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ORTHODOX CONFESSIONS IN UKRAINE DURING COVID-19: THE COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF FUNCTIONING

The coronavirus pandemic has intensified changes in the government's relations with religious organizations not only around the world, but also in Ukraine. That is why it appears not only as a threat, but also as a challenge. Religious understanding focuses not so much on the study of the causes of epidemics, diseases, etc., but focuses on highlighting the specifics of the functioning of religious organizations, including Orthodox in such a crisis, the peculiarities of state-confessional relations during a pandemic, as well as disclosing potential consequences. both for the clergy and the laity.

Domestic Orthodox denominations, as well as other religious organizations in general, found themselves between the threat of full-fledged worship and the challenge of new forms of communication between the clergy and the faithful. In particular, the PCU has clearly followed the instructions of the WHO, the Ministry of Health and the government regarding compliance with restrictions on the functioning of religious organizations. However, all this resulted in discussions within the clergy about the potential introduction of online sacraments such as Communion and Confession. At the same time, the position of the head of the UOC-KP, Patriarch Filaret, was as follows: a pandemic is not a reason to deviate from the established practice of worshipping the Orthodox Church. This manifested itself in the fact that the UOC clergy often ignored quarantine restrictions, especially in large monasteries. We believe that such intransigence of the UOC representatives to the recommendations and restrictions imposed by the state authorities is due to the fact that it is in this Orthodox denomination that a fairly large number of fundamentalist believers are observed.

Keywords: orthodoxy, coronavirus, pandemic, religious organizations, state-church relations.

Introduction. The coronavirus pandemic, which swept the world in 2019, has provoked all sorts of challenges for all countries, including Ukraine. These challenges relate to various aspects of public life, including and religious organizations. Religious institutions in Ukraine perceived this challenge differently and therefore functioned according to their beliefs. At the same time, this situation changed the government's relations with religious organizations. Thus, it becomes especially important to analyze the interaction between the Ukrainian authorities and religious institutions in the COVID-19 pandemics, to identify possible differences compared to the experience of other countries and regions of the world.

Literature review. The scientific works of Ukrainian scientists I. Bogachevska [16], L. Vyhovskiy [1], P. Kraliuk [13], S. Rudenko [15], V. Tytarenko [16] and others, who considered certain aspects of the researched problem, are theoretical. basis of this article.

Involvement of sociological research conducted by the Ukrainian Center for Economic and Political Studies named after Oleksandr Razumkov [8] has become especially important. However, there is still no comprehensive religious analysis of the peculiarities of the functioning of Orthodoxy in Ukraine during the coronavirus pandemic.

The aim of the article is to study the features and characteristics of the functioning of key Orthodox denominations in Ukraine during the coronavirus pandemic – the Orthodox Church of Ukraine (PCU) and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (UOC).

Methodology. To achieve the goal of this article, general and special methods of research of processes and phenomena are used, namely: comparative, sociological surveys, interdisciplinarity and key principles of academic religious studies – objectivity, non-confessionalism, ideological pluralism.

Orthodox denominations during a pandemic: threat vs challenge

The model of interaction between Ukrainian society, state power and denominations, which existed before, could no longer function in such a crisis situation as the coronavirus pandemic. Today, due to the high degree of uncertainty inherent in any social cataclysm, insufficient development or lack of decision-making models and lack of appropriate information base, rethinking and understanding how society, government should treat religious, church organizations is quite important.

Undoubtedly, academic religious studies did not stand aside in understanding the phenomenon of the pandemic and the "quarantine period".

Conceptually, in our opinion, academic religious studies sees the pandemic as both a threat and a challenge for religious organizations, including and Orthodox denominations. The danger is that certain recommendations of the world or government agencies responsible for human health in general and the country in particular may lead to some kind of "stoppage" in the activities of a network of religious organizations. "After all, as L. Vyhovskiy notes, in a pandemic, the mass attendance of temples by the laity, kissing icons and receiving Communion is a source of infection. In such circumstances, the church was forced to reconsider the forms of its own functioning. And because of this, there have been (and continue to be) discussions among the clergy and laity about the introduction of quarantine. Their main topic was solving the problem: can the church, as a sacred space, be a place of transmission of COVID-19 viruses "[1].

The same is said by foreign theologians. In particular, the fundamental monograph "Religious Fundamentalism in the Age of Pandemic" emphasizes how the government affects the activities of religious institutions during epidemics and how religion becomes a very powerful factor in the

perception of believers this situation is different, unlike other ordinary citizens [14].

At the same time, epidemics are a challenge for religious organizations, including Orthodox ones. Because, any social, political cataclysms prompt to behave differently, develop and implement possibly completely new models of cooperation with believers, representatives of a particular religious tradition and citizens of the country in general.

"A coronavirus pandemic can affect the religious environment much more than just a discussion about Communion. Modern churches are very close to resolving issues that will affect their very foundation and, consequently, their future functioning. What exactly is a church? Why does it exist? Previously, a limited number of theologians dealt with this issue, because the parishioners had enough of the rite. With the introduction of quarantine worship went online. Will the church be able not only to perform rites, but also to give people the meaning of life in the new conditions of their existence? Worship services in quarantine will require new preaching. And general phrases about what is possible in fasting and what is not possible will no longer be perceived as it was before. And it should be borne in mind that in the online environment, a person's attention is by nature much less focused on preaching than in the temple dimension. Under such conditions, the churches will have to justify the relevance of the sacraments and rituals. Thus, as the world changes, churches must understand the depth of the challenges they face. And these challenges will require further modernization of church life" [1].

Because of this we can say that the religious understanding is focused not so much on the study of the causes of epidemics, diseases, etc., but focuses on highlighting the specifics of the functioning of religious organizations, including Orthodox in such a crisis, the peculiarities of state-confessional relations during a pandemic, and as well as the disclosure of its potential consequences for both the clergy and the laity.

PCU: between discipline and radicalism

It should be emphasized that the Orthodox Church of Ukraine as well as key Catholic denominations (Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church and Roman Catholic Church in Ukraine) demonstrated a high level of discipline under quarantine restrictions, primarily due to the recommendations of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Vatican respectively [12]. Therefore, given the constructive reaction of most religious organizations to the restrictive measures of the Ukrainian authorities during the lockdown, after its completion, the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine proposed such an algorithm for the gradual resumption of systematic and full-fledged activities of religious organizations. and Orthodox:

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Opening of temples for individual attendance by believers and private prayers (but not at the time of traditional services by clergy: without the presence of believers and with the participation of no more than 10 people), in compliance with all rules of conduct in public places during quarantine (including to ensure that the occupancy of the temples is one person per 10 square meters of space), it may be possible when for 10 consecutive days the percentage of detected cases among all tested decreases daily, and the daily number of people who have recovered, increased or increased.

Worship services in the presence of a limited number of believers in the temple (prayer house) in compliance with all quarantine rules, including the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) and physical distance between those present, may be possible when for 10 consecutive days the number of new interrelated cases of the disease per day less than 5 per area.

Conducting routine services involving a significant number of believers in traditional rituals, such as mass communion, with the observance of personal hygiene by clergy and believers, in particular with the use of PPE, may be possible when in Ukraine only a few cases of infection are recorded. Covid-19, which are associated exclusively with the import of the disease "[1].

As a result, the need for social distancing and the introduction of worship services on the Internet have initiated a discussion among the clergy of the PCU, which may affect the future of religious practice of religious organizations in Ukraine.

However, this issue provoked a heated discussion, especially after the "Internet Eucharist" by representatives of the PCU – priests Igor Savva and Dmitry Weisburd.

So after this situation, a series of reflections (status) was published on the Facebook page of the Archbishop of the PCU Eustratia (Zori). "In his first letter, he argues that the Eucharist cannot be celebrated remotely because one cannot eat and drink remotely (the comparison, in my opinion, is manipulative because people take communion physically, and it is a matter of remote consecration, not consumption of the Eucharist itself. .G.). The second argument is that the form of Communion cannot be changed because it was established by Jesus Christ himself. Archbishop Eustratius further argues that the logic of online communion excludes, in the absence of necessity, both the priest and the Liturgy itself, leaving only God and man, and since God is in the soul, it will suffice to meditate. The bishop also believes that the online broadcast is a contemplation of the sacrament, not participation in it, and the Liturgy involves participation. Here is the obvious dispute between Archbishop Eustratia and Archpriest Igor Savva, when in fact a person participates in the Liturgy – when he is physically present in the church, but does not hear the Eucharistic prayers (and often does not even guess about their existence)? Or when she is physically absent but remotely hears and sees the fulfillment of the Eucharistic canon?" [3].

Therefore, we can see the dialectic. Accordingly, this situation stimulates the creation of new conditions and forms of interaction between society and the Orthodox denominations and their supporters.

In this context, it is appropriate to note the opinion of the famous researcher T. Derkach: "The history of the Church has many references to non-standard, non-linear situations faced by believers or bishops in antiquity or in the Middle Ages. The church has never had quiet periods when it was possible to serve liturgies, baptize, consecrate and receive communion with full confidence in the future. The church was not a conveyor belt for performing the same rituals day in and day out. Certain external or internal circumstances have changed – the Church has

changed both the practice of worship and has been forced to improve the doctrine of both God and himself. But there were also emergencies when it was necessary to make unique decisions quickly. In jurisprudence, this is called *ad hoc* – a way to solve a specific problem or task, which can not be adapted to solve other problems and which does not fit into the overall decision-making strategy (exception). By the way, there were many such exceptions in the Church, but for some reason they were used as precedents when it was profitable [4].

Accordingly, coronavirus infection and powerful scientific and technological progress have prompted the development of potentially new forms of participation in the sacraments, including remotely, "online". This is because direct participation can increase the number of patients in a country's population. Therefore, the possible transformation of the sacraments can guarantee the safety and health of the citizens of the state [1].

At the same time, the most controversial moment for the Orthodox and Catholic churches was the reception of the sacraments of Confession and Communion during the pandemic. The process of modernization of liturgical practice for some churches is painful because of the strictness of liturgical tradition, low quality of education of the clergy, the priority of rites over values. Online worship poses new challenges for traditional religions, and the sacred space of the house of prayer is an integral part of religious practice.

It is interesting to note that this discussion arose in the Orthodox environment of Ukraine. Catholics in Ukraine, as well as in a number of countries where many citizens profess Catholicism, transferred COVID-19, did not think about options for participation in the sacraments. Yes, in Ukrainian realities:

On March 17, 2020, the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) in Ukraine published an appeal to the bishops about the activities during the pandemic. In addition to the recommendations on social distancing and sanitation, the RCC proposed to limit the participation of believers in worship, and therefore to use as widely as possible all channels of communication with them – radio, television, Internet channels and social networks [5];

On March 24, 2020, recommendations were published to the Greek Catholic clergy to perform liturgical rites during quarantine [8]. These included: creating opportunities for people to participate in worship services live through social media; to honor the shroud during quarantine with a bow to the ground, not a kiss; and to celebrate Easter only in the open air [9].

Here we can conclude that for them it is not a matter of religious (in) security, because the parishioners who constantly participate in worship are really few, and therefore, how to change the form of the sacraments – it was not in the center of their attention. This is especially true in Ukraine, where they rank second among the country's population, as:

UOC: between dissent and partnership

In turn, the UOC reacted quite differently in its activities during the spread of the coronavirus pandemic. The activities of this Orthodox structure are characterized by considerable conservatism. On March 18, 2020, the Holy Synod of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church issued a petition in connection with the dissemination of COVID-19, which provided the following recommendations on religious practice: use disposable utensils, keep churches clean, air and clean more often, administer the Sacraments of Confes-

sion, and Communion all day, and if the number of believers is more than 10 people, to worship in the open air [7]. However, despite this call, the UOC clergy often ignored quarantine restrictions, especially in large monasteries.

The logic of the church's position was well clarified by the theologian Dmitry Gorevoy, who noted the following: They believe that because they are separated from the state, state laws cannot be applied to them. In Ukraine, a man in a robe often positions himself "above the law", ie the church is separate and the legislation is also separate. And this applies not only to the UOC, but also to other denominations, just the Moscow Patriarchate demonstrates it most clearly, vividly and arrogantly [2].

At the same time, we believe that such intransigence of the UOC representatives to the recommendations and restrictions imposed by the state authorities is due to the fact that a large number of fundamentalist believers are observed in this Orthodox denomination. This is especially evident in the context of relations with COVID dissidents, in particular those who adhere to a clear religious affiliation with the UOC. The main ideas disseminated by COVID dissidents can be summarized as follows:

- no virus. This is only a way to establish a world dictatorship and forbid churches to gather;
- do not wear masks, do not keep your distance, because it's all intimidation;
- The right not to believe in the coronavirus and the right not to succumb to dictatorship and chips are universal human rights.

The religious worldview of believers has an irrational basis and therefore is not able to critically perceive such conspiracy theories. Most governments have taken into account guidelines for religious communities and leaders, developed in conjunction with religious representatives in the Office of the World Health Organization. In response to the challenges of COVID-19, secular authorities are obliging religious communities to adapt their activities to the epidemiological situation. This adaptation occurs both due to and despite the specific actions of the heads of local religious communities. Given the growing COVID-19 pandemic in a number of European countries, including Ukraine, the Christmas and Easter holidays were severely restricted, which in turn could and could provoke a new outbreak of COVID dissent.

However, for scholars (theologians, sociologists, political scientists, public administration specialists) COVID-fundamentalism among UOC believers raises several vital issues in general for religion as a social institution in the state:

Will religion play a positive or negative role in overcoming the challenges of COVID-19?

Will the government be able to draw on the experience and resources of religion to solve the problem caused by the coronavirus crisis and to restore humanity after the end of the global pandemic?

Will the church and society learn a lesson from what is happening?

Will it be a factor of tolerance and cooperation, or isolationism and fundamentalism? Time will tell.

The sociological research carried out by the Oleksandr Razumkov Ukrainian Center for Economic and Political Studies during the hard knockdown in the spring of 2020 also testifies to the existence of religious fundamentalists among the believers of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. [10]

	CONFESSIONAL ACCESSION		
	PCU	UPC	People who identify themselves as Orthodox
Yes, I visit just like before quarantine	8,2	11,1	3,9
Yes, I attend, but much less	20,9	35,3	18,2
No, I do not visit	70,9	53,2	77,3
It is difficult to answer	0,0	0,5	0,5

As we can see, it was the representatives of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church who attended services more than the believers of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, while more than 50% did not attend the first and 70 % the second.

It is an interesting fact that, in our opinion, it should be noted that in fact the head of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyiv Patriarchate (UOC-KP), Patriarch Filaret, also had a common position with the leadership of the UOC. He also reacted fairly quickly to the introduction of quarantine. The first hierarch of the UOC-KP was a member of the Unification Council, which took place on December 15, 2018, and led to the creation of the UCC. However, in the spring of 2019, Filaret came into conflict with the leadership of this Church and decided to restore the UOC-KP, which he headed before the events of December 2018. Today, the UOC-KP is a marginal religious structure, but Patriarch Filaret is a very famous person and a certain part Orthodox Ukrainians listen exclusively to his opinion.

Accordingly, on March 12, 2020, he published an appeal to the believers of the UOC-KP regarding the spread of coronavirus disease. He stated that "globalization of the world is the main cause of the epidemic." In the spirit of Orthodox conservatism, Filaret declared that "such troubles are a manifestation of God's wrath on the sins of mankind. Any epidemic, including the coronavirus epidemic, is a call to God for repentance, especially for Christians who have recently deviated sharply from Christian values" [6].

At the same time, the appeal provides recommendations to the clergy on the observance of sanitary and hygienic measures of a preventive nature, which do not contradict the Orthodox faith. However, Patriarch Filaret stated that "the performance of the sacraments of the Church, in particular Holy Communion, Baptism and others, is not a means of spreading infection." That is, as we see, this church figure believed that the pandemic was not a reason to deviate from the established practice of worship of the Orthodox Church.

Accordingly, such diversity in views on the nature of the epidemic and the peculiarities of the functioning of Orthodox denominations during the crown of the viral pandemic could potentially be the basis for all sorts of conflicts. Accordingly, in our opinion, even if innovations are introduced in the conduct of worship, in accordance with the recommendations and restrictions imposed by the authorities, including those concerning participation in the sacraments, it is necessary to be very careful about the feelings of believers, both globally and locally. Because by avoiding health hazards, we may encounter the other side of religious danger – conflicts and clashes between proponents of different views on the issue. Thus, the main task is not so much the introduction of new forms of sacraments in the Orthodox Church, as protection from potential religious conflicts that may arise, depending on what radical decision can be made or rejected [15].

Thus, having carried out a comparative religious analysis of the functioning of key Orthodox denominations in Ukraine, we can draw the following conclusions:

Domestic Orthodox denominations, like other religious organizations in general, found themselves "between Scylla and Charybdis" – a threat to the full implementation of worship and a challenge to the emergence of new forms of communication between the clergy and the faithful.

The PCU has consistently established itself as an Orthodox denomination that clearly follows the instructions of the WHO, the Ministry of Health, and the government in general to restrict the functioning of religious organizations. At the same time, it resulted in a discussion and conflict within the clergy over the potential implementation of the online sacraments (including Communion and Confession).

Similarly, if there were no conflicts among the clergy of the UOC regarding the performance of sacraments or (non) implementation of restrictive measures, then there were misunderstandings between the state authorities and representatives of the hierarchy regarding the complete or partial cessation of a monastery (temple).

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ПРАВОСЛАВНІ КОНФЕСІЇ В УКРАЇНІ ПІД ЧАС COVID-19: КОМПАРАТИВНИЙ АНАЛІЗ СПЕЦИФІКИ ФУНКЦІОНУВАННЯ

Пандемія коронавірусу активізувала зміни відносин влади з релігійними організаціями не лише у всьому світі, але й в Україні. А саме тому вона постає не лише як певна загроза, але й як виклик. Релігієзнавче осмислення акцентовано не стільки на дослідженні причини появи епідемії, хвороб і т. п., скільки зосереджується на висвітленні специфіки функціонування релігійних організацій, зокрема православних у такій кризовій ситуації, на особливостях державно-конфесійних відносин під час пандемії, а також розкритті потенційних наслідків від неї як для духовенства, так і мирян.

Вітчизняні православні конфесії, як і загалом інші релігійні організації, опинилися між загрозою повноцінного здійснення богослужіння та викликом щодо появи нових форм комунікації між духовенством та вірянами. Зокрема, ПЦУ проявила чітке виконання приписів ВОЗ, МОЗ та керівництва держави щодо дотримання обмежень у функціонуванні релігійних організацій. Однак це все виллилось у дискусіях усередині духовенства щодо потенційного запровадження онлайн-таїнств, таких як Причасття та Сповідь. Разом з цим позиція очільника УПЦ КП, Патріарха Філарета, була такою: пандемія не є причиною відступати від уставленої практики здійснення богослужіння православної церкви. Проявилось це у тому, що священство УПЦ часто ігнорувало обмеження карантину, особливо у великих монастирях. Ми вважаємо, що така неуступливість представників УПЦ рекомендаціям та обмеженням, запровадженним державою, пов'язана з тим, що саме в цій православній конфесії спостерігається доволі велика частина віруючих фундаменталістів.

Ключові слова: православ'я, коронавірус, пандемія, релігійні організації, державно-церковні відносини.

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ПРАВОСЛАВНЫЕ КОНФЕССИИ В УКРАИНЕ ВО ВРЕМЯ COVID-19: КОМПАРАТИВНЫЙ АНАЛИЗ СПЕЦИФИКИ ФУНКЦИОНИРОВАНИЯ

Пандемия коронавируса активизировала изменения отношений власти с религиозными организациями не только во всем мире, но и в Украине. А именно поэтому она предстает не только как определенная угроза, но и как вызов. Религиоведческое осмысление акцентировано не столько на исследовании причины появления эпидемии, болезней и т. п., сколько сосредоточивается на освещении специфики функционирования религиозных организаций, в частности православных в такой ситуации, особенностями государственно-конфессиональных отношений во время пандемии, а также раскрытию потенциальных последствий от нее как для духовенства, так и мирян.

Отечественные православные конфессии, как и вообще другие религиозные организации, оказались между угрозой полноценного совершения богослужений и вызовом по появлению новых форм коммуникации между духовенством и верующими. В частности, ПЦУ проявила четкое выполнение предписаний ВОЗ, Минздрава и руководства государства по соблюдению ограничений в функционировании религиозных организаций. Однако это все вылилось в дискуссиях внутри духовенства относительно потенциального введения онлайн-таинств, таких как Причастие и Исповедь. Вместе с тем позиция главы УПЦ КП, Патриарха Филарета, была следующей: пандемия не является причиной отступать от сложившейся практики совершения богослужений православной церкви. Проявилось это в том, что священство УПЦ часто игнорировало ограничения карантина, особенно в крупных монастырях. Мы считаем, что такая неуступчивость представителей УПЦ рекомендациям и ограничениям, введенным государственной властью, связана с тем, что именно в этой православной конфессии наблюдается довольно большая часть верующих фундаменталистов.

Ключевые слова: православие, коронавирус, пандемия, религиозные организации, государственно-церковные отношения.