
Catholics of the Byzantine ritual tradition in the Austro-Hungarian Empire were known in church terminology as Ruthenians. Large numbers of them began to immigrate to the United States in the late 1870s. A priest of their own arrived in 1884 and blessed their first church building in Shenandoah, Pennsylvania that same year. These Catholics were placed under the jurisdiction of the Latin ordinaries of the places of residence by virtue of the Apostolic Letter of Leo XIII Orientalium Dignitas (1895). In 1907 Bishop Soter Stephen Ortynsky was appointed their ecclesiastical superior, but he had to procure actual jurisdiction as vicar general from the Latin ordinary of each community where his faithful had settled. In 1913 Bishop Ortynsky was accorded full ordinary jurisdiction and independence from the Latin ordinaries (Cum Episcopo, Aug. 17, 1914), under the vigilance of the apostolic delegate in Washington, DC.

Bishop Ortynsky died prematurely on March 24, 1916. World War I had severed communications with the dioceses of origin in Austro-Hungary.
The Holy See did not then appoint another bishop but ordered the Apostolic Delegate to assign two priests as temporary administrators, one for the faithful who came from the ecclesiastical province of Lviv-Halych (Galicia and Bukovina), and another for those whose origin was in some part of the kingdoms then called Hungary and Croatia. This division implied the permission for either group of the faithful to detach themselves from an existing parish and found one of their own, defined either according to the criterion of regional origin or of language, which was to be decided by the majority of the faithful in each parish. Smaller groups chose sometimes not to separate themselves and to stay with the majority in the local parish.

Most Rev. Constantine Bohachevsky, STD

This separation was made permanent when in 1924 bishop ordinaries were appointed for each group. For the faithful and parishes who traced their origin to the province of Lviv, the seat of the Ordinary (soon to be termed Apostolic Exarch), Bishop Constantine Bohachevsky, was established on May 20, 1924 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Pope Pius XII created on July 20, 1956, the Apostolic Exarchy of Stamford, Connecticut, assigning to it the parishes situated in the State of New York and in all of New England, and appointed as it first titular Bishop Ambrose Senyshyn, previously auxiliary in Philadelphia.

The same Roman Pontiff erected on July 12, 1958 the Ecclesiastical Province of Philadelphia, consisting of the Archeparchy of Philadelphia of the Ukrainians, and the
Eparchy of Stamford, CT.
Pope John XXIII separated the western part of the Archeparchy of Philadelphia on July 14, 1961, comprising all the states of the U.S.A. west of the western boundary of Ohio and on the West of the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers, and established it as the Eparchy of St. Nicholas of Chicago for the Ukrainians. Bishop Jaroslav Gabro was installed at the time of the canonical erection of the Eparchy on December 12, 1961, as its first Bishop.

Most Rev. Robert M. Moskal, DD

Pope John Paul II created on December 5, 1983, the Eparchy of St. Josaphat in Parma, Ohio, comprising the states of Ohio, Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, North and South Carolina, West Virginia and Western Pennsylvania. Bishop Robert M. Moskal was installed at the time of canonical erection of the new Eparchy on February 29, 1984, as its first Bishop.

As a result of these separations, the Metropolitan Archeparchy of Philadelphia includes the District of Columbia, the states of Virginia, Maryland, New Jersey and Eastern Pennsylvania to the eastern boundaries of the following counties: Potter, Clinton, Center, Mifflin, Huntington and Fulton.

Pope Paul VI recognized on December 23, 1963 the Metropolitan Archeparchy of Lviv-Halych as a major archiepiscopate, one of the autonomous (sui iuris) churches of the Universal Catholic Communion under the primacy of the Roman Pontiff as successor of St. Peter. Both the Ecumenical Council of Vatican II in the Decree Orientalium
Ecclesiarum (November 23, 1964), and subsequently Pope John Paul II in the Eastern Code of Canon Law (Codex Canonum Ecclesiarum Orientalium), defined such a major archiepiscopate as a supra-metropolitan self-governing autonomous church which is administered as a Patriarchate. Joseph Cardinal Slipyj was named the first Major Archbishop of Lviv-Halych even though he resided in Rome from the time of his nomination until his death. The seat of this Church and residence of the Major Archbishop has since been returned to Lviv, Ukraine.

The Archbishop of Philadelphia is the Metropolitan for the Ukrainian Eparchies of the United States, which have their seats in Stamford (Connecticut), Chicago (Illinois) and Parma (Ohio). He is, according to law, a Metropolitan outside the territory of the Major Archiepiscopate in accordance with canons 133-138 of the Code of Canon Law of the Eastern Churches. The Synod of Bishops of the Ukrainian Catholic Church is expected to enact particular law to the same effect.

The Bishops of the Metropolitan Province of Philadelphia of the Ukrainians enjoy jurisdiction over all their faithful in the territory of their Eparchies, thereby excluding the concurrent jurisdiction of Bishops of any other co-territorial (Western or Eastern) Catholic autonomous churches.

As to persons under their authority, their jurisdiction extends to:
1. all those who trace their ancestry to Ukraine and the Ukrainian people wherever they may have been born;
2. those who joined the Ukrainian Church as children or adults by baptism;
3. members of other Catholic churches who joined their Ukrainian spouses in accordance with canon law (111-112 CIC and CCEO, cc. 29-38).
4. members of other Catholic churches who as children or adults joined the Ukrainian Church in accordance with the pertinent canonical norms;
5. non-Catholic Christians who joined the Ukrainian Church by conversion in accordance with the pertinent canonical norms.