

Ukraine in Brief

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Ukrainian Catholic Church receives new leader



*Patriarch-elect Svyatoslav Shevchuk at his parish in Argentina
(Photo:aica.org)*

According to preliminary reports, the Electoral Synod of Bishops has chosen the next leader of the Ukrainian Catholic Church. The newly elected primate, Bishop Svyatoslav Shevchuk was selected today, Thursday, March 24th.

The vacancy in the highest position within the Ukrainian Catholic Church occurred when former Patriarch and Cardinal Lubomyr Husar resigned from his position in February, for health reasons. The Pope formally accepted his resignation and ordered the Synod of Bishops to convene.

The group of 40 bishops who participated in the Synod gathered together on March 20 to make their selection. The first three days of the conclave, a new hierarch cannot be elected unless he receives two-thirds of the vote. There were four votes per day during the first three days the bishops convened.

No leader was elected during those first three days, so at the start of the fourth day,

one only needs a majority vote in order to be elected. It was on this fourth day that the bishops in attendance put forth Bishop Svyatoslav as the newest leader of the Ukrainian Catholic Church.

Once a bishop is elected, he then sends a letter to the Pope asking him to certify the decision. At that point the leader is accepted and formally elevated during his enthronement ceremony. The newly elected leader will then make a confession of faith and promise to fulfill all of the duties of his position before the bishops.

The ceremony is scheduled to take place on Sunday March 27, at the Patriarchal Cathedral of the Resurrection of Christ in Kyiv.

A committee of over 80 people is involved in getting the church prepared for this celebration. Over one thousand guests were invited to the upcoming celebration.

The newly elected Cardinal, Svyatoslav Shevchuk, is an Apostolic administrator of the diocese from the Protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary church in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Bishop Svyatoslav and the other rumored candidate, Bishop Bohdan Dziurakh, are both of the younger set of bishops. The newly elected church leader was born in 1970 near L'viv, Ukraine.

Having first studied at the L'viv Theological Seminary, Bishop Svyatoslav received a Bachelor's Degree in Divinity from the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas in Rome. He also received his Doctorate in Divinity from the same institution.

He entered the priesthood in 1994 and has served the church ever since. Several years ago, he also served as the personal

secretary to the former church leader, Cardinal Lubomyr.

At the time of his resignation, Patriarch Lubomyr spoke of some of the goals his successor should have. He explained that there will always be challenges but that the Church, under new leadership should work through them. The Cardinal also stated that, "Another important objective is to moralize the public life, preach Godly life to people."

The Bishop served on the L'viv Theological Seminary of the Holy Spirit Faculty. Since 2001, he has been the Vice-Dean of Theology at the L'viv Theological Academy, also known as the Ukrainian Catholic University. In 2009, he was appointed Bishop for the church in Buenos Aires, and approximately a year ago was given his current position of Apostolic Administrator.



*Cardinal Lubomyr Husar, speaking after his resignation in February
(Photo: Religious Information Service of Ukraine)*