



June 9, 2023

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

My dear friends in Christ,

It is with great sadness that I write to you. During this past week, Father Deiak's immigration visa expired. I came down to go with him to the airport. Despite the difficulties, he was sunny and joyful as always. Although a bishop should not have favorites, I can say that Father Deiak is one of my favorite priests. His serene trust in God shines from his face in every circumstance. Nevertheless, overstaying a visa can result in both deportation and a ten year ban on re-entering the United States. So Father Deiak flew home to Ukraine through Reykyavik and Warsaw and arrived in Ukraine by bus, since there are no flights.

I know he loves his flock very much. I hope it will be possible for him to return here, but I don't know.

I am especially grateful to Deacon Bill Szewczyk for taking over the administration of Father Deiak's parishes on short notice, despite his own present burdens.

I pray the people of Patronage Parish and St. Gregory Parish will step up and assist the Deacon and support him in his efforts to provide you with the sacramental mysteries.

I don't have a priest to send you now. Recent deaths and illnesses in the Eparchy of Passaic have created several vacant parishes, and many of our active priests are over 75 years old, or even over 85!

Bringing priests from Ukraine has become radically more difficult with the war. A grown man is not allowed to leave the country unless he has at least three children.

In addition, please be aware of the enormous expenses. Not only is immigration extremely expensive, but medical insurance for a priest with a family is now almost \$3,000.00 a month. We spread out the cost of medical insurance to all the parishes, but as more of our priests have families, the average cost goes up and up.

Jesus commanded us to pray to the Father to send harvesters. Please pray that God send us more priests. I especially recommend that you pray to St. Therese the Little Flower that God would send us missionary priests. I also recommend that you pray to the Mother of God under the title "Undoer of Knots"—for help in untying the knots in the immigration problem.

Thank God every day that we live in country at peace, and pray every day for our brothers and sisters living in terror in Ukraine. Ukraine is one of only three countries in history to surrender its nuclear arms, and it was promised security by the United States and Russia in return for giving up its nuclear arms. Please pray fervently for their welfare and safety.

May God bless you and your family abundantly, Please pray for me too. I commend you to the prayers of St. Gregory of Nyssa, and especially to the care of the all holy Mother of God.

+ Kurt
Bishop Kurt