



Right Rev. Fr. Bill Hupalo, Very Rev. Fr. Stephen Wojcichowsky, Eparchial Chancellor and Vicar General, Most Rev. Bishop David Motiuk, Rev. Fr. Danylo Kuc, Parish Pastor, and Rev. Fr. Issa Mammam, Pastor of St. Nicholas Melkite Greek Catholic Parish

-Photo submitted

Upholding Tradition:

Edmonton's Dormition of the Most Holy Mother of God Ukrainian Catholic Parish blesses altar

By Helen Sirman, Parish Pastoral Council president, with edit and design by Jayne L. Bury, Communications Coordinator, Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Edmonton

On Sunday, October 29, 2017, Dormition of the Most Holy Mother of God Ukrainian Catholic Parish members, clergy, guests and visitors gathered to mark three very important parish milestones: Praznyk (the parish's feast day celebration), the 67th anniversary of the parish and the consecration of the altar.

"Whenever a new church is built and ready to be used," noted Fr. Danylo Kuc, current pastor of Dormition parish, "the bishop performs the Rite of Consecration. This sets the church building apart as a House of Worship, not be treated as a common use structure."

Central to this rite is the consecration of the altar in the sanctuary, the focal point of everything that takes place in the church. The holy table is washed. Icons of the four Holy Evangelists are installed into the four corners and, most significantly, holy relics of one or more saints are embedded in the middle of the top of the altar. After this, it is "dressed" with the usual cloths and accessories, including the tabernacle, candles, and gospel book, that are placed upon it.



Frs. Stephen Wojcichosky, Bill Hupalo,
Danylo Kuc, Issa Mammam and Bishop
David Motiuk consecrate the altar
-Photos submitted

A few years ago, a new altar was constructed and installed in the sanctuary of Dormition church, but never consecrated. The question arises that “if we’ve managed thus far without a consecrated altar, why bother with its consecration now?”

“One answer to this question,” Father Danylo explained, “is that in our tradition the holy table upon which the Holy Eucharist is celebrated has to be properly consecrated. Thus, when Bishop David Motiuk, Eparch of the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Edmonton, consecrated our altar, it has restored integrity to the ceremonies served on it – especially the Divine Liturgy – in which we give praise and worship to our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ and our Triune God.”

Another importance of the Rite of Consecration is that through its celebration relics of the saints of the Church are incorporated into the holy table. From the earliest days of the Church, Christians have followed the custom of celebrating the Eucharist at the tombs of martyrs. Having the relics permanently embedded in the altar enables us to share in this very ancient Christian tradition.

On Praznyk Sunday, Bishop David was greeted at the entrance of the church, with the presentation of the bread and salt by Pastoral Council President Helen Sirman, UCWLC President Virginia Sharek, and the presiding clergy. The Bishop Greschuk Assembly of the Knight of Columbus formed the Honor Guard.

The Rite of Consecration was performed just before the Divine Liturgy. The service was officiated by Most Rev. Bishop David, Rev. Fr. Danylo Kuc, Very Rev. Fr.

Stephen Wojcichowsky, Eparchial Chancellor and Vicar General, Right Rev. Fr. Bill Hupalo, and Rev. Fr. Issa Mammar, Pastor of St. Nicholas Melkite Greek Catholic Parish which shares the facility with Dormition.

Following the Divine Liturgy, Simon Pryma, master of ceremonies, warmly welcomed everyone and introduced the head table and honored guests: Bishop David; current parish priest, Fr. Danylo Kuc; former pastors Frs. Stephen Wojcichowsky, Bill Hupalo and Myron Pyszcz; Mr. and Mrs. Peter Dahoy, and the Knights of Columbus and Faithful Navigator, Wayne Mackenzie.

On behalf of the Parish Pastoral Council, Helen Sirman extended greetings and a welcome and presented a brief history of the parish. She spoke of the continuous commitment and dedicated service of Dormition parishioners in the past and in moving forward the "bestowed legacy" of the church into the future.

Helen acknowledged the dedication of deceased former parishioner Zonia Ostopowich and extended thanks to the attending family members for their generosity in directing the funeral donations towards the construction of the new altar.

Virginia Sharek brought greetings on behalf of the UCWLC Branch and encouraged everyone to take the time to enjoy friendships, share personal time and actively participate in parish life.

Under the direction of Tanya Vanderven, with the assistance of Irka Pryma and accompaniment on the piano by John Sharek, the Little Friends of Jesus – parish Sunday School program children ages three to eight – sang a festive song. Joyanne Rudiak and Christina Csernyanski, a vocal duet from our Eparchial community, added to the celebratory mood of the day.

Father Danylo added his greetings and extended thanks to the clergy, praznyk attendees and the volunteers who made this a very special event for the parish. He also acknowledged the contribution of cantors Julian and Solomiia Savaryn and the students from his evening class, and concluded the celebration with a prayer.