

The Bishop

St. Ignatius of Antioch, the third bishop of Antioch who, according to St. John Chrysostom, was ordained by the Apostles themselves, wrote in Chapter eight of his *Epistle* (letter) to the *Smyrnaeans*:

See that you all follow the bishop, even as Jesus Christ does the Father, and the priests as you would the apostles and reverence the deacon, as being the institution of God. Let no man do anything connected with the Church without the bishop. ... Wherever the bishop shall appear, there let the people be ...

Without the bishop, there can be no Church. We pray for our bishop often during the Divine Liturgy because he is our connection that keeps us in communion with the catholic (Ignatius term for the Church because of its universality) Church, the Body of Christ. Ignatius died between the late 90s to no later than 120.

Every body of believers has to connect to a bishop to be a Church associated with Jesus Christ. Members of the eparchy have a connection through the Holy Mysteries with Bishop Benedict. It is through his delegation that Divine Liturgies are celebrated, and the Eucharist is distributed.

The connection between bishop and people is found in the history of Ukraine. Notably, the Church was founded by St. Andrew, one of the Apostles. This was followed by a long period of silence concerning the Church. Emperor Nero exiled the first bishop in the territory of Ukraine to the Hellenic East of Ukraine. It was Pope Clement that Nero sent to Chersonese Taurica, modern-day Crimea. It was there that he was martyred. His remains were brought to Rome by St. Cyril. His skull was sent to Volodymyr the Great by Pope John XV in 989 just after Ukraine's conversion.

The first eparchy was established by the Patriarch of Constantinople in whose territory Rus' belonged (before any split) at Tmutorokan in the 800s. This eparchy is mentioned in the *Chronicles* of Nestor. So bishops and Christianity existed in Ukraine prior to the conversion in 988. Then bishops would make visits from Constantinople or other eparchies for ecclesial business. The first bishop to take up residence in Kyiv was Metropolitan Theopemptos, sent by Patriarch Alexander Studites in 1037.

There are different theories on how Church structure or the creation of a hierarchy developed. As you can see in the *Internet Encyclopedia of Ukraine*, there are three: First; the hierarchs

were sent from Byzantium-Constantinople. Second, they were from the West. The Byzantine connection is because of the ties between the two states. The western connection is that its timing followed the creation of the Slavonic language in Bulgaria in Ohrid's Patriarchate. Third is that Volodymyr the Great depended upon hierarchical functions from the existing eparchies of Tmutorokan and Premyshyl. During his lifetime, the following eparchies existed in his territory: Kyiv, Novgorod, Chernihiv, Volodymyr-Volynskyi, Peremyshyl, and possibly Turiv.

Therefore, from the beginning of the Ukrainian Church, following the guidance of St. Ignatius, the Church had bishops. The people surrounded their bishops as the source of good teaching, the valid Eucharist source, and the creation of new priests. As Tertullian wrote around the year 200: "[the apostles] founded churches in every city, from which all the other churches, one after another, derived the tradition of the faith, and the seeds of doctrine, and are every day deriving them that they may become churches. Indeed it is on this account only that they will be able to deem themselves apostolic churches. As St. Andrew founded our Church and the bishops he created became those of Constantinople. We then have apostolic lines that show our bishops were given the authority to forgive sins from Christ through the Apostle Andrew and pass that on to others. Through a line of the imposition of hands, our bishops can ordain priests and consecrate bishops in some circumstances. Our Metropolitan's line goes back to St. Andrew and comes into Ukraine through the Patriarch Photius. Our Beloved Bishop Benedict's line also goes back to St. Andrew. It comes to Ukraine through Patriarch Jeremias II, who consecrated Archbishop MYCHAJLO (Rohozav) in Vilnius as Metropolitan of Kyiv in August, 1589. Archbishop Rohozav was instrumental in the Union of Brest, which brought the Church of Kyiv into communion with the Church of Rome on October 8, 1596. As the Metropolitan Archbishop, he brought his line of Apostolic succession into Catholicism. So, when Bishop Benedict was enthroned as the Eparch of St. Nicholas, his presence supplies our unity with the rest of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church and with Rome. He is the source through his power to delegate (give faculties) that our priests can celebrate Divine Liturgies and supply the faithful with the Holy Mysteries. As we celebrate the 60th anniversary of our Eparchy, let us gather around our Bishop in gratitude that he is the source of many graces for us.

Fr Jonathan Morse

Bishop's
Chancery
Staff Sends
Greetings

Greetings from the staff of the bishop's chancery are included in a YouTube video, which you may access at this address:

<https://youtu.be/sArkxVQTGEA>

