

# The Ukrainian Museum and Library of Stamford

## METROPOLITAN ANDREI SHEPTYTSKY IN AMERICA

by Lubow Wolynetz, Curator

In November of this year we mark the 70th anniversary of the death of Metropolitan Andrei Sheptytsky. For 43 years he was a persevering, tireless, and self-sacrificing leader of the Ukrainian Catholic Church (Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church). He was a guiding beacon toward enlightenment, unity, and progress for his flock and for the whole of the Ukrainian nation. As Metropolitan of Halych, Archbishop of Lviv, and Bishop of Kamianets-Podilskyi, he worked continuously toward the strengthening of our Eastern Rite Church's position in the areas of Ukraine which were under foreign, not always friendly, and often hostile domination. His concern for our Church and the faithful was not only limited to its existence and development in Ukrainian lands alone, but also to regions and to countries wherever Ukrainians emigrated, e.g., the United States, Canada, and South America. Through continuous and persistent negotiations with the Vatican, Catholic officials, and foreign powers, achievements and substantial progress were made for our Church, notwithstanding the hardships, persecutions, indifferences, and indignities which Metropolitan Sheptytsky had to undergo.

Hence, it is no small wonder that scholars, historians, and Sheptytsky's biographers often refer to him as the Ukrainian Moses. Like the Biblical Moses, for over forty years, Metropolitan

whelming appeal, people listened to his teachings, pastoral advice, and instructions. Throughout the years, Metropolitan Sheptytsky, like the Biblical Moses had his Dathans and Abirams, but he never succumbed to hesitation or despondency; rather he tirelessly continued to work for the good of his Church and his people.

Metropolitan Sheptytsky visited the United States on two occasions, in 1910 and in 1921-22. In 1910 he was on his way to Montreal to the Eucharistic Congress, but he stopped in the States to visit with his friend Bishop Soter Ortynsky, who through Sheptytsky's negotiations was named in 1907 as the first Bishop for Ukrainian Greek-Catholics in America. The Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church in America had its problems. Metropolitan Sheptytsky purposely made a stop-over

parishes, and met with members of various social and political organizations to collect donations for the over 20,000 Ukrainian children orphaned as a result of the War.

In our Museum we have a number of photographs taken during Metropolitan Sheptytsky's visit to the United States, as well as other material pertaining to his life and activities. One set of photographs came to us through an interesting channel. Father Bohdan Olesh (American born) was sent to study at the Stanyslaviv (Ivano-Frankivsk) Seminary by Bishop Constantine Bohachevsky. World War II broke out, and Father Olesh could not return to America by going through western Europe. He had to go through Asia to Tokyo, and then onto a British ship to America. The trip home took him three months. Before departing,

however, he went to pay his respects to Metropolitan Sheptytsky and to bid farewell. The Metropolitan blessed him and gave him a set of photographs to take to America and give to Bishop Bohachevsky, which in turn were deposited in our Museum. Another interesting item in our collection is a brochure from 1921-22, illustrating the tragic circumstances in which Ukrainians found themselves after the War and appealing for contributions to aid them in their needs. The copy of the brochure which we have is personally signed by the Metropolitan, with a thank you note to Father Maksym Kinash, who was Rector of the Philadelphia Cathedral and who actively aided the Metropolitan in the fund-raising campaign. Another item of interest which we have, (though not directly associated with the Metropolitan's visit to the United States), is a unique plaque. In 1933 in Lviv the first Youth for Christ gathering took place with over 50,000 participants. A special commemorative plaque was made, carved in stone. This plaque was brought over to the United States by the Ukrainian-American participants and is specially placed in our Museum. Our Museum and Library also has many more photographs and archival material dealing with the life and works of Metropolitan Sheptytsky.

In 1905 Metropolitan Sheptytsky founded the National Museum in Lviv. In his opening remarks the Metropolitan talked about the importance of museums and their work in the preservation of artifacts. He said "Let us show our society who we once were and who we remain... that we are the carriers of a magnificent culture, great traditions, that we encourage and stimulate talent, and this is precisely the main role of museums... the collections of this Museum are presented to the Ukrainian people not merely as documents and witnesses of the glory of our ancestors; we are presenting them to those who are working on Ukrainian culture as

a living foundation of, grant God, common effort of our clergy and intellectuals of the future generations of our nation. Let us not separate even in thoughts the monuments



of the past from the present and from the tasks of the future!" The National Museum soon began offering courses and workshops in museology. Bishop Constantine Bohachevsky, the second bishop for our Church in the United States, attended these courses as a young priest. It only follows suit that when Bishop Bohachevsky came to America, he as soon as possible founded the Ukrainian Museum and Library of Stamford; and the first gift which our Museum received was from Metropolitan Sheptytsky – a painting of Our Lady by Oleksa Novakivsky, about which I had written in the January 24, 2010, Sivach issue.

The cultural legacy of the Ukrainian people is duly housed and preserved in our Museum. Please support us in our endeavors to promote the noble aims and ideals of Metropolitan Sheptytsky and Archbishop Bohachevsky.



Sheptytsky led his people on the road to the Promised Land. For Ukrainians, this Promised Land, foremost of all, meant religious and national freedom. Much work had to be done to reach this goal: Develop in the people self-esteem through enlightenment; encourage them to economic self-sufficiency; learn to cherish and appreciate one's own cultural heritage; adopt a dignified way of life; bring prestige to the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church world-wide; and expand its role among

to visit the churches, to meet with the faithful and various civic organizations, and to help Bishop Ortynsky set guidelines for the further development and growth of the Church. In 1921-22 Metropolitan Sheptytsky made a special trip to the United States both for political and humanitarian reasons. Western Ukraine, after the War was devastated economically and politically. He wanted to present the factual and tragic situation in Western Ukraine, and to intercede on behalf of the Ukrainian people to American politicians, including President Hard-



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