

Carpatho-Rus

Karpatska Rus'



SECOND CLASS POSTAGE PAID AT YONKERS, NEW YORK AND OTHER MAILING ADDRESSES

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Come Celebrate RUSSALIA at LEMKO RESORT

on Sunday, June 19, 1994

beginning at 10:00 AM with church services at the Chapel

Music and Entertainment to be provided

The Carpatho-Rusyns

The following is the text of a one-page handout distributed by the Carpatho-Rusyn Society of Pittsburgh at the 38th Annual Pittsburgh Folk Festival.

The Carpatho-Rusyns are a small East Slavic ethnic group indigenous to the Carpathian Mountain Region of Eastern Europe. Because their homeland roughly spans the western part of the Carpathian Mountain range, that homeland currently falls within the borders of several East European nations.

Most of the territory of the Carpatho-Rusyns was, for much of their history, entirely within the borders of Hungary. When the Austro-Hungarian Empire was dissolved at the close of World War I, the majority of Carpatho-Rusyn territory became an autonomous part of Czechoslovakia, making Rusyns one of the three founding peoples of Czechoslovakia (along with Czechs and Slovaks). The Rusyns of Austrian Galicia were incorporated into the new Polish state, with minorities of Rusyns living in northern Rumania, the new Yugoslavia and the smaller Hungary.

By the close of World War II, the Rusyn territories had been again divided, this time with the largest Rusyn territory, Transcarpathia, invaded by Soviet troops and incorporated as an oblast in the Ukrainian SSR. The Lemko Rusyns of Poland were forcibly relocated by the communist Polish government to western Poland and their properties occupied by Poles. In Czechoslovakia, Poland and Soviet Ukraine, the official government policy became one of "ethnocide." These governments attempted to destroy Carpatho-Rusyn culture and separate group consciousness as a prelude to the group's complete assimilation into their respective dominant national cultures or into officially sanctioned minority groups. Hence, Carpatho-Rusyns were not permitted to exist as a distinct national minority but recognized only as Ukrainians, Slovaks, Poles or Russians.

With the fall of communism in the late 1980s, Carpatho-Rusyns have experienced a renaissance of their language and culture. Today, the Carpatho-Rusyns are recognized by the Czech, Slovak, Hungarian and Yugoslav governments as a distinct ethnonational minority. These Carpatho-Rusyns have begun to publish books, periodicals and other materials in their native language, have begun codifying that language, are conducting

theatrical performances in these dialects and sponsor their own performing ensembles.

In Ukraine and Poland, the position of Carpatho-Rusyns is somewhat more problematic. Neither country officially recognizes Carpatho-Rusyns as a distinct ethnonational minority. On Dec. 1, 1991, the Carpatho-Rusyns of Transcarpathia in now-independent Ukraine voted overwhelmingly for autonomy within the new Ukrainian state. More than two years later, however, autonomy continues to be denied them. This is due in part to the view among some Ukrainian leaders that autonomy is little more than "anti-Ukrainian" Rusyn "separatism." Carpatho-Rusyns in Poland face similar Ukrainian prejudice, acquiesced to by a Polish government indifferent to Rusyns but anxious to maintain good relations with their Ukrainian neighbor.

Today, Carpatho-Rusyn territory falls within the borders of Poland, Slovakia, Ukraine, Hungary and Rumania, with large immigrant populations of Carpatho-Rusyns in Srem, Croatia; Vojvodina, (Serbia) Yugoslavia; Canada and the United States.

About 700,000 Americans are of Carpatho-Rusyn descent with the largest concentration of these people (about 50,000) in western Pennsylvania. Other large Carpatho-Rusyn American settlements include New York City/north New Jersey; Connecticut; Cleveland, Ohio area; greater Chicago; and Wilkes-Barre/Scranton (PA).

Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center

Fr. Alexis Toth Will Be Glorified As Saint During May Pilgrimage At St. Tikhon's

By Father Lawrence Barriger

At the end of the month the Orthodox Church of America is glorifying Fr. Alexis Toth as a saint and for good reason. It may be stated that this one Carpatho-Russian priest, through his example and tireless zeal for Orthodoxy, was the greatest American Orthodox missionary, responsible directly for bringing thousands of Carpatho-Russian and Galician Greek Catholic immigrants to the Orthodox faith again. Without his labors, the "Russian Orthodox" presence in America would have been very small today and perhaps our own Carpatho-Russian diocese would not even exist.

Fr. Alexis Toth was born on March 18, 1854 in Pod Karpatska' Rus' in the county of Spis, of a well to do family. He studied at both the Seminary

of Uzhorod and also the Presov Theological Seminary from which he graduated and was ordained on April 18, 1878. He served as episcopal secretary until 1887. In 1881 he was appointed as professor of Canon Law and Church History at the Presov Seminary. In 1889, now a widower with no children, he emigrated to the United States with the permission of his bishop John Valyj. He arrived in Minneapolis to assume the pastorate of St. Mary's Greek Catholic Church on November 15th.

The Greek Catholic Church In America

Fr. Toth emigrated from Presov, one of the most predominately Slavic and Greek Catholic areas of the Austro-Hungarian Empire to an area in the United States where the Carpatho-Russians were simply one more immigrant "problem" that was washing up on the shores of America in the 1890's. Socially, because of their radically different language and religious life, Carpatho-Russians and Galicians were at the bottom of the ladder, despised by the older generation of Irish immigrants who viewed them as competition in the mines and factories.

Religiously, as Fr. Toth well discovered, the reaction was the same. Even though Rome theoretically viewed all of the rights of the Church as equal, Fr. Toth discovered in his initial encounter with Archbishop Ireland of Minneapolis that some rites were "more equal" than others.

In 1889 there was no Greek Catholic bishop in the United States and only ten priests. Indeed, one suspects that the Greek Catholic Church in Europe tragically regarded immigration to America as a temporary phenomenon and not worthy of very much attention.

Churches were founded by the immigrants themselves, often without ecclesiastical approbation and then they cast about attempting to locate a priest who would be willing to come to America.

Struggles in Catholicism

The Roman Catholic Church in America was in the midst of a struggle over "Americanization." Simply stated, this was an attempt to establish one Roman Catholic hierarchy with jurisdiction over all Roman Catholic parishes, regardless of their particular national origins. Eventually this concept was made a reality though not without some problems.

Since there was no Greek Catholic jurisdiction in America all of the Greek Catholic parishes and priests fell under the local jurisdiction of the local Roman Catholic bishop. In the case of Fr. Toth, Archbishop Ireland was the local hierarch and Archbishop Ireland was a devout "Americanizer."

The conversation between Fr. Toth and Archbishop Ireland has been printed many times. (See my **Good Victory** pp 25-26 for the account.) Suffice to say that Ireland denied Toth jurisdiction in the St. Mary's parish and in fact refused to recognize even that he was a Catholic priest nor

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NOTICE

IN APPRECIATION

We extend our thanks for help in producing this week's issue of Carpatho-Rus to Svetlana Ledenieva, Bogdan Horbal, Susyn Yvonne Mihalasky and John Rzyk.
Ed.

For those readers who plan in the near future to travel to East Europe this spring or summer, either Slovakia or Poland, several Rusyn/Lemko folk festivals are being planned in those countries. Perhaps your itineraries can be programmed to take the following dates into consideration:

**Zydranowa, Poland, Russalia Festival
June 25--26, 1994**

**Zdynia, Poland, Vatra Festival
July 22--23--24, 1994**

In the past we have noted the limited readership of our newspaper in those countries due to the lack of foreign exchange. If a reader is planning to attend one of these festivals and desires to distribute some of our past issues of the paper, we will gladly send a supply, prior to your departure. Send us your name and address and the number of surplus copies desired and these will be promptly forwarded.

Ed.

PASSAIC LODGES 5-16 OF LEMKO ASSOC.

EVENT CALENDAR FOR 1994

Sunday, July 17--ANNUAL PICNIC--1:00 PM
Donation \$15.00
Sunday, October 16--FALL BANQUET--1:00 PM
Donation \$15.00

Birthday Meetings

Sunday, September 11, 1994 1:00 PM
Sunday, December 4 " 1:00 PM

All functions to be held at the Lodge, corner of Ann Street and Lanza Avenue, Garfield, New Jersey.

THE COOKING CORNER

Pound Cake Filled With Fresh Raspberries

- 1/2 cup unsalted butter, at room temperature, plus additional for greasing pan.
- 1 1/4 cups sugar
- 1 1/2 tsps. grated lemon zest
- 3 eggs
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 2 cups all-purpose flour, plus additional for pan
- 1/2 tsp. baking soda
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 3/4 cup sour cream
- 2 cups fresh raspberries

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Butter and flour an 8 1/2-by-4 1/2-by-2 1/2-inch loaf pan. Using an electric mixer, cream together the butter and sugar until light. Mix in the lemon zest. Add the eggs, one at a time, mixing until light and fluffy. Mix in the vanilla.

2. Sift together the flour, baking soda, baking powder and salt. Add the dry ingredients to the batter alternately with the sour cream, mixing just to combine. Spread half of the batter in the prepared pan. Cover with the raspberries. Top with the remaining batter, smoothing out the top.

3. Bake until a toothpick inserted into the center of the cake comes out clean, about 1 hour. Place on a rack to cool. Turn the cake out of the pan and dust the top with powdered sugar. Cut into slices and serve. Yield: 8 servings

NOTICE

Our annual banquet to close the **PRESS FUND CAMPAIGN** will be held on **SUNDAY, JUNE 26, 1994** beginning at **1:30 PM** at:

**MASONIC LODGE
ANN STREET & LANZA AVENUE
GARFIELD, NEW JERSEY**

The Buffet includes open bar, \$15./person

Call Mary Barker at 201-664-8693 or Alex Herenchak at 609-758-1115 for reservations.

CORRECTION

In Issue #11, May 27, 1994 two errors were made in the listing of new Directors of Lemko Resort. Corrected as follows:

John Mihalasky Treasurer
Paul Worhach Director

Also, the following additions to the Board were selected by the shareholders:

George Chowanec Alternate (Board of Directors)
Michael Kirpan Alternate (Board of Directors)
Alice Chucta Controller
Dorothy Goydich Controller
Kathy Logoyda Controller
Ted Rudawsky Alternate (Controller)

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Carpatho-Rusyns Participate in Pittsburgh Folk Festival

On May 27-29, the 38th Annual Pittsburgh Folk Festival took place at the large, enclosed Monroeville Expomart 15 minutes from downtown Pittsburgh, PA. Twenty-four local ethnic communities participated, presenting cultural displays, folk dance, vocal or musical performances, cooking and folk dance instruction. Ethnic cuisine, music cassettes, books, wooden carvings and similar wares were also being sold. Carpatho-Rusyns, who maintained a high profile presence both in organization of the Festival and in participation, were represented in all of the above endeavors by the McKees Rocks based *Slavjane Folk Ensemble*, the Holy Ghost Byzantine Catholic Church and the recently founded Carpatho-Rusyn Society (see *Karpatska Rus'*, no. 9, April 29, 1994, p. 1). Approximately 25,000 people took part in the popular festival, in which Carpatho-Rusyns have participated every year since its founding.

The Festival

The mission statement of the Pittsburgh Folk Festival, Inc. states that the purpose of the annual event is to "...preserve the ethnic and

cultural heritage of the communities in Western Pennsylvania..." and to promote tolerance and inter-ethnic harmony via the organization and sponsorship of the Festival and other educational and cultural activities. Each annual event has had a general theme; this year's theme was "Hats and Headpieces," which Festival Director Tony S. Wieckowski indicated in his Director's Message was chosen because "...head coverings are indigenous to all nationalities and they are used for a variety of purposes - to signify power, to teach, to decorate, to protect, to identify and to preserve customs."

The floor of the 106,000 square foot Expomart venue was divided into separate areas to accommodate the Festival's various activities. A large stage surrounded by ample seating stood near 20 cultural display booths and the 27 vendors making up the "international market place." A smaller stage and beverage stands separated the main performance stage and cultural displays from 18 ethnic kitchens, "cafe" seating areas and a cafeteria style layout.

Especially worth noting is the children's program and play area. The Festival organizers made a special effort to appeal to children. Children were provided with numerous fun activities, including storytelling, puppet shows, language lessons and instruction in making folk crafts. Instruction was given in, among other things, how to tie on Indian turbans and make Chinese paper cuttings. The children's play area was carpeted by a large, colorful plastic world map. "Local people have been coming back to the festival year after year," explained Richard Custer, a member of the Carpatho-Rusyn Society. "Now those original Festival goers have children. The Festival's child-friendly themes give them a reason to come back with their children."

The heart of the children's program was the "Walk Around the World" Program, in which children received a small blue "passport." Inside were questions on each ethnic group, listed under the name of that group's home country. The questions were of a general nature and identical for all groups. Answering the questions required a child to visit a cultural display, food booth, or folk performance or to learn an ethnic craft or some words in the group's language. In the last page of the passport, children were able to write in their own heritage, the year in which their family came to the United States and the meaning of their family name. Children who completed the "Walk Around the World" received prizes.

The seven questions which children had to answer for each ethnic group were:

1. Did I locate and number this country on the map? Yes. No.
2. What craft did I make from this area?
3. Did I sample a food from this country's food booth? What?
4. Did I see this country perform? Yes. No.
5. What were the costumes like?
6. What did I learn by visiting this country's display booth?
7. What words did I learn in this language?

The children were also given blank world maps on which to locate the country from which a particular group originated. The two most difficult countries for children to locate were not countries, but regions: Carpatho-Rus' and Scandinavia. Fortunately for Carpatho-Rus', frustrated young navigators barely had time to put a blank look on their faces before one or another member of the Carpatho-Rusyn display staff pointed to the center of Europe crisscrossed by borderlines, and said "That's us, along the border of Poland, Ukraine and Slovakia." "Where?" or "Oh, Yeah! That's really hard to find," were the usual responses.

The "International Marketplace" consisted of various organizations selling ethnic wares, including carved wooden dolls at the "Russian Corner" and Susyn Yvonne Mihalasky

to be continued

Continued from Page 1

even to concede that the Uniate Greek Catholic Church was even a part of the Roman Communion.

Fr. Toth was not the only priest thus treated. The first meeting of Uniate Greek Catholic priests in America took place in Wilkes-Barre, PA. in October of 1890. It was attended by eight of the ten Greek Catholic priests in the United States at the time. All of the priests present related their experiences concerning the refusal of the Roman Catholic hierarchy to observe the Union of Uzhorod (which created the Carpatho-Russian Uniate Church) and recognize them as legitimate Catholic priests.

Following the Wilkes-Barre meeting, Fr. Toth set out to do something that he later recalled that he had already dreamed of in Europe: return to the Orthodox Church.

Contact was made with the Orthodox Bishop in America at the time, Bishop Vladimir of San Francisco, Bishop of the Russian Orthodox Missionary Diocese of Alaska. Finally convinced of the desire of Fr. Toth and the faithful of his Minneapolis parish to return to the Orthodox Faith, Bishop Vladimir made the long trip to Minneapolis and there received both Fr. Toth and 361 members of the parish into the Orthodox faith on the Sunday of Orthodoxy, March 25, 1891.

Impact of Conversion

The action of Fr. Toth had a great impact on the Greek Catholic Church in the United States. In Europe, the Hungarian government out of political fear suppressed any aspirations of Orthodoxy or even of identification with the Russian conscious among the Greek Catholic population. The Union of the Greek Catholic Church with Rome was exploited for political concerns and to identify with the Russian Orthodox was considered to be a treasonable offense. As late as 1907 Hungarian teachers were told to instruct their Carpatho-Russian Greek Catholic students that they were "Magyars of the Greek Rite" - never mind that they did not speak Hungarian!

The effects of this are seen today still; few descendants of Carpatho-Russians have a clear concept of national identity. They use the terms Carpatho-Russian, Rusin, Rusyn, Uhro-Rusin, Ruthenian, and countless other variations on the theme.

In light of the fact that Orthodoxy was a treasonable and forbidden subject to citizens of the Hungarian Empire, it is not surprising then that the second gathering of Greek Catholic priests in America, meeting in Hazelton, Pennsylvania in 1891, condemned the action of Fr. Toth. Interestingly enough, these same priests vowed to create an independent Greek Catholic Church if the Vatican continued to refuse to intercede on behalf of the Greek Catholics in light of the abuse to which they were subject from the American Roman Catholic hierarchy.

Fr. Toth was accused through the rest of his life by the Uniate press of being "another Judas Iscariot" and Orthodoxy was condemned as being "the faith of Toth." He was accused of selling out to the "High Russians" for a fortune in rubles. Despite the fantastic claims of the Uniate press at the time, the Russian Church never budgeted very much money for its American mission and until 1916 half of the budget was spent on the upkeep of schools and churches in Alaska proper.

Russian Reaction

As Fr. Toth was being vilified by the Uniate clergy and press, he was also looked upon with a prejudiced eye by the Great Russian clergy of the Russian Orthodox missionary diocese. He was told by one that he was regarded as "a Jesuit who for material interests united with Orthodoxy." The new bishop of the Russian Orthodox diocese apparently shared in this Great Russian chauvinism for the letters of Fr. Toth reveal that he was constantly forced to defend himself to the bishop.

In addition to these attacks from "foreign and domestic enemies" Fr. Toth was forced to leave his Minneapolis parish in 1893, when the congregation there had been apparently stirred by these same forces. He complained to his bishop "...those same people, for whom I have sacrificed everything and who during the attacks of the Papists stood as strong as a wall, who I have been protecting and saving, became so ungrateful...It was told to my face that we do not want the Hungarian as a priest anymore...we need a Russian priest!" Now that they were Orthodox they wanted a "real Russian Orthodox" priest and not an ex-Uniate one!

Fr. Toth also complained that the priest sent by the Bishop to help him in Minneapolis began "to introduce such rules which should only be introduced gradually over a period of time, but in no way in a parish which had just united with

Orthodoxy, otherwise disaster would ensue..."

This turn of events in Minneapolis however turned out to be quite fortuitous for both Fr. Toth and his movement to return Carpatho-Russians and Galicians to the Orthodox Church. Leaving Minneapolis he came to reside in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, the heartland of Carpatho-Russian and Galician immigration at the turn of the century.

While the clergy of the Uniate Church were too frightened to follow the lead of Fr. Toth to become Orthodox the faithful certainly were not. Tired of being discriminated by those Roman Catholic bishops and priests who found the Greek Catholic Church to be inferior they willingly heard the Orthodox message from the priest the Uniate newspaper Amerkanskij Russkij Viestnik labeled in contempt "the itinerant disciple."

Greek Catholic Churches in Wilkes-Barre, Edwardsville, Allegheny, Osceola Mills, Scranton, Old Forge, Lopez, Catasauqua, Berwick, and Philadelphia, all in Pennsylvania and in places like Streator Illinois, Bridgeport Connecticut, Yonkers New York, and Passaic New Jersey, all entered into the Orthodox Church along with many others. These parishes today are usually a part of the Orthodox Church in America, (OCA) which until 1970 reflected the Greek Catholic origins of many of its parishes in its former title as the "Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church."

Lost Traditions

Unfortunately, most of the parishes that came into Orthodoxy through Fr. Toth lost their Carpatho-Russian tradition over a period of time. The historical prostopinije "plain chant" singing was discouraged in favor of Great Russian choral music and the interior of the churches came to resemble those of Moscow rather than Presov.

Only three Uniate priests followed Fr. Toth into Orthodoxy. They were his brother Victor Toth, Fr. Michael Balogh and Fr. Gregory Hruska. All three eventually renounced the Orthodox Faith and returned to the Uniate Church. This often necessitated the use of Great Russian pastors in Carpatho-Russian and Galician Churches. These men cared little for things "Carpatho-Russian" and who were unable to separate their liturgical and ethnic prejudices from their Orthodox faith. They were often willingly abetted by people who confused legitimate Carpatho-Russian traditions with Latinizations imposed by the Uniates.

Fr. Toth's activities did not go unnoticed even in the old country. There the threat of Orthodoxy and a growing "Russian consciousness" pressured the Hungarian government to have the Vatican appoint a Uniate "Apostolic Visitor" to assess the damage being done to the American Uniate Greek Catholic Church.

Finally, a Uniate bishop was appointed in 1907 to attempt to check the tide. It has been estimated that by the time of his death in 1909 as many as 29,000 Uniate Greek Catholics returned to the Orthodox faith through the influence of Fr. Toth. This is especially impressive when one considers

that in 1891 - the year of his conversion to Orthodoxy, - there were two Russian Orthodox Churches in the U.S. mainland.

As mentioned already, despite the large number of faithful, very few Greek Catholic priests returned to the Orthodox faith. This necessitated the use of Greek Russian clergy as noted above but also the ordination of necessity of men who were often not well trained. Of this latter group several priests were ordained as Orthodox later returned to the Uniate Church either because the Uniate parishes were better able to support a priest of (in the case of Victor Toth) because they wished to return to Europe and would have been arrested there if they acknowledged the Orthodox faith.

Fr. Toth was a tireless fighter for the Orthodox faith, predicting correctly that the Uniate Church in America would eventually be almost undistinguishable from the Roman Church through a continuing program of "Latinization" and that those who remained in it would lose their unique identity.

When this "Latinization" again was being pressed upon the Greek Catholic Church in the 1930's it was to the example of Fr. Toth that Metropolitan Orestes and the other founders of our diocese looked for inspiration because he, like they, were Carpatho-Russians who loved their church and their people above all things. The letters of Fr. Toth, (recently translated and published in four

volumes by Fr. George Soldatow published by AARDM Press of Minneapolis, 1988) also reveal an educated man of great faith and principle, tempered with a keen sense of humor. Fr. Toth passed away in 1909; after receiving a miter and other acknowledgements for his work from the Russian Orthodox Church. His tomb is at St. Tikhon's Monastery cemetery in South Canaan, Pennsylvania.

Model Of Faith

In our own time the search for Orthodox "roots" of America has brought to light such notables as SS. Herman and Innocent of Alaska, whose work, important as it was, was largely confined to the native peoples of Alaska. The figure of Fr. Toth, explaining Orthodoxy to miners and factory workers among the dusty and dirty coal towns of Northeastern Pennsylvania, certainly is not as romantic as the miracle-filled lives of the authentic "Great Russian" missionaries of Alaska. His Carpatho-Russian background seemingly all wrong for sainthood.

Though vilified by his countrymen as a Judas and by many of his fellow Orthodox priests as a mercenary, Fr. Toth stuck to his belief in the redeeming power of Christ to be found in the Orthodox Church, always being careful to accept only those whose motivations were similar to his as converts.

In his own words, "...I am in real battle. I suffer profanation, contempt, defamation from others and from my own people! Without any ulterior motives I united with Orthodoxy, about which I had already dreamed in the Old Country... I never ran from work, I am ready to work..."

May the life of Fr. Alexis Toth, and now his prayers, his generosity, his willingness to forgive, his acceptance of others, his faith, illumine all Orthodox Christians in America regardless of their ethnic background or jurisdiction and help us be true missionaries of the Church to each other and to this land.

Note: The preceding article appeared in "The Church Messenger: in the May 8, 1994 issue.

1. Archpriest Alexis Toth vol. I trans. & ed. by

George Soldatow. pg. 23.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Historical Mirror. John Slivka, Brooklyn, 1978. p.

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5. Ibid. p. 29