

The Third Bishop of the Eparchy of St Nicholas

Following the retirement of Bishop INNOCENT (Lotocky) Pope St John Paul II named Father Michael Wiwchar, CSSR, as the new eparch.

On May 9, 1932, Wasyl and Anna (Chajkowska) Wiwchar in Komarno, Manitoba, Canada gave birth to the future bishop. Michael grew up with three brothers and one sister. His education and aspirations took him to the Redemptorist Minor Seminary of Saint Vladimir, which had reopened in 1936. The Ukrainian priests and their operation of the Yorkton Minor Seminary were instrumental in keeping alive the faith of the Ukrainian immigrants on the Canadian prairies and an essential factor in the growth of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church in Canada. From there he went to the Redemptorist Novitiate in Yorkton, Saskatchewan.

On September 27, 1953, he took temporary vows or profession as a member of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer. He took his solemn or perpetual vows on September 27, 1957. He was ordained to the priesthood on June 28, 1959 in Winnipeg, Manitoba, by Archbishop MAXIM (Hermaniuk, CSSR) at the Metropolitan Cathedral of Sts. Volodymyr and Olha.

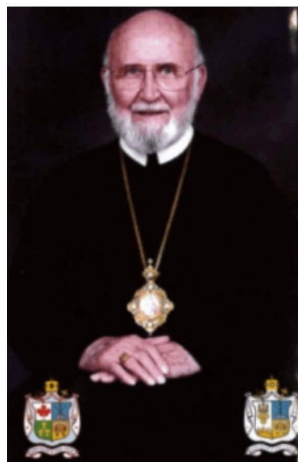
During the early years of his priesthood, 1961 – 1981, he served at St. Vladimir's College as a teacher; *Socius* "Companion, second in command"; Prefect and Director; Vocation Director; and Campaign Director. In addition, he was the Sports Director; Coach; Concert Director; and Tour Manager. Father Wiwchar played all sports, but focused his athletic interests on hockey which was his favorite.

In his pastoral and missionary role, Father Michael served as assistant pastor and pastor for parishes in the Roblin, Swan River and Ethelbert areas, as well as St. Joseph Parish in Winnipeg, Manitoba; Ss. Peter and Paul in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan; and St. John the Baptist in Newark, New Jersey. As a vocation director and missionary, he preached and/or substituted for pastors in over 100 parishes in the Archeparchy of Winnipeg, Manitoba and in numerous parishes in the Saskatoon Eparchy. He preached retreats for diocesan clergy and religious sisters, in addition to full or partial-week missions in many parishes.

Father Michael was appointed on July 2, 1993 at the Eparch of St. Nicholas. He was ordained a bishop on September 26, 1993 by Metropolitan STEPHEN (Sulyk) of Philadelphia. The co-consecrators were Archbishop MICHAEL (Bzdel) CSSR of Winnipeg and Bishop INNOCENT (Lotocky) emeritus of St. Nicholas.

Starting in 1995 Bishop Michael began eparchial preparations for the new Millennium, planning for a stronger Church. There were six annual Conferences, which provided educational opportunities for laity to grow more knowledgeable about Ukrainian Catholic liturgy and spirituality. The first was held in Chicago with the discussion of "Who We Are." The second was in Detroit on "We are the Church." The third was in Minneapolis with "Where

are we going?" For the fourth conference Bishop NICHOLAS (Samra) of the Melkites was invited. Bishop Michael chose Bishop Nicholas because of his revitalization of the Melkite Church. This meeting was held in Phoenix. The discussion was on the building of lay leadership, so that it might be possible for each individual to play a role based upon their talents in building not just a Church for the here and now, but for the future.



The fifth conference, two months before the new millennium, was held in Los Angeles and Bishop Samra focused on Building Church, Parishes and Communities. The sixth conference returned to Chicago the two hierarchs discussed building stewardship. Bishop Michael also provided leadership training to ensure that lay people in each parish were prepared to carry out their share of responsibility for assuring the growth of the Church and seeing that it takes its rightful place in the life of our country in the new Millennium.

Bishop Michael expected results in which the great distances in the eparchy could be overcome. He felt the hope for the future would be able to integrate the extant parishioners with the most recent immigrants from Ukraine.

On November 29, 2000, Bishop Michael was appointed Eparch of Saskatoon Eparchy and was installed on February 12, 2001 at St. George's Cathedral in Saskatoon. On December 9, 2000 Bishop Michael was appointed also as Apostolic Administrator of St. Nicholas Eparchy, Chicago. In order to look after the needs of both eparchies, making him the rare hierarch who was simultaneously responsible for two eparchies in two different countries. Bishop Michael spent time in both Saskatoon and Chicago on a regular basis until March 25, 2003. He served in Saskatoon until his resignation was accepted by Pope Benedict XVI on May 2, 2008.

Bishop Michael, having celebrated his 89th birthday, now lives in retirement in Saskatchewan as Bishop Emeritus of Saskatoon and Bishop Emeritus of the Eparchy of St Nicholas,

Fr Jonathan Morse

Bishop Michael, Eparch Emeritus of both Chicago and Saskatoon celebrated his 60th ordination anniversary June 28, 2019.



Bishop Michael Wiwchar, CSSR, blesses the congregation at the close of the Moleben', (28 June 2019)