

# 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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.**