The background features a faint, artistic illustration of several saints with halos, dressed in traditional robes. In the center, a small, detailed drawing of a church with a golden dome is visible. The overall style is reminiscent of religious art or a book cover design.

***D*irectives for *V*ocational
*A*wareness in the
*U*krainian *G*reek-*C*atholic
*C*hurch**

**Patriarchal Commission for Priestly Formation
2012**



Office of the Bishop
Eparchy of New Westminster

15 July 2012

Beloved in Christ!

The Patriarchal Commission for Priestly Formation has prepared the present document, *Directives for Vocational Awareness in the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church*, so that we may all be more fully aware of our role in fostering priestly and religious vocations in our Church.

Every ordained priest and man or woman in religious consecrated life can recall someone, who nourished the seed of their vocation. It may have been a parent, a close relative, a parish priest or a good friend, someone who inspired them to embark on a path of discipleship and service in Christian love and an encouraging spirit.

In presenting this document, I ask you to pray for vocations to the priesthood and religious life in our Church, and to support those who are in vocation discernment and formation for ordained ministry. The Lord always provides for His Church, calling those he loves into His Holy service. I encourage you to

have open eyes and an open heart, in order to recognize vocations in your family and in your community.

I would like to express my gratitude to His Beatitude Sviatolsav and the members of the Synod of Bishops of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church for inspiring our Commission members to undertake this task. My heartfelt appreciation also must be expressed to the members of our Commission for their efforts and work in producing this document.

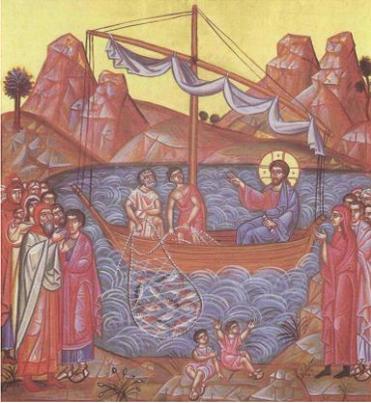
With assurance of my prayerful best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a plus sign followed by the name 'Ken' in a cursive script.

+Ken

Head of the Patriarchal Commission for Priestly Formation

Introduction



As he passed by the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting their nets into the sea; they were fishermen. Jesus said to them, “Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men.” Then they abandoned their nets and followed him. (Mk 1: 16-18)

Our Blessed Savior chose for himself a group of apostles; he looked for them, found them and called them. These were men who as they were going about their daily work, heard a voice calling them, listened to it, and took it to heart. Following this voice they became Christ’s Apostles.

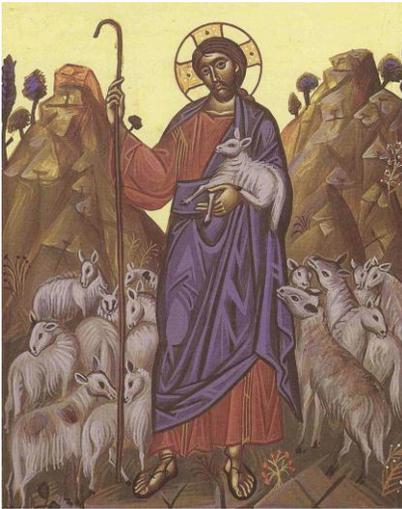
As in the time of the apostles, when this voice was first heard, today Christ continues to call his followers: “Come, follow me!” Christ did not address his call to everyone. Those to whom He spoke were responsible to respond to His word. This means that, just as the apostles were called, those who are now called to serve today must leave everything behind, in order to follow Christ, to become a son of God and heir to the kingdom of God.

Christ entrusts to his Church the task of promoting, finding and educating vocations to the priesthood and religious life. Every member of the Church, according to one’s state in life is also responsible for promoting vocations, so that there will never be a lack of workers in Christ’s vineyard.

The aim of our *Directives* is to inspire every member of the People of God: bishops, priests, religious, and Christian

families – by means of prayer and action, to help those who are called to acknowledge their vocation, and respond to God’s call.

1. Role of the eparchial bishop in regard to promoting Vocational Awareness



*The first representative of Christ and the Church in priestly formation is the bishop as pastor of Christ's Church (see Acts: 20, 28) and the person responsible for the local Church. It is he who authentically discerns the internal voice of The Holy Spirit.*¹

A vocation is a gift from God, which Christ gives to those chosen by Him. He not only calls them but also confirms them in their vocation. The mission of the church is to continually encourage every generation of Christ’s disciples to follow Him, to be totally dedicated to work in Christ’s Vineyard. Promoting vocations to the priesthood is one of the major responsibilities of the bishop’s service in the Church.

To promote vocational awareness the Eparchial Bishop:

¹ See: Directives for the Preparation of Candidates to the Priesthood in the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church, Kyiv, 2009, 12.

- prays for vocations, and encourages the faithful to pray for vocations

- preaches about vocations and encourages preaching about vocations especially during his canonical visitation;

- always encourages priestly vocations, even though they may not be actually needed in his eparchy;

- prescribes one month of the year to be dedicated to vocation awareness, during which he sponsors a youth pilgrimage for this purpose;

- when possible he appoints chaplains to various youth organizations, schools, and universities;

- promotes vocational awareness through the mass media, and encourages various religious ministries in parishes;

- at least once a year, he organizes a meeting with the clergy of the eparchy to discuss the theme of religious vocations;

- encourages respect for the religious and clerical state;

- forms a Commission for Vocation Awareness and appoints an Eparchial Vocation Director, who is to head the Commission, to which belong representatives of the seminary, eparchial clergy, institutions of religious life and the laity.

Thus, the bishop continually seeks vocations and promotes vocation awareness through his own example, and through his episcopal ministry in the eparchy. Occasionally he must bear witness to the words of our Lord: “One sows and another reaps” (Jn. 4: 37), that is he may not immediately see the fruit of his prayers and efforts in regard to promoting vocations. It cannot be forgotten that Our Lord, Jesus Christ, never abandons his Church (Mt. 28: 20) and is concerned about vocations to the

priesthood and religious life. Every vocation is first of all a gift from God, and not simply a personal decision or a human concern, but as Christ said: “It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you” (Jn. 15: 16).

2. Role of the Eparchial Vocation Director in promoting Vocational Awareness



Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, was one of the two who heard John and followed Jesus. He first found his own brother Simon and told him, “We have found the Messiah” (which is translated “Anointed”). Then he brought him to Jesus. (Jn. 1: 40-42).

As the Apostle Andrew brought his brother Peter to Jesus, so the Vocation Director brings to Christ those who are open to hear the Divine calling. Every priest should encourage and support vocations to the priesthood and the religious life.

In the Church there are various types of vocations and various means by which the Holy Spirit calls people to serve in the Church. The eparchial bishop appoints a director of vocations. The responsibility of the vocation director is to assist the faithful of the eparchy in promoting religious vocations. His work consists in encouraging individuals who manifest an interest in the priesthood and religious life to seriously reflect

on choosing their vocation in life. The vocation director assists them in discerning their vocation through his personal involvement with them.

The Eparchial Vocation Director:

- is chosen from those individuals who have experience in the field of spiritual formation;
- encourages the development of vocation awareness in his eparchy;
- is a member of the eparchial curia;

The Eparchial Vocation Director is responsible:

- to pray for vocations;
- to preach about vocations;
- to organize meetings among the children and youth of church organizations, and especially for altar boys;
- to provide witness in his personal life of the dignity of the clerical state;
- to prepare visual aids, such as signs, booklets, prayer cards, web-site, etc.;
- to employ the resources of the mass media in promoting vocations;
- to ensure that material on the theme of vocations is included in the catechetical programs for children and the youth;
- to keep in close contact with the seminarians, and the seminary staff;

- to cooperate with the eparchial clergy in respect to vocation awareness;
- to maintain mutual respect, cooperation, and trust among everyone who is involved with vocations;
- to organize regional meetings with everyone involved in promoting vocations;
- to coordinate and organize visits of seminarians to parishes, with the consent of the Rector of the seminary;
- to encourage the seminarians to share the experience of their vocation with others;
- to propose a plan of vocation activities for seminarians to the Rector of the seminary;
- to present a report to the eparchial bishop recounting his activities;
- to keep in contact with candidates of the priesthood after they have finished their studies in the seminary until they have been ordained to the diaconate;
- to maintain a data base on the candidates to the seminary, the seminarians, and the seminary graduates;

For the continuing development of vocations to the priesthood, the director of vocations should continually encourage his fellow priests to turn their attention to those individuals who manifest a desire to follow Christ in the priestly and religious life.

3. Role of the Parish Priest in regard to Vocational Awareness



The parish priest as an intimate disciple of Christ and as pastor he plays a fundamental role in respect to vocational awareness through his preaching and example. The fathers of the Second Vatican Council teach us: “All priests especially are to manifest an apostolic zeal in fostering vocations and are to attract the interest of youths to the priesthood by their own life lived in a humble and industrious manner and in a happy spirit as well as by mutual priestly charity and fraternal sharing of labor.”²

Vocations to the priesthood are inspired by the example of the pastor’s life

Every pastor and member of the clergy is called to be a living icon of Christ the Good Pastor: “I am the good shepherd. A good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.” (Jn. 10: 11). Following the example of our Divine Savior, each member of the clergy assumes the “form of a slave” (Phil. 2: 7) and “become all things to all,” (I Cor. 9: 22) in order to give his life as a ransom for many. (see: Mk. 10: 45). So emphatic is Christ’s call to the consecrated life! Joyously embracing all the

² See: Decree on Priestly Formation, *Optatam totius*. Vatican II, October 28, 1965. Paulist Press: Minneapolis, 1986, 2.

difficulties of consecrated service, the priest prepares the ground for the seed of new vocations in the souls of the children of God. By means of his love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control, (see Gal. 5: 22-23) the priest displays a sincere and attractive image of the priest's life in the community.

Promoting Vocation Awareness in the Parish

The children and youth first encounter Christ's priest in the parish community, a community of living faith, which inspires vocations to the religious life. It is in the parish where the priest fulfills his priestly, prophetic, and royal ministry, by which he can and should inspire new vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

The parish priest promotes vocational awareness through his **priestly ministry** by:

- personal prayer and communal prayer with his parishioners;
- engaging children and youth to actively participate in the liturgical services;
- the sacrament of confession and through spiritual direction;

The priest inspires vocational awareness through his **prophetic ministry** by:

- diligent preparation of sermons and explanation of Sacred Scripture;
- spiritual talks and catechetical lessons;
- frequent encounters with the youth;

- visitation of families, and various members of the parish;
- organization of pilgrimages, visiting holy places, and summer youth camps;
- visits to seminarians, young priests, monks and nuns, and other young people.

The priest promotes vocational awareness through his **royal ministry** by:

- promoting charitable ministry to one's neighbors, doing good works, providing personal assistance to those in need, support for the elderly, to orphans, and individuals with various personal problems;
- promoting and working for social justice;
- being honest, conscientious, and courteous in the administration of the parish;
- encouraging people to cooperate in the various activities of parish life.

4. Role of the Family in promoting Vocation Awareness



God – Creator of all -- also created the family. St. Paul the apostle reminds us that the family community is also a family Church (see: I Cor. 16: 19). Through this community God brings children into the world with various vocations. Among these vocations is the calling to the priesthood and religious life. The beginning of a vocation to the priesthood or the religious life first begins at home in the Christian family.³

When the Christian family is fervent in the love of God and prayer, then it is a fertile ground for vocations to the priesthood and religious life where the children first learn to know and love God, to hear His word and respond to His call. The parable of the sower (Mt. 13: 1-23) helps us understand the importance of good “ground” for the growth and formation of religious vocations.

For the growth of religious vocations in the family it is important for the parents to:

- be icons of God’s love for their children;
- teach their children to pray together as a family at home;

³ See: Directives for the Preparation of Candidates to the Priesthood in the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church, Kiev, 2009, 16; CCEC can. 329, § 1, 1.

- take an active role in liturgical and parish life;
- receive the sacraments often;
- be examples of Christian piety;
- know the truths of the Christian faith and teach them to their children;
- teach their children to be caring and generous, and always to trust in God's grace;
- speak to their children about service in the Church in a constructive manner.

5. Role of the Christian Community – Schools, Brotherhoods, and Organizations in promoting Vocation Awareness



The human person, by nature is a social being. Through God's providence, the individual achieves self-realization through participation in various social communities. In addition to the Christian family and parish community, other such communities are Christian schools, parish brotherhoods, and other organizations.

The Christian school and various Parish Organizations promote vocational awareness by:

- instilling Christian values in the children and youth;
- helping children understand how a vocation to the priesthood or religious life can have permanent significance in a changing world;
- manifesting the value of a religious vocation in the personal lives of religious;
- inspiring and supporting the choice of religious vocations among the youth.

6. Conclusion

In our contemporary culture, the Church needs zealous and holy clergy and religious;

“ ... such individuals are needed who are able to respond like the apostles did at any given moment: who in hunger and privation, satisfied with whatever is available, are ready to work for years, living from day to day in whatever circumstances God grants, even though they may have no more than a crust of bread to eat, traveling from place to place, without having a roof over their heads, simply having one purpose in life: that people may return to God.”⁴

According to the words of Patriarch Sviatoslav in his Pastoral Letter, *“The Vibrant Parish – a Place of Encounter with the Living Christ”*: *“...who will implement these important and much needed initiatives? ... the answer to this question is*

⁴ Sermon of Metropolitan Andrew to Seminarians, Pastoral Letter 1901.

*simple: each and every one of us is responsible for the renewal of our parish communities.”*⁵

Also, all of us in the Christ’s Church are called to search, cultivate, and form vocations to the priesthood and religious life. We all are co-responsible so, we will never be short of workers in the Lord’s Vineyard.

⁵ Pastoral Letter of His Beatitude Sviatoslav to the Clergy, Religious and All the Faithful of the Ukrainian Catholic Church “*The Vibrant Parish – a place to encounter the living Christ*”, Patriarchal Curia of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church, “Drukarski Kunshty“: Kyiv, 2012.

