

RESOLUTIONS OF THE VI SESSION OF THE PATRIARCHAL ASSEMBLY (SOBOR) OF THE UKRAINIAN GREEK-CATHOLIC CHURCH

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We, the delegates of the VI session of Patriarchal Assembly (Sobor) gathered in the city of Ivano-Frankivsk in the Subcarpathian region of Ukraine on the 25th-27th of August 2015, under the leadership of the Father and Head of the UGCC, His Beatitude Patriarch Sviatoslav, while deliberating on the theme of “The Vibrant Parish – a Place to Encounter the Living Christ,” have developed a number of directives for the renewal of the life of our Church in Ukraine and abroad.

Through our presence at the Sobor we bear witness to the fact that indeed the parish is the place where the faithful most frequently encounter Christ through Christian instruction, common prayer and serving one’s neighbour. By fostering and enlivening our parish life, we also enliven the entire Church. Therefore, we submit the following proposals, distinguishing between three levels: patriarchal, eparchial, and parochial.

“The Word of God”

Patriarchal Level:

1. In the area of continuing education of the clergy and in seminary formation:
 - in the course on homiletics give consideration to various methods and approaches in preaching to different categories of people;
 - conduct a practical course on the prayerful reading of Sacred Scripture (*Lectio Divina*).
2. Call upon the laity to continuously pray for good and zealous priests, able to preach on the Word of God.
3. Remind all the faithful about their duty to evangelize through the witnessing of Christian life.
4. Prepare and publish an electronic version of the Sacred Scripture (in the Ivan Khomenko translation) with commentary, explanations, and reference material: concordance, synopsis (parallel verses), references to other Ukrainian translations and a Greek language dictionary.

Eparchial Level:

1. Ask the eparchial bishops to support and encourage the development of a Bible apostolate in the parishes of their eparchy.
2. Recommend to eparchial bishops to organize days of spiritual renewal for their priests.
3. Call upon priests to preach on and explain the Word of God not only on Sundays and holydays, but also at every Divine Liturgy, during Vespers when there are Old Testament

readings, at the celebration of the Holy Mysteries (Sacraments), as well as during other liturgical services and blessings.

4. Recommend that when administering the Mystery (Sacrament) of Anointing with Oil (of the Sick) priests engage family members of the ill person in the reading of the Psalms and the Epistle.
5. Encourage priests to introduce Biblical catechesis as a method of adult catechesis.
6. Remind the faithful how important it is to possess a personal copy of the Sacred Scriptures; and for eparchial and parish communities to help those in financial need to acquire a Bible.

Parochial Level:

1. Encourage priests to become familiar with various methods and practices in the UGCC for reading Sacred Scripture, and to apply them in parishes.
2. Establish Bible groups and circles in parishes so that the faithful might have an opportunity to better understand the Holy Scriptures and explain them to others.
3. Encourage priests to take into consideration the presence of children when explaining the Word of God.
4. Make use of modern mass media technologies when proclaiming the Word of God and conducting catechesis.
5. So that the faithful might more fully experience and understand the Good News proclaimed each Sunday, priests should print the changeable parts of the Divine Liturgy for their parishioners.
6. Encourage the practice of prayerful reading of the Holy Scriptures in a family circle.
7. Utilize a variety of best practices to popularize the reading of Sacred Scriptures.

“Catechesis”

Patriarchal Level:

1. Ensure that our catechesis is relevant, responds to the challenges of our time, and is presented in a practical way.
2. Introduce a systematic catechesis of adults, based on the Catechumenate Program for Adults in the UGCC.
3. Introduce age-group specific liturgical catechesis for parishioners, using pre-festal, festal and post-festal texts, especially before the patron feast of the parish.
4. In catechetical instruction pay particular attention to instilling a love of prayer and a respectful attitude to the parish church and sacred things.
5. Develop a program of liturgical catechesis (prepare unified texts for parish liturgical catechesis that are age specific).

Eparchial Level:

1. Organize the training of catechists and animators (active laity) on eparchial and deanery levels, and support their ongoing formation.
2. Organize foundational catechesis in the parishes on the basis of the Catechism of the UGCC, “Christ – Our Pascha.”
3. Where it is necessary, introduce catechetical instruction in the language of a given country.
4. Take advantage of pilgrimages and community leisure times as opportunities for special catechization.
5. Introduce systematic catechization of adults based on the UGCC Adult Catechumenate Program.

Parochial Level:

1. Parish communities shall make every effort to ensure that catechesis is made a top priority for the parish, and that consideration is given to all age groups (children, teenagers, youth, adults) and social groups, regardless of the number of persons present.
2. Establish Parent Advisory Councils in parishes to promote and develop catechesis.
3. In parishes lacking organized catechesis create catechetical schools (programs) and engage catechists to serve in them.
4. Organize camps, both external and parochial, as special occasions for catechesis.
5. Introduce systematic catechization of adults based on the UGCC Adult Catechumenate Program.

“Missionary Spirit”

Patriarchal Level:

1. As members of the Universal Church, we must be open to missionary activity – evangelization.
2. Remind the clergy and faithful that the field of missionary activity of the UGCC is never limited by ethnic origin.
3. Encourage the faithful to bear witness to their Christianity through public manifestations of faith (e.g. Christian greeting, sign of the cross, etc.).
4. In the seminary “missiology” program give attention to contemporary circumstances for missionary activity, evangelization, and kerygma.
5. Considering the needs of the Church in mission territories, ensure that priests who are selected for such ministry possess the gift of missionary service and receive proper formation.
6. Encourage priests to provide their faithful with a deeper understanding of missionary spirit in the Church.

7. In missionary activity focus on the authentic testimony of faith and life of the saints and new martyrs of the UGCC.
8. Promote pilgrimages and religious tourism.
9. Support the development of the official web site of the UGCC, also in different languages.
10. Compose prayer petitions on the missionary vocation of each Christian.
11. Call (upon our faithful) to pray for a missionary spirit and continue holding annual Mission Days (Dekada Misijnosti) in all UGCC parishes.

Eparchial Level:

1. During catechesis emphasize the missionary vocation of every Christian (to share his or her faith) and provide concrete examples of missionary service.
2. Organize lay formation on the parish and eparchial levels.
3. Encourage bishops and priests to engage the laity in the administrative and property management responsibilities of the eparchy and parish (building, repairs, maintenance) and dedicate more time to communication with the faithful.

Parochial Level:

1. Encourage the creation of different communities in a parish, through which the faithful can become more open to others and ready to witness about Christ.
2. Encourage families, which form the parish community, to take an active part in missionary activity (e.g. in volunteer projects).
3. Encourage the restoration of Christian family traditions (e.g. praying together, sharing meals, and attending Sunday liturgies together).
4. Encourage parishioners to invite their friends and acquaintances to take part in the life of parish communities (e.g. invite friends for common prayer, vigils, and other events that take place in parishes).
5. Encourage priests to hold retreats (and other events) on the theme of mission.
6. Call upon parishioners to joyfully witness their faith – to evangelize.
7. Create and regularly maintain a book of parishioners (database with their contact information to facilitate a pastor's contact with his faithful).
8. On a parish level, when celebrating the Patronal Feast, encourage extending the festivities beyond the liturgical services in the form of fellowship through community celebration and the sharing of a common meal.
9. Organize meetings for the sharing of faith among different age groups of parishioners (family meetings, youth meetings, etc.).
10. Establish a parish notice board where the faithful can post prayer requests.

“Liturgy”

Patriarchal Level:

1. In the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church dedicate one of the next years (in a year or two) to the liturgical life of the Church.
2. In order to celebrate the consecration of Holy Resurrection of Christ Patriarchal Cathedral in Kyiv:
 - A) establish the 18th (5th) day of August as the Feast of the Consecration of the Patriarchal Cathedral of the Holy Resurrection of Christ in Kyiv;
 - B) charge the Patriarchal Liturgical Commission with compiling and submitting for approval a service dedicated to this feast.
3. Prepare appropriate commentaries and explanations to liturgical texts.
4. Complete the translations and printing of liturgical books, necessary for liturgical services (Menaion, Triodion).
5. Establish centralized publishing of liturgical texts and other materials, including other languages.
6. Expand the Trebnyk (Book of Needs), paying particular attention to those rites, which are most relevant for pastoral ministry today.
7. Unify and order liturgical texts in different languages for the clergy and laity.
8. Compile and publish liturgical services dedicated to Ukrainian saints of the 20th century.
9. Encourage priests to conduct the Holy Mystery (Sacrament) of Christian Initiation in the context of the Divine Liturgy.
10. Research a proposal to return to the practice of reciting aloud the silent prayer texts and reintroduce the kiss of peace.
11. In the celebration of the Divine Liturgy and other liturgical services stress on the importance of adhering to prescriptions found in the liturgical books of the UGCC and caution priests against making unauthorized changes. (Only the Father and Head of the Church, with the consent of the Synod of Bishops of the UGCC, is competent to introduce any such changes).
12. Call upon the priests to celebrate liturgical services diligently and attentively (to clearly articulate prayer texts, observe an unhurried rhythm in liturgical movements, proper posture, cleanliness of priestly vestments, etc.).
13. Introduce Divine Liturgies which engage children and prepare recommendations for their celebration.
14. In seminary liturgical theology courses give attention to the importance of beauty in church and aesthetics in the celebration of liturgical services.
15. Give attention to prayer and liturgy in seminary formation.
16. Provide for professional training and continuous formation of deacons/readers and create internet resources for distance education of cantors.

17. We recommend creating a unified UGCC database containing all reference materials for liturgical services, as well as promoting liturgical texts through official media resources of the UGCC.
18. Call upon priests to celebrate the Divine Liturgy daily (where this is possible).
19. Supplement the existing online platform “Dyvensvit” with liturgical texts in different languages, taking into consideration different church calendars.

Eparchial Level:

1. In the form of recommendations publish rules regarding the behaviour of the faithful during the Divine Liturgy and other services; explain to the faithful how to foster piety in their behaviour, clothing and posture in the church.
2. Ask eparchial bishops to make their cathedral churches models of liturgical and prayer life.
3. Ask eparchial bishops to more diligently enforce adherence to architectural norms, interior decoration and painting in places of worship, according to church regulations and traditions, in cooperation with the eparchial commission for sacred art and architecture.

Parochial Level:

1. Introduce liturgical catechesis and preaching in parishes. Elaborate an educational strategy to explain liturgical services to the faithful, choosing an appropriate time and method (before or after the Divine Liturgy, handing out printed commentaries, explanations, engaging trained laity).
2. Care for the beauty of liturgical singing, pay attention to the diction and clarity of the cantor, to proper amplification, encourage all the faithful to participate in singing during liturgical celebration.
3. Engage children in the liturgical life of the parish, entrusting them with different duties.
4. Ensure that liturgical books are available in the parish community and the faithful are provided with texts for liturgical services held in the parish.

“Prayer”

Patriarchal Level:

1. Encourage the faithful to witness about the importance of prayer in their lives.
2. Give special attention to fostering a love for prayer, to studying our liturgical and prayer heritage.
3. Encourage all the faithful to practice the Jesus Prayer, both personally, as well as in community.

Eparchial Level:

1. Prepare the faithful for liturgy, explaining its meaning and beauty.
2. Use social media to disseminate prayer requests.
3. Restore the practice of using bells to call for common prayer at appropriate times.
4. Introduce systematic formation programs for existing prayer communities.
5. Encourage the eparchies to stress the importance of prayer on TV and radio and to organize the broadcasting of the prayer rule of the Church.
6. During Episcopal visitations of parishes that eparchial bishops place greater emphasis on sharing fellowship with the laity and on common prayer.

Parochial Level:

1. Call upon the clergy to give a personal example of prayer for the parish community.
2. Encourage children and youth to take an active part in parish liturgical services and educate them in this spirit.
3. Take care that prayers and liturgical services in parishes are scheduled at a time that is convenient for the people, including in the evenings.
4. In parishes organize brotherhoods for men and provide for their spiritual formation.

“Communion – Unity”

Patriarchal Level:

1. Introduce the rite of forgiveness at the beginning of Great Lent and encourage the faithful to reconciliation at the conclusion of missions or retreats.
2. Cooperate with other Churches and denominations in the sphere of protecting the environment (ecology).
3. Foster mutual respect, love, and knowledge of one another.
4. Hold joint spiritual, cultural, and charitable events as well as processions on national and religious holidays.
5. Propose relevant programs and academic-practical training for pastors and practicing Christians that would promote unity.
6. Develop a program for eparchies to get acquainted with one another for the purpose of exchanging gifts and mutual assistance.
7. Call upon bishops, priests, consecrated persons, and the laity to be jointly responsible for enacting the decisions and laws of the Synod of Bishops of the UGCC. This should become a visible sign of the unity of our Church.

Eparchial Level:

1. Support professional associations (e.g. teachers, doctors, etc.) by organizing pilgrimages, prayers, and other events for them.
2. Practice ecumenical prayer in parishes and eparchies (Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, etc.).
3. Hold charitable events together with other Christian communities and religious organizations, fostering mutual respect and love.
4. Cooperate with other parishes in various kinds of catechetical, prayer, and charitable initiatives.
5. Establish an association of priests to promote unity among the clergy as a witness to unity for the faithful.

Parochial Level:

1. Encourage the parish community to hold common liturgical services, prayers, and different celebrations (Christmas, sharing of kutia, blessing of food) to promote unity among all parishioners.
2. Stress on the importance of unity to children and youth, in parish schools and during other community gatherings (at Christian camps, during meetings, conferences, forums, ecological projects, campaigns, Olympiads, and contests).
3. Organize various parish events (common meals, master-classes, sport activities, ecological campaigns) and inform one another about needs and mutual help.
4. Be open and accessible to new members of the parish, sensitive to their needs.
5. Create a parish web site or social network page.
6. Organize encounters for parishioners, where under their priest's guidance they would be able to discuss how they see their parish, express their wishes and expectations (e.g. at pastoral planning meetings, meetings of parish councils, etc.).
7. If possible, a priest should meet with the people every Sunday after Divine Liturgy.

“Serving One’s Neighbour”

Patriarchal Level:

1. Stress the importance of continuous social service in parishes of the UGCC.
2. Disseminate the teaching of the Universal Church on the protection of human life from conception to natural death.
3. Hold church-wide fund-raising campaigns for specific social projects.
4. Invite the “Caritas” organization to look after the formation of personnel for different types of social service in the parish community and provide them with relevant methodical assistance.

5. Enhance the activity of “Caritas” and social service in parishes of central, southern and eastern regions of Ukraine.

Eparchial Level:

1. In the course of the canonical visitation of a parish ask eparchial bishops to pay attention to its social ministry.
2. Encourage the creation of centres to care for orphans, provide assistance to pregnant women, the homeless, addicts, and other individuals in dire social circumstances.
3. Organize special shelters for the homeless in the cold season.
4. Pay attention to people with special needs (e.g. in wheelchairs) when constructing new churches or restoring old ones.
5. Pay special attention to the importance of pastoral care for children, youth, and families suffering as a result of social upheavals.

Parochial Level:

1. Call the parish community to social service as an important manifestation of our faith.
2. Set up social councils, “Caritas” organization centres or appoint individuals responsible for organizing social service in parishes.
3. We recommend that parish councils include programs of social service in their planning.
4. Call upon parishes to help priests and individuals engaged in prison ministry.
5. Encourage the parish community to care for the elderly.
6. Encourage parish communities abroad to help emigrants from Ukraine in questions of law, language, employment and the implementation of state programs.

“Leadership”

Patriarchal Level:

1. Educate the laity and clergy to co-responsibility for duties which the Church places on them.
2. Educate the laity to treat a priest with respect.
3. Stress the importance of ongoing formation for both priests and bishops.
4. Introduce a course on Pastoral Planning in seminaries.

Eparchial Level:

1. Encourage priests to be an example in their personal and family (if married) life, fostering the virtue of modesty in particular.

2. Call upon priests to live on the territory of their parishes, to personally know their parishioners, to be open to them, and effectively distribute (parish) duties among them.
3. Explain the vocation and function of parish councils, thus demonstrating one's trust in them and supporting their ministry.
4. Ask eparchial bishops to introduce in their eparchies training for members of pastoral and financial councils.
5. Organize professional and spiritual training for accountants (treasurers), sacristans and other individuals who perform services in the parish.
6. Establish and implement parish statutes (charters).
7. Organize joint meetings for parish councils from different parishes.
8. Encourage the sharing of good parish practices at eparchial and diaconal meetings.
9. In the program of ongoing formation for the clergy introduce a course of lectures on parish administration.
10. Remind eparchial bishops of the difference between a parish visit and a canonical visitation.
11. Call upon priests to live in their parishes and the parish community to provide for their pastor.

Parochial Level:

1. Establish parish pastoral and financial councils (where they do not exist), hold transparent elections to existing councils and inform the parish community about their activity.
2. Provide community for individuals of different professions in a parish, in order to engage them in a variety of ministries and volunteer work.
3. Encourage the publication of an informational parish bulletin.

“Stewardship”

Patriarch Level:

1. Encourage the clergy and UGCC faithful to practice tithing (of time, talents, material goods, etc.).
2. Organize a course on “Stewardship” for clergy and laity.
3. Establish a mechanism for feedback regarding the implementation of (these Patriarchal) Assembly resolutions.
4. Express gratitude for the dedicated work and service for the good and development of the UGCC for “The Working Group for the Realization of Strategic Development of the UGCC till 2020 to Implementation of the UGCC Development Strategy 2020” and the “Vibrant Parish – a Place to Encounter the Living Christ” program.

5. Call for post-Sobor conferences to be held on all levels (eparchy, deanery, parish) in order that the resolutions of the Sobor might reach all the faithful of the UGCC.

Eparchial Level:

1. Ask eparchial bishops to set up a mutual support fund for priests, the purpose of which would be to assist the clergy and their families in a time of need.

Parochial Level:

1. Call upon the pastor to closely cooperate with his parishioners.
2. Recommend that priests continuously inform the parish community on the activity of the parish.
3. Call upon the parish community to pay special attention to families in dire social need.
Recommend that parishes engage consecrated persons (sisters and brothers) to conduct retreats, parish schools, etc.
4. Encourage the proliferation of parish advisory services, engaging professionals in different spheres (priests, psychologists, lawyers, etc.).

Rev. Oleh Kas'kiv

Secretary of the VI session of the Patriarchal Assembly (Sobor)
of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church

Translated by: **Very Rev. Andrew T. Onuferko**
Executive Director of the Working Group for the
Implementation of the Strategic Development of the UGCC till 2020