

Ukrainian Catholic Church of the Transfiguration
629 McIntosh Street



Year Built: Completed 1918

Added to Heritage Register: March 2, 2009

Description:

This Byzantine-style church is characterized by a cross-shaped plan and the onion domes. Constructed in brick, the church's façade faces west and the altar is located in the eastern apse.

The main and transept roofs are gabled. Over the crossing is an octagonal wooden tower, with an arched window on each face. Surmounted by a large onion dome and topped with a miniature turret, the roof has imitation windows, and a small dome. From this point, a cross rises from an orb.

The façade has a one-storey gabled narthex, or entry, with wooden double doors. Above in the main gable of the church is a round window filled with coloured-glass. Two corner towers, square in plan, have wooden octagonal superstructures and conclude in onion domes each peaked with an orb and a cross. The domes are covered on the exterior with galvanized iron and painted silver. On the west side of each tower is a false window outlined in stone with brick corbels below. A stringcourse created by several rows of brick begins on the western towers and continues around the church building.

Both the north and south sides of the church are identical with a blind window in the tower and two wider round-arched windows along the nave wall. The stringcourse arches above the windows to emphasize the curve. Each projecting transept has a round arched entrance on the west side with double doors and a fan-shaped transom window filling the arch. In the gable of the transepts is the bull's eye window and below are two arched windows.

To the east is a rounded apse with a smaller apsidal projection to either side. The plan and roofline are in the Byzantine tradition which is more than 1,000 years old and typical of the Orthodox churches.

Local materials were used by local contractors for the construction of the church.

Bishop Budka

Bishop Nicetas Budka was the first Bishop of the Ukrainian Catholic Church in Canada, a position which he undertook in December of 1912. Born in Dobomirka, Zbarazh District, Ukraine in the fall of 1877, Budka's parents were "fairly well-to-do and politically active."¹ He entered in to theological training in 1902 and at the University of Innsbruck and was ordained at the age of twenty-eight. Budka was assigned the duties of diocesan advisor to the marriage tribunal and the consultant on emigration issues, the latter of which played a role in his assignment as first Bishop of the Ukrainian Catholic Church of Canada. In this role, Budka was responsible for serving the approximately 128,000 Ukrainian settlers who were spread throughout Canada.

Upon arrival in Winnipeg, the Bishop Budka immediately set out to visit the Ukrainian settlements of Western Canada. He "conducted services, offered advice and encouraged the faithful" during his time traveling.² Once Budka returned to Winnipeg he began tireless work to ensure that the Ukrainian Canadian citizens had spiritual well-being, material well-being and were able to preserve the language and culture of Ukraine. One scholar estimates that Budka wrote over 2,000 letters in one year alone in an attempt to administrate the diocese which stretched from sea to sea.

While the Bishop's work was heralded by some, it was condemned by others. He undertook a campaign to attract priests from the Ukraine to Canada, and some believed that this included allowing married clergy to preach in Canada. Budka was widely criticized for this, although he himself never publicly supported the proposition of married clergy. Budka was also criticized for attempting to amalgamate the resources of Ukrainian Catholic Churches across the country. Many church congregations remained leery of the Bishop's instructions to "transfer their Church property to one of his newly formed corporations."³

After 15 years of service to the Ukrainian Catholic Church of Canada, Bishop Budka returned to his native Ukraine to "compile and submit a report on the work accomplished."⁴ Ill health prevented Budka from returning to Canada; instead he accepted the position as general vicar to the Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky in Lviv.

Bishop Budka was arrested in 1945 by the Bolsheviks for being a Catholic Bishop, and was deported to Siberia. Budka was held prisoner in a Gulag, which was a Soviet labour camp. An estimated 14 million people passed through these camps from 1929 to 1953 and over one million died within them. Bishop Budka was among this

¹ Stella Hrynuik. *Pioneer Bishop*. *Pioneer Times: Nykyta Budka in Canada*. CCHA *Historical Studies*, 55 (1988) < http://www.umanitoba.ca/colleges/st_pauls/ccha/Back%20Issues/CCHA1988/Hryniuk.pdf > p. 10

² *ibid*, p. 9

³ *ibid*, p. 14

⁴ Anna Maria Kowez-Baran. *History of Ukrainian Catholic Churches in Canada*. vol 4. *Ukrainian Catholic Churches of Winnipeg Archeparchy* (Saskatoon, 1991) <http://www.archeparchy.ca/documents/history/Blessed%20Bishop%20Martyr%20Nykyta%20Budka.pdf>

number, his life ended in a “dismal prison barrack” on October 1st, 1949.⁵ He was beatified as a martyr on June 27th, 2001 by Pope John Paul II.

The Bishop Budka blessed the Ukrainian Catholic Church of the Transfiguration in Fort William.



The Bishop Budka

Teodor Baran; Commissioned Artist

Teodor Baran, whose art graces the walls of the Ukrainian Catholic Church of the Transfiguration, began his ecclesiastical artistic training in 1939. Studying at the Studite Monastery in Uviv, Ukraine, Baran learned the techniques of Byzantine church painting, ornamentation and iconography.

In 1949, at the age of thirty-eight, Baran immigrated to Canada with his wife and four children. He worked as a self-employed church artist, iconographer, and portraitist. He met with great success across the prairies and in Northwestern Ontario, where he received over 70 church commissions between the years of 1950 and 1988. Baran’s reputation grew, and he has been featured in numerous history books on the Canadian Ukrainian Catholic Church and in a National Geographic article detailing “The People Who Made Saskatchewan.”⁶ Two icons created by Baran are on display at the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Ottawa. Teodor Baran died in 1995 at the age of 84 in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

The Ukrainian Catholic Church of the Transfiguration commissioned Baran to create Byzantine style painting on the interior of the church in both 1971 and 1974.

⁵ Anna Maria Kowez-Baran. *History of Ukrainian Catholic Churches in Canada*. vol 4. *Ukrainian Catholic Churches of Winnipeg Archeparchy* (Saskatoon, 1991)
<http://www.archeparchy.ca/documents/history/Blessed%20Bishop%20Martyr%20Nykyta%20Budka.pdf>

⁶ Ethel A. Starbird. *The People Who Made Saskatchewan*. (National Geographic, May 1979) p. 650



Teodor Baran at work;

Photographs from <http://www.baran.ca/tbaran/photoarchive.htm>