

## EXPLORING OUR MUSEUM AND LIBRARY

## The 1906 Pilgrimage to the Holy Land Led by Metropolitan Andrei Sheptytsky

By Lubow Wolynetz, Curator

Metropolitan and Archbishop of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, Andrei Sheptytsky, died November 1, 1944 in Lviv. This year, we are commemorating the 75th anniversary of his death. For 43 years, he served his Church and his people faithfully, devotedly, and tirelessly, notwithstanding the many difficulties, censures, and ordeals which he had to constantly resolve. He was one of the most dominant figures not only in the history of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, but also in the history of the Ukrainian nation whose influence and guidance has been paramount and unequalled to this day. He worked towards bringing glory to his Church, uplift his downtrodden faithful people to higher ideals, and unite them into a cohesive, self-sufficient society. He supported his people in all aspects of their lives – morally, spiritually, and financially. All of his achievements, whether they were grand and enduring, or seemingly minor and momentary, had a profound impact on his faithful, his people.

One of these lesser known undertakings, yet spiritually an enriching experience, was the organization by Metropolitan Sheptytsky of the First Ukrainian Pilgrimage to the Holy Land (*Pershe Rusko-narodne palomnytstvo v Sviatu Zemliu*), which took place on September 5-28, 1906. Pilgrimages to the Holy Land or to other holy places became popular soon after the Baptism of Kyievan-Rus (Ukraine). We learn about these individual pilgrimages from the 11th and 12th century Kyievan-Rus chronicles. One of the most interesting and earliest surviving written record describing a pilgrimage to the Holy Land was done by a Kyievan-Rus Iumen (Abbot) Danylo in the year 1106. The work was entitled *The Life and Wanderings of Danylo, Iumen from Rus Land (Zhytyie i khodymya Danyla, Ruskoyi zemli ihumena)*. In those years the Holy Land was in the hands of the Crusaders, ruled by Prince Baldwin I whom Danylo met and was befriended by him. Exactly



The 1906 Ukrainian pilgrims in the Holy Land

800 years later, Metropolitan Sheptytsky organized a pilgrimage to the Holy Land in which more than 500 of his faithful took part. A well-documented 366 p. description of this pilgrimage was published in 1907 in Zhovkva entitled *How Rus Walked in the Footsteps of Danylo (Iak to Rus Khodyla Slidamy Danyla)*, a copy of which we have in our Library. The group was outfitted with its own pilgrim's flag. Each member, for identity purposes, wore a specially designed pilgrim's cross (a Jerusalem style cross).

This meticulously edited publication gives us detailed information about every aspect of the pilgrimage, beginning with the train ride from Lviv to Budapest, to Trieste, sailing to the port of Jaffa, and touring all the Holy places in Jerusalem and vicinity. Just as Iumen Danylo in 1106 prayed and lit a lamp for his country, his prince, and his Rus people in the holi-

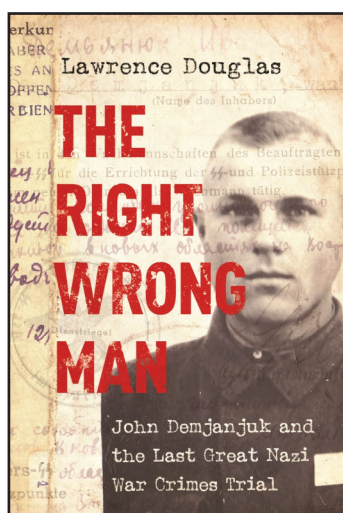
est shrine in Jerusalem, so too 800 years later the 1906 Ukrainian pilgrims from Halychyna fervently prayed at the Tomb of Jesus for the welfare of their land and people. As Metropolitan Sheptytsky in his homily there stated: "We come to the grave in order to come back to life again. Where shall we find grace if not at this grave. Let us place here our entreaties, our prayers, let our life burst forth from this grave, our Church, our land, our cities and villages, let them amass strength for a new life". During Divine Liturgy the pilgrim's choir was conducted by Yevhen Turula, 1882-1951, then a theologian, later a priest, army chaplain, choir director, composer; sang *Plotiyu...*, with solo singing by Oleksander Myshuha, 1853-1922, prominent opera and concert singer, who was a member of the pilgrim's group.

An exact account (age, profession, village or city of origin) about each mem-

ber of the pilgrim's group was given by the compilers of the publication – Father Vasyl Matsiurak and Father Yulian Dzerovych. All together, there were 505 pilgrims with 389 men and 116 women which were divided into 5 groups for more efficient logistical control. It is interesting to note that 298 pilgrims were farmers from various villages, mostly from the Podillia region. There were 89 priests, 11 theologians, 4 nuns and others who were lay people of various professions. Among the interesting members of the group, just to mention a few, were the following: Yosafat Kotsylovsky, 1876-1947, then a theologian, later Bishop of Peremyshl; Father Ivan Voliansky, 1857-1926, the first Ukrainian Catholic priest in the United States; Modest Sosenko, 1875-1920, a prominent artist; Luka Myshuha, 1887-1955, a civic and political leader, chief editor of *Svoboda* (1933-1955). In this commemorative publication, I found a personal, touching discovery.

Among the listed members of the pilgrimage was the name of Panteleimon Shpylka, 1883-1950, a theologian. Many years later, as a priest, Father Shpylka was my Religion teacher in grade school in the Displaced Persons Camp in Regensburg. Interestingly enough, our grade school in Regensburg in a special ceremony in which Father Shpylka had participated and was actively involved in, was placed under the patronage of Metropolitan Sheptytsky in 1947/48.

On the vessel sailing back from the Holy Land to Trieste, the pilgrims organized a concert to honor Metropolitan Sheptytsky, and to thank him for organizing the pilgrimage, thus making it possible for them to live out a cherished dream of visiting the Holy Land. Their spiritual enrichment had no bounds, thanks to their all-caring, all-devoted shepherd – Metropolitan Andrei Sheptytsky. ❖



## Book Review by Museum Director

Msgr. John Terlecky

Ukrainian-American, John (Ivan) Demjanjuk from Cleveland, Ohio, whose sensational trial of accusations and blunders made world headlines through the 1980s until his death in 2012. The documentary has been sharply criticized for its integrity by the Ukrainian-American Bar Association.

When I heard about this documentary, it brought back memories of an academic book written by Lawrence Douglas, a professor of law and jurisprudence at Amherst College. The book, written in 2016, has now gone into another printing, most likely, due to the release of the documentary film.

The book jacket describes the author as a "war-crimes expert, a legal scholar as well as an award-winning novelist". The book presents the sad odyssey of its leading character, John Demjanjuk, a post

World War II Ukrainian immigrant to this country, who, like so many other displaced persons, became a law-abiding citizen of the United States. His troubles (as well as that of his family) began in 1975, even evidence provided through Soviet channels identified him as a collaborator in the Nazi project of Jewish genocide. This evidence identified him as a person remembered by many camp survivors under the name "Ivan the Terrible" and his connection to the Treblinka concentration camp of World War II. The book then reports the history of this man's being stripped of his U.S. citizenship, of his first trial and acquittal by judgment in Israeli courts in 1993. The author states that "with hindsight, one can say with certainty that the survivors who identified Demjanjuk as Treblinka's gasman were wrong".

The decision was honorably

accepted by the Ukrainian-American community. Demjanjuk was now considered to be a victim of a Soviet hoax. He returned to the United States and his citizenship was restored. Sixteen years later, in 2009, at the age of eighty-nine, new but similar accusations were brought up about him being a Nazi collaborator at a different concentration camp, this time Solibor in Poland. The same process occurred – stripping him of his U.S. citizenship and deporting him for trial, this time, to Germany. While his trial was initially concluded and an appeal was being reviewed, John Demjanjuk died an invalid in a home for the elderly on March 12, 2012, in Germany. While the book does not address the role of the Ukrainian-American community in this whole process, there are numerous such citizens who still support the accused and his

claim of innocence.

What gives this book considerable merit in my eyes is that the author assesses the whole case on the grounds of justice and ethics. On one hand, justice must always prevail within the legal framework of any given case; on the other hand, what are the ethical concerns for putting on trial a ninety-year old invalid based on the actions of his youth over half-a-century ago.

The book is very inciteful. Having actually read its entire text, I might address the latter issue of ethics through a quote from St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans: "Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone – Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good, for vengeance is for the Lord" (Rom. 12:16-17). ❖