



Eparchy
Saint Volodymyr the Great
in Paris

UKRAINIAN CHURCH IN LOURDES

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Who Are We ?

The church of the Dormition of the Most Holy Mother of God in Lourdes was consecrated in 1982. Built in a Neo-Byzantine style, it can be recognized by its five golden domes. Architect: Myroslav Nimciv, frescos: Jerzy Nowosielski, iconostasis: Petro Kholodny Jr.

This church is the only Eastern Catholic centre in Lourdes. It offers a “window” to the spirituality and culture of the Christian East.

This place of spiritual focus and contemplation also symbolizes the unity of the Ukrainians scattered around the world after the dramatic events of the Second World War and totalitarian repressions. Its universal message is addressed to all migrants, as well as the persecuted and the suffering.

The erection of the church was made possible by the faithful of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (UGCC) throughout the world. The construction was led by Fathers Wassyl Pryjma (1914–2004) and Paul Kohut (1916–2006).

The church was consecrated on 28 August 1982 by Archbishop Myroslav Ivan Lubachivsky, with the participation of Bishop Henri Donze of Tarbes and Lourdes.



The Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church



The UGCC is the largest of the Eastern Catholic Churches (ca. 5,000,000 faithful). Its identity is rooted in the baptism of Kyiv by Prince Volodymyr the Great in 988.

After the Great Schism between the East and the West in 1054, there were several attempts at restoring the unity in the Ukrainian lands. The Union of Brest (1596) marked the restoration of full communion with the Apostolic See of Rome.

This communion was the reason for the brutal persecution of the UGCC during Soviet times, up to its full prohibition in the Soviet Union. Between 1946 and 1989, the UGCC was the largest underground religious body in the world.

Since the fall of the Soviet Union, the Church may freely accomplish its mission, proclaiming the Good News of the Gospel to all people of good will. The UGCC is present in Ukraine, but also in other European countries, in North and South America, in Australia and other countries.

The Frescos

The polychromies covering the walls of the church are a modern interpretation of the Byzantine tradition.

Jerzy Nowosielski (1923-2011) was a Polish artist, iconographer and Christian thinker of Ukrainian origin. His multi-layered ethnic and religious identity is reflected in his art, combining traditional iconography and the avant-garde.

The church in Lourdes is his only monumental work outside of Poland.

The artist revisits the characteristic features of the Byzantine icon: the stylised elegance of forms, the striking vividness of colours, the powerful drama of light and shadow. Nowosielski's style, impacted by the existential experience of the 20th century, does not leave one indifferent but invites us to contemplation and meditation.

In the sanctuary, there is a painting of the Mother of God at prayer (Oranta). Underneath, the Fathers of the Church appear, as it were, concelebrating around the altar. Over 60 figures of saints and prophets accompany the pilgrims on their journey.

The blue colour of the walls is deep and soothing. It points at the ineffable mystery of the maternity of the Virgin.

