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CHAPLAINCY FOR THE PRISONERS AND THE PENITENTIARY SYSTEM OF UKRAINE (1991-2021 YEARS)

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Abstract

This article examines the quality of work of religious organizations in places of deprivation of liberty, as well as their interaction with the penitentiary service of Ukraine. It was revealed that the chaplaincy ministry occupies an important place in the Christian churches of Ukraine. In the early 1990s, ministry in Ukrainian prisons was allowed, but most of the churches were at the stage of survival, so they were not able to carry out active work in prisons. At the legislative level, prisoners have ensured freedom of religion, and the penitentiary service was obliged to provide access to representatives of each of the churches of Ukraine. In fact, in most cases, priests of the Orthodox Church have access to prisons. In 2012, the optimization of the legal framework of cooperation between state bodies and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate was devoted to a round table whose participants were the deputies and members of the All-Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations. The main requirements for prison chaplains are considered, following which chaplains must be prepared for irregular schedules and all kinds of unexpected difficult situations. Protestant service to convicts is carried out to create correctional institutions and local communities appropriate for the rehabilitation of convicts. The evangelical ministry of Protestant chaplains is especially distinguished for the prevention of suicides since clergymen help convicts in overcoming depression and hopelessness. It has been proven that prisoners who agree to undergo a rehabilitation program with chaplains are less likely to return to their previous lifestyle. The rehabilitation course takes place after release when the

chaplain helps the person to socialize. Chaplains also pay attention to spiritual and educational work among the staff of correctional colonies. According to statistical data, 90% of convicts who have completed a rehabilitation course do not return to the colony. Thus, the service of prison chaplains can be perceived as one of the levers of state security, which contributes to the proper moral and psychological level of society and the complete rehabilitation of convicts.

Keywords: religion, prison, chaplaincy, Christianity, the penitentiary system of Ukraine, Orthodox Church, Roman Catholic Church, Protestant churches, rehabilitation.

Introduction

The level of quality of work with socially unstable strata of the population and ministry to prisoners by religious organizations is one of the indicators of the country's democracy. Chaplaincy is the primary method for carrying out such ministry. During the period of Ukraine's independence, the activity of Christian churches in correctional institutions of various types becomes more stable and systemic. There has been an improvement in the cooperation of the churches with the leadership of prison institutions. In the legal plane, these relationships are regulated by the Law of Ukraine, "On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations" of April 23, 1991. Article 21 of this law stipulates that at the request of arrested citizens or the initiative of religious organizations, it is allowed to hold services and various religious rites. In turn, the administration of penitentiary institutions is obliged to take all measures to ensure the spiritual needs of prisoners. The Law of Ukraine of June 30, 1990, "On Pre-trial Detention" regulated the activities of Christian churches in pre-trial detention centers. It was allowed to conduct religious rituals and supply spiritual literature, provided that there were no violations of the established order in places of pre-trial detention. This opened up a huge field of activity for various churches to work with prisoners and their social rehabilitation.

The goal is to outline the areas of work of Christian chaplains among prisoners and present the activities of the penitentiary system of Ukraine from 1991-2021 in the context of work with Christian confessions.

Brief History of Ministry to Prisoners.

Visiting prisoners for missionary purposes received state status at the beginning of the 19th century in the Russian Empire. In 1816, Emperor Alexander I initiated the emergence of the imperial philanthropic union, which consisted of clergy and laity. The main goal of the union was to provide material and spiritual assistance to prisoners. In 1819, a publication titled, "Rules for

the Prison Care Union” was printed, prompting many people to minister to the convicts. For this, it was envisaged to provide the necessary number of spiritual books, in particular, the Holy Scriptures. Chapels were set up in prisons to meet the spiritual needs of the convicts. This Union was led by high church officials, metropolitans, and archbishops. At the prisons, elementary-level schools were created, where prisoners received basic academic knowledge and got acquainted with the basics of the Christian faith. Additionally, there were prison libraries at churches, especially those located on the territory of prisons.¹

In 1842, the rules for conducting interviews with prisoners were published. These rules emphasized the fact that when communicating with prisoners, emphasis should be placed on the principles of Christian love and simplicity, without the manifestation of superiority and humiliation. In 1869, a correctional labor project described the rules for the religious education of convicts. In addition to regularly attending the Liturgy and reading the Gospel and the Apostles, the prisoners also received in-depth knowledge about the essence of the worship of the Orthodox Church.²

The curriculum of the prison school included the following subjects: “The Law of God,” during which the main prayers were studied and their content was explained, as were the Articles of Faith and the Decalogue commandments. Study of the Brief Catechism, Study of the Main Events of the Old and New Testaments, Study of the Major Events of Church History, and Explaining the Cycle of Passages from the Gospel, which were read alternately every Sunday throughout the year. In order to serve the prisoners well, each prison had its priest.³ In 1845, the first International Prison Congress was held in Frankfurt am Main, Germany. It was attended by participants from some European countries, in particular from the USA and Russia. A delegation of Orthodox clergy and penitentiaries arrived from the Russian Empire. Subsequently, over the next decades, prison conventions were held in European cities, in particular in 1895 in St. Petersburg.

At these events, they repeatedly pointed out the need for the moral and spiritual transformation of prisoners. Religion was seen as a driving force that could change the lifestyle of

¹ І. В. Пахомов, Взаємодія персоналу пенітенціарних установ з Церквою у реалізації душпастирської (духовно-просвітницької) роботи: навчальний посібник, ed. М. О. Супрун (Білоцерківське училище ППІ ДКВС України, 2016), 9. [I.V. Pakhomov, Interaction of staff of penitentiary institutions with the Church in the implementation of pastoral (spiritual and educational) work: a textbook].

² Ibid., 10.

³ Ibid., 11.

criminals. In particular, it was believed that regular Bible reading would give prisoners the desire and strength to fight their natural and acquired negative inclinations.⁴

In the days of the Soviet Union, a decree from 1929 "On Religious Associations" made it possible for seriously ill convicts, or those who were dying, to perform religious rituals in special isolated prison premises. However, this was only a declarative statement, the implementation of which was ignored throughout the existence of the USSR until 1990. In 1989, the "Recommendations on the relationship of correctional labor institutions with religious organizations and ministers of worship" were approved. And the next year, the Law "On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations" was adopted, which made it easier for religious institutions to carry out their ministry for prisoners.⁵

Presentation of the Main Research Materials

Since 1996, visits to penal colonies by priests of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church-Moscow Patriarchate (hereafter UOC-MP) have become systematic. For example, Archpriest Pyotr Kazachkov, a cleric of the Kharkiv diocese of the UOC-MP, became the first priest who began visiting those arrested in the Kharkiv at the pre-trial penitentiary facility (SIZO). A significant event on October 29-30, 1996, was the meeting of the clergy of the UOC-MP with the employees of the penal system. The meeting took place on the initiative of Metropolitan Nikodim of Kharkiv and Bogodukhov. During 1996-1999, Bishop of Lviv and Drohobych Augustin (Markevich) was the coordinator of the pastoral care of the staff of the State Penitentiary Service of Ukraine⁶ for prisoners. He was also appointed to the role of the UOC liaison officer with the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine and the Ministry of Internal Affairs. In 2009, by the decision of the Holy Synod of the UOC-MP, the Synodal Department for Pastoral Care of the Penitentiary System was created.⁷

On August 11, 1999, the State Department of Ukraine for the Execution of Sentences (hereinafter referred to as SDUES) issued an instruction, "On measures to interact with religious

⁴ Ibid., 13.

⁵ Ibid., 15.

⁶ The State Penitentiary Service of Ukraine manages the bodies and institutions of execution of punishments in Ukraine, and the territorial administrative bodies in regions and cities of state importance are subordinated to it. The activities of the State Penitentiary Service of Ukraine are directed and coordinated by the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine.

⁷ І. В. Пахомов, *Взаємодія персоналу пенітенціарних установ з Церквою у реалізації душпастирської (духовно-просвітницької) роботи: навчальний посібник*, ed. М. О. Супрун (Білоцерківське училище ППІ ДКВС України, 2016), 23-24. [I.V. Pakhomov, *Interaction of staff of penitentiary institutions with the Church in the implementation of pastoral (spiritual and educational) work: a textbook*].

organizations on their participation in the spiritual education of persons held in penal institutions.” This instruction regulated the procedure for cooperation between the department and the UOC-MP. This document relegated that the cooperation of these institutions is carried out with the aim of moral correction of prisoners based on mutual respect and understanding. Three months later, on November 29, 1999, an agreement was signed between SDUES and the UOC-MP according to which the clergy of the UOC-MP were allowed to freely visit correctional institutions; the heads of these institutions would provide special premises for the performance of religious rituals and prayers; institutions would assist in the creation of libraries of spiritual literature, audio, and video materials; seminars would be oorganized by the clergy of the UOC-MP for employees of correctional institutions; and faciliation of classes on the subject “Religious Studies” would be offered in an educational institution from SDUES.⁸

On February 26, 2002, an interfaith Christian mission, “Spiritual and charitable care in prisons” was created, which included representatives of 12 denominations. This union is part of the International Prison Ministry Association.⁹ The order of the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine dated December 29, 2014, regulates the right of convicts to freedom of religion. At the same time, for prisoners who have received a life sentence, the practice of religious rituals is allowed only within the cell or on the territory of the prison, which has the maximum level of security.¹⁰ On May 16, 2016, the Minister of Justice approved the, “Spiritual Revival” program. The program aims to awaken the consciousness of and repentance for the wrongful acts of prisoners. Among the various activities approved by the program, one can note the development of the creative abilities of convicts and the prevention of moral and psychological degradation, which manifests itself in persons deprived of their liberty.

On the occasion of the 1020th anniversary of the baptism of Kievan Rus, on June 17-18, 2008, a pilgrimage took place in the village of Zarvanitsa, Ternopil region, in which representatives of various Christian confessions took part. At this event, a meeting of a special board of SDUES with members of the Ukrainian Interfaith Christian Mission, “Spiritual and Charitable Care in Prisons” took place. In particular, a conference was held entitled, “Pilgrimage as a Deep Knowledge of the Penitentiary Idea.”

⁸ Ibid., 25-26.

⁹ Ibid., 27.

¹⁰ Ibid., 28.

The exchange of experience of spiritual work in prisons is carried out with colleagues of penitentiary institutions from European countries. One of these meetings took place on September 9-10, 2008, in the city of Lublin, Poland. This event was attended by Archpriest Viktor Yatserko, Deputy Chairman of the Synodal Department of the UOC for interaction with the Armed Forces and other military formations. He communicated with the Polish Orthodox clergy, who deal with convicts.¹¹

On July 13-16, 2009 at the National University “Ostrog Academy,” a seminar was held for prison clergy-chaplains to improve their qualifications. In the west of Ukraine, nearly 60 representatives from various denominations participated. Lectures were given on the following disciplines: penitentiary psychology, penitentiary pedagogy, and penal law. On May 12-14, 2011, the first international conference of Orthodox prison clergy was held. The event took place in Kyiv and became the first Orthodox conference on the international level, which was attended by Orthodox clergy from the countries of Eastern and Central Europe, as well as Belgium and Great Britain. It was then that a round table entitled, “International experience and modern methods of reforming convicts” was held, in which the Committee of the *Verkhovna Rada* of Ukraine on the issues of legislative support of law enforcement took part. The next Orthodox conference, also of an international format, was held in Kyiv on April 26-27, 2012. The event was titled “Modern practice of pastoral work in prisons in the context of cooperation with public and charitable organizations.” However, only the Orthodox clergy of Ukraine and Russia were participants in the conference.

The round table, “Participation of religious organizations in the formation of legislative initiatives in the sphere of penitentiary policy” was devoted to the optimization of the legal basis for interaction between state bodies and the UOC-MP. The event took place on May 29, 2012, at the premises of the *Verkhovna Rada* of Ukraine. The participants were MPs and other officials, lawyers, members of the All-Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations, clergy responsible for church ministry in prisons.¹²

¹¹ Ibid., 29.

¹² І. В. Пахомов, *Взаємодія персоналу пенітенціарних установ з Церквою у реалізації душпастирської (духовно-просвітницької) роботи: навчальний посібник*, ed. М. О. Супрун (Білоцерківське училище ППД ДКВС України, 2016), 30. [I.V. Pakhomov, *Interaction of staff of penitentiary institutions with the Church in the implementation of pastoral (spiritual and educational) work: a textbook*].

Since 2011, the publication of the Orthodox periodical *Prayer for the Convicted* and the publication of moral and spiritual articles in periodicals of the State Penitentiary Service of Ukraine began.¹³ Law of Ukraine No. 419-VIII of May 14, 2015, ensured the legal status of prison chaplains. This bill appeared as a result of the cooperation of the All-Ukrainian Council of Churches with state structures. In this law, in article 128-1, entitled “Organization of pastoral care of convicts,” the concept of “pastoral care of convicts” is legally defined, and it is proposed to create an advisory body from representatives of religious organizations, as well as to provide for special training of prison chaplains.¹⁴ To improve their qualifications, on November 11-13, 2015, 25 priests of the UOC-MP were trained. The training program included topics from legal, psychological, pedagogical, and professional competence.¹⁵

Programs aimed at increasing the level of religious knowledge among prisoners are also worth noting. In places where sentences are served, Sunday schools for convicts began to function. In the context of teaching, Orthodox chaplains conduct spiritual and educational activities for those who wish to join the Orthodox Church, for those who are already in the church, but want to learn more about Orthodoxy, and for those who wish to receive an answer to pressing questions of concern.¹⁶

Requirements for Prison Chaplains

Prison chaplains, like military chaplains and chaplains from other realms, must have the appropriate qualifications and fulfill their assigned duties. First of all, the duty of a prison chaplain is the ability to communicate with people who have a crippled fate, and as a result, a complex character. These people may also have different religious views, or be generally atheists. Even when the religious views of the chaplain and the interlocutor differ, the clergyman should be flexible and have wisdom in highlighting his position. The chaplain should be able to provide the prisoner with spiritual support, encouragement, and inspiration. In addition, he must be able to build deep, trusting relationships with people, so that the inmate can learn to build their relationships with God, despite the difficult circumstances in their lives.

¹³ Ibid., 36.

¹⁴ Ibid., 39.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid., 40.

A chaplain needs to maintain confidentiality and trust among his charges. The personal worries and experiences of the interlocutor in no case should be made public. A chaplain who has lost trust loses moral authority in the eyes of the sentenced, as well as among the chaplains of other religious denominations, as prisoners will look at other chaplains through the prism of a bitter experience with a cleric who has not justified trust.

The chaplain must understand that he will have an irregular work schedule and, if necessary, must be ready to serve his charges at any time of the day. For the personal safety and security of his family, the chaplain has the right not to disclose his data. The chaplain has the right to privacy and rests to save himself from spiritual and emotional exhaustion. It is good when a chaplain has close people who pray for him and his ministry to prisoners.¹⁷

Protestant confessions also belong to the aforementioned interfaith mission “Spiritual and charitable care in prisons.” So, for example, in 2017, the mission was led by Rustam Fatullaev, head of the department of social service of the Ukrainian Church of Christians of Evangelical Faith. This mission interacts with all the penitentiary institutions of Ukraine, of which there are 148 units. As of 2017, 460 people have already completed specialized training and received chaplaincy certificates from the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine.

Protestant service to convicts is carried out to create local communities among convicts in correctional institutions, including their regular visits. Concerts of spiritual music have also been organized for both convicts and employees of institutions. Protestant chaplain service towards preventing suicide is especially important. The ministry of prison clergy helps convicts in overcoming depression and depriving them of the desire to commit suicide.

Those prisoners who agree to undergo a rehabilitation program with chaplains are less likely to return to their previous criminal lifestyle. A rehabilitation course takes place after being released from prison. The chaplain helps guide a person to an independent life in society. Currently, negotiations are underway between the Christian rehabilitation center and the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine to replace the place of serving sentences with a rehabilitation program in one of the centers of this association.

¹⁷ “Вимоги до капеланів,” Перший Український Батальйон Військових Капеланів, December 5, 2014, <https://chaplain.net.ua/vymogy-do-kapelaniv/>. ["Requirements for chaplains." First Ukrainian Battalion of Military Chaplains].

The Prison Chaplaincy ministry pays attention to spiritual and educational work among the staff of correctional colonies. To improve the efficiency of prison staff, it is not enough just to increase wages and improve working conditions. Supporting the spiritual component of the personality is also needed to preserve internal moral qualities, moral fortitude, and humanity in the difficult social environment of correctional institutions.

According to statistics, among those who have served their sentence, only one in five does not return to the correctional institution. However, those convicts who subsequently underwent a rehabilitation course in 90% do not return to the prison. Thus, the service of prison chaplains can be perceived as one of the levers of state security, which contributes to the proper moral and psychological level of society.¹⁸

Andrey Osipov's Initiative

Andrey Osipov is a lawyer by profession and a deputy of the city council of the city of Lutsk. In 2013, he launched an initiative to ensure that convicts have the right to freedom of conscience and religion. He believes that the Law of Ukraine on Freedom of Religion does not apply to imprisoned Muslims, Buddhists, Jews, Protestants, and representatives of other faiths. Osipov argues that in practice, the administration of correctional institutions offers prisoners only the help of Orthodox priests and does not search for representatives of the confession to which this or that prisoner belongs. Osipov developed a draft appeal by the Lutsk City Council to the *Verkhovna Rada* and the Parliamentary Commissioner for Human Rights to ensure the above-mentioned rights of convicts. Some changes are proposed to the existing laws, namely:

- 1) Posting information about freedom of religion in correctional institutions.
- 2) Collecting information on the location of religious communities by the penitentiary service and establishing contact with them.
- 3) Introduction of an official and transparent procedure for inviting clergymen of various confessions to correctional institutions.
- 4) If the need arises, provide chaplains with quick access to detainees for worship, religious rituals, and confidential meetings.

¹⁸ Віталій Виноградов, "Українське євангельське капеланство," Асоціація ПОКЛИК, August 18, 2017, <https://poklik.org/ukrayinske-vevangeliske-kapelanstvo/>. [Vinogradov, Vitaly. "Ukrainian Evangelical Chaplaincy." CALL Association].

5) Provide an opportunity for the arrested person to meet with the clergyman before interrogation.

6) Creation of the possibility of verification, control, and responsibility in the implementation of the rights of convicts to freedom of conscience and religion.

Violations may be as follows: refusal of the administration of the institution to call, if necessary, a clergyman of the corresponding religion, a ban on searching for information about the location of the centers of religious organizations, of which convicts are members.

Responses to the Osipov Proposals

From the point of view of the administration of prisons, there is no great need to change anything, since the number of convicted non-Christian movements is very small. It is also noted that there is an opportunity to call the clergy of various Protestant denominations. Therefore, the administration emphasizes the absence of violations of the rights to freedom of religion in correctional facilities.

The position of representatives of religious confessions is different. Several churches gave their assessment of the positions of Andrei Osipov and the administration of correctional institutions. The Orthodox denominations of the UOC-MP and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church-Kyiv Patriarchate have come out in favor of maintaining the status quo since they believe that the mechanism of cooperation with correctional institutions and access to services for convicts in them is quite well established. However, other Christian denominations and religious organizations, in turn, are in favor of strengthening interaction with penitentiary institutions. Thus, the Roman Catholic Church, as a worldwide denomination, has a specially designated institution of chaplaincy. For their part, they expressed a desire to improve cooperation with the penitentiary service. Religious communities of progressive Judaism, for their part, noted that they do not provide spiritual support to convicted Jews, and are more focused on charity for imprisoned brothers. Some Protestant churches have expressed a desire to strengthen pastoral work among the condemned. The initiatives of Andrei Osipov did not receive universal approval; however, they

became one of the impetuses for the development of interaction between the churches and correctional institutions.¹⁹

Chaplaincy Ministry of the Word of Life Church during the Quarantine

The Union of Churches of the Word of Life²⁰ conducted chaplaincy services in correctional colonies during the pandemic. In particular, this concerned the provision of personal hygiene products, face masks, material and financial support to convicts. This aid affected the prisons of three regions of Ukraine, namely Poltava, Khmelnytsky, and Vinnytsia. At the request of the Ministry of Justice and the Probation Service of Ukraine, in 2020, the chaplains of this denomination, together with chaplains of other confessions, took up the issue of returning those who had served their time to their permanent places of residence. The process of transporting the released was accompanied by the preaching of the Good News.²¹

Chaplains of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church

The UGCC is concerned about the spiritual condition of the prisoners. This is confirmed by the construction of churches near the correctional colonies. In 2021, a church building was consecrated in the Derzhevsk male correctional colony No. 110, located near the city of Stryi, Lviv region. In June 2010, in the city of Truskavets, prison chaplains of the UGCC took part in the seminar, "Post-penitentiary care." The participants of the seminar were introduced to the activities of the Greek Catholic Church for prisoners at the site of social rehabilitation of the Drohobych correctional colony No. 40, the Nazareth rehabilitation center, and the Vozvrashchenie missionary house. During the seminar, attention was focused on the urgency of the issue of the socialization of persons released from prison. This problem is far from being solved. The UGCC acknowledged that the leading role in the decision was taken by the Protestant confessions, which founded more than 200 rehabilitation centers for former convicts. It is noted that rehabilitation in these centers,

¹⁹ "Тюрма і молитва: навіщо ув'язненим 'свій' священик," *Волинь-Post*, June 25, 2013, <http://www.volynpost.com/news/16460-tyurma-i-molytva-navischo-uviaznenym-svij-sviaschenyk>. ["Prison and Prayer: Why Prisoners Have 'Their' Priest." *Volyn-Post*].

²⁰ "Word of Life" is a religious community founded in 1983 and belonging to the "Faith Movement" group. It is also an international association of local Pentecostal communities. In Ukraine and Russia, the Word of Life churches are united into the Association of Churches of Christians of Evangelical Faith "Church of Faith."

²¹ "Служіння капеланів під час карантину," *Слово життя*, accessed July 15, 2021, <https://www.wolukr.org/sluzhinnya-kapelaniv-pid-chas-karantinu/>. ["Chaplain's service during quarantine." The word of life].

founded by Protestants, is systematic and divided into several successive stages. The Greek Catholic Missionary House "Return" has its charter and accepts 5 people released from prison for rehabilitation. Before a person is accepted to the Return Center, pastoral preparatory work takes place.²²

In the first decades of independent Ukraine, when the UGCC came out of the underground, restoring its liturgical activities and infrastructure, it could not be proud of its experience in the rehabilitation of convicts. But the priests were able to give advice: "Go to the Protestants. They have an infrastructure that will completely satisfy you; we do not have that." However, since 2010, the Center for Social Adaptation after Liberation has been operating in the UGCC, where various programs are being worked out. While it is difficult to call this activity full-fledged, there is however already movement in this direction, and the Greek Catholic chaplains are aware of the challenges they face. The work of a prison chaplain is distributed through interaction with workers of social, educational, and psychological services. Chaplains have the opportunity to conduct conversations with convicts in special rooms. The prisoner can express a desire to meet with the priest in a written statement in his hand, while the psychologist is visiting the cells. When meeting with a prisoner, the chaplain must, first of all, be able to listen to him, because even this gives the exhausted and worried soul of a person consolation, which can also become a way of performing the sacrament of confession. The chaplain's prayer with the incarcerated is important and can take place not only individually but also with a group of prisoners. At such meetings, various technical means and multimedia are often used to better communicate the topics discussed and to clarify issues discussed.²³

On May 11, 2011, Konstantin Panteley, assistant of the Patriarchal Curia for the Penitentiary Service of the UGCC, visited the arrested women in the Kyiv SIZO. The concern stems from the fact that there are pregnant women among those arrested. The Mercy Service at the Church of St. Nicholas at the Askold's Grave distributed medical clothing and hospital linen for

²² "Відродження душ: діяльність тюремних капеланів," Департамент військового капеланства Патріаршої курії УГКЦ, November 23, 2011, <https://www.kapelanstvo.ugcc.ua/vidrozhennya-dush-diyalnist-tyuremnyh/>. ["The Revival of Souls: The Activities of Prison Chaplains." Department of Military Chaplaincy of the Patriarchal Curia of the UGCC].

²³ Костянтин Пантелей, "В'язень у стократ гарячіший каянник, аніж будь-хто з нас," Оранта, July 10, 2015, https://oranta.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2815:2015-07-10-10-01-02&catid=37:spilnota-cat&Itemid=0000000049. [Constantine Panteley. "A prisoner is a hundred times hotter penitent than any of us." Oranta].

penitentiary institutions. Medical units of seven women's correctional colonies received assistance.²⁴

On September 26-27, 2011, the third All-Ukrainian pilgrimage of employees of the State Penitentiary Service of Ukraine took place to the Holy Dormition Univskaya Lavra, which belongs to the UGCC in the Lviv region. About 150 representatives of administrations from six regions prayed at a special place where the Univa Icon of the Mother of God is located. The pilgrimage route began in the city of Peremyshlyany. Those who walked were the family members of the employees and the prison chaplains. After the corresponding prayers in Uniev, in honor of the 20th anniversary of Ukraine's independence, creative contests were held. The pilgrims were addressed with a speech by Gregory Dragus, the chief chaplain of the Roman Catholic Church in Ukraine, who presented each employee of the penitentiary institutions with the Icon of the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ.²⁵

The View of a Prison Chaplain of the UGCC on the Ukrainian Judicial System

In 2011, Konstantin Penteli, an assistant of the Patriarchal Curia of the UGCC on pastoral matters in the penitentiary system of Ukraine, commented on this topic. He believes that in Ukraine the penitentiary service is, “a repressive apparatus for revenge, so that a person completely loses his dignity, and does not change for the better.” The basic principle of the Ukrainian legal procedure is not correction but revenge for the crime. In practice, no one is interested in the correction of the convicted person. The reason for this is the imperfection of the domestic judicial system, in particular the overcrowded pre-trial detention centers. He noted that at that time there were more than 40,000 people in Ukrainian pre-trial detention centers, while in 2004 there were 32,000 arrested there. According to the chaplain, “prolonged detention is the main way of testifying against oneself,” which is unacceptable. The method of torture, which is used today, even during the investigation can drag on for years, awaiting a verdict. Then the person is given an opportunity that if he signs the necessary papers and confesses to the crime, the torment will end. Chaplain Constantin Penteli also noted overcrowding in prisons, which deprives prisoners of

²⁴ “Підтримати духовні сили ув'язнених жінок прийшов священник УГКЦ,” CREDO, May 12, 2011, <https://credo.pro/2011/05/44929>. [A priest of the UGCC came to support the spiritual strength of the imprisoned women].

²⁵ “Державна пенітенціарна служба України здійснила паломництво до Унівської лаври,” CREDO, September 29, 2011, <https://credo.pro/2011/09/51617>. [The State Penitentiary Service of Ukraine made a pilgrimage to the Univ Lavra].

meeting their necessary needs. In a pre-trial detention center, even a physically and emotionally healthy person deteriorates over time. The contributing factors are cramped premises, and instead of the prescribed two-hour walk, the arrested spend only 40 minutes in the fresh air, or they are denied a walk all together. There is also a lack of funding for the maintenance of convicts. So, for example, although tranquilizers or other corresponding potent drugs are used to calm the mentally ill, in fact, convicts often do not receive them. The same situation exists concerning infectious patients. Prison staff often have only a limited supply of medication and saline.²⁶

Roman Catholic Church Ministry for Prisoners

On June 2-8, 2009, a group of the International Catholic Commission of Prison Pastoral Care of the European Region on legal issues worked in Kyiv. The working group aimed to improve the interaction of Catholic lawyers, chaplains, and volunteers from European countries for the guardianship of convicts and the fulfillment of the vocation of the Church. The emphasis was made that the Church must respond to challenges, in particular, to problems of correctional facilities for juvenile offenders, the growing number of citizens of other countries in prisons, and problems of social adaptation of convicts after release.

Within the framework of the visit of the Working Group, on June 6, 2009, the International Conference, “The Legal Dimension of Prison Ministry” was held, where the state of legislation in European countries to improve humane principles in the penitentiary sphere was considered. The Ukrainian edition of the book *Human Rights of Prisoners* was also presented.²⁷

Prison Poetry

In 2010, the State Department for the Implementation of Sentences in All Institutions of Ukraine, on the initiative of the Interfaith Mission “Spiritual and Charitable Care in Prison,” invited prisoners to take part in a poetry competition. The competition itself was held in the city of Krasnystav, Poland. The results of the competition were declared on September 10, 2010. Convicts from the penal colonies of the Vinnytsia and Lviv regions became the winners of the competition. The competition was attended by the Chairman of the Association of Chaplains of

²⁶ “В’язничний капелан про систему судочинства,” CREDO, October 21, 2011, <https://credo.pro/2011/10/52690>. [Prison chaplain about the judicial system.]

²⁷ “В’язнична поезія,” CREDO, October 5, 2010, <https://credo.pro/2010/10/34382>. [Prison poetry.]

Ukraine, Grigory Draus, and members of the leadership of the Synodal Department for Cooperation with the Penitentiary Service of Ukraine from the UOC-MP. Ukrainian chaplains had the opportunity to visit prisons in Poland and were surprised by the high level of work of their Polish colleagues.

Conclusions

Thus, over the years of independence, the level of interaction of different churches with the penitentiary service of Ukraine has significantly improved. Chaplaincy ministry in prisons is an effective method of reducing relapse after release of the prisoners as well as moral and social rehabilitation. Today, the conditions of detention and treatment of prisoners in many correctional colonies in Ukraine leave much to be desired. This leads to an increase in the incidence of suicides and relapses. In some prisons, inmates are mistreated by staff, and corruption is high due to low salaries and an unstable economy. The chaplains' service is also aimed at raising the spiritual level and morality of the staff of the colonies. The socialization of prisoners after release is the most important stage that determines their future, but there are very few institutions that deal with these issues. The best system of institutions for post-penitentiary rehabilitation is that of Protestant churches. Priests of the UOC perform rituals and help directly in prisons, while the UGCC is actively developing its chaplaincy service, adopting foreign experience. Many scientific conferences and special programs for the education and training of chaplains are held annually, which contribute to the improvement of this type of ministry and ensure the rights of prisoners to freedom of religion.

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