Statement by Bishop Kurt Burnette on the Appointment of
His Excellency Milan Lach, S.J.

June 24, 2017
Woodland Park, New Jersey

Today, on the Nativity of St. John the Forerunner, our Holy Father Pope Francis has shown his pastoral concern for our Ruthenian Church by appointing an Apostolic Administrator for the Eparchy of Parma, relieving our Metropolitan Archbishop of the burden of caring for two eparchies. Most Rev. Milan Lach is only 43 years old, born on November 18, 1973, and was appointed auxiliary bishop of Presov in April of 2013. When I was studying canon law at the Oriental Institute in Rome, he was studying eastern spirituality at the same institute. I remember him vividly as a perpetually bright and happy presence. I was a bit of an outsider there as the only American priest studying at the time, and whenever he saw me he welcomed me with warm words and an infectious smile. Many of you may remember him as the enthusiastic young bishop who made a joyful speech at my banquet in December 2013 telling all of us to experience the love of God and to tell everyone else about God's sublime love for them. He told us to share the Good News wherever we go. It was a brave thing to do in a foreign language, but he trusted in the love of Jesus. I welcome him to our Ruthenian American Church, and I look forward to working with him and learning from him. I believe God has favored the people of our sister eparchy in Parma, Ohio. I am certain the people in the Eparchy of Parma will develop the same warm affection for Bishop Milan that I have, and more importantly, grow in their love of God. May God grant him many happy and blessed years.

And you child shall be called prophet of the Most High;
   for you will go before the Lord to prepare the way for Him,
to give His people the knowledge of salvation
   through the forgiveness of their sins,
by the tender mercy of our God,
   the dawn from on high
to shine on those living in darkness
   and in the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the path of peace.   Luke 2:76-79