

Memorandum on the foundations of spiritual formation at the Ukrainian Catholic University: general principles and norms

Truth and the love of knowledge bring together those in dismay

Patriarch Josyf (Slipyj)

With its foundation, the Ukrainian Catholic University (UCU) is the culmination of centuries of aspirations of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (UGCC) and the Ukrainian scientific community to create a higher educational institution, built on the basis of Christian doctrine, spirituality, culture and worldview, which would become an educational and scientific centre of world-wide importance, as well as a place of social change, ecumenical dialogue and understanding in Ukraine. In its activities, UCU relies on the academic tradition and achievements of the Greek-Catholic Theological Academy, founded in Lviv by Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky in 1928-1929, and the Ukrainian Catholic University named after Pope St. Clement, founded in Rome in 1963 by Metropolitan Joseph Slipyj.

The Ukrainian Catholic University belongs to the worldwide family of Catholic universities with a tradition dating back to the very conception of university-level education in Europe. This affiliation enriches UCU and serves as foundation for its particular mission and purpose. In its activities, the University gains inspiration from principles and recommendations laid out in the Apostolic Constitution of Pope John Paul II on Catholic Universities "Ex Corde Ecclesiae" and other documents of the Roman Catholic Apostolic Church and the Synod of the UGCC concerning the activities of Catholic universities, the pastoral letters of His Beatitude Svyatoslav (Shevchuk), the Great Chancellor of UCU, on the identity and the mission of UCU on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Ukrainian Catholic University foundation (<http://ucu.edu.ua/news/10884/>) and on the occasion of the Year of Metropolitan Andrey (<http://ucu.edu.ua/news/24780/>).

In its own identity, the Ukrainian Catholic University organically combines the foundations of Catholic doctrine, ecclesiastical features derived from the patrimony of the UGCC (e.g. Churches of the Kievan tradition) and national-cultural identity, while remaining a free and autonomous centre of education, one capable of providing adequate responses to the challenges of our time.

In the spirit of a genuine understanding of freedom, which is realized through the pursuit of truth, goodness and beauty, UCU preserves, examines and transmits the treasures of Christian faith to all people of good will. In this sense, our University is an "open academic community that lives according to the Eastern Christian tradition and educates social leaders and professionals, to serve in the name of the God's glory, the common good and human dignity, in Ukraine and beyond."

While drawing from the deep wellsprings of the Christian tradition, science and culture, the Ukrainian Catholic University is called to a critical understanding of the versatile aspects of human

life, the creative beginning of man and his ethical imperatives as well as the bonds to and interactions between human beings and God. Along with gaining practical knowledge, the Catholic University is characterized by free search for all truth about the world, man and God.

UCU hospitably opens its doors to students, teachers and employees of different confessions, as well as to people who do not follow or practice any religion. Our mission is to create a high-quality educational and scientific environment, as well as to promote the development of the individual and society as a whole. At the same time, the Christian and specifically Catholic identity of UCU oblige all members of the University community to understand and respect ceterin basic principles.

An integral part of study and work at UCU is participation in liturgical, spiritual and intellectual life, aimed at discovering and learning the treasures of Christ's Gospel. Those members of the UCU community who do not consider themselves Christians or do not practice any religion are invited to use the time of their studies and work at UCU for in-depth acknowledgment of Christianity and its traditions in the spirit of openness and free dialogue. All members of the UCU community, irrespective of their personal religious beliefs and opinions, must have an understanding of the UCU's Christian identity, as well as respect for it and the lifestyle this identity inspires.

The mission of the Catholic University is to raise future leaders for society through constant dialogue between faith and reason, through spiritual, moral, intellectual, professional and civil formation aimed at comprehensive development of individuals in their growth to holiness. This ongoing process of UCU, staff and students' formation cannot simply be abstract and it requires specific rules obligatory for the community of our University.

These norms are intended to indicate specifically the way to practical realization of the identity and the mission of UCU, as well as to invite all members of our academic community to a more active testimony of the Christian values that are the very foundation of our educational institution.

1. Liturgical life at UCU

Faith, which inspired the founders of UCU to create the University and helped its students and teachers to withstand communist persecution, finds its natural expression in prayer. Divine Liturgy, as the fulfilment of Our Saviour's Eucharistic sacrifice, and other forms of worship are an integral part of the life of our University. This worship helps people to, in a practical way, experience two fundamental meetings, the meeting all believers are called to - the establishment of a living and active relationship with God and also the creation of an atmosphere of spiritual solidarity with their neighbours.

1. The Spiritual-Pastoral Department of UCU provides opportunities for everyday participation in the Divine Liturgy and other divine services for those members of the university community who consider themselves practicing Christians. The heads of the programs, departments and other units of UCU should not prevent their subordinates from participating in the daily Liturgy, and, if necessary, should provide opportunities to make-up the time used for prayer during other portions of the working day.

2. Collective praise of God and expressions of solidarity with all of the members of our university community overcomes the limits of faith and confessional differences. Common weekly Liturgy (which includes listening to and reflection upon the Gospel texts, familiarizing the community with UCU news, a chance for getting acquainted with the University's notable guests, congratulating members of the community with their personal and professional successes, etc.) is the central spiritual event in the life of UCU and serves as an essential component of the corporate culture of our community, thus attending it should be considered a moral obligation and an important part of solidarity between all employees, teachers and students of the University. For some, such a prayer meeting will become an opportunity to participate in the sacramental life of the Church (the Sacraments of Confession and Communion). For others, including those who do not manifest any religious affiliation, it may be an opportunity to experience and learn the spiritual values of UCU, the ones forming the core of our institution.

3. Particular responsibility for participating in the common weekly university liturgy lies with the members of the Rectorate, the heads of programs, departments and other structural units of UCU. In the case of Philosophical and Theological Department, this responsibility lies with the entire staff of the Dean's Office, the Department of Theology and students, since those members of our community are entrusted with guiding UCU. Those who directly teach or study theological sciences - must set a positive example for others and help kindle within them a sense of the glory of God.

4. During the common weekly liturgy there are no classes, exams or other public events, and such university departments as the library, computer classes, etc. suspend their work.

5. Studying sessions and major events at UCU traditionally begin with prayer. At the same time, those members of the community who do not practice any religious ceremonies can spend their praying time in silence, showing respect for the religious values of the UCU community's faithful.

6. Believers among teachers, students and workers are saluted by the Christian greeting "Glory to Jesus Christ!" (Or other forms of greetings according to Christian holidays, such as: "Christ is born!", "Christ is risen!")

2. Educational process at UCU

The Ukrainian Catholic University considers education to be a process, forming a person's integral personality and preparing them for life with other people and with God in the light of humanity's higher calling. A Christian education is aimed not only at the individuals' professional training, their achievement in the modern world or the improvement of their well-being. The Catholic University serves as a school of life, responding to the demands of the human personality and the human community, especially regarding intellectual, moral and spiritual development.

1. Since the task of the Catholic University is proclaiming the message of Jesus Christ with the methods available, every university's curriculum includes a theological component that reveals the foundations of Christian doctrine and morals. In addition, students should have an opportunity to witness how the values of finding truth, respect for human dignity and public responsibility can be integrated into all other disciplines.

2. The Department of Philosophy and Theology has special role in the University; it is the place for teaching theological sciences as well as a place for preparing the laity for responsibly solving the tasks of their apostolate. It is a place of studying both for seminarians preparing for the priesthood and laymen who are called "to achieve a deeper understanding of sacred Revelation, to reveal Christian wisdom passed down to us by our ancestors, to maintain a dialogue with our brothers and sisters who are separated from us as well as with non-Christians; to answer questions, following the progress of science "(*Sapientia Christiana*, III).

3. The humanities play an important role at UCU, while being in harmonious concord with philosophy and theology, and encouraging students to raise and solve difficult life issues while helping them develop extremely useful skills such as critical thinking, writing and communication. At the Catholic University, even non-religious students may address life's important issues by means of reason and this can reveal many interesting and important ideas; ideas which may not be commonly or thoroughly examined in a secular school.

4. An important contribution to the implementation of the educational process at the University is made by the UCU Spiritual and Pastoral Department. They offer teachers, employees and students participation in prayer and sacramental life of the Church, outgoing and non-outgoing retreats, public discussions, round tables and other events combining knowledge with the formation of an integral human personality.

3. Selecting and recruiting new teachers and staff

The primary responsibility for creating a Christian educational climate at UCU lies with the administration, lecturers and employees. Therefore, in the process of selection and recruitment of new employees and scientific-pedagogical staff, the administration is not limited to the criterion of the candidate's professionalism or academic achievements. In order to fulfil the UCU mission, the

community's willingness to strive to live the "good news" of the Gospel testimony and to demonstrate high moral values is of great importance.

The scientific and pedagogical staff of UCU, for their part, must take into account other essential aspects of the process of spiritual formation rather than simply see the purpose of their work to be the "production of specialists". The teacher of the Catholic University is a person who shares his or her life experience, since students can learn from their teachers' example. A good example is part of the how students learn and is not of lesser importance than successful pedagogical methods. In other words, what educators do and how they do it is as significant as what they say inside or outside the classroom.

1. According to the Apostolic Constitution of Pope John Paul II *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, most of the teachers at the Catholic University must be practicing Christians, dedicated to the Church and partaking in its sacramental life.

2. During their recruitment, all teachers and administrators should be notified of the identity and the mission of UCU, as well as of their duty to promote, or at least respect, the Christian identity of the institution.

3. Before starting their work at UCU, new teachers and employees should familiarize themselves with this memorandum and certify it with their own signature. They also take part in the orientation-integration session aimed at a deeper understanding of the priorities and the specifics of working at UCU.

4. While interviewing potential candidates for work at the UCU, heads of the relevant units should be interested in the attitude of the candidate towards religion and the Church. They also should express the University's expectations of the candidate's support for the UCU mission and respect for the teachings of the Church in the sphere of faith and morals. At the request of the interviewer, representatives from the Spiritual-Pastoral Department can participate in interviews.

5. Each teacher/employee is obliged (at one's own will) to take part in the UCU spiritual-formation program once a year: evangelistic meetings, retreats, humanitarian conversations, pilgrimages, integration visits, etc.

3. Admission of new students

When spreading information about UCU during the admission campaign and in the process of integrating new students into the UCU community, particular attention should be paid to the mission and the Christian identity of UCU, as well as to the requirements deriving from them. It should be emphasized that the educational philosophy of the University is based on a holistic vision of the human person involving the development of various dimensions: spiritual, moral, intellectual, social and physical. Therefore, studying at UCU involves not only the study of professional disciplines, but also the development of the personality through spiritual and moral formation,

communication with various peoples in various environments, social activities, sports, etc. Students of all religions and confessions should be encouraged to enter the University. All those studying should feel the atmosphere of hospitality. Such openness fully corresponds to the authentic Christian position of the Catholic Church, according to which its faithful have to respect representatives of other denominations and confessions as well as their values, always and everywhere. At the same time, while entering the University, students are obliged to show respect for the Catholic identity and the mission of the University, and refrain from propagandizing against them.

1. Students should be notified of the values and the mission of the UCU while being admitted to their studies. They also should be aware of the obligation to nurture or at least respect the institution's Christian identity. Before beginning their studies, new students get acquainted with the relevant memorandum and certify it with their own signature; they take part in the orientation session, which will help them get better acquainted with the priorities and the specificities of studying at UCU.

2. Practicing Catholic students come to the University in hopes of developing amid wisdom and holiness. They get a unique opportunity to deepen their understanding of the Christian faith and how this faith is combined with what is known to the human mind. They are granted open access to the liturgical and sacramental life of the Church. Together with other members of the university community, they can participate in recreation, pilgrimages, Bibles studies, diverse religious communities, evangelistic meetings, spiritual conversations and other events. Their example should serve as the best testimony and an invitation for non-believers into the life of faith.

3. At UCU, believing students of other denominations, who seek to live morally and honestly, will probably discover a more favourable atmosphere for achieving this goal than at a purely secular university. By studying the integration of faith and reason in the Catholic tradition, students from other denominations become even more capable of continuing to do so in their own religious tradition. After all, Catholic and Eastern Catholic traditions have much in common with Orthodoxy and Protestantism.

4. UCU opens its doors to students of other religions, respecting the Jewish roots of the Holy Scriptures, sharing the faith in one God with Muslims, and does so without rejecting anything that is valuable and holy to others, Eastern religions in particular (*Nostra Aetate*, 2).

5. Students who do not manifest any religious affiliation must respect the UCU's Christian mission and identity. Nonbelieving students should learn how to live side-by-side with believers; the university's curriculum should allow nonbelievers to understand more about Christians, their doctrines and their faith. In this way, some nonreligious students may, to their surprise, find that believers and their beliefs are different from what they probably imagined simply due to cultural stereotypes or ineffective life-examples of the believers who "rather hide than reveal the true face of

God and religion” (*Gaudium et Spes*, 19). Thus, some nonreligious students may discover that in their rejection of religion they actually had rejected a mere caricature of Christianity, which is rather distant from reality. Such students may reconsider their religious views and find more favourable insight into the Church and religious faith.

5. Freedom of expression and responsibility

Academic freedom is a great boon that must be nurtured and respected in every university community. At UCU, freedom is carried out in the context of seeking the truth and the common good. Every employee, teacher and student of UCU has a natural right to choose freely their spiritual, civic and academic position. The University will do its best to ensure freedom of expression and create an atmosphere of mutual respect between the subjects of the dialogue within the University. But this does not mean that all views without exception will be tolerated in our community (see *Thesis on Freedom at UCU*).

1. Only the President and Rector of the University may issue official statements on behalf of the University (either in person or through their representatives). Concerning the official position of the University, no one can make oral or written statements without having previously consulted with the abovementioned. Heads of university units are responsible for the level of coordination of employees’ stances with the UCU’s mission and information policy.

2. In the matters that do not go beyond the scope of their own professional competences, members of the community may express their own opinion, indicating that they belong to UCU.

3. Any member of the university community may express his or her views and stance as a private citizen without emphasizing his or her affiliation with the UCU. However, in these cases, particular attention should be paid to the official stance of the University, its mission, the rules for realizing its identity, its reputation and interests.

4. The UCU's leadership reserves the right to verify that community members’ public stances do not contradict the University's identity, mission and basic values, as well as the right to distance the university from contradictory stances until dismissal (or until exclusion) if an individual’s actions harm the reputation and the interests of the University. Members of the UCU community are obliged to show respect for the University’s Catholic identity and its mission, as well as to refrain from propagandizing against them.

5. One of the defining criteria of our freedom is our conscience, granted to us by God, which guides us in our worldview and prompts us to seek the Truth. On the one hand, it gives us the right to doubt and be mistaken, and UCU is a place of friendly dialogue that can lead to understanding, allowing participants to retain their stance or correct someone's mistakes. On the other hand, it means that individuals are ready to be held accountable for their actions and statements.

Christian identity is the heart of the Ukrainian Catholic University, and thanks to it, UCU has created, formed and acquired the attributes making it an advanced, respected and attractive institution. True development of UCU is inseparable from the growth of the University community on the path of knowledge and appreciation for the Christian worldview. We invite all people of good will to respect the UCU's religious identity and to enrich it with their own spiritual gifts.