

B I S H O P
SOTER STEPHEN ORTYNSKY

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The First Eastern Catholic Bishop
in the Western Hemisphere



Ivan Kaszczak

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by Ivan Kaszczak

Front Cover: Bishop Ortynsky seated in full Bishop's vestments wearing a mitre with both the Book of Gospels and Bishop's staff at his right. Circa 1907.

Back Cover: *upper left:* Medal commemoration the centennial of Bishop Ortynsky's appointment to the United States. Design credit: Moki Kokoris. *Center:* The present Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Philadelphia. Bishop Ortynsky is buried in the crypt. Photo credit: Michael Haritan *lower right:* Bishop Ortynsky's funeral commemoration pin "In Somber Remembrance – 24 March 1916."

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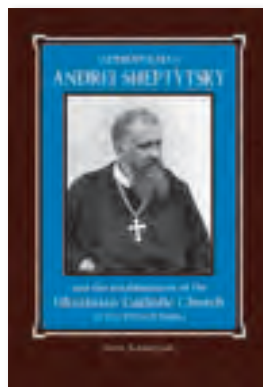
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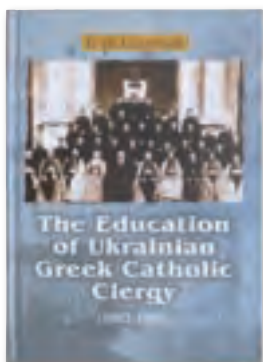
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Bishop Ortynsky's picture taken in Rome
during his 1907 visit.



RT. REV. SOTER STEPHEN ORTYNSKY, D.D.

Greek Catholic Bishop for the United States.

Greek Ruthenian Rite.

Consecrated June, 1907.

Residence: Philadelphia, Pa.

This woodcut of Bishop Ortynsky appeared in
The Official Catholic Directory of 1908.

Bishop Soter Stephen Ortynsky: The First Eastern Catholic Bishop in the Western Hemisphere

Ivan Kaszczak

Bishop Soter Stephen Ortynsky (1866–1916) served as the first hierarch of the Ruthenian Greek Catholic Church in the United States. As the first Eastern Catholic bishop in the Western Hemisphere, he significantly influenced the U.S. Catholic Church, theoretically and structurally. The lack of episcopal oversight at the inception of Ruthenian Greek Catholic Church in the U.S. led to the fracturing of its membership among diverse churches and much misunderstanding and misrepresentation. Ortynsky, in spite of his best efforts, became a target and scapegoat for much of the dissention within his church and the lack of understanding from without. For many fellow Catholics, Ortynsky stood in direct opposition to the Latin rite Catholic Church's unity of jurisdiction and uniformity of discipline. Various churches sought the conversion of Ruthenian Catholics, encompassing Rusins, Ukrainians and other ethnicities, to alternative confessions; nevertheless, Ortynsky persevered, asserting his church's rightful autonomy and evangelical mission.

Introduction

On March 24, 1916, a relatively young man of fifty years, Soter Stephen Ortynsky, the first Ruthenian Greek Catholic Bishop in the United States and the first Eastern Catholic Bishop in the Western Hemisphere, died in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. A hardworking and dedicated pastor, he had contracted pneumonia for the fourth time following some particularly difficult days of ministry. His funeral at the Ruthenian Greek Catholic Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Philadelphia, was near the burial place of a famous fellow immigrant from the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Bishop John Nepomucene Neumann.¹

1. John Nepomucene Neumann, C.Ss.R. (1811–1860), the fourth Catholic Bishop of Philadelphia, was born in Prachatitz, in the Kingdom of Bohemia, then part of the Austrian

Bishop Ortynsky's life and legacy remain relatively unexplored; only one English-language article about his life has been published to date.² A cryptic and enigmatic figure when living, born January 29, 1866 in the province of Galicia, Austria, his ancestry was not Austrian, but Ukrainian. His own Catholic confreres sometimes did not understand how this so-called "Greek" could be connected to the "Roman" (Latin rite) Catholic Church.

From the initial arrival of Greek Catholics in the U.S., Latin Catholic bishops resisted appointment of an Eastern Catholic bishop in their country. The U.S. Latin rite episcopacy of the nineteenth- and early-twentieth century has been labelled a "hibernarchy" because of the preponderance of Irish-ethnic bishops. This discord between the Catholic leadership and the ancestries/rites of U.S. Catholics fueled misunderstanding. Failing to differentiate between national (ethnic) parishes (German, Polish, Lithuanian, Hungarian, etc.) and Eastern rite Catholic churches (Ruthenian, Chaldean, Maronite, etc.), many U.S. Latin bishops desired that Eastern Catholics become Latin Catholics while retaining their ethnic distinctiveness through the founding of national parishes.³

Reflecting this mindset, a two-part article published in 1915 spoke of the "inferiority" of the Byzantine rite, and how the Latin rite merely "tolerated" the Eastern Catholics, concluding coldly: "The Church protects the national rite in his old home, but has no reason for keeping it up artificially amid surroundings to which it is foreign."⁴ Accompanying this view, the imperative to preach the Gospel was artificially confined to the Latin rite who claimed

Empire. After his canonization in 1977, the National Shrine of Saint John Neumann was constructed at Philadelphia's St. Peter the Apostle Church, less than two miles from Ortynsky's place of interment. When a new cathedral was built in the 1960s, Ortynsky's body was transferred to its crypt.

2. Bohdan P. Procko, "Soter Ortynsky: First Ruthenian Bishop in the United States, 1907–1916," *Catholic Historical Review* 58, no. 4 (January 1973): 513–533.

3. Walter Paska, *Sources of Particular Law for the Ukrainian Catholic Church in the United States* (Washington, DC: Canon Law Studies No. 485, 1975), 52; Peter Galadza, "The Structure of the Eastern Churches: Bonded With Human Blood or Baptismal Water?" *Pro Ecclesia* 17, no. 4. (2008): 373–386. The universal Catholic Church has been divided into East and West based on the ancient division of the Roman Empire. The Latin Church prevailed in the West while twenty-one Eastern Catholic Churches, born of the Antiochian, Alexandrian, Byzantine, and Armenian traditions predominated in the East. The Ruthenian Catholic Church herein mentioned is now divided mainly into two families: the Ruthenian Catholic and the Ukrainian Catholic Churches. Both belong to the Byzantine tradition. Uhro-Rusyn, Hungarian, Slovak, and Greek Catholic were common forms of labeling that were born from the various ethnic and political strains of the Ruthenian Catholic Church. See *Eastern Catholics in the United States of America* (Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, 1999).

4. Foraneus, "Some Thoughts on the Ruthenian Question in the United States and Canada," *The Ecclesiastical Review* 52 (January 1915): 42–50; Foraneus, "The Ruthenian Question Again," *The Ecclesiastical Review* 52 (June 1915): 645–653.



Bishop Soter Stephen Ortynsky (1907) (Courtesy of the Archives of the Sisters of St. Basil the Great, Fox Chase, Pennsylvania).

a *de facto* worldwide mission without respect for the autonomy and evangelizing mission of the Eastern Catholic Churches. Faced with such opposition, Europe's Greek Catholic bishops and the Holy See collaborated to establish an Eastern Catholic bishopric in the United States.

In the late nineteenth century, U.S. Catholic leaders, following a period of large-scale immigration from Europe, consolidated their institutional presence. The creation of dioceses, the founding of religious communities, and the growth of parishes, schools, and charitable works brought prominence to Latin Catholics who had spread throughout the globe along with the European empires with whom they were historically aligned.

The Eastern Catholics from the Middle East and Eastern Europe spread throughout the world in response to economic necessity and regional and international wars. Eastern European immigration to the U.S., beginning in earnest in the 1870s, included many Eastern Catholics and presented the U.S. Latin bishops with a difficult pastoral challenge to which they were ill-equipped to respond. Anti-Catholicism from outside the Church and pressure from within the Church for foreign-born Catholics to assimilate into American society provided an unfavorable context for Eastern Catholics.⁵

5. "The Appointment of a Greek Catholic Bishop in the United States," *The Ecclesiastical Review* 37, no. 5 (November 1907): 457–467.

The long tradition of married clergy within the Eastern churches was a unique irritant for the largely Irish hierarchy who even refused married priests the opportunity to minister.⁶

Though many early Greek Catholic priests serving in the U.S. were widowers, the Latin bishops viewed married priests and widowers as a “scandal,” an affront to their concept of uniform discipline. U.S. bishops, especially Irish-ethnic ones formed in the French school of spirituality’s austere notion of priesthood that included mandatory celibacy, had a visceral reaction against married clergy. Bishop Julius Firczák, Greek Catholic Bishop of Mukachevo (present-day Ukraine), expressed to New York Archbishop Michael A. Corrigan his frustration with the prohibition of assigning married priests to the U.S.:

The Catholic Church has allowed the Greek Catholic priests the privilege of marriage and the Roman Pontiff has confirmed it. ... Now when they wish to make use of this privilege, it so disqualifies them that they cannot serve the Catholic cause in America. Our people are abandoned like sheep without a shepherd. What will be the consequences of this deplorable state of things, but that many will fall into schism or Protestantism?⁷

In spite of such pleas, the 1893 annual meeting of U.S. archbishops concluded:

It is the solemn judgment of the Archbishops of the United States that the presence of married priests of the Greek rite in our midst is a constant menace to the chastity of our unmarried clergy, a source of scandal to the laity and therefore the sooner this point of discipline is abolished before these evils obtain large proportions, the better for religion, because the possible loss of a few souls of the Greek rite, bears no proportion to the blessings resulting from uniformity of discipline.⁸

A related issue entered into consideration as the Church had an ancient tradition of not placing two bishops in one city; an Eastern Catholic hierar-

6. James Hennesey, S.J., *American Catholics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 193. See Constantine Simon, S.J., “In Europe and America: the Ruthenians between Catholicism and Orthodoxy” *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 59 (1993): 169–210; Constantine Simon, S.J., “The First Years of Ruthenian Church Life in America” *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 60 (1994): 187–232; Constantine Simon, S.J., “Alexis Toth and the Beginnings of the Orthodox Movement among Ruthenians in America (1891)” *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 54 (1988): 387–428.

7. Firczák to Corrigan, April 20, 1893, G-3, Archives of the Archdiocese of New York (AANY). See also Thomas J. Shelley, *The Bicentennial History of the Archdiocese of New York, 1808-2008* (New York: Editions Du Signe 2009), 250.

8. 91-Document; V-Box; 1-Item: September 12 and 13, 1893 (Chicago), 1-2, Archives of the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

chy presented a jurisdictional challenge. Eastern Catholics asserted the need for an Eastern bishop even in the same locality as a Latin hierarchy:

The reason for a separate hierarchy for the Ruthenian Greek Catholic Church in the United States is a very different one from that urged by certain foreign Catholics. ... With the Ruthenian Greek Catholics, however, there is an absolute difference in the Rite, form of worship and usages. ... No question of Ruthenian racial affiliations or of nationality, whether Austrian or Hungarian, is involved, but only that of the religious Rite.⁹

Lack of a U.S. Greek Catholic bishop caused some members to join other churches and reinforced misunderstanding and misrepresentation among Catholics.¹⁰

Among prior attempts to designate a bishop for U.S. Ruthenians included efforts of Rev. Nicephore Chanath, an intermediary between the Latin bishops and Ruthenian faithful. Chanath, appointed in 1893 at the suggestion of the Holy See's apostolic delegate to the U.S., Archbishop Francesco Satolli, had no jurisdiction and held no title although some Ruthenians referred to him as "vicar general." He presented several petitions to the Austrian government and the Holy See, requesting a bishop for the U.S. Ruthenians, but to no avail.¹¹

Members of the Greek Catholic Union (GCU), the oldest Ruthenian fraternal organization in the U.S., had discussed the need for an appointment of a Ruthenian bishop at their 1897 convention in Braddock, Pennsylvania. Consequently, memoranda were presented to Hungarian officials and the Holy See. By 1901, Premier Koloman Szél of the Hungarian Parliament in Budapest "reported that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs [had] already initiated the negotiations with the Vatican."¹²

The Austro-Hungarian government exerted considerable influence on Church affairs, owing to a historically close church-state relationship, influ-

9. *Complaint against certain false and seditious attacks made by recalcitrant Ruthenian priests respecting their bishop* (New York City, March 12, 1912), 6.

10. From the eighteenth century until the 1950s, the term, "Greek Catholic" (*Griechisch-katolisch*), replaced "uniate" as a designation for what was initially known in the U.S. as the Ruthenian Greek Catholic Church. Later, the Church would be separated into the Ruthenian Catholic Church (Union of Uzhorod, 1646) and the Ukrainian Catholic Church (Union of Brest, 1596). Subsequently, in the modern era the term "uniate" has been viewed as derogatory but through the eighteenth century was a benign appellation.

11. Walter C. Warzeski, *Byzantine Rite Rusins in Carpatho-Ruthenia and America* (Pittsburgh, PA: Byzantine Seminary Press, 1971), 110–111.

12. Athanasius Pekar, OSBM, "Historical Background of the Carpatho-Ruthenians in America," in *Ukrainsky Istoryk-Ukrainian Historian* (New York-Munich, 1977), 75.

encing the Greek Catholic diaspora in the United States and Canada.¹³ In response to multiple petitions from U.S. Greek Catholics to officials in Austria and Hungary, Austrian officials entreated Metropolitan Andrei Sheptytsky of Lviv (present-day Ukraine) to appoint Father Basil Zholdak (1901–1904) as apostolic visitor to Canada. Officials in Budapest through Bishop Jan Valyi of Prešov (present-day Slovakia) likewise appointed Father Andrew Hodobay (1902–1907) as representative to the United States.¹⁴ Both exercised ministry to Ruthenian Catholics in the New World without becoming members of the hierarchy.

1907–1913: The First Bishop

Stephen Ortynsky entered the Basilian (Order of St. Basil the Great [O.S.B.M.]) novitiate at Dobromyl, Galicia, on February 3, 1884, taking the monastic name Soter after the second-century pope by that name. At Dobromyl, Soter Stephen Ortynsky, met the young count Roman (Andrei) Sheptytsky, future Metropolitan Archbishop of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church. Ordained a priest on July 18, 1891, Ortynsky celebrated his first Divine Liturgy at Dobromyl. Stationed in Lviv, Galicia, in 1906, he was preparing to depart to work among the Galician settlers in Brazil when he received the unexpected appointment as Ruthenian bishop for the United States.

Pope Pius X's personal friendship with Sheptytsky played a decisive role in Ortynsky's appointment. Sheptytsky, desiring a candidate acceptable to Austrian and Hungarian authorities, chose his fellow monk from Galicia, Ortynsky. While some Ruthenians regarded Ortynsky as well suited, others viewed the selection as biased. Austrian authorities quickly endorsed the appointment. To justify the selection to the Hungarians, Sheptytsky explained to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Count Alois Lexa von Aehrenthal (1854–1912), and convinced the Hungarian officials that Ortynsky opposed Russian Orthodoxy and Russification.¹⁵ The Austrian and Hungarian parliaments, wary of Russian influence in the homeland and among immigrants in the United States, viewed Russification as more than alienation of affection but also an ecclesiastical and national threat.

13. The Empire of Austria and the Kingdom of Hungary (Austro-Hungarian Dual Monarchy) maintained separate parliaments in Vienna and Budapest.

14. Metropolitan Sheptytsky explained the appointment of both administrators in his pastoral letter dated August 20, 1902. See *Postulatio Causae Beatificationis et Canonisationis Servi Dei Andreae Szeptycky Archiepiscopi Leopoliensis Ucrainorum Metropolitanæ Halyciensis*, Vol. XI, 1902–1933 (Roma, 1964), 258–270.

15. See “Yak pryishlo do imenovania nashoho pershoho epyskopa v Amerytsi,” *Yuvyleiny Almanakh Ukrainskoi Hreko-Katolytskoi Tserkvy u Zluchenykh Derzhavakh, 1884–1934* (Philadelphia, PA: America Press, 1934), 107.



Metropolitan Andrei Sheptytsky in Philadelphia during his second visit to the U.S. (1921–1922) (Courtesy of the Ukrainian Museum and Library of Stamford, Connecticut).

Greek Catholics consisted of two primary ethnic families: the Uhro-Rusin (Hungarian-Rusin or Subcarpathian) and the Galician (Ukrainian).¹⁶ To assure the Hungarian government that U.S. Greek Catholic leadership appointments would alternate between Galicia and Subcarpathia, Sheptytsky proposed to Hungarian authorities that at first the office of vicar general would alternate, while the bishop would remain Galician born.¹⁷ The Hungarian authorities consented to this compromise.¹⁸

As a result of Sheptytsky's interventions, the Holy See, in 1907 issued the decree, *Iam Vero*, appointing Ortynsky ecclesiastical superior of Greek

16. A third group, Galician Russophiles, were suspected schismatics and were believed to have pan-slavic aims with Russian sympathies. Stephen C. Gulovich. *Windows Westward* (New York: McMullen Co., 1947), 125.

17. The Hungarian government was involved from the beginning through the administration of Hodobay. See Paula K. Benkart, "The Hungarian Government, the American Magyar Churches, and Immigrant Ties to the Homeland, 1903–1917," *Church History* 52, no. 3 (September 1983): 317. Also, Keith Dyrud, "The Rusin Question in Eastern Europe and America, 1890–World War I" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1976).

18. Gregory Luznytsky, *Biskoup-Pionir Soter z Ortynych Ortynsky, O.S.B.M.* (Philadelphia, PA: America Press, 1963), 61.

Catholics in the U.S. and the titular bishop of Daulia (Greece).¹⁹ As provided in the apostolic letter of Pope Leo XIII *Orientalium Dignitas* (1895) with oversight of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith (Propaganda Fide), each Latin rite ordinary would delegate the necessary faculties to minister to Greek Catholics within their dioceses.²⁰ Sheptytsky consecrated Ortynsky as a bishop in the Greek Catholic Cathedral of Lviv on May 12, 1907.

After his consecration, Ortynsky traveled to Rome to present himself to Pope Pius X, various cardinals, and Roman officials.²¹ Though the nomination process addressed several concerns, his appointment stirred opposition. *Svoboda*, the newspaper of the U.S.-based fraternal organization, *Ruskyi Narodni Soiuz* (RNS),²² interpreted:

His nomination was put forth against the will of all the Roman Catholic bishops in America and 12 Cardinals in Rome. When he was in Rome, the local authorities requested from him that he would resign from the episcopacy. He turned to his friends in Galicia and they advised him not to resign....²³

To ease the Latin episcopacy's fears of losing authority, Ortynsky did not receive ordinary jurisdiction. As he described, "I am a bishop without a diocese." His first pastoral letter of June 25, 1907 reflected his weak position:

All Ruthenian Greek Catholic Rusins are given to my care, those who live in the United States are under my authority and I am under the jurisdiction of the Apostolic Nuncio [delegate] and through him directly to the Apostolic See. ... I think at the moment it cannot be otherwise because first I have to become an American citizen²⁴ and only

19. He was named bishop "*pro fidelibus Ritus Orientalis in Foederatis Statibus Americae Septentrionalis*." See Welykyj, *Documenta Pontificum Romanorum*, Vol. II (1954), 495–496; Paska, *Sources of Particular Law*, 44, 61, fn 12.

20. *Directory of the Ukrainian Catholic Ecclesiastical Province of Philadelphia Byzantine Rite* (Philadelphia, PA: Archbishop's Chancery, 1979), i.

21. Bishop Constantine Chehovich of Przemyśl, a widower himself, participated in the episcopal consecrations of Sheptytsky, Ortynsky and Budka.

22. The RNS, a fraternal organization founded in 1894 in Shamokin, Pennsylvania by Ruthenian Catholic priests from Galicia, was an alternative to the Greek Catholic Union (GCU), founded in 1892 by Ruthenian priests from Subcarpathia. Both organizations eventually opposed Ortynsky. Myron B. Kuropas, *Ukrainian-American Citadel: The First One Hundred Years of the Ukrainian National Association* (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 1996), 39–49.

23. Luke Mushyha, ed., *Jubilee Book of the UNA* (Jersey City, NJ: UNA, Inc., 1936), 158–159. Quote from *Svoboda* 36 (1907).

24. On October 2, 1908, *Ortynsky* signed a declaration of intention to become a U.S. citizen. He was naturalized on January 3, 1913. Certificate of Naturalization #321335, National Archives and Records Administration–Mid Atlantic Region, Philadelphia.

then to register the Ruthenian church with the state and attain for her all her just rights.²⁵

Returning to Vienna, Ortynsky had an audience with Emperor Franz Josef I and visited the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Count Alois Lexa von Aehrenthal, and other civil officials there and in Budapest. On his return trip to Lviv, he visited Greek Catholic bishops in Uzhorod (Ungvár) and Prešov in Subcarpathia.

On August 15, 1907, he departed Lviv in the company of his chaplain, Rev. Vladimir Petrivsky,²⁶ his brother Joseph Ortynsky (lay chamberlain), Brother N. Herman, O.S.B.M. (secretary), and Brother Dmytro Koniw, O.S.B.M. (cook). They arrived in the U.S. on August 27, 1907.²⁷ Shortly thereafter, at a banquet held in his honor, Ortynsky spoke of the unnamed Roman hierarchs who had demanded his resignation.²⁸

Two days after his arrival, Ortynsky traveled to Philadelphia to meet Archbishop Patrick J. Ryan.²⁹ In December 1884 Ryan had refused to receive Rev. John Wolansky, the first Greek Catholic priest in the U.S., because of the latter's marital status. This time Ryan offered Ortynsky hospitality in his own residence. Instead, Ortynsky opted to travel to Washington, D.C.³⁰ On August 30, 1907, he visited the apostolic delegate, Archbishop Diomedede Falconio, in Washington, before travelling to South Fork, Pennsylvania, to bless a new church. He remained there until November of 1907 when he transferred his residence to Philadelphia.³¹

Ortynsky's religious order had a history of friction with the secular clergy, sparking distrust in the new bishop.³² Tensions between the Uhro-

25. Translated by the author from the original as it appeared in the newspaper *Svoboda*—a newspaper for the Ruthenians and the organ of the Ruskyi Narodnyi Soiuz (RNS) (now known as the *Ukrainian National Association*—UNA).

26. *Ibid.*, 118–121. Rev. Petrivsky gives an eyewitness account of Ortynsky's arrival.

27. For a diary-like description of Ortynsky's trip from Galicia to America see *Misionar-The Missionary* (Zovkva, Galicia). Articles entitled "Z Dorohy v Ameryky," except the last one, "V Amerytsi;" October, 1908: 300–305; May, 1909: 145–148; June, 1909: 177–180; and July, 1909: 208–212.

28. John Slivka, *Historical Mirror: Sources of the Rusin and Hungarian Greek Rite Catholics in the United States of America 1884–1963* (Brooklyn, NY: 1978), 58.

29. "To Rule Many Churches—Greek Bishop Who Recognizes the Pope Comes Here to Take Charge," *The Ledger* (Philadelphia), August 30, 1907.

30. Rev. Petrivsky, "About America," *Nyva* (Lviv, Galicia) 20 (October 1, 1907): 614–617.

31. It was rumored that Sheptytsky would arrive with Ortynsky. See Slivka, *Historical Mirror*, 56.

32. John Paul Himka, "The Conflict between the Secular and the Religious Clergy in Eighteen-Century Western Ukraine," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* XV, nos. 1–2 (June 1991): 35–47.

Rusins and Galicians (Ukrainians) further exacerbated his rejection: “As for the Rusins, who by this time could boast of a commanding majority (among Eastern Catholics in the U.S.), Bishop Ortynsky was guilty of an ‘unpardonable crime’: he came of Ukrainian stock!”³³ The Rusins believed themselves “forced to accept the leadership of the Ukrainians, not only in the administration of the Church, but also in the political and social realms of the diocese as well.”³⁴ More complex than ethnic differences, individual ambition, personal preferences, and Eastern European politics played additional roles.

According to Sheptytsky’s assessment, Eastern Catholics settling in the United States several decades before Ortynsky’s arrival suffered from a dearth of ecclesial leadership. When the U.S. Ruthenian Church, lacking a hierarchy for more than thirty years, received one, he was denied ordinary jurisdiction. Ortynsky passionately expressed to Sheptytsky his frustration: “You have no idea what animosity is in these Latins and what absence of love and even catholicity. Here, the dollar is god and that’s all.”³⁵

The Uhro-Rusin alliance favored Hungarian nationalism while the Galician strain favored Ukrainian nationalism, yet Ortynsky had supporters among both groups. Among them, Orestes Chornock, a Greek Catholic priest from Subcarpathia, though lacking Galician background, supported his bishop, among “the few Carpatho-Russian priests to stand with Ortynsky (sic), despite the majority who openly attacked him and appealed for his removal.”³⁶ His apparent allegiance was born of a sincere respect for Ortynsky, sentiments reiterated when Chornock himself became an Orthodox bishop.³⁷

Ortynsky’s lack of ordinary jurisdiction created dependence upon individual Latin bishops for permission to exercise his ministry.³⁸ The papal decree *Ea Semper* (June 14, 1907) required such dependence on each individual Latin bishop in whose diocese Eastern Catholics lived.³⁹ Though

33. Stephen C. Gulovich, “The Rusin Exarchate in the United States” *The Eastern Churches Quarterly* VI (October–December 1946): 475.

34. Ibid., 112. *Amerikanskij Russki Viestnik* (ARV), the Rusyn newspaper of the fraternal organization, the Greek Catholic Union, led the fight against Ortynsky. *Svoboda*, the Galician-friendly RNS newspaper, would shortly follow.

35. November 19, 1907, from Philadelphia, Fond 358, opis 2, sprava 70, arkys 69–70, Tsentral’nyi derzhavnyi istorychni arkhiv Ukrainy u m. L’vovi (The Central National Historical Archive of Ukraine in the City of Lviv) (hereafter TsDIAL).

36. Lawrence Barriger, *Good Victory—Metropolitan Orestes Chornock and the American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Diocese* (Boston, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1985), 38.

37. Ibid., 39.

38. “The Appointment of a Greek Bishop in the United States,” *The Ecclesiastical Review* 37, no. 5 (November 1907): 460.

Ortynsky spoke and wrote often about his opposition to *Ea Semper*, he was accused of betraying the rights and privileges of his own church by allegedly consenting to its limitations on his ministry.⁴⁰

Ortynsky, haunted by *Ea Semper* his entire episcopacy, protested that he did not even know of the apostolic letter until after his arrival in the U.S.:

About such a bull, which came out of Rome for the American Ruthenians, I knew nothing in the homeland, nor in Rome, nor in America until that moment, when after a month of my stay in America, the Apostolic Delegate called me to himself and told me about it. Having inquired privately of the Rector of the Ruthenian College in Rome that the former directive of Cardinal Ledóchowski, regarding Confirmation, is to be put into effect, I put in a protest against this, the copy of which I hold in my hand as a document. And since I regard this bull as an insult to our Church and our people, I immediately protested against it and did not promulgate it to my clergy nor to the people.⁴¹

When presented with an opportunity to influence the promulgation of a successive document, *Cum Episcopo*, in 1914, Ortynsky succeeded in having the offensive part of *Ea Semper* removed. He reiterated his opposition to *Ea Semper* shortly before his death in 1916: “The Bulla does not exist, I never acknowledged it—therefore the Bull does not oblige us.”⁴²

Ea Semper and Ortynsky’s attitude toward non-Galicians infuriated the Subcarpathian clergy:

Some of the Subcarpathian clergy became alarmed because the Bishop was not “one of them,” meaning a Hungarian, and they immediately made up their mind: “We will not accept him!” even before they had a chance to meet the Bishop and talk with him.⁴³

To foster greater collaboration and cooperation of all Ruthenian Catholics, Ortynsky invited all priests and faithful to a meeting at St.

39. *Acta Sanctae Sedis* XLI (1908): 3–12.

40. Paska, *Sources of Particular Law*, 46.

41. Bishop Ortynsky’s pastoral letter, “*Poslaniie Pastirske Sotera Ortynskoho–Epyskopa dlya breko-katlykov v Spoluchenykh Derzhav Pivnochnoi Ameryky do Vseho breko-katolytskoho Svi-aschenstva I vsikh breko katolytskykh virnykh z Nabody Buli*,” Published in Ukrainian, Slovak, and Hungarian, dated January 11, 1908, Philadelphia, Ortynsky Box 1, Ukrainian Museum and Library of Stamford, Connecticut.

42. Slivka, *Historical Mirror*, 118.

43. Basil Shereghy, ed., *The United Societies of the U.S.A.: A Historical Album* (McKeesport, PA: United Societies of the U.S.A., 1978), 109. See also Father Stephen Gulovich, “Rusin Exarchate in the United States,” *Eastern Churches Quarterly* VI (1946): 478.

George's Church, New York City, on October 15–18, 1907.⁴⁴ As its most important act, this convention decided the Greek Catholic bishop had jurisdiction over all Ruthenian churches, a decision never fully implemented.

In late 1908 Ortynsky purchased Philadelphia's St. Jude Episcopal Church. An adjoining building became the bishop's residence. According to *Dushpastyr*, the publication that became Ortynsky's official voice in 1909,⁴⁵ the complex was purchased for \$36,650 and another \$10,000 was expended for renovations. He acquired several properties and planned eventually to transfer the see to New York City. The faithful were encouraged to support the bishop who after the cathedral's completion desired to form a seminary, employment agency, bank, and settlement house to help new immigrants.⁴⁶

Friction between the Subcarpathian Greek Catholics and Ortynsky continued unabated. A letter opposing him stated,

(The) Greek Catholics of Hungary, in order that they may be able to save their Catholic Faith, purity of their rite, character, peace and future welfare, separate themselves from the ukrainists, radicals and fanatical ukrainist spirit of Bishop Ortynsky, and shall do everything possible to get a bishop of their own.⁴⁷

Ortynsky was accused of unbridled Ukrainian nationalism, though he did not use the word Ukrainian or Ukraine in any of his official documents or letters:

There are those who even today accuse Bishop Ortynskyj (sic) of "Ukrainian chauvinism," which is far from the truth. There were at the time some radical Ukrainian priests, but there were also some no less Magyarophile (Hungarian) priests. Bishop Ortynskyj, however, never joined the radicals and tried to be a Spiritual Shepherd to all. It was recorded by Mr. Hanchin, who at first belonged to the opposition, but

44. The announcement appeared in *Svoboda*, October 2, 1907 and the *ARV*, October 3, 1907. The report from the priests' meeting can be found in *Svoboda*, November 7, 1907. A report was also issued from Ortynsky's Philadelphia chancery on October 26, 1907.

45. In February of 1909 *Dushpastyr-Pastor of Souls* became the voice of the Greek Catholic Church. It was published in New York City, Philadelphia, and New Britain, Connecticut.

46. On July 8, 1909 this free employment bureau (agency) was opened as St. Raphael's Ruthenian Free Employment Bureau on 822 North Franklin Street in Philadelphia. See *Dushpastyr* I, no. 7 (New York: August, 1909): 114.

47. John Uhrin and Michael Maczko to Ortynsky, January 28, 1909, Homestead, Pennsylvania, Stamford Eparchial Archives, Stamford, Connecticut (hereafter SEA). The letter enumerated the causes for the friction existing between Galician and Subcarpathian Catholics. It accused Ortynsky of mixing religion with politics and spoke of the formation of the Executive Committee of the Ecclesiastical-Laical Congress at conventions in Braddock and Scranton, Pennsylvania.

later confessed, that “Bishop Ortynskyj did not Ukrainianize and, wherever he appeared, delivered a most eloquent sermon. In no time he would gain the confidence of our people if the Sojedenenje with its paper and our clergy would not contrive against him at every given opportunity.”⁴⁸

Correspondence between Ortynsky and Bishop Valyi of Prešov (present-day Slovakia) described the Subcarpathian clergy’s struggle against Ortynsky who outlined his “Ukrainian” policy:

In America, it is impossible to cultivate any politics, especially on the part of a Greek Catholic bishop. For a Greek Catholic bishop in America, it is enough to protect his own faithful from the Russian schism and to strengthen [them] in the Greek Catholic faith. This and only this way—from the onset of my arrival in America till my own death—I wish to retain. The nationalistic Ruthenian spirit that stems from the Galician people is used only as a medium against the Russian schism as well as Russian political aspirations among our people in America and is in no way disseminated or cultivated among the Hungarian dependents. The Hungarian Government can stay reassured and be confident that all people, who come from Hungary, will be brought up in a spirit of loyalty to the Greek Catholic Church, His apostolic Majesty [the Hungarian King] and Hungary as their native land.⁴⁹

In January 1910, more than 100 delegates from forty-five Subcarpathian parishes gathered in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, declared Ortynsky’s leadership illegitimate and petitioned the Holy See to recall him. Subcarpathians opposing Ortynsky formed branches of the Rusin Civilian Church Council to “protest to Rome through the Apostolic Delegate against *Ea Semper*; stop Bishop Ortynsky from ukrainianizing the diocese; petition for a Rusyn bishop; and protect Uhro-Rusyns against Ukrainian propaganda.”⁵⁰ If a bishop to their liking were not appointed, they proposed uniting the Subcarpathian Greek Catholic Churches under one charter, calling themselves a “Union of the Greek Catholic Autonomical Churches of America.”⁵¹ Some members joined the Orthodox Church when their aims were not realized.

As part of the 1910 Johnstown congress, a clerical committee composed of Fathers Nicholas Csopey (Chopey), Victor Mirossay, and Cornelius Lau-

48. Basil Shereghy, ed. *The United Societies of the U.S.A.: A Historical Album* (McKeesport, PA: Published by United Societies of the U.S.A., 1978), 110.

49. Letter of March 24, 1908, Ortynsky file 1, SEA.

50. Warzeski, *Byzantine Rite Rusins*, 120.

51. *Minutes of the General Congress of the American Hungaro-Russian Greek Catholic Parishes held at Johnstown, PA., January 11 and 12, 1910* (Johnstown, PA: 1910), 31.

risin met with Ortynsky. The latter acknowledged the necessity of having another bishop appointed from Subcarpathia but noted that *ad hominem* newspaper attacks against him hindered Greek Catholic unity. Consequently, Father Laurisin reported to the congress:

Having considered the matter thoroughly and seriously, the Clerical Committee advises you that you in all your resolutions have in mind that you are Catholics and so take care not to transgress the laws of the Church. Debate and discuss peacefully and becomingly, hold yourselves aloof from all attacks and don't offend the position of Bishop Ortynski (sic) in the least way. In the name of the Clerical Committee I advise you to send all your resolutions, as well as the petition, which shall be sent to Rome, through a committee to Bishop Ortynski (sic), asking him to espouse our cause. At the same time I request you to have the attacks in the papers cease, since by these our cause shall not be assisted—what's more these shall cause a reaction. I finally assure the Congress that the clergy as until now, so also in the future shall guard the interests of the Church and people, but at the same time ask the Congress and people not only to assist the clergy, but also to protect it at all hazards.⁵²

Remaining unmoved towards Ortynsky, the congress voted overwhelmingly to “condemn the hitherto actions and politics of Bishop Ortynski (sic) and [expressed their] desire that all connections with him be severed.”

Bishop Michael J. Hoban of Scranton, Pennsylvania, contributing to Ortynsky's difficulties, had visited the Greek Catholic Bishops Jan Valyi of Prešov and Julius Firczák of Mukachevo in 1909. They had expressed concern about the Greek Catholics in the U.S. and the belief that Sheptytsky's visit there in the summer of 1910 would be advantageous to Ruthenian Catholics. Hoban favored especially Bishop Firczák's views; however, regarding Ortynsky he wrote, “I regret to say that I have not much confidence in Bp. Ortynsky. I am inclined to think that the Pope and Card. Gotti have not very much (confidence) in him either.”⁵³

Many U.S. Ruthenians believed only Sheptytsky could resolve the conflict, though he could not easily leave his archeparchy for an extended period.⁵⁴ He had the opportunity to intervene in the U.S. Ruthenian dispute

52. Ibid, 27.

53. Bishop Hoban to Archbishop John M. Farley, May 23, 1910, I-13, AANY.

54. Brother Joseph Grodsky, O.S.B.M., “Vidvidyny Ameryky Mytr. A. Sheptytskym v 1910 rotsi,” *Kalendar Provydinia*, 1927 (Philadelphia: America Press, 1927), 104. Brother Grodsky, the metropolitan's secretary, accompanied him on the entire tour. One of the most detailed accounts of the metropolitan's travels can be found in Mykhailo H. Marunchak, *Mytropolyt Andrei Sheptytski na Zakhodi 1920–1923* (Winnipeg–Edmonton, 1981).

when he traveled to the Americas to attend the Twenty-First Eucharistic Congress, held in Montreal, Canada, September 6–12, 1910. While there, Sheptytsky and Ortynsky spoke with the French-Canadian bishops about the possibility of appointing a Ruthenian bishop for Canada.

Sheptytsky, after arriving in the United States on August 23, 1910, visited many parishes. On September 21 he arrived in Cleveland, Ohio where on the previous day Ortynsky had opened the Eleventh Convention of the RNS. During the morning session an attempt was made to change the RNS into an organization for Greek Catholics. This effort resulted in harsh polemics. Ortynsky's background as a priest from a European monarchy and now a bishop in an American republic hindered his ministry in this regard and turned many Galicians against him.⁵⁵

On October 1, 1910, Sheptytsky with other church dignitaries greeted Cardinal Vincent Vannutelli, the pope's legate to the Eucharistic Congress at a reception and banquet honoring him in Philadelphia. On October 2, Sheptytsky and Ortynsky, assisted by sixteen Ruthenian priests and participating Latin bishops, dedicated the former St. Jude's Episcopal Church as the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, the first Eastern rite cathedral in the United States.⁵⁶

Sheptytsky returned to Lviv, Galicia, on December 14, 1910. The metropolitan thereafter left for Rome to discuss the Ruthenian Church's needs in the United States and Canada. He prepared a document defending Ortynsky.⁵⁷ His efforts resulted in the appointment of Rev. Nicetas (Nykyta) Budka as the first Ruthenian Greek Catholic bishop of Canada and conferring full and ordinary jurisdiction to Ortynsky in the U.S.⁵⁸ Still, Ortynsky's recognition as a bishop had its limits. The apostolic delegate wrote to Ortynsky, "I take advantage of this occasion to remind Your Lordship that you cannot use the title 'Greek Catholic Bishop.' In accordance with the mission entrusted to you by the Holy See, you must use the title

55. For a more comprehensive treatment of Metropolitan Sheptytsky's role in the Ruthenian Catholic Church in America along with relevant documents see Ivan Kaszczak, *Metropolitan Andrei Sheptytsky and the Establishment of the Ukrainian Catholic Church in the United States* (Toronto, Ontario: The Basilian Press, 2013).

56. "Consecration of Greek Cathedral," *The Catholic News*, October 22, 1910, 8.

57. Originally published in 1911 as an "Address to their Lordships the Archbishops and Bishops of Canada." The text can be found in M.H. Marunchak, ed., *The National Council of Ukrainian Organizations for the Patriarchate of the Ukrainian Catholic Church* (Winnipeg: Patriarchal Society, 1977).

58. Nykyta (Nicetas) Budka was nominated as the first apostolic exarch for the Ruthenians in Canada on July 15, 1912. See Welykyj, *Documenta Pontificum Romanorum*, Vol. II, 508–511.

‘Bishop of the Greek Catholic Ruthenians’ or ‘Greek Catholic Ruthenian Bishop.’”⁵⁹

On May 22, 1912, Ortynsky led a delegation to Washington, D.C., to meet with the new apostolic delegate to the United States, Archbishop John Bonzano. One of Bonzano’s first acts was to defend Ortynsky:

I am informed that on the 28th of May 1912 the laymen of the Greek Rite intend to hold meetings at the following places: Braddock, Pa., Wilkes-Barre, Pa, and Perth Amboy, N.J. for the purpose of adopting resolutions and directions to the effect that Bishop Ortynsky shall leave the United States at once and a new Bishop be appointed.

In face of such a manner of acting that totally subverts ecclesiastical discipline and attacks the prerogatives of the Holy See, to which alone belongs to appoint and depose Bishops, it is incumbent upon me to prohibit all Catholics of any rite whatsoever to be present at or take part in any way in said meetings—Moreover the priests of either Greek or Latin rite are also prohibited and, “sub gravi” to attend or take part in said meetings.⁶⁰

In 1912, eighty-two of Ortynsky’s priests defended him by signing the “Defense of Bishop Ortynsky,” a letter first published in Latin and later in English and sent to the entire U.S. Catholic hierarchy.⁶¹

1913–1916: Ordinary Jurisdiction

Bishop Ortynsky’s status improved radically when a Propaganda Fide decree of May 28, 1913 was released through the office of the apostolic delegate in Washington, D.C., confirming that Pope Pius X had bestowed upon Ortynsky full and ordinary jurisdiction over the clergy and faithful of the Ruthenian rite.⁶² Ortynsky and the Ruthenian Greek Catholics became fully

59. Apostolic Delegate D. Falconio to Ortynsky (protocol #1579-d), March 26, 1909, Ortynsky file 1, SEA.

60. Letter from Apostolic Delegate, May 24, 1912 (#11467.D) in *Dushpastyr* IV, no. 22 (New Britain, CT: May 30, 1912): 350–351. The article mentioned that the libelous letter issued against Ortynsky was distributed at the end of January 1912, but had an earlier date of August 31, 1911.

61. “*Protestatio Adversus Quasdam Falsas et seditiosas Accusationes Promotas a Nonnullis Rebellibus sacerdotibus Ruthenis Contra Ipsorum Episcopum*” (Rome: Ex Typographia Pontifica in Instituto Pii IX, 1912). This petition appeared also in English under the title, “Complaint against certain false and seditious attacks made by recalcitrant priests respecting their bishop.” See Isydor I. Patrylo. *Fontes et Bibliographia Historiae Ecclesiae Ucrainae*, Vol. 2 (Rome: PP. Basiliani—Via S. Giosafat 8 [Aventino]—Analecta OSBM, Vol. XLVI, 1988), 67.

62. Letter of the Apostolic Delegate, Archbishop Giovanni Bonzano, August 25, 1913, notifying the Latin clergy of the Holy See’s decision. The Ukrainian and English translations of this letter are printed in *Dushpastyr*, V, no. 9: September 1, 1913 (New Britain, CT:

independent of the Latin hierarchy in the United States, and although his church was established as an exarchy, it functioned as an independent eparchy or diocese, then the seventh most populous in the U.S.⁶³ In September 1913, owing in part to the decree, some Subcarpathian clergy active in seeking his removal reconciled with him, a partial yet promising *rapprochement*.⁶⁴

Aside from his trip to Canada with Metropolitan Sheptytsky in 1910, Ortynsky had not left the country since arriving in 1907. To Sheptytsky, Ortynsky indicated his plans to visit Rome.⁶⁵ With his secretary, Rev. Vladimir Derzyruka, he embarked for Rome for his *ad limina apostolorum* visit (scheduled for June 2, 1914). While in Europe, he visited Vienna and the Subcarpathian bishops with whom he discussed the possibility of appointing another U.S. Greek Catholic bishop for the Subcarpathians, indicating his belief that he could not single-handedly heal deep-seated rifts within the U.S. Ruthenian Greek Catholic Church.⁶⁶

On July 9, 1914, Ortynsky departed Rome for Lviv, Galicia, via Vienna. This trip proved harrowing, as he had to disguise himself as a reservist soldier to exit Austria-Hungary.⁶⁷ He left Europe on August 12 from Genoa, Italy, narrowly avoiding the initial hostilities of the Great War.⁶⁸ Following Ortynsky's departure, the Russian Tsar Nicholas II imprisoned Sheptytsky, but the Ruthenian Church in America did not forget their "Father Metropolitan."⁶⁹ In December 1914, Ortynsky wrote to the apostolic delegate, Archbishop John Bonzano, inquiring about Sheptytsky's fate. Bonzano replied that he would continue to seek the metropolitan's release.⁷⁰

Ruthenian Catholic Publishing, Co.), 175–179. See also, *American Ecclesiastical Review*, XLIX (October, 1913): 473–474.

63. The 1914 *Catholic Directory* lists 154 clergy, 195 parishes/missions and 500,000 faithful in the Ruthenian Greek Catholic Church in America. See *The Official Catholic Directory* (New York: P.J. Kennedy & Sons, 1914), 1189.

64. For a detailed and comprehensive analysis of the Subcarpathian situation in the United States, see the two-part article by Athanasius Pekar, O.S.B.M. "Historical Background of the Carpatho-Ruthenians in America" in *Ukrainsky Istoryk—The Ukrainian Historian*, 1976: 87–102 and 1977: 70–84.

65. Ortynsky to Sheptytsky, February 17, 1914, Philadelphia, PA, TsDIAL, Fond 358, opis 2, sprava 71, arkys 27–28. Transcribed in Wolodymyr Ortynsky, *Vykhodets z Drohobychyn* (Lviv, Ukraine: Lvivsky Derzhavny Universytet Vnutrishnuh Sprav, 2010), 105.

66. Paska, *Sources of Particular Law*, 53.

67. Recounted in an interview Ortynsky gave to the *Syracuse Herald*, "Bishop Ortynsky tells of his escape from Austria," September 21, 1914.

68. Arno Behnke. *The Sailing of a Refugee Ship: A Little Record of the Voyage of the Principe Di Udine from Genoa to New York in August, Nineteen Fourteen, during the first days of the European Conflict* (New York: 1914).

69. Sheptytsky was arrested during the Russian occupation of Galicia; he was deported and remained imprisoned until 1917.

70. Apostolic Delegate Archbishop John (Giovanni) Bonzano to Ortynsky, January 2, 1915 (No. 16829), Washington, DC, SEA.

Propaganda Fide's decree *Cum Episcopo* (August 17, 1914) reiterated and defined the decision granting Ortynsky full and ordinary jurisdiction, providing safeguards against assimilation into the Latin Catholic majority. For example, the children of mixed rites belonged to the rite of the father and baptism into another rite did not change the person's status.⁷¹ Faithful of both rites could receive communion in either rite; the bride's bishop would grant the dispensation in inter-ritual marriages. The decree also directed transferring the bishop's residence to New York City, while the vicar general and seminary rector were to remain in Philadelphia.⁷² *Cum Episcopo* negated the former decree, *Ea Semper*, and furthered peace and stability for the fledgling diocese. One omission of *Cum Episcopo* was the lack of a provision for the administration of the eparchy in the case of the bishop's death. When Ortynsky died in 1916, the apostolic delegate telegraphed Rome for emergency faculties to facilitate the appointment of administrators.⁷³

In the pastoral letter penned after Ortynsky's return from Europe, he expressed his admiration and gratefulness for residing in the United States and the compassion he felt for his European brothers and sisters:

We are blessed by fate, brothers and sisters, that we are living in a free America and are not afflicted by that suffering which war brings and especially a war with a wild, terrible and ignorant enemy—It is well with us! Therefore, it seems that we have it good, and we even forget our dear ones in the old country!—We have it good! ... O what a bitter thing is our security in a free America?!⁷⁴

Having received ordinary jurisdiction, Ortynsky established a diocesan curia and various structures necessary for operating an eparchy-exarchate (diocese) with full and ordinary jurisdiction:

The first inclusion in the Official Catholic Directory for 1914 gives a listing for the 'Ruthenian Greek Catholic Church,' and Bishop Ortyn-

71. On June 21, 1924, the Sacred Congregation for the Oriental Church renewed the decree *Cum Episcopo* for an indefinite period.

72. For an explanation of *Cum Episcopo* and its relation to the Canadian document of August 18, 1913, *Fidelibus ruthenis*, see Andrew B. Mechan, "The New Decree on the Greek-Ruthenians in the United States," *The Ecclesiastical Review* LI, no. 6 (1914): 710–717 and David Motiuk, *Eastern Christians in the New World* (Ottawa: Saint Paul University, 2005), 25–36.

73. Eric F. Mackenzie, *The Canonical Status of the Ruthenian Rite in the United States* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America, 1919), 20.

74. Letter of October 28, 1914 cited on page 133 in *Za Scho Lyetsya Krov Milioniv—Na Temu Velykoi Evropeyskoi Viyny v rr. 1914–1915* (Philadelphia, PA: Orphanage Press, 1915), 129–142. See also Robert A. Karlowich, ed., *Guide to the Amerikansky Russky Viestnik*, Volume II: 1915–1929 (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), #3003, 106.



Bishop Ortynsky's canons and consultors who assisted him in the administration of his diocese (Courtesy of the Ukrainian Museum and Library of Stamford, Connecticut).

sky, in keeping with the understanding that a balance was to be maintained between the Ukrainian [Galician] and Carpathian [Rusyn] Clergy in administration, named Alexander Dzubay, a Carpathian, as vicar general. Of the fifteen diocesan consultors and officials, eight were Ukrainian and seven Carpathian.⁷⁵

Disputes between Galicians and Subcarpathians were never fully resolved in Ortynsky's lifetime. Shortly before his death, the Subcarpathians sought another avenue of amelioration. On February 24, 1916, the *ad hoc*, "Committee of National Defense," seeking to defend the rights of Subcarpathian Greek Catholics, sought a division of jurisdiction:

The nomination of a bishop for the Carpathian people in accordance with the terms of the Union of Uzhorod (1649); 2. The suspension of the recent decrees regulating norms for the Ruthenian Church in the United States (*Ea Semper, Cum Episcopo*); 3. The transfer of jurisdic-

75. Ibid, 53. On August 19, 1916 in St. Nicholas Russian Orthodox Cathedral (New York) Father Alexander Dzubay was consecrated as the Orthodox bishop (+Stephen) of Pittsburgh by Metropolitan Prince Evdokim Meschersky. Rev. Dzubay, disappointed at being shunned by his fellow priests, had left the Catholic Church several weeks prior to his consecration as an Orthodox bishop.

tion over the Carpathian vicar general until the appointment of a Carpathian bishop; 4. The submission of three names, approved by the Committee, as candidates for the episcopacy.⁷⁶

The antipathy directed against Ortynsky, shortly before his death, caused him to entertain the idea of becoming the Bishop of Przemyśl in Galicia.⁷⁷

Despite misunderstanding and hostility, Latin Catholics, clergy and faithful, devoted many tireless hours in helping this fledgling Eastern Catholic church. For example, the German immigrant Charles Rice helped the Ruthenians of Shenandoah, Pennsylvania obtain their first priest, Father Ivan Wolansky, in 1884. A New Jersey lawyer William J. Kearns helped achieve juridical equity for Greek Catholic churches.⁷⁸ Cardinal James Gibbons, Archbishop of Baltimore, financially supported the orphanage that Ortynsky founded in Philadelphia.

Finally, Andrew J. Shipman (1857–1915), a brilliant Catholic layman and man of letters, befriended Ortynsky and became a generous benefactor of Greek Catholic Ruthenians. He wrote many articles for *The Catholic Encyclopedia* about Eastern Catholics and was responsible for the first English translation (1911) of the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom for the Greek Catholics. He also served as a counsel for the Syrian Catholics and defender of Catholic rights:

His zeal is instanced in his exposure in “America” in 1910 of the attempt of the Presbyterians at Newark in New Jersey, New York and other centres to proselytize the newly-arrived Slavic Catholics by fraudulent use of the Greek Rite Liturgy and ceremonial, a Presbyterian “Mass.”⁷⁹

Large numbers of Greek Catholic clergy and faithful attended Shipman’s funeral on October 20, 1915 in New York’s St. Patrick’s Cathedral. Ortynsky conducted the burial service, the first time the burial service according to the Greek Catholic Rite was ever seen in a church of the Latin rite in the United States.⁸⁰

76. Paska, *Sources of Particular Law*, 58–59.

77. *Narodna Wola—The People’s Will* (Scranton, PA: March 29, 1916, #25), 1.

78. William J. Kearns even named his youngest son, Cyril Soter Kearns, in honor of Ortynsky. Ortynsky and Bishop John J. O’Conner of Newark officiated at the wedding of William Kearns’ daughter Agatha T.D. Kearns. See *The New York Times*, April 23, 1915.

79. “Shipman, Andrew Jackson.” *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. XVII (New York: Encyclopedia Press, Inc., 1922), 691.

80. Conde B. Pallen, ed., *A Memorial of Andrew J. Shipman: His Life and Writings* (New York: Encyclopedia Press, 1916), lxiv.



Bishop Ortynsky among the dignitaries receiving Archbishop John Bonzano, the Apostolic Delegate to the United States, at a banquet given by the American Catholic Historical Society (1916) (Courtesy of the Philadelphia Archdiocesan Historical Research Center, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania).

The Latin Catholic Church helped in the formation and education of clergy from the earliest years of Eastern Catholics in the U.S.⁸¹ Ortynsky, unable to establish his own seminary, sent seminarians to St. Charles Seminary in Philadelphia, St. Bernard Seminary in Rochester, New York, the Benedictines' St. Mary's Abbey (renamed Assumption Abbey in 1928) in Richardton, North Dakota, and St. Mary's Seminary in Baltimore.⁸² At Ortynsky's request, the Greek Catholic priest Constantine Kuryllo taught the Ruthenian seminarians at St Mary's.

A few days before Ortynsky died, he received a letter from John Farley, Archbishop of New York, praising the charitable work of the Ruthenian Basilian Sisters in their care of orphans and promising the support of Latin

81. The first Ruthenian alumnus St. Charles Seminary in Philadelphia, Stephen Janiczky, was ordained on March 22, 1877 by Bishop Nicholas Toth [1876–1882] of Eperjes (Presov). See George E. O'Donnell, *St. Charles Seminary, Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: American Catholic Historical Society, 1964), 395–403.

82. Ortynsky established a pre-seminary in Philadelphia, St. Paul's Missionary School, where boys studied for the priesthood and secular professions. By 1919 there were nineteen students.

rite Catholics. He recognized that the story of Catholics in the U.S. was one of immigrants: "Each race of Catholics that has come here has needed assistance in the beginning, and I trust that the children of these pioneers will not forget the charity given their fathers."⁸³

Ortynsky's death produced an outpouring of respect. About 15,000 people gathered in Philadelphia for the funeral. Latin rite Catholic bishops Michael J. Hoban of Scranton, John J. McCort of Altoona, Archbishop Edmond F. Prendergast of Philadelphia, and others arrived along with the Syro-Maronite Chorbishop Joseph Yazbek of Boston. Presbyterian, Methodist, and Episcopal pastors, a Jewish rabbi, and two Orthodox priests were present. President Woodrow Wilson sent flowers.

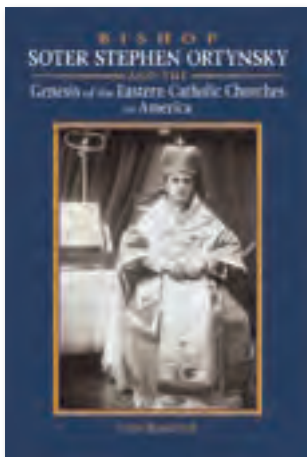
Since the terms of office of all the consultants and other administrative personnel the late bishop had appointed lapsed with his death, Bonzano telegraphed Rome requesting a directive regarding ministry to Ruthenian Catholics. In response he was informed that because of the war in Europe a new bishop could not be named. Bonzano instead named two priests as apostolic administrators, one for the Ruthenians and Subcarpathian Slovaks (Gabriel Martyak); another for the Galicians (Peter Poniatishin). No single administrator, it was believed, could serve the two ethnic groups.⁸⁴

The divisions that existed during Ortynsky's lifetime, whether between Galicians and Subcarpathians or Eastern rite and Latin rite Catholics, were not easily healed. Unfortunately, those who showed charity toward Ortynsky were fewer than those hampered by ignorance of the legitimate diversity of Catholicism. In the face of many obstacles, Ortynsky led the struggle in the United States for a full and complete incarnation of the Catholicity and equality of the Catholic churches, an important witness to a multi-ethnic church fighting for survival and struggling for recognition of its diverse gifts.

83. John Farley of New York to Ortynsky, March 11, 1916, Philadelphia, Archives of the Sisters of St. Basil the Great, Fox Chase, Pennsylvania.

84. Cyril Korolevsky [translated and revised by Serge Keleher], *Metropolitan Andrew (1865–1944)* (Lviv: Stauropegion Press, 1993), 151. The situation changed when Rev. Peter Poniatishin, administrator for the Galicians, received a letter from the Apostolic Delegate Archbishop John Bonzano, May 30, 1921 (#2885-f), in which he was appointed apostolic visitor "of all missions pertaining to your rite in this country whether composed of Galician or Hungarian faithful." See Ortynsky file 1, SEA.

English Language Edition



***Bishop Soter Stephen Ortynsky:
Genesis of the Eastern Catholic
Churches in America***

(Philadelphia Archeparchy:
Amazon.com, 2016)

Available on [Amazon](#)

Ukrainian Language Edition



***Soter Ortynsky
The First Greek Catholic Bishop
in the New World***

(The Ukrainian Catholic University
Press: Lviv, Ukraine, 2026)

*Available through
[The Ukrainian Catholic University](#)*

These books trace the life of Bishop Soter Stephen Ortynsky, the first Eastern Catholic Bishop in the Western Hemisphere.

The books also record the early years of the Ruthenian-Ukrainian "Greek Catholic Church" in the United States, which set the stage for the beginnings of the Eastern Catholic Churches in the United

States. Bishop Ortynsky served as the first hierarch of the Ruthenian Greek Catholic Church in the United States. As the first Eastern Catholic bishop in the Western Hemisphere, he significantly influenced the U.S. Catholic Church in its structure and ecclesiology.

The Catholic Church is divided into East and West based on the ancient division of the Roman Empire. The Latin Church has been dominant in the West, while twenty-one Eastern Catholic Churches, devolving from the Antiochian, Alexandrian, Byzantine, and Armenian traditions, predominated in the East.

The Ruthenian Catholic Church discussed in these books is presently divided into two Churches: The Byzantine (Ruthenian) and the Ukrainian Catholic Churches. Both belong to the Byzantine tradition.

The Eastern Catholics from Eastern Europe and the Middle East had begun to immigrate to America, due to economic factors and the pressures of regional wars. This book addresses the confluence of these Western and Eastern Churches. It speaks to both the accomplishments and the shortcomings of the Church's history - the "good" and the "bad" - and it follows a principle articulated by Rev. John Tracy Ellis, an outstanding historian of the Catholic Church in America, who cited the words of Pope Leo XIII, as he opened the Vatican Secret Archives, on August 18, 1883: "The first law of history is to dread uttering falsehood; the next is not to fear stating the truth."

In that spirit, I have attempted to present a balanced and inclusive, though not exhaustive, view of the history that includes both the Eastern and Western strains of Catholicism, strains that form the crux of Catholic Church history in the United States. I believe this approach can inform and illuminate, while showing respect for both the Ukrainian Catholic Church and the Byzantine (Ruthenian) Catholic Church while shedding light on their common heritage.





The Sacred Council feels great joy in the fruitful zealous collaboration of the Eastern and the Western Catholic Churches and at the same time declares: All these directives of law are laid down in view of the present situation until such time as the Catholic Church and the separated Eastern Churches come together into complete unity. Meanwhile, however, all Christians, Eastern as well as Western, are earnestly asked to pray to God fervently and assiduously, nay, indeed daily, that, with the aid of the most holy Mother of God, all may become one. Let them pray also that the strength and the consolation of the Holy Spirit may descend copiously upon all those many Christians of whatsoever church they be who endure suffering and deprivations for their unwavering avowal of the name of Christ.

*"Love one another with fraternal charity,
anticipating one another with honor"
(Romans 12:10)*

*Decree on Eastern Catholic Churches
(Orientalium Ecclesiarum) #30, November 21, 1964.*

