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RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS UNDER QUARANTINE: UKRAINIAN REALITIES

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Abstract

On March 11, 2020, quarantine restrictions were introduced in Ukraine due to the COVID-19 pandemic. They concerned all spheres of public life, including the religious sphere. Accordingly, all religious organizations in Ukraine had to adapt to the new rules and conditions of their liturgical practice. A dialogue at the state-church level took place immediately after the introduction of the quarantine. Some spokesmen for religious organizations (Greek Catholics, Protestants) called for a consolidation of efforts to support the population under conditions of the spread of the coronavirus disease.

The article analyzes the situation of religious organizations under the conditions of the quarantine measures in Ukraine on the basis of the official statements of the religious organizations of Ukraine, the All-Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations (AUCCRO), and the information in the mass media. The experience of their adaptation to new conditions is shown. In conclusion, an attempt is made to predict the consequences of the introduction of the quarantine restrictions in the religious organizations, and how these restrictions may affect the future transformation of religious practice.

Key words: coronavirus, COVID-19 pandemic, church, religious organizations, social distancing, online worship.

Introduction

Diseases, epidemics, and pandemics have been and remain a reality in human history. Their distribution depends on the socio-economic situation of individual societies and countries, the level of health care development, social values, and so on. As in the past, the state and the church occupy leading positions in ensuring peace and stability in society during epidemics and pandemics. These institutions are able to ensure order and control, and provide care to patients. In turn, epidemics and pandemics, as a rule, cause significant changes in the religious sphere of public life.

The history of the Christian Church has had mutually opposite models of attitude to epidemics: attempts to limit the concentration of believers in churches and intensify social service outside them, against the promotion of healing through conscientious observance of all the precepts of liturgical practice. Naturally, people become more religious during epidemics and pandemics because they feel less protected. They need not only medical, but also spiritual support, which should not go against the requirements of human health safety. However, even when circumstances so require, not all denominations are willing to make concessions for a variety of reasons. These include attachment to traditional (established, accepted) forms and practices of worship, taking into account the confessional context; dependence on external factors, administration, ritualization of faith, overemphasizing the importance of rituals,¹ perception of restrictions on religion as a “conspiracy of Masons,” etc.²

At the same time, most religious organizations act quite constructively, in particular by agreeing to limit the number of people present at worship services and by resorting to their online broadcasts. Today’s trend is the so-called “accelerated digitalization”—communication between churches and believers and amongst communities of believers themselves through online technology.³ After all, religious organizations in those countries where technology is available are forced to follow this path, and Ukraine is no exception.

¹ This implies giving too much importance to church rites, when the outward factor of faith is valued more than deep faith in God and living in accordance with his commandments.

² Ю. Варвнюк, “Християнство на карантині.” <https://vavrynyuk.blogspot.com/2020/03/blog-post.html> Accessed 27/07/2020.

³ В.В. Токман, “Релігійні організації в умовах пандемії Covid-19.” *Національний інститут стратегічних досліджень*. <https://niss.gov.ua/sites/default/files/2020-04/relegiyini-organizatsii-covid.pdf> Accessed 27/07/2020.

Attitude towards the Quarantine of the All-Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations

Measures to control the coronavirus infection in Ukraine were determined by the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 211 of March 11, 2020, “On Prevention of the Spread of Acute Respiratory Disease COVID-19 Caused by Coronavirus SARS-CoV2” in Ukraine. On March 13, 2020, the All-Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations (AUCCRO), which represents 90% of the religious organizations in Ukraine, developed and disseminated recommendations to churches and religious organizations on the organization of worship and current religious activities during the pandemic. During the quarantine period, it was proposed to limit the services that involve presence of people as much as possible and, if possible, to conduct them online. Recommendations were made to believers not to kiss icons, to adhere to a distance of at least 1.5 to 2 meters in sanctuaries, and to make antiseptics available there. It was also recommended that believers refrain from shaking hands, kissing, or hugging each other. The AUCCRO urged believers to pay special attention to their own health and to see doctors immediately if the first symptoms of respiratory diseases appear. If believers returned from a country where the coronavirus was detected, they were encouraged to isolate themselves during the incubation period for 14 days.⁴

On March 16, 2020, the AUCCRO published a “Call to the Ukrainian People to Prevent the Spread of the Coronavirus,” which asked to “avoid extremes: not to succumb to panic, but also not to ignore the danger.”⁵ This document stated that one should treat oneself and others with a sense of responsibility: show love, understanding, tolerance, and compassion to those who are struggling with the first outbreak of the disease. “Each of our churches or religious organizations takes and will take the quarantine measures, taking into account its peculiarities.”

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After amendments to the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine № 211 of April 2, which prohibited mass events, in particular by religious organizations, the situation on the spot became more complicated due to the different interpretations of this document by local authorities in the regions. Under such conditions, on April 8, 2020, the AUCCRO submitted to the Government of Ukraine its proposals to ensure freedom of religion during the quarantine. The proposals addressed the issue of filling houses of worship during religious rites (1 person

⁴ “Всеукраїнська Рада Церков провела нараду щодо карантину.” *ВРЦіРО. Офіційний сайт.* <https://vrciro.org.ua/ua/events/uccro-meeting-on-coronavirus-covid-19-quarantine> Accessed 27/07/2020.

⁵ “Заклик ВРЦіРО щодо профілактики поширення коронавірусу.” *ВРЦіРО. Офіційний сайт.* <https://vrciro.org.ua/ua/statements/627-uccro-statement-on-coronavirus-prevention> Accessed 27/07/2020.

⁶ *Ibid.*

per 5 square meters), as well as the possibility of free movement of priests, their use of public transport or their own cars.⁷

At the same time, programs were developed at the state level to celebrate major religious holidays at home (April 8, Pesach (Passover), April 12, 19–Easter) with the provision of broadcasting festive services and the consecration of Easter cakes in bakeries.⁸ Representatives of some religious organizations, however, including the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, considered these quarantine restrictions an encroachment on religious freedom, and violated them on the eve of Easter and at Easter

The statement of the Institute for Religious Freedom about the inadmissibility of inciting hostility in society in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic was a reaction to the media coverage of such violations. It read: “Recently, the media has been systematically spreading false information, primarily from the MOH (Ministry of Health) officials, about alleged mass violations of the Easter quarantine by churches and almost daily negative predictions about the expected outbreak of COVID-19 in this connection. Such statements are untrue and directly contradict the official data. After all, the National Police of Ukraine recorded a significant decrease in the number of believers in churches during the celebration of Easter: 130 thousand instead of 7 million compared to last year.”⁹

The AUCCRO, in turn, suggested that the government should ease the quarantine restrictions for the religious organizations. This was stated in its letter to the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine dated May 20, which read: “We are convinced that the effective activities of the churches and religious organizations in pastoral care and meeting the religious needs of the citizens are extremely important taking into consideration the life conditions that many of our compatriots have due to the COVID-19 pandemic.”¹⁰

Such steps were dictated by the aggravation of the situation in the religious environment and the confrontation with some influential media, in which the churches were called one of the environments where the coronavirus infection was most common. The priesthood tried to

⁷ “Рада Церков надала уряду свої пропозиції щодо забезпечення свободи віросповідання під час карантину.” ВРЦіРО. *Офіційний сайт*. <https://vrciro.org.ua/ua/news/2020-04-uccro-proposals-regarding-quarantine-restrictions> Accessed 27/07/2020.

⁸ “Держава готує проєкт ‘Великдень вдома.’” Президент України. *Офіційний сайт*. <https://www.president.gov.ua/news/derzhava-gotuye-proekt-velikden-vdoma-volodimir-zelenskij-60301> Accessed 27/07/2020.

⁹ “Заява ІРС про неприпустимість розпалювання ворожнечі в суспільстві у зв’язку з пандемією COVID-19.” <https://www.irs.in.ua/ua/2020-04-irf-statement-on-covid-19-quarantine> Accessed 27/07/2020.

¹⁰ “ВРЦіРО запропонувала уряду пом’якшити карантин для релігійних організацій.” ВРЦіРО. *Офіційний сайт*. <https://vrciro.org.ua/ua/statements/uccro-proposals-on-covid-19-quarantine-reduction-in-ukraine> Accessed 27/07/2020.

refute this opinion. For example, Bishop Eduard Kava of the Roman Catholic Church stated the following:

If we have a real threat of a pandemic, which I do not rule out, then why should there be 10 people in the church, regardless of the size of the church building, and in large supermarkets, shopping centers there are several hundred people ... Instead, in supermarkets people constantly go from one side to the other, pick up certain goods, often without using protective gloves... I do not want to compare churches to supermarkets, but only to show that being at the Liturgy can be much safer than being in a store, and at this time we are the subject to such restrictions. There is not a day that there is no information in the media about infected people in a church, but I have not yet seen any reports on the number of infections in megamarkets. This position of the state contributes to the creation of appropriate thinking and vision of the Church as a place of the spread of the virus.¹¹

It is worth noting that this was said by a representative of the Roman Catholic Church, which in the European Union had more significant quarantine restrictions than in Ukraine. Dissatisfaction with the quarantine was also expressed among Orthodox believers and Protestants.

After the introduction of an adaptive quarantine on May 20, the AUCCRO again appealed to the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine to take into account the needs of believers and ease restrictions for the religious organizations—to allow religious practice in the premises at the rate of 1 person per 5 square meters. It was stated that a “disproportionate approach” was applied to them (the difference in the areas of church buildings—small houses of worship or cathedrals—was not taken into account). This allegedly “causes misunderstanding of the Government’s actions by many believers—especially those religious communities that have been faithfully following the quarantine requirements for more than two months, waiting for the opportunity to attend worship in a religious building (a temple, a synagogue, a mosque, etc.).”¹²

Reaction of the Ukrainian Religious Organizations to the Quarantine Restrictions

In addition to the recommendations of the AUCCRO, the most influential religious organizations in Ukraine considered it necessary to appeal to their believers. Almost the first to do so was the Orthodox Church of Ukraine (OCU), which on March 12 provided recommendations on how to act during the pandemic. It was proposed to strengthen anti-

¹¹ “Церква VS Коронавірус.” Інтерв’ю з єпископом Едвардом Кавою. http://www.rkc.lviv.ua/news_view-Cerkva_VS_Koronavirus_Intervyu_z_єпископом_Edvardom_Kavoю-ua Accessed 27/07/2020.

¹² “ВРЦіРО обговорила ситуацію з богослужіннями під час адаптивного карантину.” *ВРЦіРО. Офіційний сайт*. <https://vrciro.org.ua/ua/events/2020-05-20-uccro-meeting-on-quarantine-reduction> Accessed 27/07/2020.

epidemic security measures in churches, and to use disinfectants, in particular to maintain the cleanliness of icons and other relics. Other recommendations included: for believers to worship or bow before shrines or sacred objects (crosses, icons, holy relics) could be a sufficient act of veneration, without kissing; to replace personal greetings and expressions of reverence that would require contact with the act of bowing among the church members, particularly between the priesthood and laity during the blessing; and to use disposable utensils during the Holy Communion or even to limit this rite to the *antidoron* consumption.¹³

Later, supplements to the OCU's "Practical Guidelines for the COVID-19 Coronavirus Pandemic" (March 24 and April 9) were published, stating that "it was necessary to suspend church services or change the order so that no more than a limited number of persons were accepted to participate."¹⁴ During the quarantine, the parishioners of the OCU were recommended to "organize a prayer corner in their homes with icons, the Holy Scriptures (Bible), a prayer lamp or a candle, a prayer book, and to pay more attention to a personal prayer in the morning, evening and during the day, instructions and sermons (including those posted on some web pages in the Internet)."¹⁵

Patriarch Filaret also reacted quickly to the introduction of the quarantine. The latter was a participant in the unification council, which took place on December 15, 2018, and led to the creation of the OCU. However, Filaret came into conflict with the leadership of this Church and decided to restore the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyiv Patriarchate (UOC-KP), which he then headed. Today it is a marginal religious structure, but Patriarch Filaret is a well-known figure and a certain part of Orthodox Ukrainians listens to his opinion. On March 12, he published an appeal to the UOC-KP believers regarding the spread of the coronavirus disease. It stated that "globalization of the world is the main cause of the scale of the epidemic."¹⁶ In the spirit of Orthodox conservatism, Filaret declared that "such troubles are a manifestation of God's wrath for the sins of the mankind. Every epidemic, including the

¹³ "Інформація у зв'язку з поширенням коронавірусу та захворювання COVID-19." *Українська православна церква. Офіційний сайт*. <https://www.pomisna.info/uk/vsi-novyny/informatsiya-u-zv-yazku-z-poshyrennyam-koronavirusu-ta-zahvoryuvannya-covid-19/> Accessed 27/07/2020.

¹⁴ "Практичні настанови у зв'язку з пандемією коронавірусної хвороби COVID-19 доповнені відповідно до рішень Священного Синоду від 24 березня 2020 року та 9 квітня 2020 року." *Українська православна церква. Офіційний сайт*. <https://www.pomisna.info/uk/document-post/praktychni-nastanovy-dlya-ueryskopatu-duhovenstva-i-virnyh-u-zv-yazku-z-ogoloshenoju-pandemiyeyu-osoblyvo-nebezpechnoyi-koronavirusnoyi-hvoroby-covid-19/> Accessed 27/07/2020.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ "Звернення Патріарха Київського і всієї Руси-України Філарета у зв'язку з поширенням коронавірусної епідемії у світі." *Українська православна церква Київського патріархату. Офіційний сайт*. <https://www.cerkva.info/news/zvernennya-patriarha-kyivskogo-i-vsiyeyi-rusy-ukrayiny-filareta-u-zv-yazku-z-poshyrennyam-koronavirusnoyi-epidemiyi-u-sviti/> Accessed 27/07/2020.

coronavirus epidemic, is God's call to repentance, especially for the Christians who have recently deviated sharply from the Christian values."¹⁷ At the same time, the appeal provided recommendations to the priesthood regarding their observance of sanitary and hygienic measures of a preventive nature, which do not contradict the Orthodox faith. However, Patriarch Filaret stated, "the performance of the sacraments of the Church, in particular the Holy Communion, Baptism and others, is not a means of spreading infection."¹⁸ That is, as we can see, this church figure believed that the pandemic was not a reason to deviate from the practices of the Orthodox Church.

A somewhat similar position was demonstrated by the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (UOC)¹⁹, which is a branch of the Russian Orthodox Church in Ukraine. Significant conservatism is inherent in the activities of this religious structure. On March 18, the Holy Synod of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church issued a petition in connection with the spread of COVID-19, which provided the following recommendations for religious practice: to use disposable utensils, to keep the churches clean, to ventilate and clean more frequently, to administer the Sacraments of Confession and Communion all day, and if the number of believers is more than 10 people, to worship in the churchyard in the open air.²⁰

However, despite this appeal, the UOC priesthood often ignored the quarantine restrictions, especially in large monasteries. The logic of the church's position was well clarified by theologian Dmytro Gorevoy, noting the following:

Violation of the quarantine during the coronavirus pandemic is not the first case when large monasteries of the UOC-MP (Moscow Patriarchate) demonstratively violate the law and in the same way evade responsibility. They believe that because of the fact that they are separated from the state, the state laws cannot be applied to them. In Ukraine, a man in a robe often positions himself "above the law," i.e. the church is separate and the legislation is separate too. And this is not only about the UOC-MP, it is also about other denominations, just the Moscow Patriarchate demonstrates it most clearly, vividly and arrogantly.²¹

Catholics also reacted to the introduction of the quarantine in Ukraine. On March 11, 2020, the information resource of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (UGCC) published a comment by its head Sviatoslav Shevchuk, which stated that "the Ukrainian Greek Catholic

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ In Ukraine, it is also commonly called the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate (UOC-MP).

²⁰ "Звернення Священного Синоду УПЦ у зв'язку з поширенням коронавірусу COVID-19." *Українська православна церква. Офіційний сайт*. <https://news.church.ua/2020/03/18/zvernennya-svyashhennogo-sinodu-upc-u-zvyazku-z-poshirennyam-koronavirusu-covid-19/> Accessed 27/07/2020.

²¹ Д. Горевый, "Чи можуть виселити з лавр України Московський патріархат за порушення карантину." <https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/30571414.html> Accessed 27/07/2020.

Church will comply with the orders of the state and local authorities and sanitary services. At the same time, Shevchuk asks all the citizens to take security measures responsibly, while maintaining absolute quietness. In addition, we encourage the elderly and parents with young children to stay at home, as they are at greatest risk.”²² On March 24, recommendations were published for the Greek Catholic clergy to conduct liturgical practices during the quarantine. These included: to create an opportunity for people to participate in live worship services through social networks; to honor the shroud during the quarantine with a bow to the ground, rather than a kiss; and during the Easter Week to consecrate the wine on April Sunday and to celebrate Easter in the open air only.²³

As for the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) in Ukraine, on March 17 it published an appeal to the bishops about the activities during the pandemic. In addition to the recommendations for social distancing and sanitation, the RCC proposed limiting participation of believers in worship services, instead using more widely all the channels of communication with them—radio, television, internet channels, and social networks.²⁴ During the quarantine period, the RCC paid special attention to work with families, encouraging the resumption of spiritual dialogue in families.²⁵

Immediately after the introduction of the quarantine, Protestant churches issued appropriate statements. The official information message of the All-Ukrainian Union of Evangelical Baptist Churches (AUUEBC) not only gave recommendations on the practice of worship during the pandemic, but also spoke about the peculiarities of the coronavirus disease. The AUUEBC held its pastors accountable for violating the quarantine norms: “We warn you

²² “Коронавірус: Коментар Блаженнішого Святослава, Глави УГКЦ.” *Інформаційний ресурс УГКЦ*. http://news.ugcc.ua/news/koronav%D1%96rus_komentar_blazhenn%D1%96shogo_svyatoslava_glavi_ugkts_88926.html Accessed 27/07/2020.

²³ “Лист Блаженнішого Святослава з рекомендаціями про те, як у час пандемії Covid-19 служити страсні й пасхальні богослужіння» (2020). Українська греко-католицька церква. Офіційний сайт http://ugcc.ua/documents/list_blazhenn%D1%96shogo_svyatoslava_z_rekomendats%D1%96yami_pro_te_yak_u_chas_pandem%D1%96i_covid19_sluzhiti_strasn%D1%96_u_pashaln%D1%96_bogosluzh%D1%96nnya_89092.html

²⁴ “Звернення єпископів Римсько-Католицької Церкви в Україні з приводу ситуації навколо епідемії коронавірусної інфекції.” *Римо-католицька церква в Україні. Офіційний сайт*. http://www.rkc.lviv.ua/news_view-Zvernennya_yepuskopiv_Rumsko_Katoluckoi_Cerkvu_v_Ukraini_z_privodu_sutiacii_navkolo_epidemii_koro_navirusnoi_infekcii-ua; “Рекомендації для пастирів у часі епідемії корона вірусу.” *Римо-католицька церква в Україні. Офіційний сайт*. http://www.rkc.lviv.ua/news_view-Rekomendacii_dlya_pasturiv_u_chasi_epidemii_koronavirusu-ua Accessed 27/07/2020.

²⁵ Єпископ Радослав Змітрович, отець Роман Лаба. “Лист комісії у справах сімей щодо епідемії коронавірусу та карантину.” *Римо-католицька церква в Україні. Офіційний сайт*. http://www.rkc.lviv.ua/news_view-Lust_komisii_u_spravax_simej_shhodo_epidemii_koronavirusu_ta_karantunu-ua Accessed 27/07/2020.

that in case of non-compliance with the quarantine conditions, the church ministers are personally responsible to the state, their church and the whole AUUEBC fraternity.”²⁶

On March 13, instructions were given to pastors of the Ukrainian Church of Christians of the Evangelical Faith. Having accepted all the government’s recommendations on social distancing and calling for online broadcasts of their own services, the head of the Church Mikhailo Panochko addressed the clergy with the following words: “Let us see the time of the quarantine as special time to rethink the fragility of life and faithfulness to God, to meditate on the Word of God, to build relationships with family, and to seek opportunities to help others. Let us prayerfully support those who suffer from even a simple SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome), because the public news may increase the level of fear and even panic.”²⁷

The leadership of the Seventh-day Adventist Church appealed to its believers to “remain calm in real life, as well as in social networks or messengers, to avoid unverified and overly emotional information.” It was noted hereby that “the authorities did not prohibit worship, but only limited mass events.” It was also recommended to hold them in small groups.²⁸

On March 3, Jehovah’s Witnesses posted information about the coronavirus disease on their official website even before the introduction of the quarantine in Ukraine. It was recommended to follow the instructions of the authorities concerning the pandemic control. It was also suggested that the activities of this religious organization be changed somewhat: “Taking into consideration the local circumstances, the elders can make sure that the heralds have access to a record of meetings that can be viewed at home. Heralds can preach using a telephone, writing a text message, an e-mail, or a letter.”²⁹

There were also some reactions from the non-Christian religious organizations to the introduction of the quarantine measures in Ukraine, in particular by Jews and Muslims. On March 20, the chief rabbi of Kyiv and Ukraine, Yaakov Dov Bleich, posted a message on his Facebook page urging the Jews to take seriously the situation concerning the coronavirus

²⁶ “Пам’ятка для церков щодо коронавірусу COVID-19”. *ВСЦЄХБ. Офіційний сайт.* <https://www.baptyst.com/pam-yatka-dlya-tserkov-shhodo-koronavirusu-covid-19/>; “Пасторам і відповідальним служителям щодо дотримання норм карантину.” *ВСЦЄХБ. Офіційний сайт.* <https://www.baptyst.com/pastoram-i-vidpovidalnym-sluzhytelyam-shhodo-dotrymannya-norm-karantynu/> Accessed 27/07/2020.

²⁷ “Інформація щодо ситуації з поширенням коронавірусу та рекомендації щодо організації церковного життя.” *УЦХВС. Офіційний сайт.* <http://www.chve.org.ua/koronavirus-cerkva/> Accessed 27/07/2020.

²⁸ “Звернення адміністрації Адвентистської церкви в Україні у зв’язку з карантином в Україні.” *Церква Адвентистів сьомого дня. Офіційний сайт.* <https://adventist.ua/news/ukraine/zvernennya-administraciyi-adventistskoji-cerkvi-v-ukrayini-u-zvyazku-z-karantinom-v-ukrayini/> Accessed 27/07/2020.

²⁹ “Важлива інформація про коронавірус.” *Свідки Єгови. Офіційний сайт.* <https://www.jw.org/uk> Accessed 27/07/2020.

pandemic. He suggested that during the period of social (physical) distancing we can become closer spiritually: “We can and must change our behavior during the general quarantine, until the danger of spreading the virus disappears.”³⁰

The Muslim organizations in Ukraine reacted to the quarantine restrictions with understanding. On March 12, the Religious Administration of Muslims of Ukraine “*Umma*” issued a *fatwa*, which provided recommendations for religious activities during the pandemic. Muslims were urged to avoid mass gatherings, especially during prayers, and to pray at home. Emphasis was placed on the observance of hygienic rules adopted by Muslims: “Purity in Islam is not just worship and good deeds, but more a duty, because the reality of prayer is determined by the purity of clothing, body and place. In addition, cleanliness in Islam is washing the parts of the body that are most dirty and exposed to germs, namely the hands and face, at least five times a day.”³¹ Muslim communities in Ukraine restricted their religious practices. In particular, they restricted visits to mosques for women, children and the elderly; obligatory prayers were allowed in groups of no more than 10 people with the required distance between those who pray; collective prayers for the holiday of *Eid al-Fitr* (*Ramadan Bayram*) were canceled.³²

During the quarantine, a number of religious organizations tried to provide distinct assistance to control the coronavirus to the best of their ability. They repeatedly purchased artificial respirating units for medical facilities,³³ donated their own premises for the needs of

³⁰ “Церкви оприлюднили рекомендації для віруючих під час карантину.” *Інститут релігійної свободи*. <https://irs.in.ua/ua/2020-03-churches-recommendations-on-coronavirus-prevention> Accessed 27/07/2020.

³¹ “Моліться у своїх домівках: фатва про карантин і потребу його дотримання.” *ДУМУ «Умма». Офіційний сайт*. <https://umma.in.ua/ua/node/2608> Accessed 27/07/2020.

³² “Розмір нісабу, сума закат аль-фітру та план б на випадок продовження карантину на рамадан та ід аль-фітр: постанови онлайн-засідання української ради з фатв і досліджень.” *ДУМУ «Умма». Офіційний сайт*. <https://umma.in.ua/ua/node/2647>; “Рішення ради улемів про відміну п’ятничних проповідей та джума-намазів на період карантину.” *Духовне управління мусульман Криму. Офіційний сайт*. <http://www.dumk.org/2020/03/17/tishennyu-radi-ulemiv-pro-vidminu-ryatnichnix-propovidej-ta-dzhuma-namaziv-na-period-karantinu/>; “Мусульмани Одеси вжили заходів в боротьбі з корона вірусів.” *ДУМУ. Офіційний сайт*. <https://islam.ua/ua/publikatsii/novosti/musulmane-odessa-prinyali-mery-v-borbe-s-koronavirusom/> Accessed 27/07/2020.

³³ “Блаженніший Митрополит Онуфрій передав Олександрівській лікарні апарат штучного дихання та засоби захисту для медиків.” *УПЦ. Офіційний сайт*. <https://news.church.ua/2020/03/30/blazhennishij-mitropolit-onufrij-peredav-oleksandrivskij-likarni-apat-shtuchnogo-dixannya-ta-zasobi-zaxistu-dlya-medikov/>; “У Чернівцях церква вдруге передала лікарні кисневий концентратор для допомоги хворим на COVID-19.” *УЦХВС. Офіційний сайт*. <http://www.chve.org.ua/chernivci-kysnevyy-koncentrator/>; “Тернопільщина за участі баптистів отримала 31 апарат штучної вентиляції легень.” *ВСЦЄХБ. Офіційний сайт*. <https://www.baptyst.com/ternopilshhyyna-za-uchasti-baptystiv-otrymala-31-apat-shtuchoyi-ventylyatsiyi-legen/> Accessed 27/07/2020.

doctors,³⁴ and organized fundraising for the needs of hospitals.³⁵ They introduced actions to support patients and doctors (“Give a Lift to a Doctor,”³⁶ “Social Taxi”), the elderly and needy,³⁷ distributed disposable masks, hand sanitizers, and brochures with recommendations for the prevention of the coronavirus. Food was provided to private citizens, IDPs (internally displaced persons), observers, and so on. Over two and a half months, more than 5,000 food kits were targeted in 14 *oblasts* (regions).³⁸ Caritas Ukraine has launched an online marathon “How to Effectively Use Self-isolation and not to Head for a Depression.”³⁹

In general, religious organizations in Ukraine in their appeals supported the government’s proposals on the sanitary and hygienic standards for worship during the quarantine. They restricted worship practices, although some churches expressed dissatisfaction and even violated the quarantine regulations. At the same time, a number of religious organizations were engaged in charitable activities aimed at helping medical personnel, the needy, and the people who were in isolation.

Conclusions

The religious organizations in Ukraine have gained new experience of adapting to life during the pandemic since March 2020. This experience unavoidably affected the traditional practice of worship and in general the approaches of the religious organizations to social service.

³⁴ “Тернопільська архикафедра УГКЦ віддала свої приміщення для допомоги медикам.” УГКЦ. Офіційний сайт.

http://ugcc.ua/news/ternop%D1%96lska_arhikatedra_ugkts_v%D1%96ddala_svoi_prim%D1%96shchennya_dlya_dopomogi_medikam_89051.html; “В Івано-Франківську УГКЦ віддає семінарію для медиків і запусає безкоштовні консультації в клініці Святого Луки.” УГКЦ. Офіційний сайт. http://ugcc.ua/news/v_%D0%86vanofrank%D1%96vsk%D1%96y_arh%D1%96ieparh%D1%96i_ugkts_rozporhav_robotu_arh%D1%96ieparh%D1%96alniy_koordinats%D1%96yniy_antikrizoviy_tsentr_89121.html Accessed 27/07/2020.

³⁵ “COVID-19: допоможи Церкві послужити потребуючим.” УГКЦ. Офіційний сайт. http://ugcc.ua/news/covid19_dopomozhi_tserkv%D1%96_posluzhiti_potrebuyuchim_89213.html Accessed 27/07/2020.

³⁶ “Підвези медика’ – християни віри евангельської на Рівненщині запустили флешмоб та закликають підвозити лікарів на роботу.” УЦХВС. Офіційний сайт. http://www.chve.org.ua/pidvezy-medyka_rivne/ Accessed 27/07/2020.

³⁷ “Закарпатська єпархія розпочала акцію допомоги літнім людям під час пандемії COVID-19.” ПЦУ. Офіційний сайт. <https://www.pomisna.info/uk/vsi-novyny/zakarpatska-eparhiya-rozpochala-aktsiyu-dopomogy-litnim-lyudyam-pid-chas-pandemiyi-covid-19/>

³⁸ В.В. Токман, “Соціально значуща діяльність релігійних організацій України під час карантину.” Національний інститут стратегічних досліджень. <https://niss.gov.ua/sites/default/files/2020-07/relegiyni-organizatsii-covid.pdf> Accessed 27/07/2020.

³⁹ Ibid.

The need for social distancing and the implementation of worship practices online have initiated a discussion that may affect the future of religious practice of the religious organizations in Ukraine. Thus, the most controversial moment for the Orthodox and Catholic churches was the administration of the sacraments of Confession and Communion during the pandemic. The process of modernization of ritual practice for some churches is painful, due to the rigidity of the ritual tradition, the low quality of education of the clergy, the priority of rites over values. Online worship poses new challenges to the traditional religions, of which the sacred space of the house of worship is an integral part of the religious practice. Also in the conditions of the pandemic there appeared a question of realization of sacraments and rituals, their filling with new sense; the need for effective communication of the religious organizations with each other and with the government agencies for the public good.

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