

San Francisco parish celebrates 50 years of church life

by Father John Lucas
and Maria Iskiw

SAN FRANCISCO – The Ukrainian Catholic Church of the Immaculate Conception in San Francisco celebrated its 50th anniversary on September 9. Father Petro Dyachok, current administrator, invited Bishop Richard Stephen Seminack of Chicago and other clergy to participate in a solemn liturgy honoring this special event.

Before the liturgy, Bishop Seminack was greeted at the church entrance by Father Dyachok with a crucifix, by Mykola Kis with the traditional gifts of bread and salt, by Maria Iskiw with a bouquet of white roses and by Olha Kalish, Solomiya Kryshtafovych, Nazar Tochytskyi and Sviatoslav Tochytskyi with verses composed by Father Dyachok.

Joining Bishop Seminack and Father Dyachok for the liturgy were: Fathers John Lucas, Michael Pintacura, Dennis Smolarski and Theodore Wroblicky.

Father Lucas, now of St. Michael's in Chicago, was pastor and administrator not only of the parish in San Francisco, but also its missions in Santa Clara and Sacramento from 1986 to 1993. Father Wroblicky of the Holy Wisdom Parish in Carmichael, Calif., served as administrator while still a deacon in 1993-1994. Father Smolarski, SJ, of the faculty of Santa Clara University and Father Pintacura of St. Basil's Byzantine Catholic Church in Los Gatos, Calif., serve as substitute priests when needed.

Also in attendance was the Very Rev. Alexis Limonczenko of St. Michael's Ukrainian Orthodox Church in San Francisco.

Assisting the priests during the liturgy were Dennis Conrad, Nazariy Kremповych and Stepan Kryshtafovych.

Responses for the congregational singing were led by Luba Kostiw Kladko and a number of other parishioners – except when a hush came over the congregation to allow the group of children to sing “The Lord's Prayer.”

In his homily, Bishop Seminack spoke of various ways fidelity to the Gospel may

be expressed in the life of a parish and its individuals.

Following the divine liturgy in the church, the celebration continued in the adjoining parish hall. The walls of the hall are permanently adorned with scores of photographs of major events, visitors and accomplishments in the parish's history in its attempt to bring salvation to those participating in the parish life.

The over-capacity crowd was treated to an array of hors d'oeuvres and a welcoming program before the luncheon was served. The announcers were Anne Zarsky Brichacek and Andriy Kryshtafovych. Two members of the Parish Council, Ms. Iskiw and Mr. Kis, welcomed everyone to the celebration. Members of the pioneer families who were present were each greeted with a yellow rose.

The program was dedicated to the early pioneers who deserve a great deal of credit for their dedication and hard work in starting a church from almost nothing (1957), paying it off in four years (1961), then buying the present, larger property seven years later (1968). Most of the work of remodeling both buildings was done by pioneer families.

Among invited guests was Mykola Tochytskyi, consul general of Ukraine in San Francisco, who honored the parish with a framed declaration of congratulations for serving the San Francisco Bay Area community for 50 years.

The luncheon was organized by Svitlana Kryshtafovych, with assistance from many parishioners and friends who prepared and served a very sumptuous feast.

Before dessert, a program exhibiting a wide array of vocal and dance talents of individuals and groups was presented. Among eminent performers were Ivanna Taratula Filipenko and Olena Bolshakova. The performance by the young children's dance group – Zhuravlyky, directed by Vera Vizir, thrilled the audience.

A highlight was a slide show and historical review presented by Ms. Iskiw that was an overview of the parish's inception,

(Continued on page 20)



Roman Iskiw

Children sing “The Lord's Prayer” during the liturgy.



Andrei Lessiv

Area clergy and lay assistants of the parish: (back row) Father Theodore Wroblicky, Bishop Richard Seminack, Father Petro Dyachok, (front row) Nazariy Kremповych, Dennis Conrad, Father Dennis Smolarski, Father Michael Pintacura, Father Alexis Limonczenko, Father John Lucas and Stepan Kryshtafovych.