canada. This fact is bitterly pointed out by many of the faithful. No one to represent about 70%–80% of our faithful. The clergy from the Ukraine, in their capacity as diocesan consultors, despite the best of intentions, do not and cannot understand the needs of the Canadian faithful, their problems, etc., much less can they find any effective solutions to such problems.

Solution: At least half of the members composing the diocesan board of consultors to the Bishop should be Canadian-born clergy; since they are Canadians themselves, they will know and understand the Canadian mentality, the problems, circumstances, etc., facing the Church in Canada and will more readily be able to find solutions to these difficulties [and] will be able to utilize modern techniques, techniques peculiar to

this country, techniques which they know and are familiar with, etc.

V. Sheptytsky Institute<sup>3</sup>

Another case in point is the board of directors of the Sheptycky [*sic*] Institute; this board is composed totally of clergy, none of whom are Canadian-born, none of whom has any experience in such institutions or for that matter in any school as directors or even teachers, neither here in Canada nor in the Ukraine. Neither is the Institute's rector a Canadian-born priest, nor is his English fluent. This fact too would seem to be an indication that our Church in Canada is indeed a foreign Church and the Canadians belonging to it are merely second-rate.

Recommendations:

(a) The Sheptytsky Institute is now regarded by the Canadian-born faithful as a "boarding house" and a "rooming house." The spiritual life is at an extremely low ebb if not dead altogether for many of the students there. Again there is much deep-rooted resentment that Ukrainian classes are taught at Sheptytsky while not one religion or Christian ethics class has been held for years. This is indeed a fact and a sad reflection on any Catholic institution. Classes in the Catholic religion and ethics must be introduced without delay. If not, this will be but another indication that our Church is a foreign Church given to fostering foreign nationalism.

(b) One of the qualifications for rectorship (not taking anything away from the present rector) in the Institute should be fluency in English, a priest who will be able to effectively serve the needs of the students there, one of whom the students can be proud.

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<sup>3</sup> *Editor's Note:* This and subsequent references to the "Sheptytsky Institute" are not to the Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky Institute of Eastern Christian Studies at Saint Paul University in Ottawa, which is an academic institution founded in 1986 in Chicago and moved to Ottawa in 1990. Rather, references in this document to the "Sheptytsky Institute" are to a "Ukrainian Catholic student residence" at the University of Saskatoon, opened in 1953. For more information, see [www.sheps.ca](http://www.sheps.ca).

(c) A lay Board of Directors should be established, people who are experienced in educational work, in finances, etc. That they be zealous Catholics is a sine qua non qualification. Lay boards have been most effective wherever they were given an opportunity. Certainly such a lay board could work marvels at the Institute.

(d) The financial books of said Institute should be audited annually by a C.P.A. and a financial statement by him issued to the laity of the diocese. This would do much to restore confidence and trust in said institution, a confidence and trust that is sadly lacking at present.

#### VI. Need for New Territorial Division and Centralization

i) *Division:* The present system of territorial division of parishes and districts or missions belonging to such parishes had been introduced thirty or forty years ago, when the usual means of conveyance for priests were trains; train lines and schedules were the chief consideration then. Now virtually every priest in the eparchy travels by auto to his missions. This and the fact that great shifts in population have taken place since that time; hence, we have instances where priest A has to traverse priest B's parish or parishes, while priest B in turn has to traverse priest A's.

##### Recommendations:

A new territorial division of parishes and parish districts is long overdue and should be attended to in the near future.

This new territorial division should also be fair and equalize, as far as is humanly possible, the number of larger and smaller parishes assigned to each pastor. As it is at present, some pastors serve only large parishes while others have to be content with very small ones. It is positively unfair for one priest to have an income four times as much as his brother priest who has to travel five times as far and yet be paid four times less. Concrete instances can be cited. A new rearrangement can do much to equalize the income of many priests.

Some districts, because of circumstances peculiar to the district, cannot adequately support a pastor; such pastors should be aided by the St. Josaphat's Mission Society.

Since we are no longer a mission territory but a mature eparchy, exact parish boundaries must be delineated in accordance with Canon Law. As it is with no boundaries delineated, a given pastor does not know exactly which souls, even which towns and communities, he is responsible for.

Parish cathedraticum must be revised according to a just and equal system, on a per capita membership basis. Evidently, there was no system used in making the present assessments since instance upon instance can be cited wherein one parish is assessed two and three times as much as their neighboring parish which is twice and three times larger.

A competent commission of priests can be formed which can study the territories and parishes of the eparchy and formulate a new territorial division which would be based on all the above recommendations.

ii) *Centralization:* In line with the proposed new territorial division of the eparchy, we must begin to face facts, unpleasant though they be, that there are literally several dozen of so-called parishes in the eparchy which have two, three, or five families. By no stretch of the imagination can such be classed as parishes. Since their church is not closed, the three or five families comprising such a "parish" feel no obligation whatever to attend the Divine Liturgy in any of the neighboring parishes to fulfill their Sunday obligation. In such instances, the given pastors have to leave parishes of fifty to seventy families without the Sunday Divine Liturgy to go celebrate for three or four families. As long as this lasts, we shall never have an effective laity who are zealous in their faith.

Recommendation: Churches with a membership of less than ten families should be closed and amalgamated with the neighboring parish.

## VII. Disabled Priests

Our eparchy must begin to take adequate care of its disabled or invalid priests; they should not be left, as they are at present, to shift for themselves or forced to depend on relatives. This has a deleterious effect on any possible vocations



to the diocesan priesthood. Families will oppose their son's becoming a diocesan priest when they know that the eparchy will use a priest when he is healthy and able, but when he becomes disabled, he is left to shift for himself as best he can. Furthermore, such an arrangement is against all principles of Christian charity and against the canons of the Church.

#### VIII. Traveling Expenses

At present, traveling expenses are equalized for the clergy for the annual retreat in Saskatoon. This should also obtain for the four clergy conferences. Why one and not the others? If this is not feasible, then the clergy conferences should be rotated around the various districts of the eparchy so that one and the same clergy are not penalized by having to defray the expenses incurred for traveling to and from the said conferences.

#### IX. Baptismal and Marriage Registers

Copies of the Baptismal and Marriage Registers should be made and the said Registers given back to the parishes where they belong. Much unpleasantness and bitterness can be avoided by this. As it is, individual parishioners or faithful write or call in to the rectory for their Baptismal certificate, the given pastor writes for same to the Chancery, and the Chancery, time and time again, delays two or three months in answering. In the meantime, the faithful keep calling for their certificate and all the while thinking that their pastor has not written yet, has neglected his work. If they are informed that the Chancery has responded, they form the same opinion of the Chancery; either way unnecessary unpleasantness results.

It is our sincere hope that this Memorandum will be carefully considered and acted upon. If acted upon, much good for souls will be wrought, the tremendous leakage from the Church of our rite for the most part be stemmed, and the morale of the clergy in the eparchy be bettered in no uncertain terms. May God help us to do so!

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Fr. W. Wasihshen  
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Fr. W. Shek  
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<sup>4</sup> *Editor's Note:* These names are all written in, apparently by the same hand.