

St. Mary's Assumption Eastern Rite Catholic Church History *by Yvonne Dornic*

Cars move fast on Route 152/Mountain Road in semi-rural Harford County Maryland. Many people have just enough time to notice the sign and peer through the trees at the quaint wooden church. Those who manage to read the whole sign may wonder what Eastern Rite Catholic Church means, and what the story is behind this little church in the woods.



Often referred to as "the beautiful little wooden church in the woods" by those who don't know its name, Saint Mary's Assumption Eastern Rite Catholic Church looks as though it has stood in this spot for decades. In fact, though, 2021 will see the 35th anniversary of the blessing of the grounds where St. Mary's Assumption in Joppa, Maryland now stands. To fully appreciate the significance

of this milestone one needs to understand the history of the church, which dates to the 1800s, its congregation and the driving force behind its salvation and restoration: Rev. Ivan Dornic. This is the story about how they came together in these woods.

In 1977, The Aegis, Harford County's newspaper, ran an article about Fr. Alan Nagle, associate pastor at St. Margaret's Roman Catholic Church in Bel Air, Maryland. He was one of the few Roman Rite priests in the United States who had received faculties from the Pope to say Mass in the Byzantine Rite liturgy. In addition to his usual duties at St. Margaret's, Fr. Nagle was occasionally saying Mass there for a small but growing group of Byzantine Rite Catholics. Eventually his group began renting a tiny Methodist cemetery chapel and enlisted the help of Fr. Ivan Dornic, an Eastern Rite priest assigned to St. Michael the Archangel Ukrainian Catholic Church in Baltimore, to say the Mass on Sundays.

Father Ivan Dornic – Slovak Immigrant, Priest and Visionary. Ivan Dornic, born in 1931 in the tiny village of Ujak, in the Presov region of Slovakia, attended the Church of Saint Dimitry the Martyr where his faith in God was nurtured. Though his mother had died during the birth of his sister Irene and most of her family had emigrated to the United States, there was regular correspondence and occasionally packages from America. When young

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St. Mary's Assumption Eastern Rite Catholic Church

CALENDAR OF EVENTS



REGULARLY SCHEDULED ACTIVITIES

CHILDREN'S LANGUAGE SCHOOL

In the spring semester we continue our regular weekly schedule. Classes are being held virtually. Beginners or fluent speakers are welcome to join us regardless of where they live.

- Czech Classes are held from 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm on Friday evenings.
 - Slovak Classes are held on Sunday mornings.
- You can enroll at any time. Check CSHA's web and Facebook pages for details and schedule or email us at info@cshamaryland.org.

FAMILY FUN NIGHTS

These events aren't possible due to the pandemic, but we will return to them as soon as it is safe – hopefully soon!

ADULT LANGUAGE SCHOOL

CSHA is one of the few organizations in the USA that offers language instruction for adults. Beginning, intermediate and advanced classes are offered virtually for spring. Classes began January 16. They are held on Saturday mornings. To register or ask questions, please contact Lois Hybl at 410-243-1710 or e-mail: LHybl@verizon.net.

HERITAGE SINGERS

When it is safe to resume, rehearsals will be announced on our web and Facebook page.

HLAS - If you have any suggestions or comments or want to contribute to the Hlas by writing an article, email us at info@cshamaryland.org.

CSHA ONLINE - For more information about any of these activities or to register for classes, you can contact CSHA at: info@cshamaryland.org. CSHA's Communication Committee will respond to answer your questions and provide information, and we are eager to hear your ideas and suggestions. Also, please check our website www.cshamaryland.org and follow us on Facebook at [Czech and Slovak Heritage Association of Baltimore](https://www.facebook.com/CzechandSlovakHeritageAssociationofBaltimore).

JUNE 2021

GENERAL MEETING - June 13th, 2021 at 4PM. Link for this virtual meeting will be posted on our website and emailed to our members day or two before the meeting takes place. We encourage all our members to join us, and to get involved with CSHA. The future is full of possibilities for the Czech and Slovak communities in Baltimore. We need your help to bring them to life.

SEPTEMBER 2021

CSHA members appreciation picnic - September 12th, 2021 - outdoor event with live music - details TBD.

OCTOBER 2021

34rd Annual CZECH AND SLOVAK FESTIVAL - October 24th, 2021, noon to 6PM, American Legion Hall, 125 York Rd, Baltimore, MD 21204. The location and time have been reserved and we hope the world pandemic will be over by then and we will be all able to meet and celebrate in person again.

DECEMBER 2021

MIKULÁŠSKÁ - TBD.

CHRISTMAS CONCERT - TBD.

CHRISTMAS COOKIES FUNDRAISER - If you are interested in delicious homemade cookies, get involved. Volunteers will be needed to bake and help with distribution. The donations go a long way, helping us to provide events for you or help support our language schools.

CSHA BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

OFFICERS:

President - Petr Justin
Vice President - Dana Petran
Secretary - Lois Hybl
Treasurer - Zuzana LaBuff

BOARD MEMBERS: alphabetically

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President's message:

Dear members,

I have been preparing an end-of-the-pandemic message for a while. Unfortunately, the pandemic is not over yet, so the message has to wait a bit longer and so the in person Association's events. I trust that the current vaccination efforts will soon bear fruit. We need to stay positive and beat the virus together. It seems to me that things are finally getting better. Our kids are starting a hybrid learning soon with two days per week of in person attendance. After a long year of virtual school, they will get to meet their friends and teachers and sit in their classroom again. I am so excited for them and I am certain they are too. The Association's online language schools have been a big success. I encourage everyone with an itch to refresh their knowledge or learn a new language to consider joining. Whether it is an adult or children's program, our great teachers will always welcome you to our weekly classes.

I would like to thank all of you who have already renewed your membership, become new members or donated money to CSHA for year 2021. Your generous support is what keeps the CSHA going and ensures that our Czech and Slovak community stays active and strong as ever. We always love to

hear from our members. If you feel like sharing your thoughts and experiences from the pandemic or suggestions on our activities, please send us a note. The challenges we face these days surely lead to unique experiences and ideas. We can publish some of your contributions in our newsletter.

With indoor spaces slowly and safely reopening, I have resumed my target archery training, which has been our family's passion for several years now. This sport shows me how practicing focus and concentration can be so rewarding and ultimately relaxing. Every time my arrow hits a bullseye, I secretly smile under my face mask. The winter season also brought us quite a lot of snow and I was able to go skiing a couple of times. Warmer weather is here now and the snow shovel is now stored behind my bicycle. I am ready to go for a ride and walk daily again. Please enjoy the wonderful spring season and I hope to see you out there.

S pozdravem,



Petr Justin - CSHA president

Thank you to our Christmas fundraiser bakers *by Olga Mendel*

As all in person activities have had to be canceled for so long, a couple of our dedicated bakers decided to provide something special to our members while raising money for the CSHA.

After the pandemic calms down, we plan to use the money raised for more events, so we can make up for the lost time.

Dana Havlik and her mom Dana Petran set aside a week of their time to diligently bake and prepare a variety of traditional homemade Christmas cookies. They packaged them beautifully in tin cans and

prepared them for distribution. Some were mailed and some were picked up. It was not an easy feat, since USPS is not currently a reliable service. We give them the biggest of thank yous.

We also thank Jarmila Peterova for offering a helping hand with baking, Zuzana Justinova and Margaret Supik for coordinating the pick up of the cookies locally and Petr Justin for taking care of online ordering.

We are grateful for their time and dedication.



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Ivan developed tuberculosis, the doctor in Presov said there was no medicine to kill the bacteria except in the United States. It is unclear how his uncle, Michael Timko in Passaic, New Jersey, was able to obtain and ship the needed medicine, but that saved Ivan's life. When Ivan decided to dedicate his life to the Church, he studied at the Seminary in Presov, a Greek Catholic Seminary beginning in 1881.

After feigning illness on a holiday trip to Yugoslavia in 1956, Ivan and a friend avoided returning to Czechoslovakia when a sympathetic doctor refused to release them from the hospital. By joining a group of Hungarian Freedom Fighters, Ivan and his friend were able to defect through Austria to Germany and then join a plane load of freedom fighters to New York International Airport (now JFK) where Uncle Mike was waiting to greet him. Uncle Mike helped Ivan enroll at Christ the Savior American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Seminary in Johnstown, Pa. It was there that he was ordained and married to Ann Koba, the daughter of Polish immigrants. He served at Orthodox Pennsylvania parishes in California, Jacobs's Creek and Monongahela, before deciding to return to his Catholic roots. In the early 1960's Pope Paul welcomed him to the Catholic Church as an Eastern Rite priest.



While serving at St. Macrena Byzantine Catholic Church in Monongahela, Father Dornic worked at the National Slovak Society in Pittsburgh on the publication of the *Narode Novine* newspaper and was instrumental in founding the country's first Slavic Studies program at the University of Pittsburgh. He helped resettle many Slovak and Czech defectors after Soviet troops put an end to the Prague Spring in 1968. Father Dornic founded both the *Ethnic American News* and a Slovak radio program. It was in Pittsburgh that

Father Dornic met Senator John Heinz who helped him to secure federal HUD financing after it became apparent that there was a need for housing for elderly Slavic residents in Baltimore. Father Nagle found Father Dornic there at the Lemko Housing Development. After concluding his tenure at St. Michael's, Father Dornic was able to devote all his time to Lemko and to the burgeoning Harford County parish of St. Mary which was looking for a permanent home.

St. Mark's Historic Church: Around that same time in 1985, St Mark's Roman Catholic Church in nearby Fallston had outgrown its old church and decided to build a new one. According to church officials, St. Mark's dates back to November of 1886, when Father Ebenezer Maynadier purchased two adjoining plots of ground as a site for a church in the Fallston community. The cornerstone for the church was laid in November of 1887 and the new Church, built by Dennis J. Shanahan, was completed in 1889. Nearly a century after its founding, the congregation had outgrown that small historic structure and a new, much larger, structure was being planned to house the church's growing congregation. The plan presented was to build the new church on the same location and demolish the old historic church. This was strongly opposed by the Harford County Historical Society who urged St. Mark's to consider leaving the church intact and build the new structure in another location on its expansive grounds. Enter Fr. Dornic.



Timing, Ingenuity and Determination: Fr. Dornic was stunned and dismayed when he learned that a church might actually be demolished. In his native Europe that would be unthinkable. He had developed a great love of historic churches and believed that they should be preserved. He approached St. Mark's Church which was mired in controversy over destroying the historic structure and offered to move it a few miles down the road to a site in Joppa, Maryland. An agreement was reached; St Mark's donated the historic church, and the \$8,000 set aside for demolition, to Father Dornic and the National Catholic Museum organization he had founded. In 1986, the wooden church was disassembled board by board and moved to its new home.

On Sunday April 6th, 1986, Father Dornic blessed the ground where the historic St. Mark's Church would be resurrected as St. Mary's Assumption Eastern Rite Catholic Church. Three days earlier The Aegis had published an editorial, "Eating our Words," in which they maintained that, "the idea of disassembling such an old building, moving it 5 miles and then putting it successfully back together seemed as far-fetched as landing a man on the moon and bringing him back alive must have been to people three decades ago." It concluded by saying, "we can't help but be impressed by what Father Dornic has accomplished so far. If he pulls the whole thing off and the renamed St. Mary's Assumption Church is once again a place for parishioners to worship, then Father Dornic may legitimately lay claim to the title of Harford's miracle worker." One might reasonably think that this was close to the end of a very happy story. However, many more challenges lay ahead for the church and its leader.

Rebuilding of the Church: Obtaining funds and workers for the massive undertaking proved to be more challenging than Fr. Dornic anticipated. The Maryland Historic Trust, which had applauded the preservation of the church, declined to make a loan for the project. The Amish craftsman, whom father Dornic had hired to assist in the Church's deconstruction and reconstruction, citing religious reasons, declined the project, and work permits issued to the original craftsmen expired. Undeterred, Father Dornic secured the donation of needed lumber from two area mills. W. Frank Thomas of Graybeal and Sons donated over 2000 board feet of locally cut and milled lumber in memory of Bill Brown, a friend of the family who had died in a car accident. Mr. Brown had been a former member of St. Mark's church.

Fr. Dornic then called his brother Vasil in Kosice, Slovakia to ask for the help of Slovak craftsmen who could be trusted with this specialized project. With the sponsorship of the Baltimore Slavic Cultural Society three highly skilled



brothers from Slovakia made the journey to Maryland to begin the painstaking process of putting the church back together board by board. The rebuilding of the Church began in January, 1990 over 3 ½ years after being moved from its Fallston location. In addition to the three brothers, a team of Polish, Slovak and Ukrainian refugees and

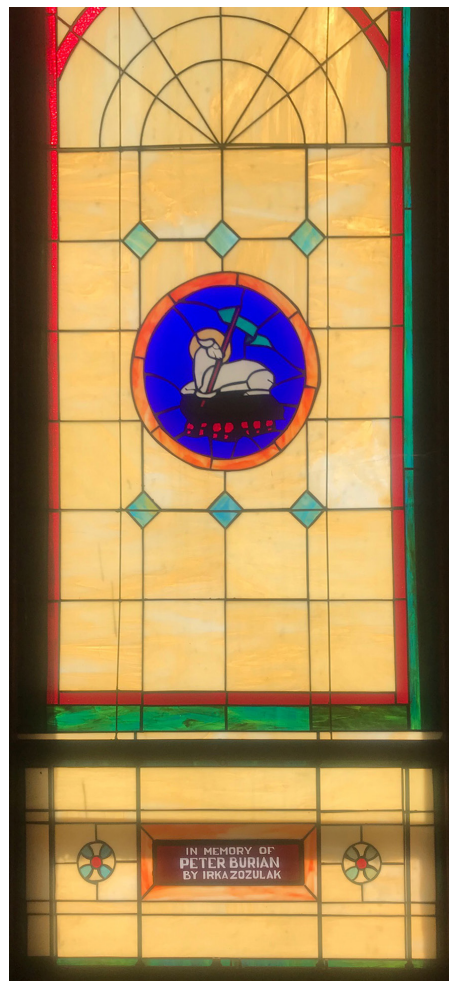
visitors assisted in the project. Among them were Fr. Dornic's cousins Stefan Stasak and Jan Varga who are members of CSHA today!

While Stefan was already in the United States at the time, Jan journeyed to the US with two other Slovak friends and craftsmen, Jan Hetes and Steve Pastiricik to participate in the project. Jan assisted in building the stone foundation and much of the interior. He recalls a very hot summer chiseling huge boulders into smaller pieces to form the beautiful stone foundation that the wooden structure rests on. In sweltering weather he was having difficulty breaking the boulders into pieces. He recalls that "Father Dornic was like Superman! ... I hit the rocks as hard as I could and did not make any dent. Father swung the chisel at the boulder and it smashed into pieces. He then showed me how to hit the boulders just right to create stones for the foundation." Jan also praises the many talented Eastern European craftsmen he worked with that summer.

Special Touches: The stained-glass windows and pews of the original church had been removed before the old church was secured; Fr. Dornic had hoped that St Mark's would donate

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This page photos: Stained glass windows



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them with the building, but God had another plan. To preserve the historic authenticity of the church, new stained-glass windows were commissioned and designed to match the style of the original windows of St. Mark's. Each was sponsored by parishioners and dedicated in memory of loved ones thus adding a personal and meaningful history for the new congregation. One of the ten stained glass side windows was dedicated in memory of Peter Burian by his wife Irka Zazulak Burian. Zonya McCoy, a dedicated parishioner and long-time supporter of Father Dornic's, sponsored two of the windows. One is dedicated in memory of her husband John, and one to her late daughter Zonya.

The large circular stained-glass window in the front of the church has a very special meaning. That window was donated by the Wright family in memory of their son William Patrick Wright III who died of cancer on November 29, 1995. He was just 3 years old. Patrick had been christened at St. Mary's and the family wanted to do something special in his memory and for the church. They raised the money and had the window designed by a local artist. The stained glass depicts Jesus walking with his hand resting on the shoulder of a small boy - Patrick now walking with Jesus. Today young Patrick's Father, Patrick Wright Jr., still attends church each Sunday under the glow of the beautiful stained glass dedicated to his son. He does the reading



Father Ivan Dornic



The final product: Church Interior



of the Epistle and assists with the Church preparations every week. Carolyn Singleton, young Patrick's aunt and her two children Kenny and Carly attend church every Sunday and sing in the choir loft only feet from the stained-glass memorial to the children's cousin.

The Finished Product: Today the church is a beautiful monument to its historic past while it cherishes the stories and memories of its new congregation, its Eastern Rite style, and Byzantine traditions. The exterior looks almost identical to the historic St. Mark's of the past. While the interior exposed beams and arched altar are exactly as they were designed in the 1800's, the addition of the iconostasis or icon screen (an ornate wood structure that separates the nave of the church from the sanctuary) is unmistakably Byzantine Catholic.

St. Mary's is a beautiful church with an extraordinary history and the centerpiece of a historic village, an emerging living museum springing up in the surrounding woods.

Announcements of upcoming Anniversary celebrations will be posted on St. Mary's web-site and in the church bulletin.

The Czech and Slovak Children School

by Jana Galkova

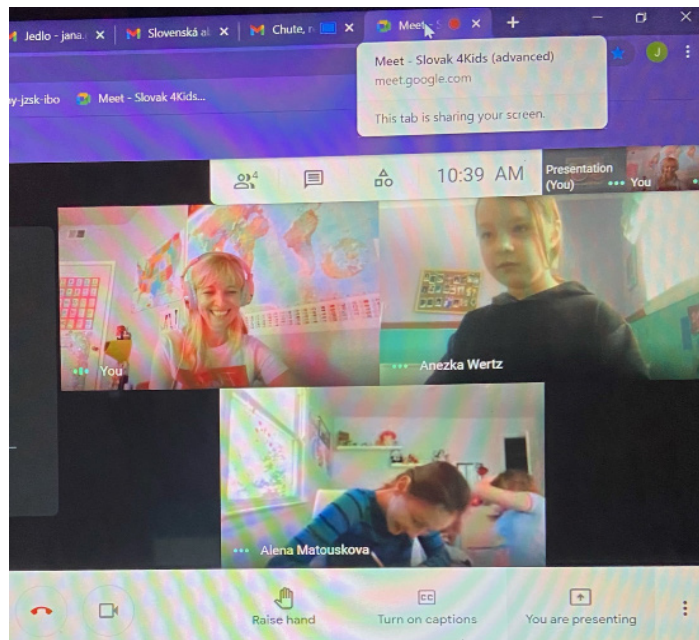
I have been teaching for fourteen years. Online teaching is new challenge though and a very good new experience for me. Kids need to be active all the time in online lessons. You have to prepare every lesson more dynamic. It's very important to change activities very often and don't let them chance to be bored.

I have two groups of students. The begginers group has five students and the advanced group has four students.

I believe that children like the Slovak lessons. They are active during the meetings, they communicate naturally and their progress is remarkable.

With the begginer's group we are focusing on the daily life activities, expanding our vocabulary and talking about the things they like. Very important is visual recognition of discussed subjects and supportive activities like drawing, craft or listening to songs.

The advanced group is developing conversational skills, correct grammar, reading and writing. To make the lessons attractive we play word games, create words from letters and form sentences.



Czech and Slovak Recipe Corner:

by Gregg Iskra

Pagach

This is a recipe that my mother, Margaret Ihnat Reisinger, used to make every year for Easter and on Christmas Eve. Mom's family (as well as my dad's) were originally from eastern Slovakia and this Americanized version of Pagach was popular with our family during the holidays. It's simple but filling food, and growing up I always considered it our version of pizza. Mom passed away last year, so I am keeping her recipe alive in my family and will pass along to my daughter.

INGREDIENTS:	1 tablespoon softened butter
30g (1 tablespoon) active dry yeast	1.5 lb (6 cups) all-purpose flour
1 tablespoon sugar	2 large egg yolks
1 teaspoon salt	3 lb potatoe filling
1 cup warm milk	1 cup shredded sharp cheddar cheese
1 cup warm water	Butter
	Optional: Garlic, chives

DIRECTIONS:

- Mix yeast with half of the lukewarm milk and a spoon of sugar. Melt butter and mix with egg yolks and with the second half of the milk. Add both mixes to the flour, add one teaspoon of salt and 1 cup of warm water. Mix everything together into a soft and flexible dough. Let it rise covered with a towel in a warm place until the dough doubles (about 1-2 hours). Boil the peeled potatoes in salt water and mash with butter and add the shredded cheese. You can further flavor with garlic, chives, parsley, or other herbs.
- Roll out the dough onto a flat sheet about 1/8 inch thick and pre-bake for 10 minutes at 375. Spread mashed potatoes filling 1/8 thick and bake for another 10 minutes. Top with melted butter and bake for another 5 minutes until it's slightly browned on top. Cut Pagach into squares and serve warm. Pagach is also great the next day, served warm or cold, although it usually didn't last that long in my family.



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Traveling, while standing still...

by MacLean Lunko

Just because you can't travel to the Czech Republic and Slovakia doesn't mean you can't spend an evening (or a whole day) there.

Amazon offers an amazing selection of Czech and Czechoslovak movies ready to stream over the internet, whether through a smart TV or on your computer. Some movies are fairly new, but some are true classics. All of the movies have English subtitles for those of us who are "not quite fluent."

Some of the movies that are available include:

Lemonade Joe (Limonádový Joe aneb Koňská opera) from 1964, is a parody of American Westerns. It is one of the most well-known, and loved Czechoslovak films.

Once Upon A Time There Was A King (Byl Jednou Jeden Kral...) from 1955, is a fairy tale about the value of love (and salt) over gold.

1951's The Emperor's Baker – The Baker's Emperor (Císařův pekař a pekařův císař) is a two-part movie, that tells the story of Emperor Rudolf II and his obsession with the Golem. It was one of the first Czechoslovak movies filmed in color.

Larks on a String (Skřivánci na niti), based on a book by Bohumil Hrabal, was produced in 1969. It was banned by the communist authorities and was only released after The Velvet Revolution in 1990.

The newer classics available include: The Snowdrop Festival (Slavnosti sněženek) from 1984, also based on a book by Bohumil Hrabal, and 1985's My Sweet Little Village (Vesničko má středisková), written by Zdeněk Svěrák. Both were directed by Jiri Mendel and are considered "cult classics" in the Czech Republic and Slovakia to this day.

The Oscar winning Kolya (Kolja) from 1996 was also directed by Jan Svěrák and stars his father, Zdeněk Svěrák. It tells a story of an unexpected change in the life of a middle-aged bachelor.

All of these movies and many more are included free, with a subscription to Amazon Prime. Until we can travel again, they can be a great escape, at least for a few hours.



Lemonade Joe playing piano in the bar