

The Fourth Bishop of the Eparchy of St Nicholas

Sitting in his rectory office in Holy Trinity in Carnegie, Pennsylvania, Monsignor Richard Stephen Seminack answered his phone. The call came from the Nunciature in Washington, DC. When the nuncio got on the phone, he stated that the Holy Father had selected him to serve as the bishop of Saint Nicholas Eparchy. Seminack, who is consultative by nature, asked how long he could consider this before replying. The nuncio said, "This phone call." Trusting in the Holy Spirit, Monsignor Seminack answered affirmatively.

Richard Seminack, the first child of Raymond and Anna (Cwiek) Seminack, was born on March 3, 1942, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Both his grandparents were from Ukraine. He was the oldest of seven children (Raymond, Robert, Gregory, Stephen, Thomas, and Joanne.) It was from the position of eldest, that he learned his leadership skills. He listened with compassion and guided them with concern for what was best for them.

He attended St. Martin of Tours Catholic Elementary School, where he was taught by the Sisters of St Joseph of Chestnut Hill, and Father Judge Catholic High School in Philadelphia, where the Oblates of St. Francis DeSales instructed him. He left Philadelphia for Stamford, Connecticut, where he studied at St. Basil College Seminary, graduating with a Bachelors in Philosophy in 1963. He continued his priestly formation as a seminarian at St. Josaphat Ukrainian Catholic Seminary. He continued his theological studies at The Catholic University of America, both in Washington, DC. After ordination in Rome at the Pontifical Institute for Oriental Studies, he continued his education, where he was awarded a Bachelors in Canon Law.

On May 25, 1967, Deacon Seminack was ordained to the priesthood by Metropolitan Archbishop AMBROSE (Senyshyn) for the Archeparchy of Philadelphia. His service there consisted of serving in parishes: Immaculate Conception Cathedral, Philadelphia, Holy Ghost Chester; Presentation of Our Lord, Lansdale; St. Anne, Warrington; and Sacred Heart in Philadelphia. In Warrington, he was awakened by the smell of smoke one night, he called the fire department and tried to put out the fire, but the parish hall was destroyed. He built a new hall through solid growth in parish membership and his concern and care for the bingo workers. At Sacred Heart in Philadelphia, he bought land for the future church but did not get to follow through with his transfer to Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church in Miami, Florida.

Father Rick was also the chaplain to the Sisters of St Basil the Great in Fox Chase, where he provided for the spiritual needs of the Sisters. He was also Campus Minister at Manor Junior College and St Basil Academy. He also was a U.S. Navy Reserve Chaplain, attaining the rank of Lieutenant.

With his transfer to Miami, when the Eparchy of St. Josaphat was created, he became a member of the new diocese. He held

many eparchial positions, including director of religious education, diocesan consultor, member of the executive board of the priests' pension program, chairman of the diocesan priests' personnel board, chairman of the diocesan presbyteral council, and staff member of the offices of pastoral ministry and examiners for junior clergy. During his nearly 20 years as a pastor at Holy Trinity Ukrainian Catholic Church in Carnegie, he became known for a common touch and for working hard in the wider church, serving on numerous commissions dealing with areas such as religious education.

Then came the 2003 appointment as bishop of the Eparchy (diocese) of St. Nicholas. "He was thinking about retirement, but he said when the pope calls, you do what you have to do," recalled Russ Zorey, a longtime member of Holy Trinity who was among the parishioners traveling to Chicago that year to see their pastor ordained as bishop.

"Going from a beloved parish priest to taking on the administrative duties of a bishop was challenging at times", Archbishop Soroka said. He had to navigate questions of how much to maintain Ukrainian language and culture in the parishes and how much to use English, adapt to American culture, and reach out to the broader public. "You're never going to win on that one," Archbishop Soroka added. "Someone's going to be upset." But "if somebody criticized him, he just listened. He didn't hold malice." Rev. Seminack said upon the announcement of his appointment: "My ministry has always been one of openness and accountability. From the first day that I was ordained, I have said that I have lived in Macy's window. Everybody's problem was my problem, and my problem was everybody else's problem."

Bishop Richard was ordained to the episcopacy by Cardinal LUBOMYR (Husar), then Major Archbishop of Lviv, on June 4, 2003. The principal co-consecrators were Metropolitan-Archbishop SIEFAN (Soroka) of Philadelphia and Bishop ROBERT (Moskal) of Parma.

A tall man, Bishop Richard could easily "oversee" almost every element of eparchial life. A gentle man, he was not overbearing in fulfilling his role.

Bishop Richard relied upon his earlier experiences in ministry to help him exemplify the motto of his episcopal coat of arms. His simple four-word motto inscribed in his heraldry does not form a sentence. Instead, they are individual notions that express qualities of the priesthood of Jesus Christ, not only in the God-made-man model He proffered—but attributes every priest—or bishop—can strive to emulate. *Taken – Blessed – Broken – Given* are four terms that accurately describe the life and mis-



sion of Christ. And the Eucharist, and us as partakers of His life..

During his episcopacy, St Nicholas Eparchy observed its fiftieth anniversary. Bishop Richard opened a year-long pilgrimage of an icon of Protection of the Mother of God, which was venerated in every parish of the eparchy. In some cases he was able to be in several parishes as they were participating. The concluding portion of the pilgrimage of this icon was overseen by His Beatitude Sviatoslav—as the icon was carried through streets of Chicago during the Akathist celebrated en route to St Nicholas Cathedral as a permanent fixture, a reminder of eparchial solidarity..



Over the years, Bishop Richard was invited to mark milestone anniversaries, bless new buildings, baptize new Christians, and bless weddings. He came to honor patronal feast day celebrations or be a visible sign of support to a struggling pastor or congregation. He was a strong supporter of married clergy. He was the first Ukrainian Catholic Bishop to ordain a married American-born in the United States to the priesthood, after the current legislation was established.

The Most Reverend Richard Stephen Seminack fell asleep in the Lord, August 16, 2016, after a prolonged illness. In life and in dying, he exemplified the Christian way of life.

Fr. Jonathan Morse

In Mexico I Was Asking the Blessed Virgin Mary to Intercede for Ukraine, -

Bishop Mykhailo Bubniy

July 8, 2021 at the initiative of the Knights of Columbus and the St. Paul Publishing House a presentation of a book “Our Lady of Guadalupe: Mother of the Civilization of Love” was held at Rosen’s Chapel in Lviv.

Source: The UGCC Department for Information

Among the participants were bishop Mykhailo Bubniy, exarch of Odesa and administrator of Crimea exarchate of the UGCC, head of the Patriarchal Curia Commission on Monasticism, archbishop and metropolitan of RCC Mieczysław Mokrzycki, Vasyl Yefremchuk, editor-in-chief of St. Paul Publishing House and others. Moderator of the meeting was Fr. Ihor Boyko, rector of Lviv Seminary of the Holy Spirit.

Fr. Ihor Boyko mentioned that the apparition of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Guadalupe is a sign of Love of the Mother of Hope and Life to predominantly pagan continent. He also said that the Rosen’s Chapel is a symbolic place of the Knights of Columbus in Ukraine – in 2012 the first community of the Knights was born there.

Bishop Mykhailo Bubniy in his remarks encouraged everyone to read a book about Our Lady of Guadalupe and also shared his impressions from his pilgrimage to Mexico. As for him honoring Virgin Mary in Mexico is special and extraordinary. “Her miraculous image in Guadalupe is not man-made”.

The exarch of Odesa said that he visited Mexico to ask the Blessed Virgin Mary to intercede for Ukraine in time of a gory war in Donbas. “I

was delegated and blessed by His Beatitude Sviatoslav to make this pilgrimage”.

The evening finished with praying rosary dozen times, led by bishops Mykhailo Bubniy and Mieczysław Mokrzycki.

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