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# ROMAN CATHOLICISM IN UKRAINE: THE CONTEMPORARY SITUATION, SOCIAL ACCEPTANCE, AND SOCIAL SERVICE

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## Abstract

This article investigates the historical peculiarities of the formation and specificity of the current stage of development of Catholicism in Ukraine. It considers the spiritual, socio-cultural, economic, and political prerequisites for the resumption of the activity of the Roman Catholic Church during the revival of Ukraine's independence in the 1990s. A quantitative comparison of dioceses since the end of the last century has been undertaken and their patterns of growth have been identified. The main achievements of the largest Catholic churches in the country since Ukrainian independence have consisted in building its ecclesiastical structures and expanding its community networks and active social service. This has resulted in a positive trend of increasing awareness and confidence among the Ukrainian citizens in Catholic institutions, their leaders, and Catholicism in general. Various aspects of the "Vatican's Eastern Policy" and its implications for the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church are also examined, as well as problems and prospects for further integration of the Roman Catholic identity into the spiritual space of Ukrainian society. The main contours of the institutional Catholic response to the current crisis situations in Ukrainian society are outlined, including the war in the East of the country, family problems, poverty, existence of socially vulnerable groups of people, despair, and so forth.

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<sup>1</sup> The official international name is Vasyl' Stus Donetsk National University. Before the beginning of Russia's military aggression in eastern Ukraine, it used to be located in the city of Donetsk. In 2014, due to the occupation of Donetsk and the threat posed to the lives and safety of the students and staff, this institution was evacuated to the city of Vinnytsia, its present location.

**Keywords:** Catholicism, Roman Catholic Church in Ukraine, Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, Vatican's Eastern policy, ecumenical movement, public consciousness, social service, church integration into society.

## Introduction

The purpose of this article is to identify the activity of the Roman Catholic Church in Ukrainian society from the perspective of its current institutional situation--its achievements, problems, and the prospects for its development.

Although not the most widespread, Catholicism is a traditional religion in Ukraine that has existed on its territory for quite a long period of time. The Catholic Church had great cultural and spiritual influence in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (16th-18th centuries), which (in different time periods) included virtually the entire Right Bank of modern Ukraine. Catholicism developed particularly rapidly in Western Ukraine, which had been in the political frontiers of the European states for a long time, until it joined the Soviet Union in 1939-1945. Currently, the Roman Catholic Church retains its influence and will continue to have a significant impact in the future. In contemporary Ukraine, however, Catholicism has ceased to be a regional phenomenon. Although the size of Catholic communities differ greatly in territorial terms, they are present throughout Ukraine.

There is a widespread belief in Ukrainian mass consciousness that Catholicism is an alien spiritual phenomenon not suited to the Ukrainian mentality. This is in contrast to the Orthodox faith, which for the general public is considered an authentic and original faith of the Ukrainian people. This attitude toward Western Christianity has a historical explanation. During the time of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, which included part of the territory of contemporary Ukraine, the state and church authorities exerted pressure on Orthodoxy. The Catholic religion and the Polish language became the means of assimilation (oppression) of the Ukrainian people. As a result, many Ukrainians developed unconscious patterns that linked Catholicism to the Polish identity as the religion of the Polish people. A more global level of opposition concerned the differences between Eastern and Western Christianity that sanctified the values of Eurasian and European civilizations.<sup>2</sup>

Of course, times have changed. The current generation of Ukrainians, especially young people, are more open-minded and tolerant of the various denominations operating in the territory of Ukraine. However, the question remains: how much have Ukrainians appropriated

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<sup>2</sup> Н. В. Іщук, "Рим і Константинополь як форми ціннісного вибору." *Вісник НАУ. Серія: Філософія. Культурологія*. № 1 (7). 2008, 85.

Catholicism as “their own”? Conversely, how much have the Catholic churches come to view Ukraine as their temporal homeland? And are they prepared to provide social service and support for the Ukrainian people in these difficult times?

The current state and prospects of Catholicism in Ukraine now interests scientists and scholars. Among those who are exploring the various historical and theoretical aspects of this problem, we note the works of M. Babiy, A. Gudyma, I. Bondaruk, V. Doroshenko, N. Ishchuk, A. Kolodny, O. Sagan, L. Fylypovych, I. Khoma, P. Yarotsky, and others.

### **Catholicism in Ukraine: Current State and Public Perception**

There are four distinct Catholic churches in the territory of modern Ukraine as of January 1, 2019, according to a report on the network of churches and religious organizations of the Department of Religions and Nationalities of the Ministry of Culture of Ukraine. The Roman Catholic Church is represented by 943 registered communities (headed by Archbishop-Metropolitan of Lviv, Mieczyslaw Mokshitsky since 2008), Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church with 3,470 communities (headed by Archbishop of Kiev-Halych Svyatoslav Shevchuk since 2011), Mukachevo Greek Catholic Diocese with 442 communities (Diocesan Bishop Cyrus Milan (Shashik since 2002) and the Armenian Catholic Church in Ukraine with 3 registered communities (headed, since 2015, by His Beatitude Kricor Bedros XX Gabroyan).<sup>3</sup> Thus, the largest and most influential Catholic churches in Ukraine are the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (UGCC) and the Roman Catholic Church in Ukraine (RCC in Ukraine).

The presence of Catholic churches as full-fledged subjects of church life is ensured by Ukrainian law, particularly the Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations, adopted by the *Verkhovna Rada* on April 23, 1991. According to the Law, the state is obliged to respect the traditions and internal guidelines of religious organizations, if they do not contradict the current legislation. Adoption of this law coincided with the general religious uplift observed in Ukraine after the collapse of the USSR. It is important that in the times of independence, the religious map of Ukraine has changed significantly. From a predominantly Orthodox country, Ukraine has become a multi-confessional one. This has had a positive effect on the well-being of believers belonging to non-Orthodox denominations.

The year 1991 was a landmark in the history of the Catholic Church in Ukraine, which was made possible by two meetings of Pope John Paul II and the head of the USSR, Mikhail

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<sup>3</sup>“Дані Департаменту у справах релігій та національностей Міністерства культури України. Форма 1. Звіт про мережу церков і релігійних організацій в Україні станом на 01.01.2019 р.” *PICU*. [https://risu.org.ua/ua/index/resources/statistics/ukr\\_2019/75410/](https://risu.org.ua/ua/index/resources/statistics/ukr_2019/75410/) Accessed 21/04/2020.

Gorbachev. The meetings occurred 30 years ago in December 1989 and November 1990. During this period (March 15, 1990), official relations were established between the Soviet Union and the Vatican. Following January 16, 1991, the Catholic Church in Ukraine was restored, which took place shortly before Ukraine gained independence. That year, Catholic bishops of the Roman and Byzantine rites, including Archbishop Marian Jaworski and High Archbishop of the Greek Catholic Church Miroslav Ivan Lyubachivsky and other priests, arrived in Lviv, Kamianets-Podilskyi, and Zhytomyr. In 1992 diplomatic relations between Ukraine and the Vatican were established. Two years later, the Apostolic Administration of Transcarpathia was established, and in 1998 and 2002 the Dioceses of Lutsk, Mukachevo, Odessa-Simferopol, and Kharkiv-Zaporizhia were created.<sup>4</sup> In the same years, Marian Jaworski (1998) and Lubomyr Husar (2001) became Catholic Cardinals.

In July 2001, Pope John Paul II visited Ukraine. His meetings with the President of Ukraine, L. Kuchma, and liturgical celebrations in both the Latin and Byzantine rites, testified to the focus on establishing political and friendly relations with Ukraine as well as between the Greek Catholic and Roman Catholic Churches, and also with other denominations.<sup>5</sup> For example, during the visit, the Pope met with members of the All-Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations (the UCCRO). This inter-confessional institution was formed in December 1996 and includes more than 90% of religious organizations in Ukraine. As of today, it consists of the Bishop of the Kyiv-Zhytomyr Roman Catholic Church in Ukraine, Vitaly Kryvitsky, and the Head of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, Supreme Archbishop of Kyiv-Halytsky Svyatoslav (Shevchuk).<sup>6</sup>

Today, the structure of the Catholic Church in Ukraine is determined by dioceses and the Conference of Roman Catholic Bishops of Ukraine, whose activities are regulated by canons 447-459 of the Code of Canon Law. Yes, there are only 53 dioceses operating in Ukraine, including the Ukrainian Catholic Church of the Byzantine tradition.<sup>7</sup> The Latin tradition includes the Archdiocese of Lviv and six other dioceses: Kyiv-Zhytomyr, Kamianets-Podilsky, Odesa-Simferopol, Lutsk, Mukachevo, and Kharkiv-Zaporizhzhya.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> "Відродження Католицької Церкви в Україні." *Львівська Архидієцезія Римсько-Католицької Церкви в Україні*. [http://rkc.lviv.ua/news\\_view-Vidrodzhennya\\_Katoluckoi\\_Cerkvu\\_v\\_Ukraini-ua](http://rkc.lviv.ua/news_view-Vidrodzhennya_Katoluckoi_Cerkvu_v_Ukraini-ua) Accessed 21/04/2020.

<sup>5</sup> "Візит Папи Івана Павла II." *Інститут Релігії та Суспільства* <http://irs.ucu.edu.ua/proekty/vizyt-papy-ivana-pavla-ii/> Accessed 21/04/2020.

<sup>6</sup> "Інформація про ВРЦіРО." *Всеукраїнська Рада Церков і релігійних організацій. Офіційне інтернет представництво*. <http://vrciro.org.ua/ua/council/info> Accessed 21/04/2020.

<sup>7</sup> "All Dioceses. Ukraine." *The Hierarchy of the Catholic Church*. <http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/country/dua.html> Accessed 21/04/2020.

<sup>8</sup> "Структура Римсько-Католицької Церкви в Україні." *Львівська Архидієцезія Римсько-Католицької Церкви в Україні*. [http://rkc.lviv.ua/category\\_1.php?cat\\_1=5&lang=1](http://rkc.lviv.ua/category_1.php?cat_1=5&lang=1) Accessed 21/04/2020.

One of the most ancient dioceses, which were restored on January 16, 1991, is the former Diocese of Halicz (Galyc), Kyiv-Zhytomyr, and Kamianets-Podilsky, which was established in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Today, the Archdiocese of Lviv includes 12 deans, 271 parishes, serving 4 bishops, 95 diocesan and 45 monastic priests, who care for 154,000 faithful.<sup>9</sup> In 2016, the share of those who professed Catholicism in Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, Ternopil, and Chernivtsi regions was 3.2% of the population.<sup>10</sup> The Diocese of Kyiv-Zhytomyr has 11 deans, 149 parishes in Kyiv, Zhytomyr, Cherkasy, and Chernihiv regions. Catholicism is professed there by about 2.7% of the population, who are organized in 166 parishes by 62 dioceses, 103 monastic priests and 2 bishops. Kamianets-Podilskyi Diocese has 8 deans, 222 parishes in Vinnytsia and Khmelnytskyi oblasts, with 3 bishops, 108 diocesan and 70 monastic priests serving. These territories have the largest proportion of Catholic believers, who in 2016 numbered about 250,000, and made up 8.6% of the population.<sup>11</sup>

The dioceses of Odessa-Simferopol, Kharkiv-Zaporizhzhya, and Lutsk, which were formed and restored in 1996 and 2002, are characterized by smaller numbers. Their numbers are 18,000 people (0.2%), 47,000 people (0.3%) and 25,000 people (1.1%), respectively. Their hierarchical structure is well developed. In particular, these dioceses include 16 deans, who are served by 8 bishops and 136 priests.<sup>12</sup> Another diocese that emerged in the 14<sup>th</sup> century (1346) was restored in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, originally as the Transcarpathian Apostolic Administration, and Diocese of Mukachevo (2002). It consists of 7 deans, 95 parishes, with 36 priests and one bishop serving over 54,000 Catholics. Such a renewal of religious life has led Ukraine to become the absolute leader in the number of the youngest bishops of the Catholic Church.<sup>13</sup> Today it has already six hierarchs of Greek Catholics and three Roman Catholics aged 38 to 43 years.

In the near thirty years of existence of independent Ukraine, the awareness of the ordinary citizens about Catholicism has changed significantly. If in the year of 2000 the proportion of those who had heard nothing about Roman Catholicism was 5.2%, then their

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<sup>9</sup> “Історія Львівської Архидієцезії.” *Львівська Архидієцезія Римсько-Католицької Церкви в Україні*. [http://www.rkc.lviv.ua/category\\_1.php?cat\\_1=6&lang=1](http://www.rkc.lviv.ua/category_1.php?cat_1=6&lang=1) Accessed 21/04/2020.

<sup>10</sup> “All Dioceses. Ukraine.” *The Hierarchy of the Catholic Church*. <http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/country/dua.html> Accessed 21/04/2020.

<sup>11</sup> “Diocesis Camenecensis Latinorum. Diocese of Kamyanets-Podilskyi.” *The Hierarchy of the Catholic Church* <http://catholic-hierarchy.org/diocese/dkamy.html> Accessed 21/04/2020

<sup>12</sup> “All Dioceses. Ukraine.” *The Hierarchy of the Catholic Church*. <http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/country/dua.html> Accessed 21/04/2020.

<sup>13</sup> “Україна—абсолютний лідер серед наймолодших єпископів Католицької Церкви.” *РІСУ*. [https://risu.org.ua/ua/index/all\\_news/catholics/catholic\\_world/78501/](https://risu.org.ua/ua/index/all_news/catholics/catholic_world/78501/) Accessed 21/04/2020.

share has dropped significantly to 0.7%.<sup>14</sup> The dynamics of the increase in the percentage of people who practice Roman Catholicism in different regions of Ukraine is indicative. Although in the western Ukraine the percentage of people has not changed (1.3%), in other regions it has increased from 0 to 0.8% in the South and East, and from 0.8% to 2.6% in the Center of the country.<sup>15</sup> Similar constancy in the West region of the country (Volyn, Transcarpathian, Ivano-Frankivsk, Lviv, Rivne, Ternopil, Chernivtsi regions) is associated with the high level of religiosity of the inhabitants of this region, for whom religious identity is extremely important and therefore the level of religious mobility is low.

There is an improvement in the perception of Roman Catholicism by the Ukrainians, which is expressed in a mostly positive attitude towards it. As of 2019, 39% have a positive attitude toward Catholicism while 42% are indifferent.<sup>16</sup> The level of trust in the Pope is still high today: 34% trust him versus 16% of those who do not trust him;<sup>17</sup> according to other polls it is 42% versus 15%.<sup>18</sup> It should be noted that the level of support for the Pontiff is quite different in the West and East of the country. In the West 62.8% of citizens trust him, while in the East only 29.3% of citizens do.<sup>19</sup>

### **Problems for the Roman Catholic Church in Ukraine**

The most significant difficulties in the development of the Roman Catholic Church in Ukraine relate to its relations with the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, which is an integral part of it. Thus the renewal of the representation of Catholic Church in the territory of independent Ukraine was carried out in accordance with the “Eastern policy” (*Ostpolitik*) of the Vatican. This ecumenical strategy, introduced in the 1990s, aimed at reconciling the Christian churches of the Eastern and Western traditions. For this purpose, in 1993, the Balamand Theological Institute hosted the 7<sup>th</sup> session of the Mixed International Commission on Theological Dialogue between the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches. It resulted in the creation of the “Balamandan Declaration,” a document that contained important provisions for their rapprochement, although as an interim working document, it was not signed by the Church representatives. It should be noted that this declaration contained paradoxes and

<sup>14</sup> “Держава і Церква в Україні – 2019: Підсумки року і перспективи розвитку відносин.” *Razumkov centre*. [http://razumkov.org.ua/uploads/article/2019\\_Religiya.pdf](http://razumkov.org.ua/uploads/article/2019_Religiya.pdf) Accessed 21/04/2020.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> “Ставлення українців до створення Єдиної Помісної церкви.” *Соціологічна група «Рейтинг»*. <http://ratinggroup.ua/research/ukraine/6541e0064f0288673205fbd06795b94c.html> Accessed 21/04/2020.

<sup>18</sup> “Держава і церква в Україні – 2019: Підсумки року і перспективи розвитку відносин.” *Razumkov centre*. [http://razumkov.org.ua/uploads/article/2019\\_Religiya.pdf](http://razumkov.org.ua/uploads/article/2019_Religiya.pdf) Accessed 21/04/2020.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

contradictions. On the one hand, the Catholic and Orthodox churches were recognized as “sister churches.” On the other, proselytism and Uniatism were touted as unacceptable methods of bringing Christian churches together, which had a direct bearing on Greek Catholicism.<sup>20</sup>

The same motif was expressed in the Apostolic Message “*Orientale lumen*” (“Light of the East,” May 2, 1995). It stated that “the full image of the Universal Church cannot be expressed by one tradition or community that is opposed to another.” The thought was expressed by John Paul II in the Apostolic Epistle “*Euntes in Mundum*” (“Go Into the World” on the 1000th Anniversary of Baptism of Kievan Rus): “The two forms of the great tradition of the Church, Western and Eastern, complement each other as two “lungs” of a single organism.”<sup>21</sup> Therefore, “the Christian Church must breathe two lungs, Western and Eastern.”<sup>22</sup>

This position was certainly not satisfactory for Ukraine. Although the territory of Ukraine resembles the two lungs – the Orthodox East and the Catholic West-- the statement did not explain the status of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church in this community. At present, this reconciliation policy has not led to satisfactory results directly for Ukraine. First of all, this was because resolving the Ukrainian issue was not the purpose of the Vatican's “Eastern Policy.” Ukraine was not considered a subject of this process. The true purpose of this policy was Moscow, which embodied Eastern Orthodoxy. In this way, the UGCC continued to be a problematic issue for both the Catholic and Orthodox Churches.

In retrospect, the problem dates back to the middle of the last century, when there was tension between the Supreme Archbishop of the UGCC Metropolitan, J. Slipyj, and the governing structures of the Vatican over how to resolve the issue of his own patriarchate for the UCC.<sup>23</sup> Metropolitan Maxim Germaniuk, who headed the UGC Metropolitanate in Canada in 1956, saw J. Slipyj's position as “a great complication of the problem.”<sup>24</sup> The UGCC's desire for greater independence is still perceived as a threat to the consolidation of the Catholic world.

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<sup>20</sup> “Joint International Commission for the Theological Dialogue Between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church. Balamand School of Theology (Lebanon). June 17-24, 1993” *La Santa Sede*. [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/pontifical\\_councils/chrstuni/ch\\_orthodox\\_docs/rc\\_pc\\_chrstuni\\_doc\\_19930624\\_lebanon\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/ch_orthodox_docs/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_19930624_lebanon_en.html) Accessed 21/04/2020.

<sup>21</sup> Папа Иоанн Павел II. *Идите по Всему Муну*. (*Euntes in Mundum*). Апостольское послание в ознаменование 1000-летия Крещения Киевской Руси. <http://yakov.works/acts/20/voityla/19880125.html#five> Accessed 21/04/2020.

<sup>22</sup> See more: П. Яроцький, “Східна політика Ватикану: еклезіальні та екуменічні вияви в Україні.” *Українське релігієзнавство*. № 48. 2008, 159-182.

<sup>23</sup> The name of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church varies. In particular, at the beginning of the last century it was officially called the “Catholic Church of Ukrainian-Eastern Rite” in the Vatican, and in numerous unofficial documents it was called the “Greek Catholic Church.” Since 1991, this church has been officially registered in Ukraine under the name “Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church.”

<sup>24</sup> *Vatican II: Expériences canadiennes* / sous la direction de Michael Attridge, Catherine E. Clifford# Gilles. (d'Ottawa, 2011), 332.



This is not surprising, because “the Ukrainian Greek Catholics have long been expecting from the Apostolic Capital the canonical recognition and elevation of their Church to patriarchal dignity.” Instead, “the Vatican has repeatedly demonstrated condescending and humiliating attitudes towards the UGCC, as this church has become superfluous and not even necessary for ‘Eastern policy.’”<sup>25</sup> The meeting of Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and all Rus' with the Ecumenical Bishop of Pope Francis on February 12, 2016 in Havana demonstrated this. The “Havana Declaration” will go down in history as a “stab in the back” to the Ukrainian issue. It is known that this meeting was also hoped for by Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI. However, as the head of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church notes, His Beatitude Sviatoslav (Shevchuk) “always had a certain condition” and “this condition was the existence of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church. We have always been a stumbling block to ourselves.”<sup>26</sup> Thus, “the UGCC and its right to its own patriarchy became hostages to the Vatican's ‘Eastern policy’ in its relations with the Russian Federation and the Moscow Patriarchate and, accordingly, to the ‘litmus test’ of the Vatican's ecumenical aspirations at the vector level of Rome-Moscow.”<sup>27</sup>

One of the main reasons for this confrontation of interests was the fact that the UGCC identifies as the expression of a “pro-Ukrainian” position, both in history and today. Instead, “the ideologues of Eastern Vatican politics preferred to see it primarily as a province of the Roman Catholic Church without national but only ceremonial identification in the form of ‘Eastern rite’, ‘Byzantine rite.’”<sup>28</sup>

It is no accident that the restoration of Roman Catholicism in independent Ukraine was based, first and foremost, on the citizens who had and have Polish roots; that is to say, Ukrainian Roman Catholicism was genetically linked to the Polish nation. Because of this, the overwhelming number of church hierarchs and priests of this church are Poles and today the liturgies are held in both Polish and Ukrainian. Even in the face of the current uplift of patriotism, the formation of national consciousness of the Ukrainians, the Roman Catholic Church is trying to maintain the Polish authenticity. This is manifested in the absence of

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<sup>25</sup> П. Яроцький, “Апостольська Столиця у ставленні до УГКЦ і сучасної співпраці з Москвою.” *Релігійна безпека/небезпека України. Збірник наукових праць і матеріалів. За ред. проф. Анатолія КОЛОДНОГО.* (Київ, УАР, 2019), 157-164.

<sup>26</sup> “Глава УГКЦ: Російська церква використала Гаванську декларацію як елемент гібридної війни” *ZIK* [https://zik.ua/news/2018/04/06/glava\\_ugkts\\_rosiyska\\_tserkva\\_vykorystala\\_gavansku\\_deklaratsiyu\\_yak\\_element\\_1300709](https://zik.ua/news/2018/04/06/glava_ugkts_rosiyska_tserkva_vykorystala_gavansku_deklaratsiyu_yak_element_1300709) Accessed 21/04/2020.

<sup>27</sup> П. Яроцький, “Апостольська Столиця у ставленні до УГКЦ і сучасної співпраці з Москвою.” *Релігійна безпека/небезпека України. Збірник наукових праць і матеріалів. За ред. проф. Анатолія КОЛОДНОГО.* (Київ: УАР, 2019), 157-164.

<sup>28</sup> See more: П. Яроцький, “Східна політика Ватикану: еклезіальні та екуменічні вияви в Україні.” *Українське релігієзнавство. Бюлетень.* 2008, № 48, 159-182.

translation of church terms (*ksiqdz*, adoration, *diacesia*, homily, etc.), which are known to be rooted in the consciousness of the believer and invisibly form a sense of his or her belonging to a particular culture or ethnic group. This is no coincidence, since the language and rules of worship are rooted in the system of traditions.

Due to the expansion of the Roman Catholic Church in Ukraine, which is mediated by numerous societies, monastic orders, and publications, Polish revival in Ukraine is more likely than the formation of Ukrainian Catholicism itself. Even when it comes to worship of a patriotic character, they are dedicated to the history of Poland; for example, in the Ukrainian churches celebrations are held in commemoration of Poland's Independence Day.<sup>29</sup> This strategy, due to its distinct ethnicity, also has negative consequences for the RCC itself in Ukraine, which thereby limits its growth zones at the expense of other ethnic groups.

In addition to the aforementioned, there are other, more local problems to be solved. Among them are the emergence of charismatic-type communities that mimic Catholic communities, which, incidentally, is a problem not only for the RCC, but also for the UGCC. It includes the "Dognal Group" (otherwise also known as "the Pidhirtsi Fathers"), and the "Black Brotherhood," which operated in Ukraine, and according to some had the characteristic of a totalitarian sect.<sup>30</sup> Separate mention should be made of temporarily excommunicated Catholic communities such as the Lefebvrist (or Priestly Brotherhood of St. Pius X). They have become widespread in Ukraine thanks to Fr. Vasily Kovpak, who in 2000 founded the Brotherhood of the Holy Martyr Josaphat, the Seminary of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, the Lefebvre Convent of the Basilian Sisters of God's Mercy. Over time, the actions of the leaders of the Lefebvrist movement in Ukraine led to the declaration in 2004 by the Head of the UGCC, Lubomyr (Husar), that "the priest Vasyl Kovpak by his own will ceased to belong to the UGCC and the Catholic Church altogether" and "all priestly acts of priests Vasyl Kovpak and his followers are irrelevant to the UGCC and the entire Catholic Church."<sup>31</sup> Therefore, over time, the excommunication of the Ukrainian bishop-Lefebvrists took place.

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<sup>29</sup> П. Яроцький, "Римо-Католицизм в Україні: стан, тенденції розвитку." *Українські наукові записки*. 2008, № 2 (26), 396 – 401.

<sup>30</sup> "Звернення Синоду Єпископів Києво-Галицького Верховного Архієпископства УГКЦ та Конференції Римсько-Католицьких Єпископів України щодо небезпечних явищ у духовному житті України." *PICU* [https://risu.org.ua/ua/index/resources/church\\_doc/ecumen\\_doc/45118/](https://risu.org.ua/ua/index/resources/church_doc/ecumen_doc/45118/) Accessed 21/04/2020.

<sup>31</sup> "Лефевризм." *PICU*. <https://risu.org.ua/ua/index/resources/directory/~%D0%9B/45786/> Accessed 21/04/2020.

## Social Ministry and Integration of Roman Catholicism into Ukrainian Society

The Vatican's position on such landmark and tragic events in Ukraine as the Revolution of Dignity (late 2013-early 2014), the annexation of the Crimea by Russia, the war in the east of Ukraine has been quite moderate and was largely expressed in prayers for the Ukrainian people and calls for peace. As a result, among the Ukrainian expert community the idea emerged of “some degree of alienation of the RCC from the Ukrainian society.”<sup>32</sup> This is partly true. But in this respect, one must also take into account the specific means by which the Church can and has a right to influence acute crises in society. It should also be remembered that in December 2016, Pope Francis provided Ukraine with humanitarian assistance to the victims of the Donbas in the amount of EUR six million,<sup>33</sup> which is in no way an expression of indifference to the problems of the Ukrainian people.

Unlike the Vatican's rather moderate stance on the events of recent years, the Bishops of the RCC in Ukraine supported the Ukrainian people with prayer and active participation in the Maidan, ensuring the functioning of prayer tents. In particular, as early as December 2013, the Church openly condemned the actions of the authorities and stated that “the people have the right to courageously overcome fear, to stand against trials and persecution and to defend a just cause, and to restrict human rights, in particular the right to freedom of expression, is inadmissible and shameful.”<sup>34</sup> Among other things, the church of St. Alexander in Kyiv provided protection to the protesters. And since the beginning of hostilities in the East of the country, to this day the bishops of the RCC have been praying for the integrity of Ukraine.<sup>35</sup>

It is only natural that, in the context of Russia's ongoing “hybrid war” against Ukraine, the churches share their difficulties with the believers and the country, demonstrating examples of Christian ministry. Today, Roman Catholic priests also do volunteer work in the war areas. The experience of such cooperation was reflected in the bill “On Military Chaplaincy,” which takes into account the issues of equality of all denominations, tolerance of military chaplains toward representatives of other denominations and to each other, the work of interfaith advisory bodies on military chaplaincy, etc.<sup>36</sup> Bishop Stanislav Shyrokyuk took part in the formation of the document on the interaction between the state and religious organizations concerning

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<sup>32</sup> В. Єленський, “Майдан змінює Церкви.” *Майдан і Церква. Хроніка подій та експертна оцінка*. (Київ: Самміт-Книга, 2015), 83-84.

<sup>33</sup> “Різдвяний подарунок.” <https://tsn.ua> Accessed 21/04/2020.

<sup>34</sup> “Римо-католицькі єпископи рішуче засудили спроби розгону Майдану.” *Майдан і Церква. Хроніка подій та експертна оцінка*. (Київ: Самміт-Книга, 2015), 270-271.

<sup>35</sup> “Єпископи РКЦ України пообіцяли молитися за всіх, кого торкнулася біда.” *РІСУ*. [https://risu.org.ua/ua/index/all\\_news/state/national\\_religious\\_question/56284/](https://risu.org.ua/ua/index/all_news/state/national_religious_question/56284/) Accessed 21/04/2020/.

<sup>36</sup> “Проект Закону України Про військове капеланство.” *Ліга Закон*. [http://search.ligazakon.ua/l\\_doc2.nsf/link1/JH7WK00A.html](http://search.ligazakon.ua/l_doc2.nsf/link1/JH7WK00A.html) Accessed 21/04/2020/.

chaplaincy from the Conference of Roman Catholic Bishops of Ukraine. He is in charge of the RCC for military chaplaincy at the Ministry of Defense.<sup>37</sup>

For comparison, it should be noted that the greater activity in the protection of the temporal homeland is manifested by the UGCC, as evidenced by the “Appeal of the Synod of Bishops of the Kyiv-Halych Supreme Archdiocese to the priests of the UGCC on pastoral activity in the war.” This document speaks of “defending the homeland as the right and duty of every conscious and responsible citizen” and praises the chaplain's service – whether on the front line, “or in military hospitals,” which are examples of courage and pastoral sacrifice in the current difficult conditions.<sup>38</sup>

The Catholic Churches in Ukraine pay particular attention to overcoming social problems in the Ukrainian society. The ministry of the Roman Catholic Church in Ukraine is characterized by the continuation of the integral line of the Catholic Church after the Second Vatican Council, “the general expression of which is anthropocentric and humanistic orientation.”<sup>39</sup> Therefore, family issues are the focus of its attention. On the issue of artificial termination of pregnancy, the Catholic bishopric of Ukraine (Synod of the UGCC and the Conference of the Roman Catholic Church in Ukraine) supported the abortion ban in 2012.<sup>40</sup> In support of this request, Catholic monasteries in Vinnytsia, Lviv, Ternopil, Kyiv, and other cities, as well as in maternity hospitals and general hospitals opened “Windows of Life” for infants abandoned by their parents.<sup>41</sup> Reproductive health education is underway. Social centers for single mothers are starting to be formed. In particular, the RCC Religious Mission in Ukraine “Caritas-Spes” has already opened a third house within the framework of the “Hope” project.<sup>42</sup> A rehabilitation center for children from problem families has been opened.<sup>43</sup> Other social problems are not ignored. Thus, in Zaporozhia at the Catholic monastery, “Men's

<sup>37</sup> “Єпископ Широкоградюк: ‘Усі наші капелани – волонтери’.” *Львівська Архідієцезія Римсько-Католицької Церкви в Україні*. [http://www.rkc.lviv.ua/news\\_view-YEpuskor\\_SHurokoradyuk\\_\\_Usi\\_nashi\\_kapelanu\\_\\_\\_volonteru\\_-1](http://www.rkc.lviv.ua/news_view-YEpuskor_SHurokoradyuk__Usi_nashi_kapelanu___volonteru_-1) Accessed 21/04/2020/.

<sup>38</sup> “Звернення до священників про душпастирство в умовах війни.” *Інформаційний ресурс Української Греко-Католицької Церкви*. [http://news.ugcc.ua/documents/zvernennya\\_do\\_svyashchenik%D1%96v\\_pro\\_dushpastirstvo\\_v\\_umovah\\_v%D1%96yni\\_72892.html](http://news.ugcc.ua/documents/zvernennya_do_svyashchenik%D1%96v_pro_dushpastirstvo_v_umovah_v%D1%96yni_72892.html) Accessed 21/04/2020/.

<sup>39</sup> Т. В. Гаврилюк, *Людина в християнській антропології XX–XXI століття*. Монографія. (Київ: ТОВ НВП “Інтерсервіс”, 2013), 132.

<sup>40</sup> “Звернення католицького єпископату України про заборону абортів.” *PICU*. [https://risu.org.ua/ua/index/resources/church\\_doc/ecumen\\_doc/47278/](https://risu.org.ua/ua/index/resources/church_doc/ecumen_doc/47278/) Accessed 21/04/2020/.

<sup>41</sup> “Вінницьке ‘Вікно життя’ при монастирі Сестер-Каносіянок врятувало дитину.” *Релігія в Україні*. [https://www.religion.in.ua/news/ukrainian\\_news/14725-vinnicke-vikno-zhittya-pri-monastiri-sester-kanosiyanok-vryatuvalo-ditynu.html](https://www.religion.in.ua/news/ukrainian_news/14725-vinnicke-vikno-zhittya-pri-monastiri-sester-kanosiyanok-vryatuvalo-ditynu.html) Accessed 21/04/2020/.

<sup>42</sup> “На Харківщині відкрили соціальний центр для самотніх матерів.” *PICU*. [https://risu.org.ua/ua/index/all\\_news/community/charity/77544/](https://risu.org.ua/ua/index/all_news/community/charity/77544/) Accessed 21/04/2020/.

<sup>43</sup> “Як у містечку Фастів створили частинку Європи.” *PICU*. [https://risu.org.ua/ua/index/monitoring/kaleido\\_digest/63601/](https://risu.org.ua/ua/index/monitoring/kaleido_digest/63601/) Accessed 21/04/2020/.

House of St. Brother Albert” was created.<sup>44</sup> It is designed for 30 permanent places for the homeless. There are dining rooms for the needy, such as the “Good Bread” at the Roman Catholic Church of God the Most Merciful Father.

To coordinate such social services, the All-Ukrainian Public Forum “Participation of Active Citizens in Community Social Development” was held in November 2019. It was organized by the RCC Religious Mission to Ukraine “Caritas-Spes” to enhance volunteer social activity in communities.<sup>45</sup> The forum became a platform not only for sharing experiences and presenting public initiatives, but also for meeting partners such as community activists and donor organizations, etc. Catholic nongovernmental organizations operate in many areas of Ukraine. For example, in the Chernivtsi, Ivano-Frankivsk, Lviv, Rivne, Vinnytsia, Transcarpathian and Volyn regions, the “Kolping Case in Ukraine” operates.<sup>46</sup> The social projects of this organization have different directions: education of children and seniors (50+), medicine, rehabilitation, social kitchen, and assistance to internally displaced persons.

The Catholic Church's involvement in social life and service to its neighbor is evidenced by a statistical report on the RCC's network of religious organizations. As of January 1, 2019, there are 897 registered and 10 unregistered communities, 5 fraternities, 41 missions, 111 monasteries with 664 monks, 10 spiritual educational establishments with 378 students enrolled, 20 periodicals published. There are 707 Latin priests serving in Ukraine, 346 of whom are foreigners. It is worth noting that the results pertain exclusively to the Roman Catholic Church in Ukraine without taking into account the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, the Mukachevo Diocese of the Greek Catholic Church and the Armenian Catholic Church in Ukraine.<sup>47</sup> Among these communities in Ukraine, there are numerous movements and communities: the Living Rosary community, the Light-Life movement, including the Home Church, the Family of Families, ministers, scouts, the Kolping family, the Knights of Columbus, the Legion of Mary, the Catholic Action, the Neocatechumenal Road, Order of the Secular, Religious Mission “House of the Heart,” “Movement of the Nazarene Families,” Apostolate of the Good Death, Again in the Holy Spirit, Third Dominican Order, and others.

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<sup>44</sup> “Чоловічий будинок святого брата Альберта: місце, де у безхатченках бачать людину.” *PICU*. <https://risu.org.ua/ua/index/exclusive/kaleidoscope/64136/> Accessed 21/04/2020/.

<sup>45</sup> “Всеукраїнський Форум ‘Участь активних громадян у соціальному розвитку громад’ проводять у Києві римо-католики.” *PICU*. [https://risu.org.ua/ua/index/all\\_news/catholics/rcc\\_in\\_ukraine/77945/](https://risu.org.ua/ua/index/all_news/catholics/rcc_in_ukraine/77945/) Accessed 21/04/2020/.

<sup>46</sup> “Справа Кольпінга в Україні.” *Kolping*. <http://kolping.com.ua/> Accessed 21/04/2020/.

<sup>47</sup> “Дані Департаменту у справах релігій та національностей Міністерства культури України. Форма 1. Звіт про мережу церков і релігійних організацій в Україні станом на 01.01.2019 р.” *PICU*. [https://risu.org.ua/ua/index/resourses/statistics/ukr\\_2019/75410/](https://risu.org.ua/ua/index/resourses/statistics/ukr_2019/75410/) Accessed 21/04/2020/.

Among the factors that point to the Roman Catholic Church's entry into the Ukrainian context is the topic of the *Holodomor* (famine in Soviet Ukraine in the 1930s), which is devoted both to the relevant divine services and to numerous information notes in the press. The Pastoral Letter of the Conference of Roman Catholic Bishops of Ukraine to the Latin Latter-day Saints on the Anniversary of the Holodomor in Ukraine highlights the official position of the Church and, in particular, states that “to date, many states, including the Vatican, have recognized that famine in Ukraine was a crime against humanity.”<sup>48</sup>

In the future, the growth and influence of the Catholic Church in Ukraine will depend on its ability to adapt and respond to the “challenges” of modern society and the needs of the people. Currently, many structures of modern society are being destroyed and “sociality is not only evolving and being created, but also ruining, collapsing in its institutions.”<sup>49</sup> These processes, which are inevitable, make people increasingly alienated from each other, suffering from despair, loneliness, and hopelessness. The extent to which the Catholic Church will be able to become a “warm sociality,”<sup>50</sup> an island of love, of mutual assistance and brotherly/sisterly service for modern people, defines not only on the success of its earthly mission, but also the fate of people involved in it.

Most Catholic believers in Ukraine are moving through time together with the whole integrity of their Church, in close connection with the past, with tradition, with previous generations of their relatives, who were Catholics, and will continue to pass on the faith to their children. Such religiosity can be a part of everyday life, and nurturing the tradition is based on the special connection and affinity of religious and national imagination, which B. Anderson wrote about in his seminal book about nation and nationalism, *Imagined Communities*.<sup>51</sup> The main purpose for them is to answer the question of the meaning of life. However, such religiosity can also be the result of a mystical leap into the past, as has happened, for example, to families on the so called “Neocatechumenal Road.” Most neo-catechumenal families are large, patriarchal, open to the Will of God, and the traditions of their lives conform to the beliefs of the lives of the first Christians.

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<sup>48</sup> “Пастирський лист Конференції римсько-католицьких єпископів України до вірних латинського обряду з нагоди річниці Голодомору в Україні.” *Slavorum apostoli*, 2008, № 3-4, 21.

<sup>49</sup> М.В. Лукашенко, *Трансформації соціальності в контексті становлення інформаційного суспільства*. 2018 <https://www.filosof.com.ua/Avtoreferaty/Lukashenko%20Diss.pdf> Accessed 21/04/2020.

<sup>50</sup> Н. В. Ішук, *Сучасна православна теологія діалогу: філософсько-релігієзнавчий аналіз*. (Київ: НПУ ім. М. П. Драгоманова, 2019), 339.

<sup>51</sup> B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Revised Edition. VERSO. London- New York, 2006.

Catholics will not live the life of the Church for a long time only to satisfy his or her own social needs. Modern people, apart from the sharing traditional commons of the first (home) and second (work) places, also have spaces of the third place (Ray Oldenburg<sup>52</sup>). These are neutral territories, including virtual territories where people can meet their social needs for informal communication. Although religious communities are sometimes also ranked as such a third place, we can agree with this in part, because the system-forming here is the sacred component of this communication. One can come to church and find a common third place there, but he or she will remain there only when the values of the Catholic religion meet their existential demands.

## Conclusions

In summary, it should be noted that the activity of the Catholic Church in Ukraine has been restored during a period of general revival of religious life in the country. In particular, the Catholic Church's return and development coincide with the religious upheaval of the 1990s, when diplomatic relations were established between Ukraine and the Vatican. Since then, the Catholic Church has significantly increased the number of dioceses in Ukraine. The level of trust in the Church and its leader, Pope Francis, has grown, although it has not crossed the majority line in many areas of the country. One of the factors that hinders the accelerated growth of the Church is its ethnic orientation, its focus on preserving Polish identity and the lack of conditions for the formation of an authentic Ukrainian Catholicism.

The restoration of the Catholic Church in Ukraine was to a great extent a political act predicated on the Vatican's "Eastern policy" aimed at improving "Rome-Moscow" relations rather than directly mediated by Ukrainian factors. The result is a constant tension with the UGCC, which identifies itself as an expression of the "pro-Ukrainian" position both in history and today, while according to the ideology of "Eastern politics" it must be part of the Roman Catholic Church distinct only by its liturgical and ceremonial identification. Therefore, the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, while being an active subject of the country's socio-political life, also remains a local church that is more subordinate to the general policy of Catholic Church rather than a force capable of having a decisive voice within that church.

In the context of the Church's response to the tragic events of recent years in Ukraine, it should be noted that the official position of the Vatican is supportive, but rather restrained.

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<sup>52</sup> R. Oldenburg, *Celebration the Third Place: Inspiring Stories About the 'Great Good Places' at the Heart of Our Communities*, 2001.

Until now, no document has been published in which the Vatican condemns Russian aggression. Therefore it is reasonable to speak about the continued tendency to preserve the “Eastern policy” of the Vatican. A different position is demonstrated by the Ukrainian bishops of the Roman Catholic Church. They actively supported the Ukrainian people with their presence at the Maidan, where they openly condemned the actions of the authorities. They are currently caring for the woes of the Ukrainians in the face of the “hybrid war,” manifesting examples of Christian ministry. In general, the growth of the Catholic Church in Ukraine will depend on its ability to enter the Ukrainian context, its willingness to express the interests of the Ukrainian society, and to carry out a social service that does not obscure its overarching mission—to be the conduit of God's love, word and will on earth.



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