

**ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST BYZANTINE RITE CATHEDRAL**

**HISTORY:** How did this rite come to be? The Roman Catholic Church proceeded to convert Eastern Orthodox Christians in the old Austro-Hungarian Empire. This was during the 16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> century. By forming a separate but included Rite they maintained some autonomy but still fell under the leadership of the Pope.

At first they were called the Uniate church then the Greek Catholic or Byzantine Rite Catholic Church. They retained some practices of the Eastern Church. Masses were said in Old Slavonic and not Latin. The Julian calendar rather than Gregorian, Eastern form of the cross (three cross bars). Marriage of the clergy was permitted.

Around the turn of the century with the migration of Byzantine Catholic immigrants to this country with their married priests created a real uproar within the Latin Catholic Church. What resulted was a decree in 1907 permitting only celibate priests to enter. They circumvented this decree by defecting to the Russian Orthodox Church. Then in 1924 the decree was modified and married priests could enter this country.

In 1916 the Vatican established 2 separate administrations for Byzantine Rite Catholics in the US. Cleveland has 2 dioceses, the Diocese of the Ruthenian (Rusin) Byzantine Catholic Church and the Ukrainian Byzantine Catholic Diocese of St. Josaphat. This reflects the 2 factions found in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. One faction was the Rusins, whose area was annexed by Czechoslovakia and the remainder were Ukrainians annexed by Poland.

In Cleveland in 1969 the Ruthenian diocese was established and included 11 churches, which included Rusins, Hungarians, Slovaks and Croatians. The Ukrainian diocese was established in 1984 and is made up of Ukrainians and some Lemkos. Both dioceses are located in Parma.

**If you remember when we did the ethnic church tour we learned that the eastern Europeans eventually immigrated to the Parma area.**

**ST. John the Baptist Byzantine Rite Catholic Church is the oldest Rusin church in our area and was established in 1995. It was originally established in 1898 and the church built on Scovill in Cleveland in 1913. The church was razed to make room for the Innerbelt Freeway. The church then relocated to Parma. In the late '60's, early '70's they established a high school on the grounds which in the mid '70's closed due to lack of enrollment like many of our schools.**

**In 1950s the largest Rusin parish was Holy Ghost on the west side with 3,000 members. The pastor was Rev. Joseph Hanulya who was responsible for organizing the Rusin Cultural Gardens on East Bled. We were just there for the tour and just thought they spelled Russian wrong. Mistake!**

**Today we are visiting the St. John the Baptist Byzantine Rite Cathedral. The Pastor is Faher Michael Hayduk.**

## **ST. SERGIUS OF RADONEZH RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL**

**First it's important they we try to understand how "Orthodox" became the name of the Eastern rites churches.**

**There was a break with the Pope resulting in the schism between the church in Constantinople and the church in Rome. In the years ahead the church in the east became known by the name, Orthodox while the church in Rome was known as Catholic.**

**Now the Russian Orthodox. In 988 Grand Prince Vladimir of Kiev adopted Orthodoxy from Byzantium. With the collapse of the Constantinople in 1453 Russia claimed leadership over the Eastern Orthodoxy. So the Orthodox is the Christians in the East of Europe, in Egypt and Asia. They include many nations and number around 100 million.**

**Now the church we will visit, St. Sergius.**

**End of WWII many refugees displaced from the Communist countries or the now Communist held countries. They sought freedom anywhere else. A small group of refugees of Russian descent migrated to Cleveland, Ohio.**

**They tried attending an Orthodox church, not Russian, but it was not familiar to these DP's, as they were called. They sought to create their own worshipping place..**

**First they gathered in private homes to worship. It was soon decided that they needed to build a church. They wrote a letter to the Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church in Exile requesting a priest. In September 1960 They were sent Fr. Antony.**

**After the first Vespers service they formed a community and named it St. Sergius.**

**They found a dilapidated garage. They spent many evenings turning it in to a proper place to worship. Their first service was celebrated on the Nativity of our Lord.**

**By 1951, in spring, the parishioners began to look for land for a real church. They purchased land at E. 67<sup>th</sup> St. between Superior & St. Clair. The church was consecrated in 1955. Although all loved this church the neighborhood saw a dramatic increase in crime in the 69's and 70's. It was decided to move south.**

**What we will visit today is the Cathedral they have built in Parma.**

## **ST. MARK COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCH**

**First, let me explain about the Coptic sect. We first encountered one in Dayton in the area in which we had moved. You noticed the people were of Indian decent, meaning from India.**

**The Copts were the original Egyptians and the word “Copt” itself is derived from the Greek word “Aegyptus” meaning Egypt. They are the descendants of the ancient Egyptians.**

**Now, St. Mark, who was of African origin and one of the authors of one of the gospels, came to Egypt to preach. It seems he arrived in Alexandria around 50 AD or so. He was martyred in 68 AD. Christianity spread quickly through Egypt because the Egyptian people have always been very religious minded.**

**The Romans became threatened by this spread of Christianity because it went against worshipping the emperor as divine. They then initiated a series of persecutions.**

**The Coptic movement went through three periods. The first being the expansion of Egyptian library & museum considered the most extensive in the world. It originally was scientific and literary but because of the Christian movement now became the authority on Christian antiquity. This institution was responsible for assembling 70 Jewish scholars who translated the Old Testament into Greek. Among their pupils were St. Gregory and St. Jerome, two of our Doctors of the Church.**

**The next movement was Ecumenical. The early Coptic church went through the preaching of a heretic, Arius. It caused a meeting of the bishops in Nicea precipitating the Council of Nicea in 325 AD which was responsible for developing the Nicene Creed, the basis of our faith.**

**Next came the Monastic Movement. Egypt is known as the Motherland of Christian Monasticism. It has three characteristics:**

- 1. The urge to pray without ceasing**
- 2. The hunger to meditate on the word of God**
- 3. Disciplining self by fasting, vigils, celibacy, poverty and leaving the world behind.**

**The first of these “monks” was St. Antony who retired to the eastern desert of Egypt. The philosophy of the Egyptian Coptic Monastic is “love”. The love of God and to spend all your time alone with God.**

**Around 450 the schism in the church began between the Orthodox and the Roman Catholic churches. This caused the persecution of the Coptics by the Byzantines. The war between the two factions never resolved.**

**Next was the Arab Conquest – 642 AD. Egypt passed from the emperors of Constantinople into the hands of the Arab Muslims. The city of Alexandria with 4000 palaces, 4000 public baths, 400 theaters and 40,000 rich Jewish settlers passed into the hands of the Arabs. Amr ordered the city to be burned. This included the destruction of the library and museum. The Copts were given a choice of converting to Islam, surrender or be killed.**

**The Coptic Church today. They are about 6 million. The liturgy is still the original form, that of St. Cyril, St. Basil and St. Gregory. This century has seen a revival both at home and around the world. The church is established here in the the USA and Australia. They have sent missionaries to Africa. The church has built or is building churches and monasteries and convents all over the world. They are engaged in dialog with Catholics and Protestants.**

**Now, here in Cleveland. The Coptic Orthodox Church was begun in 1968 by 6 families. They came from Egypt with their Coptic faith taught to them originally by St. Mark.**

**The Coptic Church believes in the Holy Trinity, God the Father, God the Son & God the Holy Spirit. There has been very little change in the Coptic Church since it’s inception. They celebrated their first liturgy in 1968.**

**In the ‘70’s**

- 1. Sixty families in 1973**
- 2. First church 1970**
- 3. 1975 – first priest sent to Cleveland, Father Mikhail Edward Mikhail.**
- 4. 1977 – first church in Parma**

- 5. October 1988 – Built a church complex in Seven Hills**
- 6. 1989 Pope Shenouda consecrated the church.**

**The complex has a church for 500 people, a social hall, many Sunday school classrooms. A library, offices and a small chapel. There are many icons beginning with the Annunciation to the ascension of Jesus.**

**St. Mark Church was blessed by the Miracle of Oil seeping from two of the icons, one of Jesus and the other of the Virgin Mary. The miracle began on May 15, 1990, on the feast of St. Athanasius the Apostolic. The miracle has recurred on several occasions and was witnessed by thousands of pilgrims, TV and newspapers and Pope Shenouda in 1991.**