

Our Eparchy

The Eparchy of St. Nicholas is celebrating the sixtieth anniversary of its establishment by the decree of Pope St John XXIII. As the papal bull establishing the eparchy began, "From the Philadelphia metropolitan eparchy is made ..."

This statement may be confusing because we do not usually call Philadelphia an eparchy, but it merely means it is an eparchy headed by a Metropolitan. We typically refer to the metropolitan as the Archbishop or Archeparch and his territory as the Archeparchy. Rome is calling it an eparchy.

When most of us are asked the difference between an eparchy and a diocese or an Archeparchy and an Archdiocese or even an Archeparch and an Archbishop or an Eparch or a Bishop? The typical response is the Latins use one term. We use another meaning the same thing.

From where do our terms come? Actually, they go back to the days of the Roman Empire. As the Church was establishing territorial regions, it used the territories already established by the Roman civil government. The Church accepted the divisions made by Diocletian (284-305) and Maximian, which divided the Empire into four great Prefectures (Gaul, Italy, Illyricum, and The East). In the Church, for the most part, the prefectures became patriarchates and exarchates. Gaul and Italy were united to become Rome, and the East was divided to become Jerusalem, Antioch, and Alexandria.

Each of these prefectures was then subdivided into jurisdictions called dioceses, divided into eparchies under governors. An example would be the area Rome controlled centered in Jerusalem. It was an eparchy with a governor in charge. Each eparchy had a religious temple because the Romans believed that the emperor was a god, so where his governor would have a temple. The Roman government did not separate church and state. The one exception to this was the eparchy of Jerusalem, which lacked a temple to the emperor. It was not for trying by Caligula. His attempt caused rebellion by Jews throughout the empire, and the emperor just ripped the matter.

Each eparchy was headed by a metropolitan. In many ways, the Vatican has still kept this terminology; the (Arch)eparchy of Philadelphia is led by a metropolitan.

The first council of Nicea gave the metropolitans authority to appoint bishops within their eparchy. A metropolitan had bishops subject to him. The bishops under him were usually bishops of cities as the spiritual head of the Church. Cities were religious jurisdictions as well as large areas of people. To handle the rural faithful, the Church created chorbishops.

This led to many bishops, more than even a local synod could handle, forget a council. In order to reduce the number of bishops, the church united cities in a territory under one bishop in an eparchy. Eparchial bishops were united under a metropoli-

tan-eparch. Then following the Roman example, they were called Arch-eparchs.

Since Chicago has a large territory, if we developed more parishes, it could be decided to make Chicago another metropolitan see for Ukrainians in the United States and create eparchies under it. So, let's get building those parishes in new areas.

Fr Jonathan Morse

The document establishing St Nichols Eparchy reads in part:

Ukrainian Byzantine rite faithful in the United States of America in the present, when appropriately consulted, we have divided the territory of the eparchy of Philadelphia Ukrainians with a new church. Because, it is quite small causing difficulties in the traveling for faithful. For this reason, after listening to who you would know as the Apostolic Delegate in the United States of States has written on this subject, and the advice of Constantine Bohačevsky OSBM, a former Metropolitan Archbishop of Philadelphia, on the advice of the Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church venerable comments of our brother Bishops, who are the principal men of the Sacred Congregation for the Oriental Church, and by our apostolic authority, We decree and command what is to follow.

Some from the eparchy of the Ukrainian regions residing in the metropolia of Philadelphia, and from these we have established a new St. Nicholas Chicagiensis eparchy of the Ukrainians, of which the territory will be the border to the north Canada; to the west, the Pacific Ocean and the south, Mexico; to the east, the American states commonly known as Ohio, Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi.

The new eparchy of the Ukrainian suffragan who is senior in Philadelphia, which we raise to the See of a metropolitan, eparchiy to have its headquarters in the city of Chicago, the laity, and the priests dedicated to the Church of St. Nicolas, which, as an eparchial church that is true to the grandeur that a building of a cathedral should be, are given all the appropriate rights of others. The table of the eparchial bishop, shall be located in the parish of Saint Nicholas. Of course, all the faithful of Byzantine rite join the Bishop of the Ukrainians, who live within the boundaries of the eparchy at the time of its establishment have all the rights and the obligations ... We decree, moreover, a minor seminary may be open to its students, which is in the town commonly known as Stamford, furthermore, that is to say, the seminary of the city in Washington exists, according to the treaties and agreements among the eparchs. ...

In Rome, at St. Peter's on the fourteenth day of July, one thousand nine hundred and sixty-first year, the third of our pontificate

John XXIII