

**“JESUS CHRIST - OUR HOPE” (I Tim. 1:1)**  
**Pastoral letter of His Beatitude Sviatoslav, Head and Father of the UGCC,**  
**to the clergy and faithful of the UGCC and all people of good will**  
**on the occasion of the Jubilee Year 2025 of God**

Most Reverend Archbishops and Metropolitans,  
God-loving Bishops, Very Reverend Clergy, Venerable Monastics,  
Dearly Beloved Brothers and Sisters,  
in Ukraine and throughout the world

*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Rom. 15:13).*

**Beloved in Christ!**

***Introduction***

1. By following the paths of this world, man will not find peace until he or she is not strengthened in the hope in God. This “restlessness” is very aptly described by St. Augustine: “It is you who make us seek joy in your praises, for You created us for Yourself, and our hearts will not rest until they rest in You.”<sup>1</sup> This is what the Lord says, calling us: “Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest.” (Matt. 11:28). It is as if He were saying: draw near to the hope that is in Me, and you will find rest from fatigue and fear.
2. It is not surprising, then, that it is the Christian virtue of hope that is the through thread of the message by which Pope Francis proclaimed 2025 a Year of Jubilee. He invited not only the faithful of the Roman Catholic Church, but also the Eastern Catholic Churches to participate in it. In particular, the Holy Father writes: “In a particular way, I would like to invite the faithful of the Eastern Churches, particularly those already in full communion with the Successor of Peter, to take part in this pilgrimage. They have suffered greatly, often even unto death, for their fidelity to Christ and the Church, and so they should feel themselves especially welcome in this City of Rome that is also their Mother and cherishes so many

---

<sup>1</sup> The Confessions, I, 1.

memories of their presence... For them, the hope born of the knowledge that they are loved by the Church, which does not abandon them but follows them wherever they go, will make the symbolism of the Jubilee all the more powerful."<sup>2</sup>

3. In response to this call of Pope Francis, I invite the clergy, monastics and laity of our Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church to mark this Jubilee Year 2025 of God with the virtue of Christian hope, which is like an anchor that affirms us in faith in the risen Christ, the people of God, who, through the various challenges and trials of the third millennium, are pilgriming in the boat of the Universal Church to the Kingdom of God. Growing in the virtue of hope helps a person to see the presence of God in every moment of life in the world around him or her. Let us live the year of God 2025 in the spirit of biblical and ecclesiastical traditions of celebrating the anniversary, remembering the faithfulness of God, Who throughout the history of salvation, has always shown to those who believe in Him and keep His commandments. Trusting in God, relying on His care and concern, helps us overcome various difficulties and trials.

#### *Old Testament Jubilee - A harbinger of True Hope*

4. The hope of God's people in the power of God, in the fact that the Lord will always be with His people, the certainty that the God of Israel is faithful to His promises and the covenant He has made with His people - this is the through thread of the Holy Scriptures. In the Old Testament, God gradually revealed His plan for the salvation of people, preventing them from perishing after the fall and giving him hope for future redemption and restoration of relationship with Him. One of the most striking Old Testament episodes that reveal God's care for his creation is the account of the establishment of the Jubilee year, contained in the book of Leviticus (chapter 25).
5. From this book we learn that the jubilee symbolized God's care for his people and emphasized the need for mercy and compassion for others, reminding people that their attitude towards their neighbors should reflect God's attitude towards them. The Jubilee year was also a time of rest for the earth, which was a reminder that the whole earth belongs to God, and people are only its temporary stewards: "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it" (Ps. 24:1). The principles and precepts of the Jubilee Year relate to the return to the roots, the restoration of justice, the practice of mercy, the liberation from slavery, the forgiveness of debts and reconciliation. It is a time of hope and rebirth, a time to return home and restore families, a time to renew our relationships with God and our neighbors. It is a time of thanksgiving to the Lord and enjoying His gifts.
6. The Jubilee Year points to God's infinite mercy and the ability to change even what seems hopelessly lost. The Old Testament prescriptions regarding its celebration are instructive: the future of any nation depends not only on just laws, their implementation and honest

---

<sup>2</sup> Bull "Spes non confundit" ("Hope does not disappoint"), 5.

judgments, but also on mercy, that is, the absence of indifference, compassion for the neighbor, and the ability to forgive each other. The law may be just, but human beings are weak and imperfect, which often leads to the accumulation of debts, offences and debt's slavery. Without justice, the people have no development, and without mercy, they have no future. This plan of God's mercy is carried out through the ministry of the Servant of the Lord, of which, in particular, the prophet Isaiah writes: "Here is my servant whom I uphold, my chosen one with whom I am pleased, Upon whom I have put my spirit; he shall bring forth justice to the nations" (Isaiah 42:1-2).

### *Jesus Christ - The Fulfillment of Hope*

7. In the New Testament, Jesus Christ fulfills the Old Testament jubilee with His mission. In His first public sermon, He declares: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for He has anointed Me. He sent me... to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord." (Luke 4:18-19). God's Anointed One is sent "to bring glad tidings to the lowly, to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and release to the prisoners, to announce a year of favor from the Lord and a day of vindication by our God, to comfort all who mourn" (Isaiah 61:1-2). The Lord performed "redemption" and "deliverance" for the Old Testament chosen people, leading them out of Egyptian slavery. The "redemption" by His blood and the "deliverance" from the bondage of sin was performed for us by the Lord Jesus Christ "in accord with the riches of His grace" (Eph. 1:7).
8. Christ, fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy about "the year acceptable to the Lord" (cf. 61:1 - 3:7), proclaims the presence of the Kingdom of God among his people. It is He - the Lord, present among His people - who creates the space of that Kingdom, which is manifested through a number of so-called messianic signs: He heals the sick, restores justice, frees people from sin in the Paschal Mystery and proclaims the Kingdom of God, thus giving all mankind the hope of true liberation. Christ repeatedly emphasizes the liberating power of his mission: "So if a Son frees you, then you will truly be free" (Jn 8:36). This freedom, which He grants us, is the basis of our hope, even in the most difficult times. The Good News of the risen Lord is a message of hope for the final liberation of people, which brings the Christian newly into the world, not in order to obey its laws, but in order to open up new, more perfect and infinite perspectives.

### *Christ's Church Brings Hope*

9. After Christ's ascension, His saving mission is continued by the Church. The first disciples and apostles of Christ not only lived in the hope of true liberation and eternal life in the Kingdom of God, but also passed this hope on to others. The Apostle Peter emphasizes that one should not lose hope, "although now for a little while you may have to suffer through various trials" (I Pt. 1:6), because these trials lead to the strengthening of faith. The Apostle

Paul presents hope as the fundamental basis of our salvation: “For in hope we were saved” (Rom. 8:24), emphasizing that it is an integral part of the work of salvation. He teaches that this Christian virtue is not the fruit of human effort or positive thinking, but a gift from God “and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the holy Spirit that has been given to us” (Rom. 5:5). Hope goes beyond mere optimism and requires deep faith and steadfastness, the ability to hold on to God’s promises even when their fulfillment is not yet visible.

10. If the virtue of hope is closely connected to faith, then the sin of unbelief is obviously based on hopelessness. We know from the book of Genesis that sin in its original form is human’s desire to be like God (cf. 3:4-5). The consequences of this sin are: hopelessness, indifferent submission, inertia. Consequently, anxiety and disappointment arise, seeding all living beings with the seeds of indifference and fear. St. John Chrysostom teaches: “For the reason why the devil plunges us into thoughts of despair is that he may cut off the hope which is towards God, the safe anchor, the foundation of our life, the guide of the way which leads to heaven, the salvation of perishing souls. For by hope it is said, we are saved (Romans 8:24). For this assuredly it is which, like some strong cord suspended from the heavens, supports our souls, gradually drawing towards that world on high those who cling firmly to it, and lifting them above the tempest of the evils of this life.”<sup>3</sup> That is why the Holy Sacrament of Repentance is so important as a path to spiritual renewal and reconciliation with God, the Church of Christ, whose connection with us, granted by grace, is broken by sin.
11. The book of Revelation of John the Theologian presents us as a powerful source of hope for Christians in difficulty. It presents God as the Almighty, who controls the course of history and will have the final say in the drama of mankind. The images of the new heavens and the new earth (cf. 21:1-4) offer unshakable hope for the final restoration of all creation, for God “will wipe every tear from their eyes” (21, 4), bringing comfort and hope to those who suffer. The Venerable Bede (†735) wrote: “Since the fiftieth year in the Law is a jubilee... This number denotes the very peace of the higher world, when, as the Apostle says, at the last trumpet the dead will rise and we will be changed into glory: then the labors of this age will cease and the heavy debts for all sins will be canceled. Then all the chosen people will rejoice in one contemplation of the Divine visitation, fulfilling this longed-for command of our Lord and Savior: “Be still, and know that I am God...” (Ps. 46, 11)<sup>4</sup>.

*The Ukrainian Local Church is a symbol of hope for the people*

12. “The Son of God took on human flesh in a specific historical time and a concrete place. He was a son of the Jewish nation, accepting their customs, culture, and mentality. Similarly,

---

<sup>3</sup> An Exhortation to Theodore after His Fall, II.

<sup>4</sup> Homilies on the Gospels 2, 17.

the Gospel of Christ—the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow—is “clothed” in the preaching of the Church with the mentality and culture of various nations. In this way, distinctive church traditions are formed, and self-governing Churches are born and grow.”<sup>5</sup> Thus, when time was fulfilled, the Son of God was “incarnate” in the history of our people through the Baptism of Saint Volodymyr in 988. Reflecting on this event, the holy Pope John Paul II wrote: “... the almighty God, the Lord of the Universe and the Lord of the history of all nations, embraced the people of Kievan Rus with His infinite love and brought them to the light of the Gospel of His Son Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world.”<sup>6</sup> With the adoption of Christianity, there was hope for the spiritual renewal and transformation of all our people, as Metropolitan Hilarion of Kyiv aptly put it: “And we are no longer called idolaters, but Christians; not without hope, but with hope for eternal life.”<sup>7</sup>

13. Through St. Volodymyr’s baptism, God invited our people to come out to meet His liberating grace, “armed” with faith, hope and love. He calls us to “make straight his paths” (Luke 3:4), that is, to act, and not just wait for a miracle, because man is His co-creator and helper (cf. I Cor. 3:9). Christian hope encourages us to actively cooperate with God, to combine our efforts with God’s grace, which “acts where an individual provides personal assent.”<sup>8</sup> And a “Perfect cooperation between human will and God’s grace is exemplified in the Annunciation of the Most Pure Virgin Mary... By virtue of her assent, the God-bearer became a participant in the mystery of salvation.”<sup>9</sup> Our ancestors well understood the important role of the Mother of God in the history of salvation and cherished deep piety for Her. Even Prince Yaroslav the Wise gave our land under Her holy protection, and later our church and state leaders repeatedly renewed this dedication. And so, being the “hope of the hopeless”, the Mother of God-Oranta has been guiding our people for centuries, taking care of them and praying for them, helping them to overcome various trials.
14. One of our characteristic features, to which the Ukrainian local church tradition owes to the Cyril and Methodius heritage, is openness to unity and dialogue, the ability to look for ways of reconciliation and mutual understanding, the ability to overcome contradictions between Western and Eastern spiritual centers. This was demonstrated by the hierarchs of the Kyivan Church through The Union of Brest (1596), which implemented the decision of the Council of Florence (1439) in our lands in order to restore church unity. This event is a testament to the profound wisdom and foresight of our ancestors who understood the importance of spiritual unity in keeping hope alive. Having restored the ideal of the unity of the Church of Christ and being in communion with the Roman Apostolic See, the UGCC

---

<sup>5</sup> Catechism of the UGCC “Christ - Our Pascha”, 301.

<sup>6</sup> *Magnum Baptismi donum*, 1.

<sup>7</sup> Слово про закон і благодать // Золоте слово. Хрестоматія літератури України-Русі епохи Середньовіччя IX–XV століть. – Т. 1. – Київ, 2002. – С. 291.

<sup>8</sup> Catechism of the UGCC “Christ - Our Pascha”, 745.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 746.

remains the heir of the Kyivan church tradition, preserving and nurturing the spirituality, theology, canonical order and liturgical rite of Byzantium. Patriarch Lubomyr noted: "History preserves a number of cases when the Church of Kyiv clearly testified to its awareness of the inseparability of the chiton of Christ. We believe that this awareness lives on to this day, serving as a source of hope."<sup>10</sup>

15. Over the centuries, especially during the Russian imperial and communist rule, our Church has been subjected to numerous persecutions and trials. The enemy forces, seeking to destroy the identity of our people, resorted to various methods, including attempts to destroy the UGCC by forcibly converting its faithful to Russian Orthodoxy. These sad moments of our church history are the violent actions in Podillia (1770 and 1794-1796), on the Right Bank Ukraine (1839), in the Kholm region and Podlachia (1875), in Galicia (during the First World War and 1939). In the memory of our contemporaries, the consequences of the Lviv pseudo-council of 1946, which drove the UGCC underground and lived in conditions of persecution for almost half a century, like the early Christians during the catacomb period. The faithfulness of our clergy, monastics, and laity, who risked their lives to remain faithful to Christ's commandment "That they may all be one" (Jn 17:21), is a testimony of deep hope and trust in God. This steadfastness made it possible to preserve the faith and church structures and, even in the most difficult times of persecution, inspired the faithful to the responsible mission of Christian witness. The past of our people, full of constant trials and struggles for freedom, convinces us of God's faithfulness and His constant help and unfailing protection, which He assured through the prophet Isaiah: "Fear not, I am with you; be not dismayed; I am your God. I will strengthen you, and help you, and uphold you with my right hand of justice" (Isaiah 41:10). These words are inspiring even in the darkest times, when it seems that there is no hope.
16. The Lord spoke through the prophet Jeremiah: "Again I will restore you, and you shall be rebuilt, O virgin Israel; Carrying your festive tambourines, you shall go forth dancing with the merry-makers" (Jer. 31:4). We can also apply these words to our Church, which, having emerged from the forced underground in the late 1980s and early 1990s, became a symbol of the revival of the entire Ukrainian society. The development of our church structures and educational institutions in the following years resembles the rebuilding of Jerusalem after the Babylonian captivity: "You see the evil plight in which we stand: how Jerusalem lies in ruins and its gates have been gutted by fire. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, so that we may no longer be an object of derision" (Nehemiah 2:17).
17. An important milestone in the history of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church was August 21, 2005, the day of the return of the seat of its Head to Kyiv, the cradle of the baptism

---

<sup>10</sup> Слово Блаженнішого Любомира, митрополита Києво-Галицького Української Греко-Католицької Церкви, з нагоди започаткування повернення осідку митрополита до Києва «Один Божий народ у краї на Київських горах», 13 квітня 2004 року.

of Rus-Ukraine by St.Volodymyr, where our Church was born and from which a foreigner had been trying so persistently for centuries to oust it. This event reflects the restoration of historical justice and its desire to serve all of Ukraine. It has become another vivid symbol of revival and hope for the Ukrainian people, demonstrating the ability of the Church to adapt to new realities and respond to the challenges of the time, remaining faithful to its spiritual mission.

18. The history of the Church of Christ in Ukraine is a vivid example of the indomitable spirit and unquenchable hope of our people. Through centuries of trials and obstacles to her eschatological fulfillment, she invariably remained a reliable support for her sons and daughters. The roots of the faith of the Ukrainian people go deep into our history, forming and nourishing their unique spiritual and cultural heritage. The Church of Christ has become an integral part of the Ukrainian identity, shaping the worldview, culture and traditions of the people, inspiring the preservation and development of spiritual values, strengthening faith in a better future. In this Jubilee Year, we are particularly acutely aware of the connection with our past and its significance for our future. The legacy of St.Volodymyr the Great, Yaroslav the Wise, Metropolitan Hilarion, Hieromartyr Josaphat Kuntsevych and other saints, martyrs, confessors and righteous people of the Ukrainian nation reminds us that hope is not just a feeling, but an effective force that drives us to create, unite and constantly move forward. Today, in times of trials and war, we can draw strength and inspiration from this rich spiritual heritage. Faith, unity and unquenchable hope laid down by our great ancestors remain the pillars on which the Ukrainian nation rests, helping us overcome difficulties and build a future worthy of our glorious history. Based on these experiences, we can witness hope for all peoples who seek peace and justice. The Jubilee Year inspires a deeper understanding of our mission as Christians – to be the light in the world (cf. Mt 5:13-14), a hope for those who are despairing, and a source of support for those in need.

*The virtue of hope is the strength of the Christian life*

19. Our Christian hope is not in vain, but is based on faith in God, who throughout history has repeatedly delivered his people and restored justice. Today, as we suffer from the horrors of Russian armed aggression, we must draw strength and hope from the many lessons of the history of salvation and our national history, which remind us that God never forsakes his people and that after trials there is always restoration and rebirth. Therefore, let us heed the words of the psalmist: “Let Israel say: ‘His mercy endures forever!’ ... In danger I called on the Lord; the Lord answered me and set me free.” (Ps. 118:2, 5). The prophet Isaiah also encourages us: “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name: you are mine. When you pass through the water, I will be with you; in the rivers you shall not drown. When you walk through fire, you shall not be burned; the flames shall not consume you”

(Isaiah 43:1-2). These words still sound for us today as a source of support and inspiration, promising us the care and protection of the Lord God.

20. Christian hope is a virtue and a trait of a believer. It is faith in God, as the complete openness of a human being to the all-conquering power of the risen Savior, that gives birth to Christian hope. The believer experiences a new creation and a new birth in the Holy Sacraments of Baptism and Chrismation and becomes a new creature in Christ, as the Apostle Paul teaches: "So whoever is in Christ is a new creation: the old things have passed away; behold, new things have come" (II Cor. 5:17). In this sacrament, the Heavenly Father, through the Paschal mystery of His Son, by the power and action of the Holy Spirit, puts into the bowels of each baptized person the germ of eternal life, the life of the Risen One. The Apostle Peter teaches about this germ as a new beauty of man, hidden within the human heart (cf. 3:3-4). It [the germ of eternal life] is not an immovable or dead treasure, which we are only called to preserve. Not at all! The Christian life of faith is a development and daily growth in this new life that no one can take away from us. Therefore, Christian faith in God gives rise to the hope of the resurrection and eternal life, which is realized in love. This is why the virtue of hope is the strength of the Christian life, the inner source of invincibility and resilience that enables us to endure all persecution and patience and to reach our ultimate goal – eternal life in God<sup>11</sup>.
21. The essence of Christian hope is the expectation of the fullness of the Kingdom of Heaven, already given to man here, in the midst of temporal life. The whole paradox of this hope is that we expect the fulfillment, the final manifestation of what we already have in the germ. We hope for the resurrection and eternal life, being partakers of it during earthly life. The Apostle Paul teaches: "If then you were raised with Christ, seek what is above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Think of what is above, not of what is on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ your life appears, then you too will appear with him in glory" (Col. 3. 1-4). The possession of the gift of resurrection and eternal life, which we receive in the Holy Sacraments of the Church, reveals the unshakable certainty of Christian hope, which will surely be fulfilled in the life of the age to come. This real communion and the foretaste of what we hope to come fully in the future distinguishes the *virtue of hope* from the ordinary human *feeling of hope*. The latter leads us to hope for something uncertain, to expect something doubtful and something that is not always possible to be realized. Christian hope, on the other hand, is always certain. The Apostle assures us all: "Hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the holy Spirit that has been given to us" (Rom. 5:5).
22. The power of Christian hope, which we received from our parents, has been for us the source of the eternal rebirth and immortality of our Church and native people. We received this power as a gift of the Baptism of Prince Volodymyr, Equal-to-the-Apostles. Our Baptizer

---

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Catechism of the UGCC "Christ - Our Pascha", 840.



put into the very heart of his people such a treasure that became the eternal heritage of the Ukrainian people of God – the Church of Kyiv. This legacy was pointed out by Pope Benedict VI in his encyclical “Spe Salvi” (“Saved by Hope”), revealing the meaning of the saved hope with the help of a passage from the Epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Hebrews: “Remember the days past when, after you had been enlightened, you endured a great contest of suffering. At times you were publicly exposed to abuse and affliction; at other times you associated yourselves with those so treated. You even joined in the sufferings of those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, knowing that you had a better and lasting possession” (10:32-34). The Holy Father emphasizes that faith gives people this better and lasting possession, which is not external, but internal, because it is contained within their being. This treasure serves a person as a support, which is stronger and more reliable than material income or earthly wealth. That is why the early Christians even gladly accepted the loss of their possessions, for their true treasure could not be taken away from them. Such a power of Christian hope gives birth to a new kind of freedom: “A new freedom is created with regard to this habitual foundation of life, which only *appears* to be capable of providing support, although this is obviously not to deny its normal meaning. This new freedom, the awareness of the new “substance” which we have been given, is revealed not only in martyrdom, in which people resist the overbearing power of ideology and its political organs and, by their death, renew the world. Above all, it is seen in the great acts of renunciation, from the monks of ancient times...and those of our contemporaries who enter modern religious Institutes and movements and leave everything for love of Christ, so as to bring to men and women the faith and love of Christ, and to help those who are suffering in body and spirit.”<sup>12</sup>

23. In our modern history, Christian hope manifests itself in a new, sometimes even heroic, way. We are witnesses of Christian hope when we see our newest heroes who, in the name of love for God and the Motherland, go to death every day – hope then has the face of a warrior. When we see our doctors and paramedics who do not get tired of treating the wounds of our people every day, although they know that the war tomorrow may cause new ones, hope has the face of a doctor. When we see energy workers and rescuers who dismantle the rubble every day and work to restore the infrastructure of our cities and villages, although they know that tomorrow, perhaps, a new missile strike will destroy their work, in this case, hope takes their face. Hope also takes the face of our young people, who in the middle of the war know how to love, build new families, and give birth to children, although they realize that they belong to the generation that often attends funerals of their peers more often than weddings. Christian hope is the secret of the resilience and invincibility of our people, who know how to defend freedom at the cost of their own lives in the midst of war, dream of a better future, and build today a better world for their

---

<sup>12</sup> Encyclical letter “Spe Salvi” (“Saved in Hope”), 8.

children. And the source of this hope is the risen Christ, who in this kingdom of death points us to the source of eternal life that pulsates within us.

24. In the context of the current Russian aggression, when many of us have lost our homes, lost loved ones or are forced to live under occupation, the words of the Apostle Paul are gaining special importance: "Jesus Christ is our hope" (cf. I Tim. 1, 1). Christian hope precedes suffering or even death by the expectation of a glorious participation in the Lord's resurrection: a person already lives in hope in Christ, who resurrects the dead. He is our hope, because His Pascha does not stand before us as a goal that has yet to be achieved, but engages us as an event taking place today in our lives and in our history. On the sacrifice of His Son, the Lord established a new order for the world: "Behold, I make all things new" (Rev. 21:5). We can hope that on the sacrifice of the present generations of Ukrainians, a new Ukraine will arise by the will of God – it will appear as the fruit of our common efforts and as the fulfillment of our hope. This our hope is fueled by the words of the prophet spoken in the Old Testament: "Thus speaks the Lord God:...I will gather them from all sides to bring them back to their land. I will make them one nation upon the land... No longer shall they defile themselves with their idols, their abominations, and all their transgressions. I will deliver them from all their sins of apostasy, and cleanse them so that they may be my people and I may be their God. They shall live... on the land where their fathers lived; they shall live on it forever, they, and their children... I will make with them a covenant of peace; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them, and I will multiply them, and put my sanctuary among them forever. My dwelling shall be with them; I will be their God, and they shall be my people" (Ezekiel. 37. 21-27).

***Jubilee 2025 is an opportunity to strengthen our hope in the Lord***

25. The Jubilee Year is a special occasion for each of us to restore our relationship with God, to reconcile with our neighbors and ourselves. We restore our connection with God through repentance and intense prayer. "Ask, and it will be given you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you," our Savior encourages (Matt. 7:7). Prayer opens our hearts to God's support, strengthens us, and helps us trust in the Lord. It gives us strength not to despair and reminds us of God's presence in our lives. The righteous Metropolitan Andrey emphasized to families: "Your home is the first and most important school where your children should learn to love God and people. School quality impacts learning quality."<sup>13</sup> It is necessary to educate children in a Christian way, to create a special atmosphere of common prayer in the family, as our Synod calls for it: "Pray as a family before the holy

---

<sup>13</sup> Християнська родина, 13.

icons, celebrate Sundays and holy days by participating with your children in the parish Divine Liturgy.”<sup>14</sup>

26. A special prayer practice useful for deepening the relationship with God is reading and meditating on the Holy Scriptures. Therefore, the call of the Synod of the UGCC to the faithful of our Church “to read God’s Word daily and meditate on it in parish bible apostolate communities” remains relevant.<sup>15</sup> Let us remember that “the God’s Word always leads to the communion of the Holy Sacraments and is fulfilled in the Liturgy of the Church of Christ.”<sup>16</sup> Therefore, it is necessary to read and meditate on the Word of God together by the Church and in the Church, that is, in the spirit of the teachings of the Holy Fathers and in the context of the liturgical heritage.
27. The Jubilee Year also creates special opportunities for us to reconnect with our neighbors. The Apostle of the nations exhorts us to “Bear one another’s burdens, and so you will fulfill the law of Christ” (Gal. 6:2). When the faithful gather together, share their pain and worries, help each other with prayer and words of consolation, it strengthens faith and a sense of hope. The community of Christ, essentially a network of love and service, as the book of the Acts of the Holy Apostles well illustrates: “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” (4:32). That is why our Synod teaches: “How good when there is cooperation and solidarity! This network of souls through the millennia embraced the destitute, healed wounds, overcame divisions among people, raised those who found themselves at the bottom of the social ladder, and continues to do so to this day.”<sup>17</sup> We cannot remain indifferent to the situation in Ukraine, getting used to the suffering caused by the war. Let us be a light for those who have lost faith today, support for those who need comfort, and an example for children and youth who look to us as witnesses to Christ.
28. True solidarity consists in being ready to support those around us and to do everything possible to alleviate their situation. In the words of the Apostle James, “faith without works is dead” (2:26). By helping our neighbors, we manifest our Christian nature. In serving one’s neighbor through good deeds, a person “rediscovers the greatest truth about themselves as a beloved child of God, created out of love and called to love.”<sup>18</sup> Christian love is characterized by its concreteness. Just as each of our neighbors, with their unique daily needs and experiences, is concrete, so too God’s presence in our acts of mercy should be concrete: to feed the hungry, to give the thirsty to drink, to clothe the naked, to receive the traveler

---

<sup>14</sup> Pastoral letter of the Synod of Bishops of the UGCC to the clergy, monastics and laity “God’s Word and Catechesis”, December 12, 2018.

<sup>15</sup> Pastoral letter of the Synod of Bishops of the UGCC “The Gospel is the power of God to salvation of everyone who believes” (Rom. 1:16), July 24, 2024.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Pastoral letter of the Synod of Bishops of the UGCC “The Hope to Which the Lord Calls Us”, 2021, 3.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 5.

into the home, to visit the sick and imprisoned, etc. (cf. Mt 25:35-36).<sup>19</sup> Today, every Ukrainian in Ukraine and abroad should feel the obligation to sacrificially serve wounded soldiers and families who lost loved ones in the war. We must remember those who have returned from war and are experiencing difficulties in adapting to a peaceful life, especially the wounded. May our parish communities become a place where they can find understanding, help and a friendly environment. Only in unity and solidarity can we overcome difficulties and become stronger.

### *Conclusion*

29. Dear brothers and sisters! The sacred history of salvation, which we learn through the Holy Scriptures and historical events, demonstrates the relevance of the virtue of hope as a prerequisite for positive change. Since the creation of the world, despite various troubles, problems and cataclysms, God has always been by the side of his people, supporting and guiding them in the paths of his Providence. Hope in Christ (cf. I Tim. 1:1) is not just a feeling or a dream of a better future. It is a living force that drives us to positive change. It is the belief that God can turn suffering into rebirth. It is the ability to see beyond this world, beyond the pain and sorrow we face today. It is the certainty that Christ is risen and with Him everyone will be reborn, who place their hopes in Him.
30. Although the Jubilee Year was established for the people of Israel, its principles were adopted by the Church of Christ, because, according to the Apostle Paul: "For whatever was written previously was written for our instruction, that by endurance and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope" (Rom. 15:4). The Jubilee Year 2025 of Hope is another reminder to us that the Lord-Emmanuel never leaves His people, that God is with us, and for those who trust in Him, nothing is impossible. This is a special time when the Church calls us to a penitential rethinking of our own lives, returning to the origins of our faith, reflecting on our relationship with God and our neighbors. It is an invitation to renew our relationship with the Lord through deepened prayer. It is an encouragement to perform concrete acts of love and mercy towards our neighbors.
31. May this Jubilee Year be a time for us to renew our faith, strengthen our hope, and deepen our love for God and our neighbor. May it become a time of serious reflection, balanced decisions and blessed actions. May it bring the long-awaited peace to our [Ukrainian] land and help us rebuild our society on the principles of justice and fraternal love. This year, let us not just dream about the best, but also act with love, support those around us, live in hope and with faith that everything is possible with God. May the blessing of the Lord be with all of you, and may the Most Holy Theotokos continue to cover our land and all our people with her omophorion [veil]. Amen.

---

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Ibid.

† SVYATOSLAV

Given in Kyiv  
at the Patriarchal Cathedral of the Resurrection of Christ,  
on the day of The Holy Martyrs Eustratios, Auxentius, Eugenius, Mardarius, and Orestes and  
the Holy Martyr Lucia, virgin,  
the 13<sup>th</sup> of December in the 2024<sup>th</sup> Year of our Lord