



# Barquilla de la Santa Maria

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Sept. 14: Triumph of the Cross

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The steeple of the Belle Valley Church towers over the east side of the town. It is now recognized by neither Catholic officials nor the Synod of Orthodox Churches.

THE SLAVIC CATHOLICS OF GUERNSEY AND NOBLE COUNTIES  
by Lorle Porter, Ph.D.

Part 3  
The Great War and Beyond  
Loss of Belle Valley to the Orthodox

Although Pope Benedict XV issued a letter Motu Proprio in 1917, affirming the distinct Byzantine rites, the heated ethnic and political pressures of

Europe continually spilled over into the American settlements. (62) The Byzantines solved the "Ukrainian Menace" by the division of the rite into two dioceses: Philadelphia for Ukrainians (Galicians and Uhro Russians) and Pittsburgh for Carpatho Rusyn. But this was not accomplished until two years after Bishop Soter Ortynski's death (in 1916) and the laity wandered in a "fog of confusion" with a veritable flood going over to Orthodoxy. The confusion of identity and loyalty was underscored by the annexation of three Carpatho Rusyn counties (Spis, Saris, and Zemplin) by Slovakia. These counties were the principal source of local immigration in Guernsey and Noble counties and the immigrant communities suffered the "identity crisis of Carpatho Russians in America." (63) At this crucial juncture, the Vatican appointed Basil Tarach as Bishop for the Diocese of Pittsburgh. Born to a priestly family in the village of Vuchkovo, Matamoros and educated at Uzhorod, Tarach was a European leader of a "popular front" against Magyarization and Russification of the church. He and George A. Zhatkovich in America "tried to defend the Ruthenian people and their church against Magyarization, and eventually, lead the people to national autonomy." (64)

Bishop Tarach was acknowledged to be a "man of exceptional and almost inexhaustible patience", seemingly the ideal candidate for the chaotic condition of his rite in America. (65) During his administration, he pretty successfully conquered the problem of lay ownership and secured the freedom of clergy from lay control. (66) But all his hard work evaporated with the volcano of rage spewed out with the announcement of the papal decree Cum data fuerit, March 1, 1929. The decree reinforced Ea semper and asserted the final enforcement of celibacy upon the Byzantine clergy in America. (67) The outrage welled up parish by parish. This "latinization" affront propelled the formation of the Committee for the Defense of the Eastern Rite (KOVO), organized at a convention of the Greek Catholic Union in Detroit in 1932. For several years KOVO thought that it would convince Rome to accept the tradition of the married eastern rite clergy. (68)

Rome was unmovable, however, and four factions developed in the Byzantine Greek Catholic Church as a result. Bishop Tarach stood with Rome as the "Celibatniki", the "peace at any price" people. They led the majority of the people and clergy. The second faction, who were not Celibatniki, were opposed to the decree but still held fast to Rome. They argued for consistent work through channels to prevail upon Rome to grant them the rights of the rite. Rome counted that the married clergy was "too great a scandal" and that the permission applied only to Europe. Countering these two groups were the "coming home" group, those who saw a separate Carpathian Rusyn Orthodox church in America as an alternative and, the fourth group, the "radically independent" faction. (69)

Implicitly realizing that established Russian Orthodoxy was more dominating than union with Rome ever was, one group did not return to Russian Orthodoxy and in 1937 formed the Carpatho-Russian Church in America in union with the Patriarch in Constantinople. It is now called the American Carpatho Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church, and is centered in Johnstown, Pa.

Many local churches changed loyalties more than once. Civil court cases over property ownership and continual wrangling alienated many of the young.

## Belle Valley

The history of the Church of the Resurrection (Byzantine Catholic) - Elevation of the Holy Cross (Russian Orthodox) in Belle Valley is highly sensitive. (70) Known today as "the Orthodox" Church, it started as a Byzantine Catholic church. The miners who came to the bonanza at Belle Valley included a large number of Byzantine rite Catholics and undoubtedly some Orthodox. When the Roman Catholics got their church, this Byzantine segment wanted a place of their own. A committee of Byzantines purchased land for their church on January 26, 1914. (71) The cornerstone was laid on November 25, 1915. While they were building the church, the Byzantine priest from Pleasant City practiced Liturgy for them in the newly erected Roman Catholic Church of the Ascension, "so that the one church served as a 'double mission'". (72) The Byzantine church was incorporated on May 2, 1916.

The people were anxious for their church and on October 16, 1916 the trustees (Daniel Varhola, John Fetkovich, John Demko, Steve Varhola, and Mike Zeleznik) sought to mortgage the property so they could borrow the \$900 necessary to pay the balance of the construction cost of the "Greek Catholic Church United Forever (Always) with the Holy Apostolic See of Rome." (73) The large frame church had a pressed tin roof, a simple home-made iconostasis, the marble altar from the first St. Michael's at Pleasant City, and hand-painted banners commemorating the men's and women's jednotas belonging to the parish.

The lack of records from St. Michael's, Pleasant City, and from the Belle Valley church prevent any detailed picture of local events being painted between 1916 and 1932. The general trend of events can be outlined.

The area prospered during the World War. At its wartime height, the coal industry in Guernsey County was awesome. With nearly thirty major mines working, eleven coal trains left Cambridge daily bound for Cleveland and the Canadian-Pacific Railroad. Three labor coach trains moved "English miners" to and from the remote mining towns six days a week. The villages were almost exclusively foreign. (Trainmen, mostly drawn from the old Irish railroad towns, were a close-knit fraternity. The English engineers and the Irish foremen made the railroad a closed shop and set it apart from the huge influx of new immigrants.)

Slavs in Guernsey County following World War I were initially elated by the defeat of the "Hun" and the "freedom" of their homeland, but that turned to anger at the dominance of the Czechs in the newly formed Czecho-Slovakia. However, all but the most political of them had a more tangible problem: labor war and strike. The 1920s were a shattering decade for American coal miners. It was the decade of the depopulation of the Guernsey coal field. The area was devastated by a strike and the Depression. Trail Run Mine was prematurely shut down as a retaliatory measure between October 1931 and July 1933. The Trail Run community (Russian Orthodox) moved northward -- to Youngstown Sheet and Tube and to factories in Cleveland. The church limped along -- far less income -- less frequent priestly service. The community retrenched and tried to evaluate its life. Joseph Grisak, ill with Black Lung, wrote his memoirs. (74) In Belle Valley, church battles injured not only the participants, but caused an alienation among the young. (75) Slovak Roman Catholics and Russian Orthodox clung to the enveloping warmth of their liturgies, both groups severely wounded, their emerging self-confidence weakened. They found it

harder to shake off the demeaning European images: their anchor was cast adrift.

In the general turmoil of the Byzantine Church, human tragedy played out in courts across the land, as congregations and families split over changing loyalties. In Belle Valley, St. Vozdvizanije Cestnaho Kresta (Elevation of the True Cross) Greek Catholic Uhro Roski Church had fallen on hard times. The "congregation had been unable to receive proper services in the said church for a long period of time and that the services rendered now in said church are irregular and unsatisfactory as services by the Pastor have been only held once a month for the last six years while the Sunday school for children has been practically disregarded." Therefore, the church "is of no or very little use to the members of the congregation" and is "only a burden and expense." The dues (\$1.00 a month) and free will donations had dropped due to this dissatisfaction and the massive unemployment. In February of 1932 many members wanted to sell the church. (76)

The priest in question was Father Michael Krivonak, stationed at St. Michael's in Pleasant City from 1928 to 1932. The entire area was frozen in the grip of the Great Depression. When the parish house burned in 1932 it was rebuilt with lumber from abandoned buildings. (77) The exodus of population from the area severely curtailed church income. Perhaps the majority of St. Michael's congregation had followed Father George Hritz to St. Gregory's in Lakewood, Ohio. Fr. Krivonak presided over a parish disaster and it was none of his fault. He was worn out and probably exasperated at the dwindling membership of St. Michael's and he was faced with angry parishoners in Belle Valley.

In the equally descimated village at Belle Valley, Steven Varhola, president of the church trustees, called the February 28, 1932 meeting. Of the forty-one who attended, only Steve Rodovijan voted against the sale of the church property. Therefore on April 1, 1932 Mike Halachan, Nicholas Pinchah, and George Washenko "in the best interests of the church" agreed to purchase it and assume all debts and obligations for \$1.00. The court document stated that "notice of this meeting was given by personal service upon every member of this church", but a dissident group, headed by John Torchick, filed a petition to halt the sale on June 18, 1932. Fifty-seven people signed that petition. Perhaps members now residing outside the area came back for the Torchick meeting. On July 20, the court found "that there is not sufficient evidence to sustain the allegation of the petitions [to sell] and that the motion of the defendants to dismiss the proceedings is hereby sustained and said petition dismissed".

This "valiant" fight by the Byzantine Catholics to save their church blocked the sale, but "it is difficult, even at this late date to determine the real outcome of the trial, but the result was that the church has ever since been served by schismatic priests." (78) It is probable that an agreement was reached outside the court between the two factions of the parish and that the dissidents were given the use of the church until they abandoned it, at which point it would revert to the Byzantines. "Schismatic priests" served the parish from 1933, probably the priest at Trail Run, but as of 1941 The Elevation of the True Cross parish in Belle Valley was one of two churches in Ohio under the jurisdiction of the Carpatho Russian Greek Catholic Diocese of the Eastern Rite (Johnstown, Pa.). (79) The "Catholics" in Belle Valley

traveled to St. Michael's, Pleasant City, where the aged Father Joseph Penyak (he first appeared in the records in 1905) soothed the shaken flock, or they "defected" to the Roman Catholic Ascension Parish in Belle Valley. (80)

Thus in Noble County the spiritual turmoil of the national crisis cut deeply into souls. The Orthodox Metropolia (the Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church in America) decries the fact that "a united pan ethnic Orthodox Church in America was shattered, and canonical chaos swiftly ensued." (81) But the deeper issue was the question of religion and ethnicity. This was the final cry of a people long suppressed to assert their identity.

Indeed, it is ironic that only in the U.S. have these people preserved their identity fully, thanks in large part to their Byzantine Catholic church and its offshoot, the American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church. In the USSR they are affected by the greater Soviet Ukrainian culture, and in Slovakia they are becoming absorbed into the Slovak ethnic group. (82)

(To be concluded)

#### NOTES

62. "In the Church of Jesus Christ, which is neither Latin, nor Greek, nor Slav, but Catholic, there can be no discrimination leveled between her children; and they, whether they be Latin, Greek, slav or of any other nation, each of them possesses equal status before this apostolic see." Basil Shereghy, The Byzantine Catholics (Pittsburgh, 1981), p. 24.
63. Jaroslav Roman, "Establishment of American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Diocese in 1938", St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly, Vol. XX, No. 3 (1976), p. 141.
64. Athanasius Pekar, "The Carpatho-Ruthenians in America", A Historical Album Compiled on the Occasion of the 75th Anniversary of the United Societies, p. 101. Athanasius Pekar, Our Past and Present: Historical Outlines of the Byzantine Ruthenian Metropolitan Province (Munhall, Pa., 1974), p. 46.
65. Stephen Gulovich, "Rusin Exarchate in the United States", Eastern Church Quarterly (October, 1946), p. 480.
66. Shereghy, Byzantine Catholics, p. 31. Gulovich, p. 482.
67. The married clergy already on duty did not fade away; they remained in parishes until retirement. Fr. George Simchak, the last married priest of the Parma Eparchy, died June 5, 1989. He retired after 36 years from the church of St. Mary's, Marblehead, Ohio in 1970. Father George Hritz, former pastor of St. Michael's, Pleasant City, lives (1992) with his daughter in retirement in Cleveland. He is ninety-eight. (Horizons, June 25, 1989.)
68. KOVO (Komitit Oborony Voslocnolo Obryada) engaged in "libelleous and often crude attacks" and was met in kind. Paul Robert Magocsi, Our People: Carpatho-Rusyns and Their Descendants in North America (Toronto, 1984), pp. 49-50.
69. Roman, "Establishment", pp. 156-157.
70. I have sought to interview six members of the church to no avail. The History of St. Michael's Russian Orthodox Church, written in the 1950s, slides over the condition of the Belle Valley church, stating that about 1928 "for financial convenience the parishes of Robins, Lore City and Belle Valley merged and supported one pastor, who rotated his services among the three parishes." The Belle Valley church was not Orthodox in 1928.
71. Noble County Deed Record 68/6.
72. John McCarthy, History of Corpus Christi Parish, Belle Valley, Ohio, 1961.
73. Noble County, Records of Incorporation, 187/264.
74. Basil Smilak, St. Michael's Orthodox Church, Robins Ohio, 1951.
75. For example, in 1930-1940 Czecho-Slovakia, 750,000 people severed all church membership. J. Krajcar and M. Lacho, "Czechoslovakia", New Catholic Encyclopedia, IV, p. 595.

76. Noble County Common Pleas Court record, Box 440 7318. Document filed April 2, 1932.
77. St. Michael's Byzantine Catholic Church 60th Anniversary Booklet.
78. McCarthy, History of Corpus Christi Parish, p. 31.
79. McCarthy. Smilak; St. Michael's Orthodox Church, Robins, Ohio. Stephen Gulovich, "Byzantine Slavonic Catholics and the Latin Clergy", The Homeletic and Pastoral Review, Vol. 45 (April-June, 1945), 520, n. 12.
80. McCarthy. St. Michael's Souvenir Booklet, Pleasant City. Baptism records. Fr. Penyak supervised the building of the new rectory. The history of these churches is made murky by the destruction of St. Michael's (and Holy Cross) records in the rectory fire of 1934.
81. Constance Tarasar, Orthodox America, 1794-1976: Development of the Orthodox Church in America (Syosset, N.Y., 1975), p. 188.
82. Robert Taft, "Renowned Scholar Comments on Rusyn America", Jednota, February 3, 1988.

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ORIGINS OF GERMAN CATHOLICS OF COLUMBUS  
FROM THE HOLY CROSS PARISH CENSUS  
(Continued from Vol. XVII, Number 6)

[In this continuing series, please note that it is the editor's intention to be as faithful as possible to the original record, even where the original is pretty obviously in error, for example in the substitution of Roggenhausen and Rockenhausen.]

Ims, Anton, born 10 March, 1815. Wife Friederica Schäfer, born 23 Jan., 1833, Lindenberg, Neustadt/Hart., daughter of Mathias Schaefer and Cath. Gräff. (two children)

Ims, Jacob, born 24 July, 1821, Baierfeld, Rheinpfalz, Canton Roggenhausen, son of Franz Jacob Ims and Anna Barbara Huber. Wife Catharina Pfarr, born 27 April, 1830, Membris b. Aschaffenburg, Neu Baiern, daughter of Christoph Pfarr and Cath. Meder. Married 4 Nov., 1849. (seven children)

Jacobs, Cornelius, born 5 March, 1806, died 31 Aug., 1883. Wife Christina Gangloff, born 30 Aug., 1815, Danne, Sarbourg, daughter of Nicholas Gangloff and Appolonia Vahl; died 16 May, 1900. Married at Somerset, Perry County. (five children)

Jacobs, John, born 3 May, 1803, Erbesbüdesheim, Alzei, H. Darmstadt, son of Joseph Anton Jacobs and Barbara Spintler from Moelsheim. Wife Magdalena Kraus, born 1813, Dettweiler b. Strassburg, daughter of Christ. and Cath. Kraus. Married 18 Feb., 1835, Columbus. (eleven children)

Jäger, Otto -- see Christian Eisel.

Jahn, Peter, born 8 April, 1831, Baiern, son of Adam Jahn and Veronica Zapf; died 18 Dec., 1876. Wife Magdal. Bähr, born 2 Oct., 1838, Columbus, daughter of Clemens Bähr and Agnes Toll, from Walldum, Baden. Married 15 May, 1855. (eight children)

Jessing, Anton, born 1 Aug., 1861, Westphalen, Münster, son of Max and Clara. Wife Mary Keller, born 23 Feb., 1853, daughter of Ludwig [q.v.]. Married at the Josephinum, 1885. (six children)

Jochum, Peter, born 9 Oct., 1821, Troesel, Hesse Darmstadt, son of Adam Jochum and Maria Eliz. Weber; died 28 Oct., 1903. Wife Eliz. Kaufmann, born 26 Dec., 1827, Flockenbach, Hessen Darmstadt, daughter of Peter Kaufmann from Oberabsteinach, H.D. and Eliz. Boch from Flockenbach; died 24 June, 1898. Married 27 Jan., 1851. (six children)

Jury, John, born 16 Sept., 1817, Alzheim, Hessen Darmstadt, son of Philip Jury and Anna Eliz. Ludwig. Wife (1) Theresia Fischer, Ebringen, Baden; died 1859. Wife (2) Eliz. Miller, born Pa., 1832. (two daughters by first wife)

Jury, Philip Jacob, born 1823, Alzheim, Hessen Darmstadt, son of Philip Jury and Elizabeth. Wife Ernestina Eger, born 2 Nov., 1835, Buchau, Rudolstadt, daughter of Christian Erdman Eger and Sybilla Emilia Lindig. Married 1852. (five children)

Kaiser, Joseph (27 S. Sixth St.), born 1 June, 1847, Wulfershausen, Unterfranken, Baiern; died 6 March, 1912. Wife Maria Anna Schneider, born 2 July, 1849, daughter of Bernard and Maria (Aug. 27, 1814). (seven children)

Karch, Franz, born 1853, Lambrecht (?), Neustadt. Wife Eva Frank, born 28 Aug., 1855, daughter of Andreas and Johanna Frank. (three children)

Käss, Sebastian, born in Baden, 46 years old. Wife Cath. Gobing, 49 years old, Dau, Pfulzburg, Lothringen, daughter of Anton and Magdalena. Married by a "squire" [i.e. not a Church wedding]. (three daughters)

Kathriner, Anton, born 18 July, 1818, Canton Unbei, Obden Wald, Kilchgang Sarne, Gemeinde Schwende, Schweiz; died 14 Nov., 1886. Wife Agatha Britschke, born 26 Apr., 1823, Schwende, Schweiz. (two daughters)

Kaufmann, John, born 12 Nov. 1833, died 1883. Wife Maria Moeller, born Albany, N.Y., 11 March, 1842, daughter of Joseph Moeller or Sitzmann and Sybilla Trott; died 11 June, 1901. Married 23 Jan., 1865. (ten children)

Keller, Joseph (Fulton St.), born 27 Apr., 1849, Miltenberg/Main, son of Franz Nic. Keller and Cath. Gramling. Wife Anna Eliz. Martin, born 14 Aug., 1850, Ermethers, Cassel, daughter of Henry Martin and Cath. Wittekind. (two daughters)

Keller, Ludwig, born 1 Nov., 1815, Darmstadt, Hessloch; died 1886. [Buried at Mt. Calvary in 1890 at the age of 73 years. - ed.] Wife Maria Anna, born 1826 in Baden; died 25 Aug., 1870. (nine children)

Kerscher, John, born 1 Mar., 1820, Neukirchen, Kitzing., Niederbaiern, son of John Kerscher and Anna; died 22 Sept., 1905. Wife Cath. Kultzer, born 25 Nov., 1827, Degenbach, Bogen, Baiern, daughter of John Kultzer and Magdalena Zitterspeck; died Sept. 5, 1911. (three children)

Kessler, Franz, born 19 Sept., 1845, Mengen, Oberamt Saulgau, Württemberg, son of Franz Kessler and Josepha Kehle. Wife Eva Lang, born 23 Oct., 1848, Columbus, daughter of John Lang and Louisa Kaiser. (three children)

Kessler, Isidor (Canal St.), born 3 Apr., 1841, Bedmaringen, Baden, son of Benedict Kessler and Victoria Ammann. Wife Balbina Ammann, born 28 March,

1846, Bedmaringen, daughter of Johann Georg Amman and Magdalena Glattholz; died 3 Dec., 1910. (seven children)

Kessler, Ludwig, born 18 April, 1826, Stangenroth, Kissingen, Baiern, son of Ehrhard Kessler and Anna Kessler; died 16 Jan., 1901. Wife Anna Wehner, born 1 Nov., 1824, Stangeroth, daughter of John Wehner (bauer) and Margaretha Schultheiss; died 26 Jan., 1901. (six children)

Kessler, Rudolph, born 4 June, 1844, Logan, Ohio. Wife Josephia Rose, born 15 Aug., 1844, Achen, Rhein. (two children)

Kiefer, Carl, born 11 Aug., 1819 (see Joseph Kiefer, below); died 9 Jan., 1899. Wife Leopoldina, born 6 Jan., 1819, daughter of John G. Issig and Maria Eva, from Östringen, Bruchsat; died Jan. 9, 1899. (one son)

Kiefer, Jacob Joseph, born 15 Aug., 1836, Dielkirchen, Rheinpfalz; died 9 April, 1916. Wife Maria Rose, born 4 March, 1838; died 5 Dec., 1910.

Kiefer, Joseph E., born 28 Sept., 1823, Dielkirchen, Rockenhausen, Rheinpfalz, son of Emmeric Kiefer and Margaretha Ritzmann; died 15 Apr., 1886. Wife Cath. Leidinger, born 28 May, 1837, Gerbach, Rheinpfalz, daughter of Jacob Leidinger and Gertrud Heno. (three sons)

Kissel, Herman, born 20 Dec., 1862, Put-in-Bay, Ohio, son of Jonas Kissel from Würtemberg and Elisabeth Wendel (born 17 Mar., 1811, Würtemberg). Wife Fannie Hermann, born 25 Sept., 1865, Chillicothe, daughter of Coelestine Hermann. Married 1 Oct., 1884. (one son)

Klaus, Willy, born 8 Dec., 1847, Columbus, son of Bernard Klaus from Stundweiler, Elsass, and Maria Zimmermann. Wife Maria Borger. (three children)

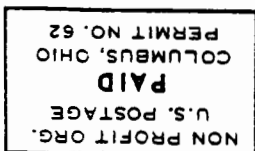
Knott, Georg, born 16 June, 1838, Steinach, Straubing, Nieder Baiern, son of Georg Knott and Maria Bieler. Wife Theresia Schieber, born 1842, daughter of Michael Schieber and Magdalena Ungerer, Traetsching, Cham (?), Nieder Baiern. (one daughter) [In the margin is written "Putnam Co".]

Koch, Peter, born 6 Aug., 1811, Bonn, Rhein, son of Michael Koch and Appolonia Kuth; died 27 Oct., 189\_. Wife Jacobina Sophia Becker, born 1824, Betburgreverscheid, Reg. Cöln, daughter of Mathias Becker from Cöln and Eliz. Vogelsang from Widdig/Bonn; died 1893. (nine children)

Köhl, Christian, born 23 Apr., 1837, Dienkirchen, Baiern, son of Christian Köhl and Elizabeth; died Jan., 1913. Wife Anne Ernst, born 24 Aug., 1843, Tuschgau(?), Böhmen, daughter of Peter Ernst and Catharina; died 26 Dec., 1912. (nine children)

(To be continued)

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197 E. Gay Street Columbus, Ohio 43215 Donald M. Schlegel, editor  
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CHANCERY OFFICE  
DIOCESE OF COLUMBUS  
198 EAST BROAD STREET  
COLUMBUS, OHIO 43215