

BUSZCZE – Oldest Marian Shrine of Lvov Archdiocese, Ukraine

Buszcze is a big village located 10 miles from Brzezany (Berezhany) 60 miles from Lwow (Lvov) – capital of Western Ukraine; district Tarnopol (40 miles). It is a Mission Church of St. Peter & St. Paul parish in Brzezany; a formerly independent parish since 1399 till 1944. The first written information about Buszcze is from the year 1086 A.D. This settlement was founded by Jan Boszcz. His mansion was burnt down by Tatars and he found shelter with his family in the church. The first church was wooden. During the Tatars invasion in 1241, the church was burnt down and a majority of people were murdered or taken as captives.

People rebuilt the village and also built a new church from wood as well, with surrounding high walls. The village grew in number of inhabitants and in 1376 was recognized as a town. The third wooden church was burned by Turks, during their next invasion. The fourth church was built with stones in 1624 by Countess Catherine Sieniawska from Brzezany and her husband Hieronim, who was a cupbearer of Polish King. It was the oldest Marian Shrine of Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Lvov.

This church has sustained until this day, however its roof was burned down during the Second World War. The interior was destroyed by Communists (they stored chemicals there and fertilizers). The church in Buszcze has two titles: Assumption of the BVM (August 15) and Nativity of the BVM (September 8). In the main altar there were 2 icons that were brought from Rome by Count Alexander Sieniawski, son of founders of this church. One of the icons of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary was painted in 1399. The second one of the Annunciation of the BVM, was used as a screen to cover the first icon.

During the Second World War, the church roof was burned down and all church furniture got damaged (pews, side altar, confessionals etc.) except the main High Altar, which was untouched by fire. It was a visible sign of wonder, the nature of this phenomenon of these icons. When the War was ended, those icons were brought to Western Poland to Raclawice Slaskie near Opole and they are still there now. When Russians took over this part of Poland and created Ukrainian Socialist Republic of Russia, all Poles were expelled to the Western part of Poland and the church was used as a storage

for fertilizers and chemicals. The chemicals completely devastated the stone tile floor and walls. Church is without roof, the vault still exists. The Church is completely devastated and desecrated.

Over there is a small group of Roman Catholic parishioners, who remain there, and a few years ago a priest from Brzezany visited them in the ruins; Holy Mass is occasionally celebrated during the Summer. Climate is very severe. They are afraid that the ceiling could collapse at any time. They registered the parish and now have received permission to rebuild that historical church. They are unable to collect funds among parishioners. They are poor. Ukraine is also in state of war with Russia. They need money now to RENOVATE INTERIOR: new windows, main altar, side altars (shrines), floor, copy of two miraculous icons, tabernacle, furniture - pews, confessionals, sacristy closets, organs and other items like chalices, vestments, and others. I understand that every Catholic around the world is responsible to keep their own parish, diocese, schools and organizations in good standing.

By no means do I want to take away from that. However, if you are able find in your family budget some amount of money to help this particular cause, we will be very grateful.

Every First Sunday of the month I celebrate Holy Mass for all the benefactors, helping us to restore this church.

We created special website: www.projektbuszcze.org. You can find more information about that project and methods you can help. You can also send e-mail to: projektbuszcze@yahoo.com for more information.

If you would like to help please write check for:
HELP FOR THE UKRAINIAN CHURCH and mail to:

BUSZCZE PROJECT
3418 E. 18th Street
OAKLAND, CA 94601

In check memo please write: Buszcze project. You can also send money through PayPal from website: www.projektbuszcze.org

Telephone: 510-536-0721

Email address: projektbuszcze@yahoo.com