

Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA

Youth Sobor 2007

Chairperson – Anastasia Markiw – St. Peter & St. Paul, Carnegie, PA

Secretary – Natasha Walewski – St. Peter & St. Paul, Carnegie, PA

Delegates:

Alexander Carman – St. Luke – Warners, NY

Daria Gapon – Holy Ascension – Maplewood, NJ

Lesia Mahlay – St. Vladimir – Parma, OH

Alexander Shevchuk – Holy Ascension – Maplewood, NJ

John Siwko – St. Andrew – South Bound Brook, NJ

Patrick Scanell – St. John – Johnson City, NY

We, the 2007 Youth Sobor delegates, have reviewed the vision statement from the previous Youth Sobor of 2004, and have made suggestions detailed to a specific statement of this vision. They are as follows:

“We the participants of the 1st Youth Sobor envision our Church of the future as a place where our main focus is on Christ and our faith, while not forgetting to honor our heritage.”

This statement is explored in our second session discussions.

“A place where our people encourage and pray for our clergy and our clergy are an active part of parish life”.

- In order to build a close relationship with your parish priest, or with any clergy, you cannot be afraid of them; one must feel comfortable with clergy, this must begin at a young age.
- One way to become comfortable with them would be to have a sleepover at the parish with chaperones and the priests attend to be a part of the event.
- Clergy have more frequent get-togethers with one another to expand friendships.
- Clergy should dress appropriately during all church functions, especially involving the community.

“A place where religious education would not always be segregated by age and that all people would be well informed, educated Orthodox Christians about all aspects of our faith-who would then fully participate and live all of those aspects”.

To expand our religious education, we suggest the following:

- Adult Education Classes, Classes that would encompass people of all ages within the parish, youth should attempt to attend church school up until at least 18 years of age.
- Classes to train parishioners to be knowledgeable and personable greeters for the church
- We should have access to the Library at the Consistory.
- There should be books that would explain the services as you are participating in them.
- Bulletin articles about the weekly Gospel reading or printed sermon.
- Children’s Gospel lesson in Bulletin
- Print Religious Education opportunities in the bulletin
- Provide mini lock-ins
- Provide pamphlets about Orthodoxy in the pews or vestibule
- Parish workshop days/sessions on topics such as the eight tones, feast days, bible study, etc...

“A place where it is normal for there to be regular prayer and liturgical services, more than just on a Sunday”.

Within our own parishes, and throughout the country, we need to do more than just write the times of services in the Bulletin every Sunday.

- We can, however, do things such as set up a prayer place in the forest or on the parish property
- Have the church open all the time, if possible
- Have services with shut-ins, at nursing homes, etc
- A radio show
- Traveling services, in which the entire parish can go and visit surrounding parishes

“A place of peace”.

- To promote peace, we could think about having uniting activities, an anonymous suggestion box, and give more hugs.
- The Kiss of Peace during the Liturgy is important and should be taken part in and mean it.
- Be open to change, and talk about problems one-on-one, face-to-face, rather than talking behind people’s backs.
- Hold meetings outside of the church building.

“A place welcoming to all people, where converts will be given proper introduction to the faith”.

In order to make converts feel more comfortable, we need to make them feel welcome.

- Provide introduction to Orthodoxy classes,
- Provide/produce Orthodox booklets (i.e. Orthodoxy in a Nutshell)
- Invite visitors to coffee hour after church and spend time with them.
- Talk about Orthodoxy openly with friends.

“A community that supports all life”

- Encourage people to go and participate in the Walk for Life.
- Support Zoe for Life.
- Parish should welcome new babies and families.
- Become good stewards of resources.

“Exposes non-Orthodox to Orthodoxy and raises awareness about Orthodoxy which will bring to it the same respect within the secular world as others faiths”.

It is imperative that we raise awareness about the faith through out the church. Parishes could create informational pamphlets, pod casts, hold Church fairs, make/sell Orthodox related bumper stickers and DVD s and hold dances.

We need to be open about our religion and when confronted about our faith, be comfortable in responding and defending what we believe in.

Participate in Bring a Friend to Church Day, during which you could bring in missionary speakers (and other presentations), not only in your own parish, but also to those of other religions.

“A community that begins by helping those outside of the church so that when we meet our Lord He will say to us, “for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me”. (Matthew 25:35-36)”

- It is important that we become involved(if not already) in charity and missionary work.
- It would also be very helpful to offer spiritual and financial support (i.e high school/college mission teams).

- Raise awareness about Orthodox Prison Ministry.
- Support our troops by:
 - Phone cards, helping to provide video conferences between troops and families.
- Go to a food bank and volunteer.
- Hold a clothing drive for the orphans in Ukraine and/or the poor in your community
- Volunteer at hospitals
- Reach out to pregnant girls in your school.
- Parish Guardian Angels – individuals that would:
 - Keep in touch with families/individuals in the parish that have been laid off, are alone or that have nothing left and provide support as appropriate
 - Provide transportation to those who may need it.

Pray for those whom the Lord has put before us that are in need spiritually, financially, and physically.