

Pre-History

The Drohobych Seminary is the third institution in a line of religious institutions that have been formed in our region since the emergence of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church from the underground. The first was, in fact, a seminary called "the accelerated group" or the group for "accelerated learning", launched in 1989. The main reason for its creation was the ever increasing need for priests, which showed itself in relation to the movement for the legalization of the Church and the organization of the so-called "Commemorative Liturgies" on the occasion of the 1000th anniversary of the Baptism of Ukraine. In fact, these celebrations had already taken place during 1988. But the idea was so effective that the celebration of the 1,000 years of Christianity was continued for another year. In 1989 it began like a wave, in distant Carpathian villages and rolled on with ever greater force to the cities, including the majestic Liturgical celebrations in Lviv. The last of these occurred in 1989, when approximately 250 thousand people participated.

It is clear that this movement appeared to be very spontaneous, but the need to provide celebrants for these "Commemorative Liturgies" had demonstrated the lack of priests who at that time were still in hiding. In other words, the scale of the revival of the Church exceeded the real capabilities that it then had. Finally, the composition of the priests and their number, that were more or less adequate for the conditions of an underground Church, clearly proved to be inadequate for circumstances after the legalization of the Church. Therefore, anticipating the growing need for priests, and, on the other hand, seeing that the flow of those interested in the priesthood grow, as the number of participants in these Liturgies also grew, it seemed that it was necessary to create institution, that would meet these new challenges, which, in fact, could not be ignored. That is why the idea of a seminary first came about, but a seminary that in no way resembled anything that exists today, as today's conditions were then only a dream.

So, the "first seminary" was established at a private residence in Sambir, which simultaneously served both as a Chapel, and Lecture Hall. Notable in respect to this project are such priests as Frs. Mykola Kuts and Mykhaylo Voloshyn. They were the instigators of the foundation course. Later, they invited Fr. Myron Bendyk. Together, in a joint effort they identified the main areas of study. So, in Sambir at the end 80's, starting in fall, systematic studies began. Gradually the number of student groups increased, ranging from 8-10, and at times there were already 20. Naturally, problems arose with the premises. Students gathered from around the Lviv area. There were some who hearing about the revival of our Church, left the Orthodox seminaries and begged to study in the UGCC seminary. On the one hand there were exuberant hopes, and on the other there were the modest possibilities for what could then come out of Sambir.

Undoubtedly, it is difficult not to see God's guidance in all that happened, as on December 1 of the same year, when the Church of the Holy Trinity in Drohobych was returned, and with it some rooms, the idea grew of transferring the Seminary into a larger premises there. And in December 1989 the Seminary at Sambir was to relocate to Drohobych, where there was a church to pray in, and several rooms in which to work. The priests already mentioned above brought this about. So the Seminary began to function in this location. From January-February 1990 the number of students who came for training, increased to 150. Of course, these classes were held at night, because in this transitional stage, students worked in state jobs or were studying at various schools, and in the evening traveled to Drohobych to study. Soon after this there arose the problem of placing a spontaneously organized institution under a bishop of our

Church, so that it would have every sign of belonging to the Church and existed with its blessing.

This bishop was His Excellency Julian Voronovskyy, who already at that time (1989-90) was out of the underground. The priests of the Seminary asked him to take under his pastoral care this first attempt at a seminary in our Church. Other priests were also enlisted to conduct courses at Drohobych. The history of the Church was taught by Vasyl' Hovera (Pastor of the village of Velyn near Mykolaiv), Father Vasyl' Tsyhulyak - Pastor of Churches at Silets and Kolpets also worked with students. Of course, it was difficult to say what could be achieved, because the conditions were extreme: lack of space, the teachers did not have any already existing programs, as they had still to be created. The essence of the phenomenon of this Seminary lies in the fact that it was the first such establishment in the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, because only some time after, in late January /early February 1990, the Theological Seminary in Lviv started operations at the Church of the Transfiguration, where there were lectures, and where students could attend classes.

Accordingly, the Drohobych priests reorganized their seminary, namely: they identified the so-called "fast-track group" of students who were found to have an adequate level of knowledge, that is higher state education, and who had gifts. There were also students with various abilities and skills for learning. So, about 120 students who needed longer training, were sent to Lviv leaving a group who, by making some effort, could in a short time be ready for priestly ordination, as in 1990 "an avalanche of transitions" began of many parishes to the UGCC, which automatically meant a sharp increase in demand for priests, where each priest might have to serve 2, 3, 4 and even 5 parishes. They might also have to combine this ministry with work in the Seminary. Therefore, 35 students were selected who, because they were members of the "accelerated group", resigned from their jobs and were transferred to a full time form of training.

They lived in the hotel "Chervone Prykarpattia (Red Pre-Carpathia)" and ate at one of the Drohobych eating houses. The situation appeared as follows: students worked in the city that is they no longer traveled to Drohobych. In the morning there was Divine Liturgy at the Church of the Holy Trinity then after breakfast classes began, which lasted all day. The late Rev. Vasyl' Mykhaylyuk was the visiting professor of Moral Theology, and he taught day and night at the Seminary as his course was extremely necessary. In addition, there were faculty members for: Church History, Liturgy, Dogmatic Theology - in short, all the minimum set of items that are directly required for future priests were taught.

The first group of priests (8-10) and three groups of 35 was ordained on the 30th December 1990. These ordinations were done by Bishop Yulian Voronovskyy. The newly-ordained priests at once had to move to their parishes for the Christmas period. Liturgical practice lasted only several days, and then they were sent to parishes.

The next group of priests (12-15) was ordained on March 17 of that year just before Easter. So, in these days of numerous confessions to be heard, they could give their assistance. The last ordinations took place in late May, with a over 20 new priests. And so ended the cycle of ordinations for the 'accelerated group', and at the same time the first Drohobych Seminary also ended its existence.

Creation

"The second seminary" under the name of the "Theological Faculty of the Eparchial Catechetical Institute" was established by decree of Bishop Yulian in 1996. It functioned within

the structure of the previously established Catechetical Institute as the Theological Faculty of the Institute. Teaching began in September. Twelve students were enrolled. This was the first and the only course at the Drohobych Theological Seminary. At that time there was already a staff of teachers. Year by year a new course was added. Soon a 5-year course of study had been formed and 2001 saw the first graduating class of the "second seminary" which was called the Theological Faculty. Classes were conducted on six days of the week.

The establishment of the "third seminary" was a type of reorganization of the Catechetical Institute. It took place in September 2003. The Theological Faculty was separated from the Catechetical Institute and was named the "Drohobych Seminary of the Blessed Priests Severyn, Yakym and Vitaliy priest-monks of Drohobych (who a little before had been beatified by the Pope in Lviv), and so the Seminary was given its roots in Drohobych even with its name. This reorganization effected the structure of teaching in the Seminary, namely: courses are now conducted over a six year period.

In 2003, when the Theological Faculty of the Eparchial Catechetical Institute was separated to form an independent institution called the Drohobych Seminary of the Blessed Priests Severyn, Yakym and Vitaliy, a Seminary statute and a Seminary Constitution were adopted. They provide a variety of management structures - a board headed by the Rector, faculty council, student government, headed by the Dean of the Seminary, elected by the seminarians. Training is conducted in the seminary over six years for five-days a week. Prayer in the Chapel, study in the classrooms, the library, the computer lab with Internet access, meals in the refectory and accommodation in comfortable conditions, the possibility of sports - all under one roof.