Eparchy of Saskatoon

The Vibrant Parish

A Place to Encounter the living Christ
~ Families Evangelizing Families ~
Sobor 2014
May 3 & October 8-9
Remarks

Pope Francis, in his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, states the following:

27. *I dream of a “missionary option”, that is, a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the Church’s customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channeled for the evangelization of today’s world rather than for her self-preservation. The renewal of structures demanded by pastoral conversion can only be understood in this light: as part of an effort to make them more mission-oriented, to make ordinary pastoral activity on every level more inclusive and open, to inspire in pastoral workers a constant desire to go forth and in this way to elicit a positive response from all those whom Jesus summons to friendship with himself. As John Paul II once said to the Bishops of Oceania: “All renewal in the Church must have mission as its goal if it is not to fall prey to a kind of ecclesial introversion”.*[25]

28. *The parish is not an outdated institution; precisely because it possesses great flexibility, it can assume quite different contours depending on the openness and missionary creativity of the pastor and the community. While certainly not the only institution which evangelizes, if the parish proves capable of self-renewal and constant adaptivity, it continues to be “the Church living in the midst of the homes of her sons and daughters”. [26] This presumes that it really is in contact with the homes and the lives of its people, and does not become a useless structure out of touch with people or a self-absorbed group made up of a chosen few. The parish is the presence of the Church in a given territory, an environment for hearing God’s word, for growth in the Christian life, for dialogue, proclamation, charitable outreach, worship and celebration. [27] In all its activities the parish encourages and trains its members to be evangelizers. [28] It is a community of communities, a sanctuary where the thirsty come to drink in the midst of their journey, and a centre of constant missionary outreach. We must admit, though, that the call to review and renew our parishes has not yet sufficed to bring them nearer to people, to make them environments of living communion and participation, and to make them completely mission-oriented.*

Among so many insightful and inspired messages that the Holy Father, Pope Francis has imparted to the world, he asks and exhorts us to understand who we are as missionary disciples, belonging to families that are called to evangelize. It strikes me that our hope in nurturing vibrant parishes is based on how deeply we understand this. I wish to offer you the reflections of the faithful of the Eparchy of Saskatoon on this theme as it is expressed in the context of our Patriarch Sviatoslav Shevchuk’s pastoral letter of 2011, *The Vibrant Parish – a place to encounter the living Christ*. May we, in our parishes and families, open our hearts to the Heavenly King, Comforter and Spirit of Truth.

+Bryan J. Bayda, C.Ss.R.
Eparchy of Saskatoon

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The words from the Prophet Joel reach us today reminding us of God’s promise,

“Afterward I will pour out my spirit upon all mankind. Your sons and daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions; even upon the servants and the handmaids, in those days, I will pour out my spirit.” Joel 3:1-2

Thus, we share our personal encounters with the Living Christ in our parishes and with those we likewise encounter elsewhere, confident in the words Christ spoke to his disciples just before he ascended into heaven,

“…You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses . . .” Acts 1:8
SOBOR 2014
Eparchy of Saskatoon
Vibrant Parishes – a place to encounter the living Christ
“Families Evangelizing Families”

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PASTORAL LETTER
OF HIS BEATITUDE SVIATOSLAV
TO THE CLERGY, RELIGIOUS AND ALL THE FAITHFUL
OF THE UKRAINIAN GREEK-CATHOLIC CHURCH

“The Vibrant Parish – a place to encounter the living Christ”

Dearly Beloved in Christ!

Introduction

Our Lord Jesus Christ before his ascension into heaven instructed his disciples, saying: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Mat 28:18-29). This commission of Christ to proclaim the Good News was given not only to the first disciples, the apostles, but it is directed to the Church in all times, even to the end of the ages. The Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church, in fulfilling this commission of our Divine Savior, speaking through the Bishops of its Holy Synod five years ago, defined “Holiness of a united people of God” as the goal of her ministry. Holiness is God’s gift, and the vocation of every Christian. “For this is the will of God, your sanctification,” St. Paul reminds us in the letter to the Thessalonians (1 Th 4:2-3).

The parish is the place where Christian holiness most often germinates, grows, and matures. For this reason the Synod of Bishops of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church in 2011, in its concern for the spiritual renewal of our entire Church, focused its particular attention on the parish, that foundational portion of the People of God, which strives for holiness under the guidance of its bishop as father and teacher of the faith. The program, which the Holy Synod approved, is called, “The Vibrant Parish – a place to encounter the living Christ.” The goal of this pastoral program is to help all the faithful of our Church to learn “to live in order to please God” (1 Th 4:1), and thus to grow in holiness and unity in Christ Jesus.

In this Pastoral Letter, I would like to reflect on the key components of a vibrant parish.

The Word of God

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom,” St. Paul teaches us in the Epistle to the Colossians (Col 3:16). Through the Word of God we come to know Christ, we encounter Him, and enter into a living relationship with Him. “Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ,” said St. Jerome. In our parishes we want to follow the example of the first Christians so that the Word of God might become the foundation of our ecclesial, parochial, family, social, and personal life. I strongly urge pastors to diligently prepare their homilies based on the proclaimed Word of God in such a way that this Word might become “living and active” in the life of our parishioners, capable of nourishing them, giving them answers to real issues of the day, and inspiring them to service.

The Word of God should bear visible fruit in our everyday lives because only those who keep this Word, that is, obey it, will be called blessed in the Lord (see Lk 11:28). In our parishes there should not be a single family which does not own a Bible. I encourage all our faithful to read the Sacred Scriptures on a daily basis; this is done ideally through participation in parish bible-study groups or through prayerful reading at home. The newly published Catechism of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church, “Christ our Pascha,” is another essential volume which should become a handbook of faith for all the members of our Church – children, youth, and adults. The Catechism, according to Metropolitan Andrey (Sheptytsky), is the foundation of Christian life.

On this occasion I wish to emphasize that all the members of our Church have a personal responsibility
throughout their whole lives to acquire an ever deeper knowledge of the truth of the Holy Faith, while the clergy must not neglect their responsibility of teaching the faith to their parishioners, not only through preaching, but also through catechetical instruction. When we speak of catechesis, we understand this to be a continuous process of entering into the mystery of the Church, to be applied not only to children who are preparing to receive the Holy Mysteries (Sacraments). Permanent and continuous formation for various age groups – children, youth, adults, and the elderly – is an essential component of the vibrant parish. Finally, I would like to emphasize that just as it is with the Bible, so too the Catechism of our Church should be a handbook for each member of our community as it is a most valuable aid for a proper understanding and reading of the Word of God.

**Holy Mysteries (Sacraments) and Prayer**

The Word of God is the foundation of Christian life, while the Holy Eucharist is its source and at the same time its culmination. Gathered at the Divine Liturgy, the parish community unites with its invisible head, Christ, and with all the saints and angels, thus enacting a mystical union between heaven and earth, between time and eternity. The Divine Liturgy, which a duly appointed priest celebrates in unity with and on behalf of his bishop, is also a time of building up the Church, the body of Christ, which has our Lord as its Head. There is no moment more precious in our earthly life than the Divine Liturgy. That is why Sunday, the holy Day of our Lord, should be honored by every Christian, and participation in the Divine Liturgy should be considered not as an obligation imposed by the Church, which requires our obedience, but it should be received as a gift from our Lord, who longs to encounter us, in order to fill us with His grace and love. “We cannot live without Sunday!” was the motto of the early Christians of the first centuries, and they preferred a martyr’s death to agreeing under pressure from the pagans to work on Sunday. This motto we Christians of the 21st century must make our own, and we should persistently guard the holiness and inviolability of the Lord’s Day.

Members of a vibrant parish also actively participate in the Holy Mysteries (Sacraments). Regularly, if possible even daily, they gather for the services in praise of our Heavenly Father. They frequently go to Confession and receive Holy Communion. In a vibrant parish church organizations combine their activities with common prayer, finding in it their strength and inspiration. No less important is our private prayer – personal and family prayer – which extends and continues our liturgical prayer in the Church. Our parishes, and in them our families, must again become a school of prayer for all of our faithful.

**Serving One’s Neighbour**

Another important element, which expresses the inner nature of the Church and reveals the vibrancy of a parish is *diakonia*, which means serving in love or performing “charitable activity.” This service to our neighbor flows from our rootedness in Christ. Active love of neighbor is the vocation and task of each Christian without exception. It is only faith, acting in love, which leads us to salvation (see Gal. 5:6). Faith without works is dead (see James 2:26). “As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me” (Mt. 25:40), – says the Lord Jesus.

Let us look around us – in this world there is so much tragedy and poverty, so much loneliness and sorrow, pain and suffering! All the challenging circumstances of our life on earth – these are for us an invitation to active love, which is an expression of living faith. The Lord wants to open our eyes to the suffering world so that we might learn to truly love and to express God’s love to our neighbor – by our attention to them, by our sincere sympathy, support, by our words of encouragement and good cheer, but mainly, through acts of mercy. It is only then that we can consider ourselves vibrant Christians and our parishes can become places where care is given to the orphan, protection for the widow, help for the poor, and where the suffering of the sick is shared. Thus, we will reveal to the world the maternal face of the Church and will become the living sign of the presence of God among humankind, according to the words of St. Augustine: “If you see charity, you see the Trinity.”

**Leadership**

The parish is a community of faithful who, under the leadership of the bishop and their pastors, fulfill their
calling to unity with God the Father through our Lord Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit. The Lord Jesus constantly acts in our communities through the Holy Spirit sending down His gifts for the development and growth of His Body. The Apostle Paul thus explains: “And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,” (Eph 4:11-13). The leadership of the parish community is exercised under the leadership of the bishop as head and father. Each parish should be an organized community in which, under the care of their pastor and in cooperation with him, members serve one another according to the gifts which they received from the Lord.

Therefore, church leadership is not the fulfillment of a particular administrative office, but first of all service to God and neighbor. In practice this means that for a parish to be vibrant, it must have active parish and pastoral councils. In addition, a parish must have well-formed and mature co-workers who assist the priest in leading catechetical schools, church brotherhoods, charitable works, youth organizations and prayer groups. One of the most important responsibilities of leadership in the parish community is discerning God’s will and searching for the best ways of implementing it in the life of the parish.

**Fostering and Serving Unity**

The Acts of the Apostles convey a sense of profound unity which existed among the members of the first community of Christ’s disciples: “The community of believers was of one heart and mind, and no one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they had everything in common”. (Acts 4:32). This spiritual state of being of the first Christian community can be expressed with the term *koinonia* (communion) which conveys unity, harmony and common life. To be Church is to abide in the communion of the Holy Spirit, the grace of our Lord Jesus, and the love of God the Father. Thus, the unity of the church is an icon of the unity of Persons of the Holy Trinity. This unity can be seen on different levels: on the level of the Universal and Particular Church, the eparchy, and the individual parish. It may happen that through our weakness and sinfulness we do not reflect this unity. Ever aware of this, we all must cherish and foster unity, preserving full communion with the successor of the apostle Peter, the Holy Father, with the hierarchy of our Church, with the local bishops and pastors who act in their name.

The parish is a community of communities. In a parish there will be various prayer groups, brotherhoods, and youth organizations. All of these are called to strengthen unity and love among the members of the parish community. By supporting one another through prayer, by sharing God’s gifts and working together in a Christ-like spirit of service, we will be able to bring to life our synodal program: “Holiness of a united people of God.” We cannot be indifferent to the fact that the descendants of the Baptism under St. Volodymyr today are divided and estranged from one another. At the Last Supper, Christ prayed to His Heavenly Father for His disciples, “that all may be one” (John 17:21). Bearing in mind these words of Christ, I sincerely ask you all today – let us pray for the unity of the Church, let us pray for the restoration of unity of all the churches of the Kyivan tradition. And above all, in the spirit of the love of Christ, let us make every effort to avoid any words or actions which could damage our brothers and sisters in Christ or offend them. Even though at times we may be subjected to mockery and pressure, let us not give in to the temptation to respond to evil with evil. May Christ’s prayer for his wrong-doers and the teaching of the Apostle of the Nations become a testament for us: “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good” (Rom. 12:21).

**Missionary Spirit of the Parish Community**

Jesus Christ said to His disciples: “You are the salt of the earth… you are the light of the world” (Mt. 5:13-14), and by this He calls us to reach outside our church communities to carry Christ’s teaching into the world, to transform the world with the Spirit of Christ. A church community, renewed in the Holy Spirit, by its very life becomes a living sermon of Christ and His presence. Here it is worth mentioning one of the favorite phrases of Blessed John XXIII, that “the parish is the fountain at the center of the village, to which all come to quench their thirst.” It is our wish that our parishes become such spiritual well-springs so that people would be drawn to them, and be able to find support and strength, love and grace – in one word, salvation.
Returning to the Lord’s commission with which we began this letter, we will note: Jesus Christ teaches us that we are to be ready to bear witness to Him not only with our life, but also in word. Frequently it is the case today that Christians are ashamed to acknowledge their faith, hiding it by their silence and passivity, instead of defending the Church of Christ and standing in the defense of the rights and dignity of the human person. Our pastoral initiatives, catechesis, Divine services, the reading of God’s word, etc. should make us strong and unwavering in our faith, as well as always ready “to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you” (1Pt 3:15).

With particular recognition and thanks, I would like to mention today those priests and religious, who, guided by a missionary spirit, provide spiritual care to our faithful outside of the territory of our homeland – in particular, to our emigrants. I also acknowledge those who preach the word of God in prisons, in the military, and to all who have yet to know and encounter Christ in their lives. Our Church as a whole must support them and pray that they may be strengthened by the Holy Spirit in this most important ministry.

Dearly beloved in Christ! In listening or reading these words, many of you may ask: who will implement these important and much needed initiatives? Who will ensure that our parishes are truly vibrant? The bishop, perhaps? Maybe our pastor together with other members of the clergy? Perhaps this is partially the work of catechists or consecrated religious if their monastery is located on the territory of the parish? The answer to this question is simple: each and every one of us is responsible for the renewal of our parish communities. Christ’s commandments apply to all faithful Christians without exception. Together, we all form the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. That is why all of us need to be “living stones” as we build our parish community, through which the Church is present where we live.

Therefore, I encourage all of you: open the doors of your hearts and your homes to Christ, allow His Holy Spirit to transform you, purify and strengthen you in God’s love! And I invite all – laity, religious, and clergy – to the renewal of our church life on our native lands and abroad. Let us move forward, strengthened in God’s grace, and trusting in His Holy Providence, which guides our Church through the ages!

I entrust all of you, dearly beloved in Christ, to the motherly protection of the Most Holy Theotokos. May our heavenly Mother lead us to her Son! May the holy protectors of the Ukrainian lands, in particular, the blessed martyrs of the last century, intercede for us. Through their suffering, often with the greatest sacrifice of their very lives, our persecuted Church, which found itself in the catacombs for decades, was truly vibrant and life-giving. By their example and their intercession may they be a sign of hope for us and a promise of the Lord’s blessing in our ministry.

The blessing of the Lord be upon you!

+СВЯТОСЛАВ

Given in Kyiv, December 2, 2011 AD
at the Patriarchal Sobor of the Resurrection of our Lord
B. Decisions of the UGCC Synod 2013
Resolutions of the Synod of Bishops of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church,
Kyiv, August 11-17, 2013.

33. Hold the Sixth Session of the Patriarchal Sobor in September 2015 in Ivano –
Frankivsk.

34. Identify the topic for the Sixth Session of the Patriarchal Sobor of the UGCC on the
theme: “The Vibrant parish – a place to encounter the living Christ.”

35. Charge the eparchial bishops to hold an Eparchial Sobor in 2014 on the theme: “The
Vibrant parish – a place to encounter the living Christ.” in preparation for the Sixth
Session of the Patriarchal Sobor of the UGCC.

C. DECREE - SOBOR I for May 3, 2014—“Families Evangelizing Families” &
SOBOR II for October 8-9, 2014 “The Vibrant Parish – a place to encounter the living Christ”

February 25, 2014

Dear Clergy, Religious and Faithful of the Eparchy of Saskatoon,

SOBOR 2014

An Eparchial SOBOR (Part I) will be held on Saturday, May 3, 2014, in Saskatoon. The theme of the SOBOR is Families Evangelizing Families, focusing on how each person, family, parish and the Eparchial community can better become aware of and meet the needs of families as they face the struggles of modern day life. At my request, this SOBOR is being organized by Deb Larmour, Director of the Family Life Office, and members of the Eparchial Pastoral Council.

Families are the life-blood of vibrant parishes. The Teaching of the Church has consistently acknowledged parents as the primary educators of their children. Recent studies have shown that the parents of today have an extremely significant impact on the faith of their children. This assembly will focus on helping families to pass on a ‘living’ and ‘vibrant’ faith to their children and grandchildren. Mothers can strengthen mothers and fathers support other fathers in their vocations. Grandparents share common challenges. Brothers and sisters are called to be truly brothers and sisters to each other, caring for those who are fragile, ill or in need of special attention. "In matrimony and in the family a complex of interpersonal relationships is set up: married life, fatherhood and motherhood, filiation and fraternity-through which each human person is introduced into the "human family" and into the "family of God," which is the Church. (Familiaris Consortio [Christian Family in the Modern World]: Encyclical by Pope John Paul II, 1981, #15)

We are trying to identify issues and foster an awareness that we need to help each other in our families and parishes. We are not here to solve all issues at once but rather acknowledge that people don’t have to deal with these issues alone or feel alienated. There is hope. Our hope is in Christ. There is hope in Christ and in the Trinity which is present in our families forming a ‘communion of love’. There is hope in my parish because there are others in the parish we are not aware of that are in a similar situation.
What to Expect
I will begin the day by focusing on Family and Evangelization and the Church's teaching on the family. This will frame our discussions for the day. Then speakers in the small group presentations will share their lived experience of profound faith in some of the most challenging areas of family life, particularly prayer, marriage, forgiveness, sexual identity, addictions, parenting, healing relationships, care for the aged, immigration, Theology of the Body, and more. We appreciate that the speakers, various members of our eparchy, are sharing their personal struggles/experiences and will be giving witness to Christ in their lives. Their witnessing is not instruction or teaching. Rather, it is a sharing of their particular journey. Some material may be difficult to hear but we are called to listen and understand. Participants will then be given the chance to respond and suggest how they, as family members, parishioners and as members of the eparchy, can grow in providing an environment in which the faith of families can flourish.

The Eparchial SOBOR (Part II) will take place on October 8, 2014 when the Clergy, Religious, the Eparchial Pastoral Council (representing all four deaneries) and the heads of our eparchial organizations will meet in accordance with canon law, to compile the results from the May SOBOR Part I gathering and prioritize them for the future direction of the Eparchy.

The Larger Context – Vision 2020 & Questionnaire
The 2014 SOBOR will be part of a larger process taking place in our Eparchy, in the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (UGCC) at the international level, and in the global Catholic Church as well. At the Eparchial level, building upon our SOBOR of 2005, we are now moving forward in the process that each parish is asked to undertake in connection with Vision 2020, initiated in 2011 by Patriarch Sviatoslav and the UGCC Synod of Bishops, a program of renewal of our entire Church, and described in His Beatitude’s letter, "The Vibrant Parish - a place to encounter the living Christ".

The SOBOR will be preceded and assisted by other initiatives and activities across the Eparchy. Training sessions were held in each deanery, led by Fr. Ivan Nahachewsky, regarding the development of pastoral plans. Planning sessions will be held in parishes where we will be invited to apply the six themes of Patriarch Sviatoslav’s Pastoral letter, including understanding and applying the word of God in our families, to a pastoral plan individually tailored for each parish. A comprehensive eparchial survey has been prepared which includes questions about the needs of individuals and families. This questionnaire is available both in printed form in parish bulletins and on the eparchial website. All of our faithful, thirteen years of age or more, are asked to complete the survey. Results will be made available to each parish to assist the development or enhancement of programs for families.

POPE FRANCIS & the Papal Synod
At the national and international levels, Pope Francis has called for an extraordinary synod in October 2014 to discuss the subject of the family. This synod will see heads of Eastern churches, representation from the catholic bishops’ conferences, and heads of Curia offices gather at the Vatican in October 2014 for a synod with the theme “The pastoral challenges of the family in the context of evangelization”.

Pope Francis has written a letter very recently to families asking them to pray for the next Synod of Bishops, which will convene at the Vatican in October. The letter, dated 2 February, Feast of the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple, says in part:

"Dear Families, With this letter, I wish, as it were, to come into your homes to speak about an event which will take place at the Vatican this coming October. It is the Extraordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, which is being convened to discuss the theme of “pastoral challenges to the family in the context of evangelization”. Indeed, in our day the Church is called to proclaim the Gospel by confronting the new and urgent pastoral needs facing the family.

This important meeting will involve all the People of God – bishops, priests, consecrated men and women, and lay faithful of the particular Churches of the entire world – all of whom are actively participating in preparations for the meeting through practical suggestions and the crucial support of prayer. Such support on your part, dear families, is especially significant and more necessary than ever. This Synodal Assembly is dedicated in a special way to you, to your vocation and mission in the Church and in society; to the challenges of marriage, of family life, of the education of children; and the role of the family in the life of the Church. I ask you, therefore, to pray intensely to the Holy Spirit, so that the Spirit may illumine the Synodal Fathers and guide them in their important task. As you know, this Extraordinary Synodal Assembly will be followed a year later by the Ordinary Assembly, which will also have the family as its theme. In that context, there will also be the World Meeting of Families due to take place in Philadelphia in September 2015. May we all, then, pray together so that through these events the
Church will undertake a true journey of discernment and adopt the necessary pastoral means to help families face their present challenges with the light and strength that comes from the Gospel.”

Patriarchal Synod
The results of our SOBOR in May 2014 and our subsequent dialogue will contribute to the working documents of this Papal Synod as well as the Patriarchal SOBOR of the UGCC in 2015 where the work that we are now doing in our parishes will contribute to the spiritual renewal of our entire Ukrainian Catholic Church.

Please read the attached material and plan to attend. The knowledge and understanding you will gain at the SOBOR will be not only for you and your family but is intended for you to pass on to your fellow parishioners and your respective parish or eparchial organizations.

I extend my warmest pastoral blessing to you and your family, that they be a light for the world. Encounter Christ in your own family. Be transformed. Go and be a witness for Christ.

With continued service to Christ and the Catholic Church, I remain,

Ref # BB-140225

Clergy, Religious and Faithful of the Eparchy of Saskatoon

Most Rev. Bryan J. Bayda, C.Ss.R.
Eparch of Saskatoon

D. PREFACE: SOBOR II Document & Abbreviations used in the text

The Document will follow the six themes found in the Pastoral Letter of His Beatitude Sviatoslav, “The Vibrant Parish—a place to encounter the living Christ”:

1. The Word of God
2. Liturgy, Holy Mysteries (Sacraments) and Prayer
3. Service to our Neighbour
4. Leadership
5. Fostering and Serving Unity
6. Missionary Spirit of the Parish Community

It will also address directly the central needs of the family, with all of its struggles and concerns in the world today, as the primary mechanism of evangelization and passing on of the faith. The importance of the family, not only to the church but also to all civilization, was emphasized by St. John Paul II, patron of the family, who said, “The future of humanity passes by way of the family.” (FC 86) This SOBOR document is formulated with the specific recognition that the family, as the domestic church, is foundation for the vibrant parish and central to what has become known as the ‘new evangelization’.

As stated by Paul VI in the document Evangelii Nuntiandi, “The family, like the Church, ought to be a place where the Gospel is transmitted and from which the Gospel radiates. In a family which is conscious of this mission, all the members evangelize and are evangelized. The parents not only communicate the Gospel to their children, but from their children they can themselves receive the same Gospel as deeply lived by them. And such a family becomes the evangelizer of many other families, and of the neighborhood of which it forms part.”
Thus we begin our thoughts and plans on building the vibrant parish, from the ‘grassroots’ of building and supporting the family, the ‘domestic church’, with the words of Patriarch Sviatoslav. (*The words of his Beatitude appear in italics at the beginning of each section.*)

Abbreviations found in the text

EG *Evangelii Gaudium* Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Francis (24 November 2013)
EN *Evangelii Nuntiandi* Apostolic Exhortation (8 December 1975)
FC *Familiaris Consortio* Apostolic Exhortation of Pope John Paul II (22 Nov. 1981)
GS *Gaudium et Spes*, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, Second Vatican Ecumenical Council (7 December 1965)
IL *Instrumentum Laboris*: The Pastoral Challenges of the Family in the Context of Evangelization Synod of Bishops III Extraordinary General Assembly, 2014
LF *Lumen Fidei* Encyclical Letter of Pope Francis (29 June 2013)
LG *Lumen Gentium*, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, Second Vatican Ecumenical Council (21 November 1964)
OE *Orientalium Ecclisiarium* Decree on the Catholic Churches of the Eastern Rite, Pope Paul VI, 21 November 1964
OL *Oriental Lumen* Apostolic Letter of Pope John Paul II (2 May 1995)
UG *Unitatis Redintegratio* Decree on Ecumenism, Second Vatican Ecumenical Council (21 November 1964)
1. The Word of God

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom,” St. Paul teaches us in the Epistle to the Colossians (Col 3:16). Through the Word of God we come to know Christ, we encounter Him, and enter into a living relationship with Him. “Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ,” said St. Jerome. In our parishes we want to follow the example of the first Christians so that the Word of God might become the foundation of our ecclesial, parochial, family, social, and personal life. I strongly urge pastors to diligently prepare their homilies based on the proclaimed Word of God in such a way that this Word might become “living and active” in the life of our parishioners, giving them answers to real issues of the day, and inspiring them to service.

The Word of God should bear visible fruit in our everyday lives because only those who keep this Word, that is, obey it, will be called blessed in the Lord (see Lk 11:28). In our parishes there should not be a single family which does not own a Bible. I encourage all our faithful to read the Sacred Scriptures on a daily basis; this is done ideally through participation in parish bible-study groups or through prayerful reading at home. The newly published Catechism of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church, “Christ our Pascha,” is another essential volume which should become a handbook of faith for all the members of our Church – children, youth, and adults. The Catechism, according to Metropolitan Andrey (Sheptytsky), is the foundation of Christian life.

On this occasion I wish to emphasize that all the members of our Church have a personal responsibility throughout their whole lives to acquire an ever deeper knowledge of the truth of the Holy Faith, while the clergy must not neglect their responsibility of teaching the faith to their parishioners, not only through preaching, but also through catechetical instruction. When we speak of catechesis, we understand this to be a continuous process of entering into the mystery of the Church, to be applied not only to children who are preparing to receive the Holy Mysteries (Sacraments). Permanent and continuous formation for various age groups – children, youth, adults, and the elderly – is an essential component of the vibrant parish. Finally, I would like to emphasize that just as it is with the Bible, so too the Catechism of our Church should be a handbook for each member of our community as it is a most valuable aid for a proper understanding and reading of the Word of God.

1.1. Introduction:

1.1.1. In the SOBOR 2005, it was clearly stated that the family was the foundation for the parish and the Eparchy. It goes on to say, “The family unit (a community of life and love) is the environment in which spiritual formation
should begin and flourish. Faith is cultivated in the family from the cradle to the grave with education and support required at all stages of a person’s life.”

1.1.2. If “the Word of God is to dwell richly in a person”, it must dwell in the family, the domestic church. If it is to dwell in the family, it must dwell in a couple throughout their married life. Ideally, family life begins with the lifelong commitment of one man and one woman in marriage. Marriage is a community of love that is “caught up into divine love and is governed and enriched by Christ's redeeming power and the saving activity of the Church, so that this love may lead the spouses to God.”(GS, 48) Marriage and family life is a school of holiness that is beautifully symbolized by the crowning of the Bride and Groom who embrace the vocation of marriage as their path towards receiving the lasting crowns of God’s kingdom. The bride and groom make their covenant with the firm intention to follow God with, faithfulness, chastity, and purity of heart, asking to be blessed with happiness, fruitfulness, peace and concord.

1.1.3. “The apostolate of the family will also become wider through works of spiritual and material charity towards other families, especially those most in need of help and support, towards the poor, the sick, the old, the handicapped, orphans, widows, spouses that have been abandoned, unmarried mothers and mothers-to-be in difficult situations who are tempted to have recourse to abortion, and so on.”(FC, 71)

1.1.4. As Pope Benedict the XVI tells us in his encyclical Deus Caritas Est, “Marriage, based on exclusive and definitive love, becomes the icon of the relationship between God and his people and vice versa. God's way of loving becomes the measure of human love.”(DCE, 11) This love is by its nature life giving as created in the ‘image and likeness of God’ a human being can not “fully find himself except through a sincere gift of himself.”(GS, 24) When the ‘gift of self’ is expressed in the conjugal union, this love has a close and inseparable link to the generation of human life. The Word dwells in the relationship between a husband and wife as expressed in church teaching from the time of the Early Church Fathers through the ages but more recently elucidated and confirmed in the documents Humanae Vitae, Gratissimam Sane, and Familiaris Consortio.

1.1.5. Resulting from the love of a man and woman, children are born into this loving relationship and, consequently, parents are the primary educators of their children, particularly with respect to their faith formation. In this atmosphere of love a person’s formation in the faith is much more than the result of merely imparting knowledge. It is a lived experience of Christ’s love, in the context of service, prayer, scripture and catechesis that translates into a firmly grounded,

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living relationship with Christ. This sustains a deep ongoing conversion that transforms and changes us into the men and women that God created us to be. To be immersed in a family of love is to be immersed in Christ the Word.

1.1.6. To read and pray with scripture in a family setting is therefore a profound way to experience the Word of God. This formative experience fertilizes the roots of the human soul, preparing it to hear the Word sung, preached and reflected upon in the parish. Encountering the Living Christ through Holy Scripture is fittingly experienced in the larger family of the parish.

1.1.7. This imparts a foundation of faith and conversion that remains strong despite the trials and struggles of life. Pope Francis in his Encyclical Lumen Fidei clearly tells us that, “Encountering Christ, letting themselves be caught up in and guided by his love, enlarges the horizons of existence, gives it a firm hope which will not disappoint. Faith is no refuge for the fainthearted, but something which enhances our lives. It makes us aware of a magnificent calling, the vocation of love. It assures us that this love is trustworthy and worth embracing, for it is based on God’s faithfulness which is stronger than our every weakness.” (LF, 53)

1.1.8. As Pope Francis reminds us, “The family is experiencing a profound cultural crisis, as are all communities and social bonds. In the case of the family, the weakening of these bonds is particularly serious because the family is the fundamental cell of society where we learn to live with others despite our differences and to belong to one another; it is also the place where parents pass on the faith to their children.” (EG, 66)

1.1.9. Although no marriage or family is perfect, the Church offers clear and consistent teaching, through the grace of the sacrament, it is in the family context that a person experiences mercy (encounters Christ), experiences forgiveness, healing, support and inspiration in tangible and realistic ways. It prepares people for marriage and their new family life. This was clearly exemplified by the witnesses to faith who shared their stories at our Families Evangelizing Families SOBOR I event May 3, 2014.

1.1.10. Ideally, family life begins with the life-long commitment of one man and one woman in marriage bearing and raising children. We hold important the traditional understanding of the family despite, however, acknowledging the challenges that have changed the family structure so that it exists in many partial forms.

1.1.11. We are all under an obligation to love and support single parent families. We also recognize other family structures such as foster families or children being raised by grandparents. “Real pastoral attention is urgently needed to care for these people and bring them healing so that they might continue their journey with the entire ecclesial community... The pastoral care of families, far from limiting itself to a legal point of view, has a mission to recall the great vocation
of love to which each person is called and to help a person live up to the dignity of that calling.” (IL, 80)

1.2. **Eparchial Position:**

1.2.1. In the SOBOR 2005 document it was noted that the Eparchy had established Ukrainian Catholic Religious Education Center (UCREC) in 1979 which has been the source of many important initiatives and programs in the Eparchy such as the Catechetical training program, Lay Formation, Catechist workshops, Catechist Connection newsletter and Generations of Faith.

1.2.2. Other programs and services currently offered in some parishes and communities in the Eparchy assist in this challenge parents face in being Christ for one another in the family. They include the teaching received from the pulpit (sermons), bulletins, newsletters and sacramental preparation. In the Eparchial survey it was found that the clear majority (68% of respondents) consider the parish priest to be their main source of faith information. Over 73% consider homilies to be engaging and informative, and over 50% consider the priest to be a main reason to join or stay in parishes. However, on questions about how parishes respond to the needs of all parishioners in terms of retreats or opportunities for spiritual growth, religious education/formation for adults, children and families, the average approval was 42%, which is significantly lower.

1.2.3. In Parish reflections for Vision 2020 it was noted that there are some parishes offering sacramental preparation (including programs that prepare for the parental role in faith formation), missions, bible studies, icon writing, catechetical programs, chotky making and teaching on the Jesus Prayer, youth ministry programs and retreats. Yet this was not consistent throughout the Eparchy and there were calls for:

1.2.3.1. More faith formation for parents, grandparents, children, youth, seniors and adults;
1.2.3.2. More consistent follow up and materials available in a variety of forms such as print, online, video and mobile apps;
1.2.3.3. Greater help at the parish level in the areas of catechesis and youth ministry;
1.2.3.4. Eparchial initiatives in faith formation such as Study Days, Retreats and Missions;
1.2.3.5. Greater understanding of our unique Eastern Theology, tradition and liturgy;
1.2.3.6. Greater understanding of human sexuality from the perspective of our faith.

1.2.4. Participants at the SOBOR I in May 2014 identified a need for a greater understanding of the virtues of purity and chastity as healthy, holy ways of living. Those who model these virtues form hearts for Christian marriage and the expression of conjugal love. There was also much concern from parents on
how to approach the subject of sexuality while raising their children in a Catholic atmosphere.

1.2.5. All of these challenges to human dignity require an understanding of Christian Anthropology—(Church teaching on what it means to be human). Otherwise we are at risk of being swept away by secular beliefs that negatively impact how we use our material gifts and resources while caring for the elderly and people marginalized in some manner.

1.2.6. In response to the SOBOR 2005 the Family and Life Office was brought into being in 2009. Its mandate has been to establish resources for family life, marriage preparation, teaching on sexuality (Theology of the Body) and parenting. The purpose is to pass on the faith and the sacredness of human life. Most recently it is implementing the Strong Catholic Families/ Strong Catholic Youth initiative in the Eparchy that empowers parents to be the ones primarily to pass on the faith to their children.

1.3. **Recommendations, Objectives and Action Items:**

1.3.1. The Eparchial leaders and faithful will promote and encourage ongoing formation and development of clergy and staff in all areas of teaching and speaking, particularly in the areas of sharing the Word of God (evangelization), living as an Eastern Catholic, catechesis, Christian anthropology, human sexuality/dignity, marital and familial love. (See also 6.3.3)

1.3.2. The Eparchial leaders and faithful will implement and support the initiative of Strong Catholic Families/ Strong Catholic Youth to be continued and developed throughout the Eparchy guided by both the Family and Life Office and Youth Ministry Office. Particular attention will be paid to assisting parents who are obliged to prepare their children in their younger formative stages of life for premarital chastity, vocations to priestly life, single life, married life and religious vowed life. (See also 2.3.5)

1.3.3. The Eparchial leaders and faithful will renew efforts to establish educational programs and evangelistic outreach in the Eparchy, including Study Days for both clergy and laity, programs, witnessing to the faith and faith-filled living. (See also 4.3.4; 5.3.1; 5.3.2)

1.3.4. The Eparchial leaders and faithful will continue developing the Family and Life Office to provide resources and support for family/parish initiatives in all aspects of family life. (See also 6.3.3)

1.3.5. The Eparchial leaders and faithful will continue providing support for the Ukrainian Catholic Religious Education Center’s services and programs with particular focus on the promotion and Study of Christ Our Pascha, the new

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Catechism of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, scripture and Eastern Christian studies eparchy wide. (See also 5.3.1,2,3; 6.3.2)

1.3.6. The Eparchial leaders and faithful will continue to advocate for adequate representation of the Ukrainian Catholic Church and the other Eastern Churches in Catholic education throughout the Eparchy. Likewise, each deanery will continue its support of Catholic education since “…Catholic schools express the idea of Freedom in education and reassert the primacy of the family as the true subject in the educational process, to which others involved in education must contribute. The task of education requires a greater collaboration among families, schools and Christian communities.”(IL, 63)

1.3.7. The Eparchial leaders and faithful will continue ongoing efforts to communicate the Gospel through all available forms of preaching, personal sharing, social media, technology and various forms of communications. (See also 6.3.4; 6.3.7)

2. The Holy Mysteries (Sacraments) and Prayer:

The Word of God is the foundation of Christian life, while the Holy Eucharist is its source and at the same time its culmination. Gathered at the Divine Liturgy, the parish community unites with its invisible head, Christ, and with all the saints and angels, thus enacting a mystical union between heaven and earth, between time and eternity. The Divine Liturgy, which a duly appointed priest celebrates in unity with and on behalf of his bishop, is also a time of building up the Church, the body of Christ, which has our Lord as its Head. There is no moment more precious in our earthly life than the Divine Liturgy. That is why Sunday, the holy Day of our Lord, should be honored by every Christian, and participation in the Divine Liturgy should be considered not as an obligation imposed by the Church, which requires our obedience, but it should be received as a gift from our Lord, who longs to encounter us, in order to fill us with His grace and love. “We cannot live without Sunday!” was the motto of the early Christians of the first centuries, and they preferred a martyr’s death to agreeing under pressure from the pagans to work on Sunday. This motto we Christians of the 21st century must make our own, and we should persistently guard the holiness and inviolability of the Lord’s Day.

Members of a vibrant parish also actively participate in the Holy Mysteries (Sacraments). Regularly, if possible even daily, they gather for the services in praise of our Heavenly Father. They frequently go to Confession and receive Holy Communion. In a vibrant parish church organizations combine their activities with common prayer, finding in it their strength and inspiration. No less important is our private prayer – personal and family prayer – which extends and continues our liturgical prayer in the Church. Our parishes, and in them our families, must again become a school of prayer for all of our faithful.

2.1 Introduction:

2.1.1 According to Pope Francis “This fullness which Jesus brings to faith has
another decisive aspect. In faith, Christ is not simply the one in whom we believe, the supreme manifestation of God’s love; he is also the one with whom we are united precisely in order to believe. Faith does not merely gaze at Jesus, but sees things as Jesus himself sees them, with his own eyes: it is a participation in his way of seeing.” (LF, 18) When we have faith it changes our way of looking at how we are church and how we pray. Likewise, the Sunday Divine Liturgy is not only to be attended but lived all day and everyday. The Divine Liturgy itself then becomes the wellspring and source of life-giving communion between God and the church.

2.1.2 According to St. John Chrysostom, “Prayer is the place of refuge for every worry, a foundation for cheerfulness, a source of constant happiness, a protection against sadness.” Yet despite all of our struggles and search for happiness, prayer is often the road that is less travelled.

2.1.3 The Eastern churches, of which the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church is one, in particular, have much to contribute to the modern world in terms of the richness and beauty of our liturgical, sacramental and other prayerful traditions. St. John Paul II says, “Pondering over the questions, aspirations and experiences I have mentioned, my thoughts turn to the Christian heritage of the East. I do not intend to describe that heritage or to interpret it: I listen to the Churches of the East, which I know are living interpreters of the treasure of tradition they preserve. In contemplating it, before my eyes appear elements of great significance for fuller and more thorough understanding of the Christian experience. These elements are capable of giving a more complete Christian response to the expectations of the men and women of today.” (OL, 5) These traditions need to be kept alive and vibrant, through a process of developing a living faith that responds to the culture in which we live, in twenty-first century North America.

2.2 Eparchial Position:

2.2.1 Four hundred and eighty four people responded to the Eparchial Survey yet did not always answer every question. According to the respondents to the Eparchial Survey, most are long-standing members of the eparchy; 76% have been members for 25 years or more, and they are over 55 years old, with 56% being over 65. Most appear to have deep fundamental respect for the sacraments and Divine Liturgy. 86% attend most Sunday services. Only 5.5% have ever been divorced or separated. 70% approve of the sacramental preparation for Baptism, Eucharist and Marriage being offered in their parishes.


6 See Ecclesia in America Apostolic Exhortation of St. Pope John Paul II. Given at Mexico City, January 22, in 1999.

7 Less than 1% were under age 19. Ages 20-25 made up 1.3%; ages 26-35 made up 2.4%; ages 36-45 made up 6%; ages 46–55 made up nearly 19%; ages 66-75 composed roughly 30% of respondents; ages 76-85 were approximately 23% and nearly 6% were over age 86.
2.2.2 Most people, 78%, are willing volunteers and participants in some aspect of parish or eparchial life. 86% see themselves as being involved or more involved in the future, and over 90% attend at least a few social gatherings sponsored by the parish or affiliated organizations each year. Proximity to churches is excellent for most people, with 96% having a travel time of 30 minutes or less. Ukrainian and English language issues appear to be well addressed.

2.2.3 However, very few (less than 6%), say that they participate on a regular basis in church services other than Sunday Liturgies and major feasts. Only 57% say that they regularly spend time in private prayer or meditation. 54% report that a primary attraction to their parish is the focus on faith. 55% approve of devotional opportunities available such as prayer groups, rosary groups, etc.

2.2.4 Some parishes report that they offer a rich liturgical and sacramental life, including Feast Days and major Fasts/Feasts depending on the location, and some offer other opportunities for prayer such as prayer groups and ecumenical prayer. A few of the parishes also have committed choir directors and cantors to help lead in worship. There are also opportunities for Pilgrimages to Shrines throughout the Eparchy. Some traditions such as Saturday evening Vespers have been all but lost, although some parishes have celebrate Vespers prior to major feast days. Flexible liturgical schedules have helped those who struggle with family and work commitments, but the essential rhythm of Sunday Divine Liturgical preparation has experienced a decline in attendance.

2.2.5 In many parishes the congregations are aging and numbers attending services are declining. Although 86% of respondents to the Survey suggest that they attend Sunday Divine Liturgy, it must be remembered that 76% of respondents were over 55 years old, with 56% being over age 65. The predominance of this age group in the survey, and by extension in the Eparchy as well, plays an important role in the nature and interpretation of survey results.

2.2.6 There is concern over Liturgical Practice not being standardized throughout the Eparchy regarding the use of musical instruments, lack of congregational participation in responses and the need overall for more-and-better-trained cantors and leaders of music. They affect how the Divine Liturgy is celebrated, as an uplifting experience, especially for the youth and young families. Likewise, we must eliminate obstacles to worship for those who stand on the margins of our communities, the single parents, the single persons, those with physical and mental challenges, those who struggle with addictions and the aged and sick. They all encounter special needs that need to be identified and overcome. Our love and support must be tangible.

2.2.7 Our churches are generally beautifully blessed with iconography and iconostasis but some indicated that their church needs to provide certain essential elements of Eastern churches and prayer life that have been absent for
some time. Likewise ongoing education needs to be continued to assist in prayer with icons in our parishes and the domestic church.

2.3 Recommendations, Objectives and Action Items:

2.3.1 The ‘Kiss of Peace’ prior to the Creed should be practiced by all present as a powerful expression of reconciliation and communion during all Divine Liturgies in the Eparchy.

2.3.2 Renew ministries of hospitality so that everyone is warmly greeted upon arrival. Convey to everyone their participation in the ministry of welcome and the need to genuinely reach out and greet newcomers or those they don’t know. Encourage families to take on the ministries of welcoming (greeting, ushering and assisting) as well as reading and cantoring. Revive the traditional minor orders and, where appropriate, expand liturgical and pastoral ministry roles for laity-- men, women and families.

2.3.3 The Eparchial leaders and faithful will further develop the Eparchial Liturgical Committee that has as its priority the training of cantors. Also, this committee is to examine and give recommendations regarding standardization of ritual as well as survey, explore and give recommendations for special liturgical needs. Attention should be paid to accommodate the disabled, sick, youth and young families.

2.3.4 The Eparchial leaders and faithful will consider development and adaptation of para-liturgical services to meet the prayer needs of the community. Opportunities will be provided for people to witness to their faith, support those with special needs such as family relational difficulties, illnesses, addictions, elderly and children.

2.3.5 Sacramental preparation should be mandated, including a parental component to promote, prepare and empower parents to take on the responsibility for passing on the faith to their children. (See also 1.3.2)

3 Serving One’s Neighbour:

Another important element, which expresses the inner nature of the Church and reveals the vibrancy of a parish, is diakonia, which means serving in love or performing “charitable activity.” This service to our neighbour flows from our rootedness in Christ. Active love of neighbour is the vocation and task of each Christian without exception. It is only faith, acting in love, which leads us to salvation (see Gal. 5:6). Faith without works is dead (see James 2:26). “As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me” (Mat. 25:40), – says the Lord Jesus.

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8 Mt. 5:23-24 So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift.
Let us look around us – in this world there is so much tragedy and poverty, so much loneliness and sorrow, pain and suffering! All the challenging circumstances of our life on earth – these are for us an invitation to active love, which is an expression of living faith. The Lord wants to open our eyes to the suffering world so that we might learn to truly love and to express God’s love to our neighbour – by our attention to them, by our sincere sympathy, support, by our words of encouragement and good cheer, but mainly, through acts of mercy. It is only then that we can consider ourselves vibrant Christians and our parishes can become places where care is given to the orphan, protection for the widow, help for the poor, and where the suffering of the sick is shared. Thus, we will reveal to the world the maternal face of the Church and will become the living sign of the presence of God among humankind, according to the words of St. Augustine: “If you see charity, you see the Trinity.”

3.1 Introduction:

3.1.1 In developing a vibrant liturgical prayer life we must offer our solidarity to all those who suffer, in our parishes and beyond. Pope Francis tells us, “An evangelizing community gets involved by word and deed in people’s daily lives; it bridges distances, it is willing to abase itself if necessary, and it embraces human life, touching the suffering flesh of Christ in others. Evangelizers, thus, take on the ‘smell of the sheep’ and the sheep are willing to hear their voice. An evangelizing community is also supportive, standing by people at every step of the way, no matter how difficult or lengthy this may prove to be.” (EG, 24)

3.1.2 This statement is consistent with the teaching of the Early Fathers of the Church. St. John Chrysostom also reminded us of the constant necessity to be in solidarity with the poor. He says in his reflection on Mt. 25; “Would you honor the body of Christ? Do not despise his nakedness; do not honor him here in church clothed in silk vestments and then pass him by unclothed and frozen outside. Remember that he who said, “This is my Body”, and made good his words, also said, “You saw me hungry and gave me no food”, and, “in so far as you did it not to one of these, you did it not to me”. In the first sense the body of Christ does not need clothing but worship from a pure heart. In the second sense it does need clothing and all the care we can give it.”

3.1.3 The call to love is a call to reach out beyond those of our own community or ethnicity and is an all-inclusive call to love those around us. Pope Benedict the XVI reminds us, “Anyone who needs me, and whom I can help, is my neighbour. The concept of “neighbour” is now universalized, yet it remains concrete. Despite being extended to all mankind, it is not reduced to a generic, abstract and undemanding expression of love, but calls for my own practical commitment here and now… Jesus identifies himself with those in need, with

the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick and those in prison. “As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.” (Mt 25:40) Love of God and love of neighbour have become one: in the least of the brethren we find Jesus himself, and in Jesus we find God.” (DCE, 15)

3.1.4 We are reminded that when it comes to social justice and loving our neighbour that the most fundamental right is the right to life. “Even in the midst of difficulties and uncertainties, every person sincerely open to truth and goodness can, by the light of reason and the hidden action of grace, come to recognize in the natural law written in the heart (cf. Rom 2:14-15) the sacred value of human life from its very beginning until its end, and can affirm the right of every human being to have this primary good respected to the highest degree. Upon the recognition of this right, every human community and the political community itself are founded.” (EV, 2)

3.1.5 We are also reminded that there is a strong connection between the contraceptive mentality and the abortion mentality. “It is frequently asserted that contraception, if made safe and available to all, is the most effective remedy against abortion. The Catholic Church is then accused of actually promoting abortion, because she obstinately continues to teach the moral unlawfulness of contraception. When looked at carefully, this objection is clearly unfounded. It may be that many people use contraception with a view to excluding the subsequent temptation of abortion. But the negative values inherent in the ‘contraceptive mentality’ - which is very different from responsible parenthood, lived in respect for the full truth of the conjugal act - are such that they in fact strengthen this temptation when an unwanted life is conceived.” (EV, 13)

3.1.6 “While building up the Church in love, the Christian family places itself at the service of the human person and the world . . . Another task for the family is to form persons in love and also to practice love in all its relationships, so that it does not live closed in on itself, but remains open to the community, moved by a sense of justice and concern for others, as well as by a consciousness of its responsibility towards the whole of society.” (FC, 64)

3.1.7 “Let us make the family our fundamental option, remembering that virtually every form of poverty — material, emotional, moral or spiritual — has its origin in some kind of deprivation within the family. It will be essential that we use all available resources to support life and love specifically within the context of marriage and the family. Today’s efforts whether they are directed to the engaged, to young married couples, children, youth, youth adults, parents, grandparents or single parents will bear fruit for current and future families.”10

3.2 Eparchial Position:

3.2.1 In the eparchial survey, 67% of respondents say they have been helped in times of serious need and 49% volunteer their time in social service (but not

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10 CCCB, Elements of a National Pastoral Initiative for Life and the Family, October 2011, 8.
necessarily within the context of the parish or affiliated groups). Parishes received a 50% or better rating in the area of volunteer opportunities for service/outreach, yet only 14% rated social outreach activity (service and justice) as a reason to be attracted to their parishes. Ratings above 50% were also provided to social opportunities for members to build community and friendships, as well as ministering to the sick, shut-ins and the bereaved.

3.2.2 Parishes received less than a 50% approval in the areas of social justice / advocacy initiatives and information (eg. Pro-Life, environmental issues, human rights); pastoral support to those dealing with challenging life situations and counseling to help members deal with spiritual / faith problems and support to those requiring conflict resolution.

3.2.3 Approval ratings below 40% were given for how well parishes serve adults (35 to 60 years of age), married couples and families with young children. Ratings below 30% were given for service to high school youth, young adults (18 – 35), and families with teens and families with specific spiritual or physical needs. Parishes were rated below 20% for separated and divorced adults, families with specific economic needs, members of the wider community and non-participating parish members.

3.2.4 Although accurate and specific age information is not collected in annual parish returns, it does appear from the parish data available and from the results of the 2014 eparchial survey that the majority of members of most parishes are now over 65. Certainly, the majority are over 55 years of age. Retaining and attracting young families, youth and those at the margins of the Church, is one of the greatest challenges facing parishes in the 21st century. There must be a close assessment of the types of services now being offered to these groups and a full reassessment of the types of services that would be of most value to them. The parishes must find them where they live and demonstrate that a full life in the parish is still very much possible and practical. As our Patriarch noted many times in his pastoral visit to our Eparchy of Saskatoon, the Church should not be just a museum. Pope Francis also warns against a museum-nature to our church when he says, “A tomb psychology thus develops and slowly transforms Christians into mummies in a museum.”(EG 83)

3.2.5 In the pastoral plans for Vision 2020 it was noted that we rarely hear the clergy speaking out on issues such as the sacredness of human life at every stage. While we have established the Family and Life Office to raise awareness of the situation regarding the great threats to human life and dignity, efforts have to be intensified in parishes that rarely have activities that effectively mobilize our faithful in support of life and care for those in crisis owing to pregnancy, post abortion, special needs, sick or aging.

3.2.6 Some parishes have active social justice committees and social service activities at home and abroad. Many see a need for more activity in our Church, particularly outreach to the poor and marginalized in our own cities,
calling for initiatives to be set up in our Eparchy like the Welcome Home, operated by the Yorkton Province Redemptorists, that facilitates an opportunity for faithful to serve those in need in the inner-city area of Winnipeg. This is similar to the Marian Center in Regina.

3.2.7 While in some places there is active outreach to those who have gone through family/marriage turmoil, breakdown, abuse or addictions there is also a need for greater consistency across the Eparchy both in terms of services and support.

3.3 **Recommendations, Objectives and Action Items:**

3.3.1 The Eparchy should have a Social Justice Office which is specifically charged with assisting and providing resources to parishes to be more pro-active in all areas of education and outreach, particularly encouraging family involvement in working through the parish to ‘live the liturgy’ and effect positive change in the world.

3.3.2 City parishes and deaneries should collaborate with each other and perhaps even other churches (Catholic or ecumenically speaking) on major projects to reach out to the marginalized. This could include outreach endeavors on a small or grand scale.

3.3.3 The Family and Life Office, in collaboration with the local deaneries, should prepare and establish a list of resources and support groups for families in crisis and where there are needs that are noted at the family or parish level, to work with local groups to meet the needs of the local parish with the establishment of support groups/programs in the parish. (See also 1.3.4)

3.3.4 The Family and Life Office will serve clergy by providing them with a pro-life electronic news publication that can form the basis for educational activities, prayer intentions/activities and sermons so that the faithful can be educated and active in building a culture of life. This is not just to include what the Church stands against, such as abortion, contraception, euthanasia, materialism and consumerism. Rather, this should be done primarily from a positive point of view celebrating life, generosity, love, compassion, justice and service. (See also 1.3.1)

4 **Leadership:**

The parish is a community of faithful who, under the leadership of the bishop and their pastors, fulfill their calling to unity with God the Father through our Lord Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit. The Lord Jesus constantly acts in our communities through the Holy Spirit sending down His gifts for the development and growth of His Body. The Apostle Paul thus explains: “And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the
The leadership of the parish community is exercised under the leadership of the bishop as head and father. Each parish should be an organized community in which, under the care of their pastor and in cooperation with him, members serve one another according to the gifts which they received from the Lord.

Therefore, church leadership is not the fulfillment of a particular administrative office, but first of all service to God and neighbor. In practice this means that for a parish to be vibrant, it must have active parish and pastoral councils. In addition, a parish must have well-formed and mature co-workers who assist the priest in leading catechetical schools, church brotherhoods, charitable works, youth organizations and prayer groups. One of the most important responsibilities of leadership in the parish community is discerning God’s will and searching for the best ways of implementing it in the life of the parish.

4.1 Introduction:

4.1.1 The Eastern Catholic Church can be described as both hierarchical and conciliar in that it has particular leadership roles for both clergy and laity. The Ukrainian Greek Catholic church is ‘apostolic’ in that through the guarantee of apostolic succession, we can make the claim that the teachings of the Church passed on by the Bishop, with and through the Church, are faithful and true. As such, however, it is also true in the words of Tertullian, one of the early Fathers of the Church “We Christians are forbidden to introduce anything on our own authority, or to choose what someone else introduces on his own authority. Our authorities are the Lord’s Apostles, and they in their turn choose to introduce nothing on their authority. They faithfully passed on to the nations the teachings which they had received from Christ.”

4.1.2 The laity is defined by the Second Vatican council as “all the faithful except those in holy orders and those in the state of religious life specially approved by the Church. These faithful are by baptism made one body with Christ and are constituted among the People of God; they are in their own way made sharers in the priestly, prophetical, and kingly functions of Christ; and they carry out for their own part the mission of the whole Christian people in the Church and in the world.”

4.1.3 The laity has ministry and administrative roles within the church structure and these are important and to be encouraged. However, the laity and in particular the family has a pivotal leadership role, particularly in evangelization. Simply put the family is ‘in’ the world—and as such brings Christ to the world. As such, formation and preparation to adequately fulfill those roles is critical.

4.1.4 Clergy and laity are called to work together in this great mission of

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12 CCCB, Elements of a National Pastoral Initiative for Life and the Family, October 2011, 7.
evangelization. Bestowing the liturgy and sacraments upon the Church the clergy have a place of respect and responsibility and all ministries within the church are to work under the authority of the Pastor who bears the responsibility for unity. Likewise those who have chosen the religious or monastic life, have special charisms and gifts with which to serve and inspire the church. (EN, 73)

4.1.5 In all aspects of leadership we are reminded to be authentic and honest about whom we are as church. St. John Chrysostom reminds us of the notion of our Church as where we all enter on equal footing as sinners. He wrote, “Enter into the Church and wash away your sins. For this is a hospital for sinners and not a court of law.” In the Divine Liturgy, he also refers to Jesus, as “the Physician of our Souls and Bodies”—a physician who is needed by all. 13

4.1.6 What is a parish and who are its leaders?
  4.1.6.1 Canon 279 - A parish is a definite community of the Christian faithful established on a stable basis in the eparchy, whose pastoral care is entrusted to a pastor. 14
  4.1.6.2 Canon 280 - §1. Generally, a parish is to be territorial, that is, it embraces all the Christian faithful of a certain territory; if however, in the judgment of the eparchial bishop, having consulted the presbyteral council, it is expedient, personal parishes are to be erected based on nationality, language, enrollment of the Christian faithful in another Church sui iuris or even upon some other definite determining factor.
  §2. It is the competency of the eparchial bishop to erect, modify and suppress parishes after consulting the presbyteral council.
  §3. A lawfully established parish is a juridic person by the law itself. 15
  4.1.6.3 Canon 281 - §1. The pastor is to be a presbyter to whom, as the principal cooperator of the episcopal bishop, is entrusted the care of souls as their proper shepherd in a determined parish under the authority of the same episcopal bishop.
  §2. A juridic person cannot validly be a pastor. 16

4.2 Eparchial Position:

4.2.1 The Eparchial Survey shows that respondents are willing volunteers and there is a high rate of participation in parish activities.

4.2.2 The 5 committees or groups having the highest participation are:
  4.2.2.1 Food Service, event setup and cleanup: 50%
  4.2.2.2 Liturgical Ministry: (Welcomers / Ushers / Choir / Musician / Readers / Lectors / Cantor / Eucharistic Minister, etc): 45%
  4.2.2.3 UCWLC: 36%

13 Coniaris, Uniqueness, 39.
14 Code of Canons of Eastern Churches CCEO
15 Ibid. CCEO
16 Ibid. CCEO
4.2.2.4 Parish Council: 25%
4.2.2.5 Knights of Columbus: 24%.

Overall, the general condition and aesthetic appeal of parish properties are considered excellent or adequate. However, there are some concerns in regard to access for persons with physical limitations (elevators, ramps, railings, etc.), office space as well as roof and drainage systems.

4.2.3 Over 75% of survey respondents, on average, agree with the following statements:
4.2.3.1 It is clear what is expected of me.
4.2.3.2 The spiritual leaders seem to care about me as a person.
4.2.3.3 Taking on leadership roles is encouraged.
4.2.3.4 I regularly have the opportunity to use my talents.
4.2.3.5 Respondents are well informed about what the various committees and groups in the church are doing.
4.2.3.6 Respondents are encouraged to discover their particular gifts for ministry and service.

4.2.4 Approval and agreement is somewhat weaker, approximately 58% in regard to the following:
4.2.4.1 Important decisions about the life of the parish are rarely made without open discussion with the church leaders and members.
4.2.4.2 Members and groups get support and encouragement for trying something new in the parish.
4.2.4.3 The current morale of our church membership is high.
4.2.4.4 However, and perhaps surprisingly, the statement, “Opportunities for members to understand and use time, talent and treasure” receives an agreement rating of only 36%.

4.2.5 In interpreting these findings, perhaps it is reasonable to say that although respondents are generally very well motivated and eager to help, at least in terms of time and talent, there is an underlying desire for clearer direction, better communication, and development or acceptance of new ideas in light of uncertainty about what the future may hold for their parishes.

4.2.6 Eparchial offices including Communications, Education and Catechesis (UCREC), Youth Ministry and the Family and Life Office, as well as the Eparchial Pastoral Council, Financial Council, Bishop Budka Eparchial Stewardship Society (BBESS) and Archangel Gabriel Eparchial Ministries Inc. (AGEMI) are all important and active bodies of service and leadership in the Eparchy.

4.2.7 There are Church based organizations of laity such as the Ukrainian Catholic Women’s League, Ukrainian Catholic Brotherhood and Knights of Columbus. These groups have provided longstanding leadership throughout the history of our Church. They are working to maintain relevance and to speak to new generations of the faithful, particularly Youth (Children of Mary, Altar Servers and Youth Groups) and Young Adults.
4.2.8 Parish Administrative and Pastoral Councils provide active leadership in the lives of individual parishes in the Eparchy. They are working both to provide for the needs of their parish as well as to participate and act on Deanery or Eparchial wide initiatives such as Eparchial insurance, code of conduct and directives, parish constitutions, Eparchial support (Cathedraticum), vocation promotion, reporting, meetings of pastoral districts and stewardship initiatives.

4.2.9 There was some concern expressed that occasionally parishes are less welcoming than they could be and that sometimes people with the desire to contribute their ‘time, talent and treasure’ feel overlooked as they have never been personally asked or invited.

4.2.10 There is concern that sometimes we are not authentic about our own ‘brokenness’ and need of God’s mercy and love. Sometimes this can lead to a perception of the Church as judgmental—evoking ‘guilt’ rather than welcome, mercy, forgiveness and acceptance. We must acknowledge past hurts and mend these hurts, collectively seeking true conversion of heart.

4.3 Recommendations, Objectives and Action Items:

4.3.1 The Eparchial leaders and faithful will seek out and provide resources and training in the area of leadership to clergy, religious and lay leaders of the Eparchy. There are members of the Eparchy who have significant expertise in leadership principles and practice who might be brought in for in-service training. Based on sound principles of psychology and group dynamics, these principles, which when learned and put into practice, may benefit and enhance our work as Church without in any way jeopardizing the uniqueness of ecclesial life.

4.3.2 The Eparchial leaders and faithful will provide resources to parishes and organizations that will foster respectful and loving relationships and create an environment of acceptance, encouragement and gratitude for each other’s gifts. (See Also 1.3.4; 4.3.1)

4.3.3 The Communications Office, Youth Ministry Office and Family and Life Office will provide resources for organizations looking to attract and interest youth and young families to their ministry and service in the church.

4.3.4 The Eparchial leaders and faithful will strive to provide formation and education in evangelization beyond the existing programs, even consideration of alternate media/distance formation. While gathered programming is ideal, it is not always possible in today’s world. Even traditional gathered initiatives need to be more inclusive regarding convenience of times, places and dates. (See also 1.3.1; 5.3.1; 5.3.2)
5 Fostering and Serving Unity:

The Acts of the Apostles convey a sense of profound unity which existed among the members of the first community of Christ’s disciples: “The community of believers was of one heart and mind, and no one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they had everything in common.” (Act 4:32) This spiritual state of being of the first Christian community can be expressed with the term koinonia (communion) which conveys unity, harmony and common life. To be Church is to abide in the communion of the Holy Spirit, the grace of our Lord Jesus, and the love of God the Father. Thus, the unity of the church is an icon of the unity of Persons of the Holy Trinity. This unity can be seen on different levels: on the level of the Universal and Particular Church, the eparchy, and the individual parish. It may happen that through our weakness and sinfulness we do not reflect this unity. Ever aware of this, we all must cherish and foster unity, preserving full communion with the successor of the apostle Peter, the Holy Father, with the hierarchy of our Church, with the local bishops and pastors who act in their name.

The parish is a community of communities. In a parish there will be various prayer groups, brotherhoods, and youth organizations. All of these are called to strengthen unity and love among the members of the parish community. By supporting one another through prayer, by sharing God’s gifts and working together in a Christ-like spirit of service, we will be able to bring to life our synodal program: “Holiness of a united people of God.” We cannot be indifferent to the fact that the descendants of the Baptism under St. Volodymyr today are divided and estranged from one another. At the Last Supper, Christ prayed to His Heavenly Father for His disciples, “that all may be one” (John 17:21). Bearing in mind these words of Christ, I sincerely ask you all today – let us pray for the unity of the Church, let us pray for the restoration of unity of all the churches of the Kyivan tradition. And above all, in the spirit of the love of Christ, let us make every effort to avoid any words or actions which could damage our brothers and sisters in Christ or offend them. Even though at times we may be subjected to mockery and pressure, let us not give in to the temptation to respond to evil with evil. May Christ’s prayer for his wrong-doers and the teaching of the Apostle of the Nations become a testament for us: “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good” (Rom 12:21).

5.1 Introduction:

5.1.1 On the most basic and fundamental level, it is the union of man and woman in marriage that images the union of Christ and the Church. (Eph. 5:32) Indeed this “great mystery” of unity is often threatened. In family life, divorce is rampant even among those within the church. On the level of the Christian Church, there are many breaches of communion in both the West and East. Even within particular churches we often find discord.

5.1.2 We are reminded of our call to be peacemakers within our own community (Mt. 5:9), as well as our particular call to be a bridge of unity within the larger Church especially between the Roman Catholic Church with whom we share communion and the Eastern Byzantine Orthodox Church with whom we share
liturgical and theological traditions. As the Second Vatican Council reminds us, “The Eastern Churches in communion with the Apostolic See of Rome have a special duty of promoting the unity of all Christians...” (OE, 24) This duty is particularly significant regarding our Orthodox brothers and sisters.

5.1.3 Despite desire for reconciliation and unity there are deep wounds that require healing and conversions on both sides. Speaking of the Eastern Catholic Churches, St. John Paul II said that despite renewed efforts of the Churches to be united “These Churches carry a tragic wound, for they are still kept from full communion with the Eastern Orthodox Churches despite sharing in the heritage of their fathers. A constant, shared conversion is indispensable for them to advance resolutely and energetically towards mutual understanding.” (OL, 21) This deep conversion needs to take place at every level, arguably, beginning with the family. “While diversity in the expression of faith can and does contribute to the catholicity of Christ’s Church, those divisions resulting from discord and disagreement between Christians are an open contradiction of the Gospel.”

5.1.4 “Engagement in relationships with other Christians begins with an attitude of humility and repentance. The Decree on Ecumenism recognizes that the responsibility of the separation of the churches is shared by Catholics and other Christians alike (UR, 3), and does not hesitate to ask pardon of other Christians for our sins against unity.” (UR, 7)

5.2 Eparchial Position:

5.2.1 According to the survey results the distinctive character of the Ukrainian Catholic Church is a factor in preserving identity and fostering unity. Respondents consider the following as the most important aspects of what they find attractive about the Church.

5.2.1.1 The primary focus is on faith, other issues are secondary
5.2.1.2 Services are offered in Ukrainian
5.2.1.3 Services are offered in English
5.2.1.4 More traditional experience
5.2.1.5 The priest
5.2.1.6 Friends and hospitality

5.2.2 Throughout the Eparchy, there are pockets of outreach to our Orthodox brothers and sisters, such as joint projects and shared responsibility in areas of Ukrainian culture, heritage, facilities (auditoriums, cemetery clean up) and youth camps. There is sometimes joint prayer (panakhyda) for the victims of the Holodomor and cooperation in Ukrainian language bilingual schools.

5.2.3 As concerns over the nation of Ukraine escalate, there are renewed efforts between Catholic and Orthodox faithful to raise awareness and pray. These

18 Ibid.
efforts have resulted in cooperation and unity that needs to be nurtured in order to address other issues together.

5.2.4 There is also broader ecumenical prayer during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity participated in by the Eparchy in various locations.

5.3 **Recommendations, Objectives and Action Items:**

5.3.1 That the Eparchy reconsider the *Windows to the East* program as part of an overall ecumenical program—working in cooperation with the St. Thomas More College - University of Saskatchewan, the Orthodox Churches, and the Roman Catholic community. (See also 1.3.3; 4.3.4)

5.3.2 That Study Days for the laity and clergy and Summer Institute (in cooperation with the Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky Institute of Eastern Christian Studies (MASI),) be considered as an initiative by the Pastoral Council and Ukrainian Catholic Religious Education Center. (See also 1.3.5)

5.3.3 The Eparchial leaders and faithful will strive for a strong Eastern Christian focus regarding catechesis for all members of our families, both at home and at school. When materials are prepared from a Roman Catholic perspective, steps will be taken to provide for supplementary materials so that an Eastern Christian perspective is presented as well. Our distinct approach to prayer, traditions and liturgical-sacramental living must be sustained as part of the educational process.

5.3.4 A team approach offers support in trying times when facing challenges. How can parishes benefit from this approach? Participation in a group enhances a sense of belonging, support, motivation, spiritual friendship and evangelization in a way that personalizes a parish experience. It is nice to be known on a first name basis. In the context of the parish family, individual families should be supported and enhanced through establishing friendships for ministry. All members of a parish should be involved. This is addressed with groups including a cross section of all states of life such as families, widowed, divorced, single parent, single adults, elderly, newly married, etc. who are both the agents and benefactors of real, measurable ministry and growth in Christ.

6 **Missionary Spirit of the Parish Community:**

> Jesus Christ said to His disciples: “You are the salt of the earth…you are the light of the world” (Mt. 5:13-14), and by this He calls us to reach outside our church communities to carry Christ’s teaching into the world, to transform the world with the Spirit of Christ. A church community, renewed in the Holy Spirit, by its very life becomes a living sermon of Christ and His presence. Here it is worth mentioning one of the favorite phrases of Saint John XXIII, that “the parish is the fountain at the center of the village, to which all come to quench their thirst.” It is our wish that our parishes become such spiritual well-springs so that people would be drawn to them, and be able to find support and strength, love and grace – in one word, salvation.
Returning to the Lord’s commission with which we began this letter, we will note: Jesus Christ teaches us that we are to be ready to bear witness to Him not only with our life, but also in word. Frequently it is the case today that Christians are ashamed to acknowledge their faith, hiding it by their silence and passivity, instead of defending the Church of Christ and standing in the defense of the rights and dignity of the human person. Our pastoral initiatives, catechesis, Divine services, the reading of God’s word, etc. should make us strong and unwavering in our faith, as well as always ready “to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you” (1Peter 3:15).

With particular recognition and thanks, I would like to mention today those priests and religious, who, guided by a missionary spirit, provide spiritual care to our faithful outside of the territory of our homeland – in particular, to our emigrants. I also acknowledge those who preach the word of God in prisons, in the military, and to all who have yet to know and encounter Christ in their lives. Our Church as a whole must support them and pray that they may be strengthened by the Holy Spirit in this most important ministry.

6.1 Introduction:

6.1.1 “First and foremost, the world needs witnesses: persons who are animated by an encounter with Jesus, who has opened new horizons to them and who has given meaning to their lives. This is exemplified by Saint Paul, who wrote to the Galatians that ‘it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me.’ (Gal. 2:20)” Pope Francis reminds us that to be Christian and Catholic is to be a missionary disciple. “We no longer say that we are ‘disciples’ and ‘missionaries’, but rather that we are always missionary disciples.”(EG, 120)

6.1.2 Pope Francis says, “This is a Christian’s disease. We’re afraid of joy. … We’re afraid of being close to Jesus because this gives us joy. And this is why there are so many ‘funeral’ (mournful) Christians, isn’t it? Those whose lives seem to be a perpetual funeral. They prefer sadness to joy. They move about better in the shadows, not in the light of joy, like those animals who only come out at night, not in the light of day, who can’t see anything, like bats. And with a little sense of humour we can say that there are Christian bats who prefer the shadows to the light of the presence of the Lord.”

6.1.3 “Theology of the Body is the Holy Spirit’s solution to many of the problem which confront us. If effectively communicated through the witness of lived example, it can become the corner stone, the informing principle, of all our efforts to provide formation for individuals and families. And this clearly is our single greatest need, what Saint John Paul II referred to as ‘solid and deep formation’. On that condition, the family can become ‘an effective agent of

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evangelization in Canada.”21 In order to be the agents of evangelization they are called to be families formed in Christian anthropology and Trinitarian or incarnational theology. Fortunately, because of St. John Paul II’s deep Eastern roots, his theology of human love accords brilliantly with the theology of the Eastern Church.

6.1.4 The pastoral care of refugees and migrants is an important concern for the Church. In particular, those Ukrainian Catholics who come from countries where the faith is closely tied to culture, often experience ‘culture shock’ when they leave close-knit, faith-filled communities and without support can get drawn into a materialistic, consumerist culture.

6.1.5 Likewise persons with disabilities and their families can feel marginalized in both society and the Church, which should be a place of welcome, refuge and understanding.

6.1.6 When dealing with persons who experience same-sex attraction, gender identity issues, or same-sex partners who present a child to the church for sacramental preparation, there is a great pastoral challenge to “…develop a ministry which can maintain the proper balance between accepting persons in a spirit of compassion and gradually guiding them to an authentic human and Christian maturity.”(IL, 118)

6.1.7 The above issue, along with our culture’s many challenges dealing with sexuality, marriage and family, including all couples who choose to live together in a sexual relationship outside of sacramental marriage, needs to be met with pastoral sensitivity and love while clearly imparting the wisdom of the consistent teaching of the Church. “To defend the truth, to articulate it with humility and conviction, and to bear witness to it in life are therefore exacting and indispensable forms of charity. Charity, in fact, “rejoices in the truth”.

6.1.8 When people come to the church for all sacramental preparation, it can be an opportunity to evangelize. In other words, rather than merely following certain rubrics for formally receiving the sacrament, the person, couple or family must receive evangelization and instruction to enable them to “undertake a real journey of faith.”(IL, 107)

6.1.9 Courage to live and proclaim the faith is required in a post Christian culture.

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21 Elements of a National Pastoral Initiative for Life and the Family, CCCB, October 2011, 7.
such as we encounter in North America today. This was foretold by Pope Paul VI in his encyclical on Evangelization when he asked, “Is it then a crime against others' freedom to proclaim with joy a Good News which one has come to know through the Lord's mercy? And why should only falsehood and error, debasement and pornography have the right to be put before people and often unfortunately imposed on them by the destructive propaganda of the mass media, by the tolerance of legislation, the timidity of the good and the impudence of the wicked? The respectful presentation of Christ and His kingdom is more than the evangelizer's right; it is his duty.” (EN, 80)

6.1.10 “The Church has received the Gospel as a proclamation and a source of joy and salvation. She has received it as a gift from Jesus, sent by the Father ‘to preach good news to the poor’ (Lk 4:18) She has received it through the Apostles, sent by Christ to the whole world. (cf. Mk 16:15; Mt 28:19-20) Born from this evangelizing activity, the Church hears every day the echo of Saint Paul's words of warning, ‘Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel!’ (1 Cor. 9:16) As Paul VI wrote, ‘evangelization is the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelize’. This is also the case with regard to the proclamation of the Gospel of life, an integral part of that Gospel which is Jesus Christ himself. We are at the service of this Gospel, sustained by the awareness that we have received it as a gift and are sent to preach it to all humanity, ‘to the ends of the earth’ (Acts 1:8) With humility and gratitude, we know that we are the people of life and for life, and this is how we present ourselves to everyone…. Together we all sense our duty to preach the Gospel of life, to celebrate it in the Liturgy and in our whole existence, and to serve it with the various programs and structures which support and promote life.”(EV, 78/9)

6.2 Eparchial Position:

6.2.1 The 2014 survey showed a need for improved outreach in a number of areas. The following received an approval rating of less than 40% on average:
   6.2.1.1 Pastoral support to those dealing with challenging life situations
   6.2.1.2 Pastoral counseling to help members deal with spiritual/faith problems
   6.2.1.3 Support to those requiring conflict resolution
   6.2.1.4 Opportunities for sharing the Good News of the Gospel with others
   6.2.1.5 Activities and programs with groups from other faith traditions or denominations
   6.2.1.6 Religious education opportunities for parents and families.

6.2.2 Service for the following groups received an average approval below 35%:
   6.2.2.1 Married couples
   6.2.2.2 Separated and divorced adults
   6.2.2.3 Family configuration of all kinds
   6.2.2.4 Members of the wider community
   6.2.2.5 Non-participating members

6.2.3 All of these rank below 20% on the list of the attractive features of our Church:
6.2.3.1 More contemporary experience
6.2.3.2 Child and youth programs
6.2.3.3 Social outreach/service and justice
6.2.3.4 Adult education and formation activities.

6.2.4 In conjunction with initiatives considered under “Service to our neighbour” as well as “Communion – Unity”, there must be close assessment of specific needs and opportunities for development of the missionary spirit and for personal engagement that would be of greatest value to those we may be trying to reach. Better communications is a necessary ingredient.

6.2.5 In the Vision 2020 Pastoral Plans, it is noted that outreach to those that have left the church needs to be accomplished in an effort to heal and reconcile. Individual members and families need to reach out to those around them. However, they need the help of a clear message about who we are and what we believe.

6.3 Recommendations, Objectives and Action Items:

6.3.1 That the Eparchy adapt a program entitled “I believe because…” which gives all clergy and members clear instructions on how to tell their ‘faith story’ and helps them to share it in 100 words or less. Some of these could be posted online hosted by the Eparchy and in the Eparchial News. They also could be short ‘selfie’ videos that could be posted online. (See also 2.3.4)

6.3.2 That we remember the cost our ancestors and recently members of our Church in Ukraine have suffered for the faith. In so remembering, we renew our understanding and commitment to courageously spreading the Gospel. In venerating our Saints and Martyrs, promoting and knowing their stories, we recognize and impart a living faith for which it is worth the cost of living and dying. (See also 1.3.5)

6.3.3 That all of our clergy and catechists have ongoing resources and formation in the Theology of the Body to enhance their preaching and teaching. (See also 1.3.5)

6.3.4 The Eparchial Leadership and faithful will provide supportive pastoral and congregational care where there is a need. Likewise, the Eparchial Pastoral Council will advocate for resources and support to the Parishes for those who are marginalized, in particular the disabled, immigrants, the elderly, the grieving, the separated and divorce, those who experience same sex attraction. Appropriate Eparchial ministries may be contacted in that regard for additional support.

6.3.5 That the Youth Ministry of the Eparchy continue to be supported and that its vital work with the youth of the Eparchy be given the priority it deserves to help each and every deanery establish active and strong youth and young–adult outreach and events.
6.3.6 Increasingly more people are staying in touch with parish life online. People seek answers to questions they have regarding spirituality, theology, faith and life challenges online, as well. Our presence online as parishes is a tangible sign of a missionary spirit to those in our parishes as well as those to whom we are called to reach out. Our parishes and the Gospel message of Good News is not heard in society to the extent we are not visible or present online. People who could encounter Christ in a parish via their computers, hand-held devices or other electronic avenues need to be reached. Today they are on the peripheries of our ‘radar’. In the very near future, if not already, electronic communication will largely replace bulletins and telephone calls. Electronic communication and presence is no longer an option but a necessity. Consequently, each parish is encouraged to establish a website with a webmaster that updates information frequently and a social media presence in cooperation with our Eparchial Social Media Office.

6.3.7 That we proclaim our vision of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church as a vibrant, growing community that is welcoming to all (Ukrainians and non-Ukrainians). That we are striving to be a joyful, welcoming, supportive and caring community that proclaims and provides hope, healing and the loving mercy of Jesus Christ. (See also 1.3.7)

7 Conclusion of the Eparch:

As your Eparch, I commend all parishes, families and individual faithful to the protection and guidance of Our Mother, Theotokos. May our faith be renewed through prayer, study, reflection and good works. May the Vibrant Parish be your hope of encountering Christ, as described in the pastoral letter Our Father and Head, His Beatitude Sviatoslav. Renew yourselves in the hope that is offered by Pope Francis in his Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Gaudium, speaking candidly about the beauty and urgency of a missionary parish that calls all of us to be missionary-disciples.

With my apostolic blessing, I remain in service to Christ and His Church,

Most Rev. Bryan J. Bayda, CSsR
Eparch of the Eparchy of Saskatoon

*In the year of our Lord, Two Thousand and Fourteen, in the month of October on the 9th day.*
PRAYER

May families always be united, as you and the Father are one, and may they be living witnesses to love, justice and solidarity; make them schools of respect, forgiveness and mutual help, so that the world may believe; help them to be the source of vocations to the priesthood and the consecrated life, and all the other forms of firm Christian commitment.

Protect your Church and the Successor of Peter, to whom you, Good Shepherd, have entrusted the task of feeding your flock. Grant that the Church in America may flourish and grow richer in the fruits of holiness.

Teach us to love your Mother, Mary, as you loved her. Give us strength to proclaim your word with courage in the work of the new evangelization, so that the world may know new hope.

Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mother of America, pray for us!22

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22 St. Pope John Paul II composed a prayer (part of which appears) at the end of his letter Ecclesia In America. He said, "In concluding this Apostolic Exhortation, in which I have taken up the proposals of the Synod Fathers, I gladly welcome their suggestion to compose a prayer for the families of America."
F. APPENDICES
   a. Canon Law Re: SOBOR

Eparchial SOBOR (Assembly)
Directives, themes, structure and implementation plan

1. CCEO

Chapter II.
Organs Assisting the Eparchial Bishop in the Governance of the Eparchy.

Art. I. The Eparchial Assembly

Canon 235 - The eparchial assembly assists the eparchial bishop in those things which regard the special needs or advantage of the eparchy.

Canon 236 - The eparchial assembly is convened as often as circumstances warrant it in the judgment of the eparchial bishop after he has consulted the presbyteral council.

Canon 237 - §1. It is the right of the eparchial bishop to convene the eparchial assembly and to preside over it personally or through another, to transfer, postpone, suspend, or dissolve it.
   §2. If the eparchial see becomes vacant, the eparchial assembly is suspended by the law itself until the new eparchial bishop issues a decree on the matter.

Canon 238 - §1. The following are to be summoned to the eparchial assembly and must be present for it:
   1° the coadjutor bishop and the auxiliary bishops;
   2° the protosyncellus, syncelli, judicial vicar and eparchial finance officer;
   3° the eparchial consultors;
   4° the rector of the eparchial major seminary;
   5° the protopresbyters;
   6° at least one pastor from each district, to be elected by all of those who actually have the care of souls, the protopresbyter presiding over the election; another presbyter is to be elected as an alternate to fill in for him if he is impeded;
   7° the members of the presbyteral council and some delegates of the pastoral council, if it exists, elected by the same council in the manner and number established by particular law;
   8° some deacons elected according to the norms of particular law;
   9° superiors of monasteries sui iuris and some superiors of other institutes of consecrated life which have houses in the eparchy, to be elected in the manner and number established by particular law;
   10° lay people elected by the pastoral council, if it exists, or designated in some other manner determined by the eparchial bishop so that the number of lay people does not exceed one-third of the members of the eparchial assembly.
   §2. The eparchial bishop, if he judges it opportune, can invite to the eparchial assembly others also, not excluding persons of other Churches sui iuris, to all of whom he can even grant the right to vote.
§3. Some observers from non-Catholic Churches or ecclesial communities can also be invited to the eparchial assembly.

Canon 239 - Those who must be present at the eparchial assembly, if detained by a legitimate impediment, cannot send proxies who would attend in their name at the eparchial assembly, but must notify the eparchial bishop of the impediment.

Canon 240 - §1. With due regard for the right of any Christian faithful to pose questions to be treated at the eparchial assembly, only the eparchial bishop is to determine the matters to be discussed in that assembly.
   §2. At a suitable time the eparchial bishop is to appoint one or several commissions whose duty it is to prepare the matters to be discussed in the assembly.
   §3. The eparchial bishop is also to see that, at a suitable time, all who are summoned to the assembly are given an agenda of the matters to be discussed.
   §4. All of the proposed questions are to be submitted to free discussion in the sessions of the eparchial assembly.

Canon 241 - The eparchial bishop is the sole legislator in the eparchial assembly, the votes of others being only consultative. He is the only one who signs the decisions which have been made in the eparchial assembly which, if they are promulgated in the same assembly, begin to oblige immediately unless expressly provided otherwise.

Canon 242 - The eparchial bishop is to communicate the text of the laws, declarations and decrees which have been decided upon at the eparchial assembly to the authority which the particular law of his Church su iuris has determined.
Dear Clergy, Religious, and Laity of the Eparchy of Saskatoon,

We find ourselves in a time where tensions have arisen and led to violence in Ukraine. Civil and religious liberties are being denied by the current civil government and we continue to offer our prayers and messages of solidarity to all the people of Ukraine, particularly our Patriarch Sviatoslav, the hierarchy and faithful of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church.

Meanwhile in Canada, we continue to enjoy religious freedom and with our hearts and minds continue to follow the promptings of the Holy Spirit to make our parishes vibrant according to Vision 2020. We are not free from other forces and challenges to our faith in God, however. The obstacles we encounter daily as families in the Eparchy are often serious and leave lasting pain and strife.

So that we might find strength in dealing with these challenges to wholesome, loving and prayerful families, we are called to lift up one another in our struggles. The family is a building block of a vibrant parish and having a vibrant parish where all people can encounter Christ means we need to have families that draw strength from each other. Indeed, families are called to evangelize families.

This will be the theme for the upcoming SOBOR 2014 that I am invoking for Saturday May 3, 2014 - Families Evangelizing Families. The SOBOR will be preceded and assisted by other initiatives and activities across the Eparchy. Training sessions will be held in each deanery, led by Fr. Ivan Nahachewsky, regarding the development of pastoral plans, followed by planning sessions in parishes where we will be invited to apply the six themes of Patriarch Sviatoslav’s Pastoral letter, including understanding and applying the word of God in our families, to a pastoral plan individually tailored for each parish. A comprehensive eparchial survey has been prepared which includes questions about the needs of individuals and families. This questionnaire will be available both in printed form and through the internet. All of our faithful, thirteen years of age or more, are asked to complete the survey. Results will be made available to each parish to assist the development or enhancement of programs for families.

At the national and international levels, Pope Francis has called for an extraordinary synod in the fall of 2014 to discuss the subject of the family. This synod will see heads of Eastern churches, presidents of the bishops’ conferences, and heads of Curia offices gather at the Vatican for a meeting entitled “Pastoral Challenges of the Family in the Context of Evangelization”. The results of our SOBOR in May 2014 and our subsequent plans will contribute to the working documents of this synod. All of this will lead up to the Patriarchal SOBOR of the UGCC in 2015.

According to the CCEO a motion was passed at the December 9, 2013 Eparchial Consultor’s meeting to hold the SOBOR on May 3, 2014 in Saskatoon. It is compulsory for all clergy and religious to participate in the SOBOR. If for some reason they are not able to attend in person, they are asked to send an explanation of their situation to the Chancery office informing us why.

May God continue to give strength and perseverance to our brothers and sisters in Ukraine. May we honour them by exercising the rights we enjoy to meet freely without fear of persecution and share our minds and hearts with one another for the glory of God’s families and parishes in the Eparchy of Saskatoon.

With continued service to Christ and the Catholic Church, I remain,

Most Rev. Bryan J. Bayda, C.Ss.R.
Eparchial Bishop of Saskatoon
c. Preface to the SOBOR I of May 3, 2014—“Families Evangelizing Families”

Dear Clergy, Religious, Faithful of the Eparchy of Saskatoon and People of Good Will,

In 1974 Pope Paul VI wrote Evangelii Nuntiandi, an Apostolic Exhortation about proclaiming the Gospel. With three questions he describes a challenge that was taken up.

“...fidelity both to a message whose servants we are and to the people to whom we must transmit it living and intact is the central axis of evangelization. It poses three burning questions, which the 1974 Synod kept constantly in mind:

- In our day, what has happened to that hidden energy of the, which is able to have a powerful effect on man's conscience?
- To what extent and in what way is that evangelical force capable of really transforming the people of this century?
- What methods should be followed in order that the power of the Gospel may have its effect? (Pope Paul VI; Evangelii Nuntiandi, 1974 Apostolic Exhortation, #4)

After several decades of prayer in the church and prompting of the Holy Spirit, our current Holy Father Pope Francis, in his Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Gaudium, reminds us of our baptismal vocation.

In virtue of their baptism, all the members of the People of God have become missionary disciples (cf. Mt 28:19). All the baptized, whatever their position in the Church or their level of instruction in the faith, are agents of evangelization, and it would be insufficient to envisage a plan of evangelization to be carried out by professionals while the rest of the faithful would simply be passive recipients. The new evangelization calls for personal involvement on the part of each of the baptized. (Pope Francis; Evangelii Gaudium, 2014 Apostolic Exhortation, #120)

We are gathered here today, then, to be faithful to the Good News of Christ which is made visible through personal witness. We encounter Christ and we share that encounter with others. We always do this as members of a family. We do this with joy. We do this to evangelize others as we have been evangelized. Therefore, we are asked by Pope Francis to participate personally through prayer and reflection on the family in his February 2, 2014 letter. We need to adopt the necessary pastoral means to help families face current challenges in life.

I ask you, therefore, to pray intensely to the Holy Spirit, so that the Spirit may illumine the Synodal Fathers and guide them in their important task. As you know, this Extraordinary Synodal Assembly will be followed a year later by the Ordinary Assembly, which will also have the family as its theme. In that context, there will also be the World Meeting of Families due to take place in Philadelphia in September 2015. May we all, then, pray together so that through these events the Church will undertake a true journey of discernment and adopt the necessary pastoral means to help families face their present challenges with the light and strength that comes from the Gospel.

God is speaking to us through the prophet Joel when he says, “I will pour out my spirit upon all mankind. Your sons and daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions; even upon the servants and the handmaids, in those days, I will pour out my spirit.” (Joel 3:1-2) Likewise, in the Acts of the Apostles we read, “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you and you will be my witnesses.” (Acts 1:8) The Holy Spirit comes to us as a result of the promise of God. Let us receive the Holy Spirit ever more fully. Let us intercede for others so that all people, as members of families, discover their true human dignity and thus, witness to the presence of God in their lives.

In Christ,

Most Reverend Bryan J. Bayda, CSsR
Eparch of Saskatoon
d. Chapter III. Parishes, Pastors and Parochial Vicars

Canon 279 - A parish is a definite community of the Christian faithful established on a stable basis in the eparchy, whose pastoral care is entrusted to a pastor.

Canon 280 - §1. Generally, a parish is to be territorial, that is, it embraces all the Christian faithful of a certain territory; if however, in the judgment of the eparchial bishop, having consulted the presbyteral council, it is expedient, personal parishes are to be erected based on nationality, language, enrollment of the Christian faithful in another Church sui iuris or even upon some other definite determining factor.

§2. It is the competency of the eparchial bishop to erect, modify and suppress parishes after consulting the presbyteral council.

§3. A lawfully established parish is a juridic person by the law itself.

Canon 281 - §1. The pastor is to be a presbyter to whom, as the principal cooperator of the eparchial bishop, is entrusted the care of souls as their proper shepherd in a determined parish under the authority of the same eparchial bishop.

§2. A juridic person cannot validly be a pastor.

Canon 282 - §1. The eparchial bishop, but not the administrator of an eparchy, after consulting the presbyteral council, and with the consent of the major superior of a religious institute or society of common life in the manner of religious, can erect a parish in the church of the same institute or society with due regard for can. 480.

§2. This erection must be done by means of a written agreement made between the eparchial bishop and the major superior of the religious institute or society of common life in the manner of religious. This agreement is to state precisely what parochial ministry is to be fulfilled, the persons to be attached to the parish, the financial arrangements, and what are the rights and obligations of the members of the same institute or society in that church and what are those of the pastor.

Canon 283 - The eparchial bishop is not to remove from the pastor the partial or total care of certain groups of persons, buildings and places which are in the territory of the parish and are not exempt by law, except for a grave cause.

Canon 284 - To entrust a parish to a member of a religious institute or society of common life in the manner of religious, the major superior is to propose a suitable priest of his institute or society to the eparchial bishop for appointment, with due regard for agreements entered into with the eparchial bishop.

The eparchial bishop, by means of a decree, can name a pastor for a term of five years, renewable for an additional 5-year term. If the eparchial bishop deems it necessary, he can also require that the proposed candidates be given an appropriate exam.

Canon 285 - §1. In order for a presbyter to be named pastor it is necessary that he be of good morals, sound doctrine, zealous for souls, endowed with prudence and the other virtues and gifts which are required by law in order to fulfill the parochial ministry in a praiseworthy manner.

§2. If the presbyter is married, good morals are required in his wife and his children who live with him.

§3. After he has weighed all the circumstances, the eparchial bishop is to confer a vacant parish in the one whom he judges suitable without any partiality; in order to make a judgment concerning a person's suitability he is to listen to the proto-presbyter, conduct appropriate investigations and, if he considers it opportune, listen also to other Christian faithful especially clerics.

Canon 286 - When the eparchial see is vacant or impeded, the administrator of the eparchy or another who governs the eparchy in the interim, is competent:

1° to name as pastor a presbyter proposed by a major superior according to the norm of can. 284, §2;

2° to name a pastor from other presbyters if the eparchial see has been vacant or impeded for at least one year.

Canon 287 - §1. A pastor is to have the parochial care of only one parish; however the care of several neighboring parishes can be entrusted to the same pastor due to a dearth of presbyters or in other circumstances.
§2. In the same parish there is to be only one pastor; however, a parish may be entrusted to several presbyters; the eparchial bishop is to determine accurately the rights and obligations of the moderator, who directs the common action and reports on it to the eparchial bishop, and what belongs to the competence of the other presbyters.

Canon 288 - §1. The pastor acquires the care of souls by canonical provision; however, he is not allowed to exercise his office unless he has taken canonical possession of the parish. §2. The introduction of the pastor into the parish takes place in the manner determined by the eparchial bishop.

Canon 289 - §1. In carrying out the function of teaching, the pastor is bound by the obligation of preaching the word of God to all of the Christian faithful so that they may grow in faith, hope and charity rooted in Christ and that the Christian community may render that witness of love which the Lord commanded; the pastor is also to lead the Christian faithful to full knowledge of the mysteries of salvation by catechetical formation accommodated to the age of each one; for giving this formation he is to seek not only the assistance of members of religious institutes or societies of common life in the manner of religious, but also the cooperation of the laity. §2. In carrying out the function of sanctifying, the pastor is to take care that the celebration of the Divine Liturgy is the center and culmination of the whole life of the Christian community; and also to labor that the Christian faithful are fed with spiritual food through devout and frequent reception of the sacraments and through conscious and active participation in the divine praises; he is also to be attentive especially to confer the sacrament of penance to foster the Christian life; for which reason he is to make himself readily available to administer this sacrament; even with the help, if it is appropriate, of other priests who understand various languages. §3. In fulfilling the function of governing, the pastor is first of all to know his flock; since he is the minister of all the sheep, he is to foster growth in the Christian life both in individual members of the Christian faithful and in associations, especially those directed to the apostolate, and in the entire parish community; therefore he is to visit the homes and schools insofar as the pastoral function requires it; to look out zealously for adolescents and children; to exercise paternal love for the poor and sick. Finally he is to have a special care for laborers and strive that the Christian faithful offer assistance in the works of the apostolate.

Canon 290 - §1. In all juridic affairs the pastor represents the person of the parish. §2. Sacred functions of greater importance, such as the celebration of the sacraments of Christian initiation, the blessing of marriages, without prejudice to can. 302, §2, the ecclesiastical funeral rites, belong to the pastor; therefore, parochial vicars are not allowed to carry them out except by permission, at least presumed, of the pastor himself.

Canon 291 - All offerings except those treated in cann. 715-717 which are received on the occasion of performing the pastoral function by the pastor and other clergy attached to the parish are to be put into the parish account unless it is obvious that such would be contrary to the will of the donor in the case of voluntary offerings; the eparchial bishop is competent, after consulting the presbyteral council, to establish regulations which provide for the allocation of these offerings as well as those which provide for the remuneration of the pastor and other parish clergy according to the norm of can. 390.

Canon 292 - §1. The pastor is bound by the obligation of residing in the parish house near the parish church. However, the local hierarch, for a just cause, can permit him to reside elsewhere so long as the parochial ministry suffers no harm from it. §2. Unless there is a serious reason to the contrary, the pastor may be absent from the parish for a maximum of one continual or interrupted month per year for his vacation; the days which the pastor spends once a year in spiritual retreat are not counted as his vacation days; if the pastor wishes to be absent from the parish beyond a week he is bound to inform his own local hierarch of this. §3. The eparchial bishop is to issue norms which provide for the care of the parish by a priest possessing the necessary powers and faculties during the absence of the pastor.

Canon 293 - The pastor is to remember to manifest in his daily contacts and solicitude to the baptized and non-baptized, Catholic and non-Catholic, a truly priestly and pastoral example of ministry and to give the proper witness of truth and life to all; and, as a good shepherd, to seek out those baptized in the Catholic Church who have absented themselves from the reception of the sacraments or even fallen away from the faith.
Canon 294 - The pastor is obliged to celebrate the Divine Liturgy for the faithful of the parish entrusted to him, every Sunday and on Holy Days of obligation. If more than one parish is entrusted to a pastor or church, he is obliged to celebrate only one Divine Liturgy for the intentions of the people entrusted to him. If the pastor, with a just cause, is unable to fulfill this obligation, then he can delegate it to the associate or to another priest.

Canon 295 - In the parish there are to be financial, pastoral and other councils, which are instituted to assist the pastor in fulfilling his pastoral obligations. The manner of formation and extent of the activities of the councils is to be determined by the eparchial bishop. Each parish council is to have its own statutes.

Canon 296 - §1. The parish baptismal and chrismation register is to be kept in two copies: one to be kept in the parish church, the other in the archives of the eparchial curia. Besides the books named in common law, the pastor is to see to it that the following books are properly filled out and preserved, namely registers of:
- prenuptial investigations and marriages,
- funerals,
- parish financial statements in two copies,
- requests for Divine Liturgies,
- the sick,
- obligations to foundations, and also the minutes of parish meetings and a list of parishioners.
§2. In the baptismal register are also to be noted the enrollment of the baptized into a determined Church sui iuris according to the norm of can. 37, the administration of chrismation with Holy Myron as well as those things which pertain to the canonical status of the Christian faithful by reason of marriage, with due regard for can. 840, §3, adoption, and sacred orders or perpetual profession in a religious institute; these notations are always to be noted on the certificate of baptism.
§3. Certificates which are given about the canonical status of the Christian faithful and all the documents which can have juridical importance are to be signed by the pastor himself or his delegate and sealed with the parish seal.
§4. In the parish there is to be an archive in which the parish books are kept along with the hierarchial letters and other documents which ought to be preserved due to necessity or usefulness; all of these are to be inspected by the eparchial bishop or his delegate during his canonical visitation or at another suitable time; the pastor is to take care that they not come into the hands of outsiders.
§5. The older parish books are also to be preserved according to the norms of particular law.

Canon 297 - §1. The pastor ceases from office by resignation accepted by the eparchial bishop, expiration of term, removal or transfer.
§2. When a pastor has completed his seventy-fifth year of age, he is requested to submit his resignation from office to the eparchial bishop, who, after consultation with the eparchial consultors, is to provide for the suitable support of the priest whose resignation he accepted.

Canon 298 - If the parish becomes vacant or the pastor is hindered by any cause from exercising the pastoral function in the parish, the eparchial bishop is to appoint as soon as possible another priest as parochial administrator.

Canon 299 - §1. The administrator of a parish has the same rights and obligations as the pastor unless the eparchial bishop determines otherwise.
§2. A parochial administrator is not permitted to do anything which can prejudice the rights of the pastor or harm parish goods.
§3. When he has fulfilled his office the parochial administrator is to render an account to the pastor.

Canon 300 - §1. When the parish is vacant and when the pastor is absolutely hindered from exercising his pastoral function, before the appointment of an administrator of the parish, the parochial vicar assumes the interim care of the parish; and, if there are several parochial vicars, the one senior in presbyteral ordination; and if there are no vicars, the nearest pastor; the eparchial bishop is to determine at an early date which parish is considered closer to which parish.
§2. The one who assumes the interim governance of a parish is immediately to inform the eparchial bishop.

Canon 301 - §1. One or several parochial vicars, who must be presbyters, can be associated with the pastor whenever it is necessary or suitable for fulfilling the proper pastoral care of the parish.
§2. A parochial vicar can be designated either for the whole parish or for a determined part of the parish.
§3. The eparchial bishop freely names a parochial vicar, having heard, unless he prudently judges otherwise, the pastor, or if it concerns a member of a religious institute or society of common life in the manner of religious, observing can. 284, §2.

Canon 302 - §1. The rights and obligations of the parochial vicar are derived from common law as well as from the letters of the eparchial bishop, except for the obligation mentioned in can. 294; unless determined otherwise, the parochial vicar must, in virtue of his office, assist the pastor in the entire parochial ministry, and when necessary, substitute for the pastor.

§2. In virtue of his office, the parochial vicar does not have the faculty of blessing marriages; nevertheless, this faculty can also be conferred upon him even generally, by, besides the local hierarch, the pastor within the boundaries of the parish; if conferred upon him, the parochial vicar can also confer this faculty upon other priests for individual cases.

§3. The parochial vicar, as the cooperator of the pastor, provides daily a preeminent and active assistance in the pastoral function. Between the pastor and the parochial vicar there should always be a fraternal relationship, mutual love and reverence; they are to assist each other by consultation, help and example, studiously providing parochial care in harmonious and common will.

§4. The parochial vicar is bound by the obligation of residing in the parish according to the prescriptions of the eparchial bishop or lawful custom; the parochial vicar has the same rights to vacation as the pastor.

Canon 303 - The parochial vicar can be removed by the eparchial bishop for a just cause; however, if the parochial vicar is a member of a religious institute or society of common life in the manner of religious, can. 1391, §2 is to be observed.
References:
Books:

Church Documents:
*Elements of a National Pastoral Initiative for Life and the Family*, CCCB, October 2011.
*The Vibrant Parish—a place to encounter the living Christ*, Pastoral Letter of His Beatitude Sviatoslav, December 2, 2011.

Websites:
Vatican [http://w2.vatican.va/content/vatican/en.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/vatican/en.html)
Eparchy of Saskatoon Sobor II
Oct 8 & 9, 2014

Attendees:

1. + Bryan Bogolub, CSP
2. Fr. Pyotr Kolomyaty
3. Fr. Paul Malin
4. Fr. Peter Paraskov
5. Rev. Ivan Perkach
6. Fr. Pyotr Shtysh
7. Fr. Anthony Dotsiev, CSP
8. Fr. Denian Howard, CSP
9. Fr. Myroslav Romanets
10. Fr. Cyril Lobaich
11. Fr. Ivan Yaremchuk, CSP
12. Fr. Basil Melnychuk
13. Fr. Vasyl Knysh, CSP
15. Fr. Volodymyr Shymchuk
16. Fr. A. Muzik
17. Fr. Jeffrey Stelmach
18. Fr. Walter Kostick
19. Fr. A. Kudri
20. Fr. M. Wischauer, CSP
21. Fr. Grzegorz Kozicki
22. A. Ryszard Kosarzewski
23. Sr. Maria Kondrasewicz
24. Rev. Marcin Laskowski
25. Laurence Frere
26. John Kowalski
27. Janusz Walczak
28. Edward Popowicz
29. Angela Wasyliw
30. Emma Przybyl
31. John Nicholas Starnes
32. Ed R.
33. Carolee Kryl
34. Deborah Larmour
November 21, 2014

Dear Clergy, Religious and Faithful of the Eparchy of Saskatoon,

After adhering to the resolutions of the Synod of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church regarding the convocation of an Eparchial Sobor in the Eparchy of Saskatoon according to the Code of Canons of Eastern Churches, a Sobor was held on October 8 & 9, 2014. Prayerful and serious consideration of the theme Vibrant Parishes – a place to encounter the living Christ by all the delegates present at the two-day event resulted in the Sobor 2014 Document.

With this letter, we officially promulgate this document and it is our hope that it will serve as a guide and source of inspiration to reflect on every personal encounter with Christ. May this reflection lead to personal conversion, communion and solidarity in our families, parishes, the Eparchy and beyond. Thus, families evangelizing families, with the joy of the Gospel, will become a daily reality.

I extend a sincere expression of gratitude to all those of the Eparchy and friendly volunteers who contributed to this work. Their gifts of time, treasure and talent are truly inspiring to continue building the kingdom of God.

This Document will take effect on December 12, 2014.

With continued service to Christ and the Catholic Church, I remain,

Most Rev. Bryan J. Bayda,
C.Ss.R
Eparch of Saskatoon