

THE BISHOP, HIS STATUS AND AUTHORITY

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We live in a time when interest in the Church has grown greatly – when ecclesiastical matters have arose among the people; being caught up by them, all are discussing them as issues of first priority, as important matters of our day. Since the person of the bishop has a place of primacy in the Church, people are now speaking much about the episcopacy. And, as usual, what is being said is not that which needs to be said, because there is a lack of clear understanding about the essence of the episcopacy and about the scope of his authority within the Church. Therefore, we believe that it is our primary hierarchical responsibility to speak, at least in brief, about this according to what the Orthodox Church has taught, and how the situation has always been in Ukraine.

1. The Bishop's Status in the Church

The place of the bishop was established by the very founder of the Christian Church, our Lord Jesus Christ. His apostles were the first bishops, and they in turn, through the laying-on-of-hands, consecrated other bishops, both as their successors and as their assistants. (Acts 13:1-3) The Church of Christ immediately grew, and the apostles themselves could not be in all places at once, and thus they quickly ordained assistants who from the beginning were called bishops.

As Christians, we confess, according to our dogma, that **our Church is Apostolic**. This dogma is expressed in the Creed: “I believe in one, holy, catholic, apostolic church.” Following the commission of their Teacher, the Lord Jesus Christ, the apostles established and multiplied the Church (see the Acts of the Apostles) and installed their assistants, **in whom they live eternally, in continuous succession**, through the act of the laying-on-of-hands and by the invocation of the Holy Spirit. **Church Tradition has always called bishops the successors of the Apostles or of Christ Himself.**

In truth the apostles were the immediate successors of Christ Himself in their hierarchical ministry, and especially in the celebration of the Liturgy, and this direct

succession was passed on – again, through the laying-on-of-hands – to those who followed them. Therefore, **in the Divine services of the Church the bishop does not only represent the Apostles, but is also a sign and symbol of the presence of Christ Himself.** As a result, in our Liturgy the bishop is given the highest honour; in his person we honour not the individual, but the successor of the Apostles, and through them the successor of Christ Himself. In this is the greatness and breadth of our Church, and upon this She has been eternally built. Among us in the Church exist not only Christ’s teachings, but He Himself is with us, and the visible symbol of this is the bishop’s presence in the Church. All the Orthodox believe that this is an important, foundational element of our faith, and one who does not so believe this is not Orthodox.

In Archbishop Michael’s “Expanded Catechesis of the Orthodox Church” published with the blessing of the Holy Synod of the UAOC, we read on page 79: **“In divine services the bishop represents Christ the Saviour, and for this reason he is due the highest respect.”**

When the Holy Gospel is read during the Divine Liturgy, all priests stand with heads uncovered. Only the bishop stands at the High Place during the Gospel reading, wearing the mitre on his head, because in a manner of speaking he – representing Christ Himself – is proclaiming the Good News.

I recall here the teaching of the St. Ignatius of Antioch, the God-bearer (+ 107 A.D.), the disciple of St. John the Theologian: **in the Church the bishop represents Christ Himself.** It is certain that St. Ignatius received this teaching from the lips of his teacher, the Apostle John, who himself heard these words from the Savior Himself. We also recall that St. Cyprian of Carthage (who died in 258 A.D.) taught that the bishop is the foundation of Christ’s Church, and those who are not in unity with the bishop are outside the Church.

The word “bishop” (in Ukrainian “yepyskop”), like many other words in our Church life, is of Greek origin: *episkopos*. The meaning of this word swiftly spread (like wildfire) in the ancient Church, at a time that was not unimportant. The Apostolic Canons and the earliest Ecumenical Councils confirm the significance of this term. The word comes from the Greek term “episkopeo”, meaning “to oversee something”. Thus, the first meaning of the word “bishop” is “overseer”/“supervisor” or “inspector”. With

this meaning in mind, the word “episkopos” in Acts 20:28, in St. Paul’s discourse in Miletus: “Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.”

The word "bishop" ("episkopos") is found four times in the New Testament (see Acts 20:28, Philipians 1:1, 1 Timothy 3:2, and Titus 1:7). The bishop was the elder in the Church who ordained presbyters and deacons, and lead the entire Church. In the beginning, in the first century, the leader of the Church might have also been a presbyter, but with limited authority.

Already in the first and second centuries it was firmly established that the bishop was the member of the clergy who **at the highest rank of ordination, and the fullness of Divine grace**. In the Holy Church there are three orders of the priesthood: deacons, presbyters (priests) and bishops, and among them there is a clear and profound difference concerning their commissions. The deacon only assists the priest and bishop in the Divine services and Holy Mysteries, and may not celebrate them alone (the Greek word "diakonos" means server). A presbyter can celebrate most of the services and Mysteries alone, but not all of them - the presbyter has no grace to celebrate ordinations. The bishop has full ecclesiastical authority, and only he may ordain deacons and presbyters, only he may bless the Antiminsia, Chrism, etc. Anyone who does not recognise this is not Orthodox.

The role of the bishop differs fundamentally and essentially from that of the presbyter. No presbyter may celebrate the Divine Liturgy against the will of the bishop, for in such cases the Saviour is absent from the service – the service is not unto salvation but "unto judgment and condemnation". Our Church is apostolic, and therefore the only bishop or his appointed presbyter must be the celebrants of the Divine Services, in order that they may be truly unto salvation. When a priest does not abide by this, and gathers the faithful together to celebrate services independently, without the blessing of the bishop, his service is not unto salvation, and he falls under the gravest censure and may be removed from the priesthood. **The presbyter must gather the faithful together as Church only under a bishop, and with his blessing.**

Only bishops may consecrate other bishops, and not presbyters. A presbyter does not have the blessing, or the grace, to pass on grace to another person. In the Orthodox Church this was formulated as a dogmatic statement found in the Symbol of Faith: "I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church." In this instance "apostolic Church" must be understood to mean "lead by the apostles", and consequently by their successors the bishops, who are the descendants of the apostles – through the apostolic laying-on-of-hands; that is, by virtue of their hierarchical ordination.

This is a great gift of grace in the Christian Church – that her bishops descend in an unbroken lineage from Christ the Saviour Himself and His apostles – and we inherit it from generation to generation, and thus our Church is called apostolic. If a bishop were to be consecrated by someone other than bishops, for example by presbyters, then the apostolic succession would be broken, and that Church ceases to be apostolic, which is to say that it ceases to be the Church.

Moreover, the consecration of bishops by bishops alone is an immoveable dogma of our Church. To sin against this dogma is to sin against the Holy Spirit – it is to sin against the Mystery of the Holy Orders (the Priesthood) – which is the unforgivable sin. The Mystery of the Holy Orders was established from the apostolic times, and confirmed by Sacred Tradition. It demanded that a bishop be consecrated only by other bishops. Anyone who would do differently would be violating the doctrine of the Mystery of the Holy Orders. A person who does so knowingly is not Orthodox.

The number of bishops necessary to consecrate another bishop is established by the Holy Canons alone. The First Apostolic Canon, which comes from the beginnings of the Church, sets forth the following: "A bishop is consecrated by two or three bishops". The fourth Canon of the Ecumenical Council in 325 presents an even higher preference: "It is best that a bishop be consecrated by all the bishops of that region." As we see, the Holy Canons also clearly establish that a bishop is consecrated only by other bishops.

Here it is necessary to remember well that the consecration of a bishop by other bishops is a dogma of our Church, and not merely a canon. The canon only stipulates how many bishops are necessary for the consecration. This is why the consecration of a bishop by priests is a breach of doctrine, and not only of the canons.

As I have mentioned before in “Slovo Istyny” (No. 10), up to 325 there were situations in the Alexandrian Church of an unclear nature, when a bishop was consecrated by presbyters. But the First Ecumenical Council put a stop to this, and it was not practiced further.

From ancient times in the Orthodox Church the practice has been that, before the consecration of an episcopal candidate, there would be the proclamation of his election before all the people (*note: The Ukrainian word translated here as “proclamation” that is used by Metropolitan Ilarion literally means “engagement” of “betrothal” – editor*). This was when it was announced that the candidate would be consecrated as a bishop. The hierarchy (two or three at the least) together with the faithful would take part in this proclamation, and **before all the people the candidate would make a vow that, upon becoming a bishop, he would diligently defend all of the doctrines and implement the canons of the Orthodox Church.** Usually, this proclamation would take place in that church where the candidate would be serving as bishop. Because the Bishop must always be elected, at this proclamation, the people had the freedom to voice their opposition to the candidate, if they did not want him.

In the beginning, according to Church Tradition from the Old Testament, bishops could be married, or certainly must have been married (1 Tim. 3:2, Apostolic Canon 5). However, the Sixth Ecumenical council, in the year 680, established in its 12th Canon that a bishop must be unmarried, and from this time no one has tried to break with this practice. In this manner, the precept was established in the Orthodox Church that a Bishop must without exception be a monk, and must without fail take on a new name, keeping only the first letter of his name in the world.

From earliest times **bishops were always elected** – elected, that is, by the people and the council of bishops – and this practice always existed in Ukraine. **We have never had a bishop come to serve the people without first being elected,** and only Moscow broke this age-old practice, which is unknown to her now. Unfortunately, now this practice has also been broken among us, and this has led only to confusion within the Church.

The grace of the bishop is full and profound, and is received from Jesus Christ Himself, through the laying-on-of-hands by the successors of the Apostles. This

hierarchical grace acts through the bishop in the whole Church – upon both the clergy and the laity. Moreover, only the Bishop is the source of this grace – which gives ecclesial authority to all things and sanctifies all – for he, according to the teaching of St. Ignatius of Antioch (the "God-bearer") is the representative of Christ in the Church. Anyone who rejects the Bishop, anyone who does not recognize the most-high grace of his rank, casts Christ the Savior out of the Church, and in all regards one such as this is not an Orthodox Christian. This is why **a Church without a bishop is not a Church**, and a priest cannot gather the faithful together as the Church (that is, for the celebration of the Holy Mysteries) alone.

Episcopal Titles

All bishops possess the same grace; they are all equals, just as all the apostles were equals. However, they are distinguished by the extent of their ecclesiastical authority. The overseer of a single, smaller, diocese is called a **bishop**. A bishop with more seniority, or the bishop of a larger region, is called an **archbishop** – a bishop that assists him in this work is called a **vicar bishop** (*auxiliary bishop*). The ruling bishop of an entire nation is called a **metropolitan** – sometimes this title is also given to a bishop in honor of his years of dedicated service. The presiding hierarch of an independent nation and an independent Church is called a **patriarch**. In ancient times, there were only five patriarchs: Rome (who was called "Pope" – that is, "Father"), Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem. Among these five, the Sixth Ecumenical Council established "that the See of Constantinople has the same honor as the ancient See of Rome." Four of these five Sees were called the "Eastern Patriarchates". Later, other Patriarchates were established, among them: Moscow (1589), Bulgaria, Serbia, and Romania. All of them have the same grace and the same authority, however, the Ecumenical Councils (II.3, IV.28, VI.36) established that among them Rome was first in honor, and Constantinople second. When the Patriarchate of Rome broke away from the other four in 1054, the primacy of honor in the Ecumenical Orthodox Church was given to the Patriarchate of Constantinople.

Vestments Exclusive to the Episcopacy

Beside the vestments of a priest, the bishop wears special vestments: the sakkos (*the tunic worn as the outer vestment*), omophorion (*long vestment worn over the shoulders*), mitre (*crown*) and panahia (*icon of the Mother of God worn on a chain around the neck*), which the priest does not wear. It is true that priests can be awarded the mitre of nabadrenyk (*a rectangular vestment that hangs down over the right thigh – ed.*); this practice was instituted by the Russian Czar Paul I, in spite of the fervent protests of Metropolitan Platon of Moscow. For blessing the faithful, only the bishop uses the dikiri and trikiri (two-branched and three-branched candelabras), and only he carries the zhezlo (*episcopal staff*) as a sign of his particular wide-reaching authority in the Church. A priest blesses the people only with the right hand, while the bishop blesses with both hands, symbolizing the fullness of his grace. Additionally, when he is not celebrating the Liturgy, the bishop wears the great mantia (*episcopal, monastic cloak*) as another sign of his high rank. In daily situations, the bishop wears the cassok, riassa (*loose-fitting outer cassok, with wide sleeves*) and a black klobuk (*monastic headwear*), usually without a cross on it – though a cross may be placed on the klobuk in honor of the bishop's years of faithful service). The metropolitan wears a white klobuk as a symbol that he guides the people to the most-pure life. During the Liturgy, the bishop does not carry his prayer rope, though for all other services he does wear the prayer rope on his wrist as a sign of his monastic tonsure. The Metropolitan of a local church has a cross on the top of his mitre and wears two panahias (this latter practice is of more recent origin).

In Ukraine from the most ancient times, as reflected in the old liturgical texts, bishops were addressed by the title **Right-reverend Master**. This title was used for Archbishops and Metropolitans, as well. Later Archbishops and Metropolitans were given the title **Most-reverend Master**. Metropolitans of autocephalous Church were addressed as **His Beatitude**. Also from ancient times, patriarchs were called **His Holiness**. In general all bishops are referred to as Vladyko (*Master*), just as all priests are referred to as “Father”, as this title reflects their hierarchical authority.

The Significance of the “High Place”

In every church building, under the icon which hangs behind the holy altar table – that is, immediately behind the holy table – we find the **High Place**, upon which we

believe our Lord and Saviour Himself is seated as the Good Shepherd and Great High Priest. At every Liturgy the priest blesses this High Place at the instruction of the deacon: "Bless, master, the High Place." The priest says, "Blessed art Thou, sitting upon the Throne of Thy glory, who rests upon the Cherubim, always, both now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen." Also at every liturgical service, when the priest censes the church he must cense the High Place. The priest does not have the right to sit on the High Place; he sits to the left of it (during the reading of the Epistle). To sit or stand at the High Place is exclusively the right of the bishop, and this clearly shows his high position during worship – as a representation of Christ Himself. **A church cannot be without a High Place** (which is found frequently in America and Canada) – it is essential for all canonical church buildings, and without it the church is not complete.

From all that has been mentioned to this point becomes clear that **a Church cannot exist without a bishop**, just as it cannot exist without Christ. The nature of the episcopal office is such that it makes the Church on earth whole. As a house is not complete without a roof, so the church is not complete without a bishop. Wherever the faithful gather as the Church of Christ, they must have a bishop; a priest who establishes a church without episcopal blessing is committing a crime against that which is sacred and is acting as a renegade. When a Church's bishop has died or moved on to another diocese, that Church is looked upon as a widow or an orphan, and she diligently strives to find a bishop as quickly as possible. For the fullness of the Church is found only with the bishop present, and without him that fullness is missing.

The authority of the bishop has developed over the course of time, and is founded upon the Holy Scriptures, the Holy Canons and Church Tradition. This authority has great breadth and height. As the father has full authority in the family, the bishop has full authority in his ecclesiastical family, the diocese.

The Gospels reveal that after His Resurrection Jesus Christ first appeared to his disciples, saying: "Peace be with you. As the Father sent Me, so I send you." (Jn. 20:21-23) Then He breathed upon them and said: "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the *sins* of any, they are retained." With these words Christ gave His earthly successors, the Apostles (and therefore, the bishops), **all the fullness of ecclesiastical authority**. Christ said nothing more clearly than this:

“He who hears you hears Me, he who rejects you rejects Me, and he who rejects Me rejects Him who sent Me”(Lk. 10:16) Whoever does not recognize the hierarchy is not Orthodox. **Whoever does not listen to the hierarchy does not listen to Christ.**

We learn from ancient Chronicles and other records, that in Ukraine bishops always had full ecclesiastical authority in their dioceses, and at no time did they pass this on to others. This authority was confined to them alone through the dictates of the holy canons. The practice of limiting episcopal authority came from Moscow (*when the Church became a department of the Tsarist state – ed.*), and is really a precept of Protestantism.

In general, a bishop’s authority is limited to his diocese, and beyond his diocese he does not have influence (see Canon 8 of the 3rd Ecumenical Council, Canon 20 of the Sixth Ecumenical Council, among others). However, at a Church-wide Sobor a bishop may freely make his observations about the affairs of another diocese, when this is deemed necessary. Each bishop is also free to offer advice to a brother hierarch, when that bishop is teaching something that is clearly un-Christian, or when he is clearly breaking the canons (see Mt. 18:15-17)

The 81st Apostolic Canon states that “*a bishop is obliged to be involved in the life of the Church constantly*”, and in this he finds his full hierarchical authority. This is also affirmed by the 39th Apostolic Canon, which states that “*the bishop is entrusted with care of the Lord’s faithful people, and he will give an account for their souls.*” In this, again, the fullness of the bishop’s authority is confirmed, as he bears a responsibility for his ministry first and foremost before the Lord.

Great is the authority of the bishop, and therefore great also is his accountability. As the encyclical of the 3rd Ecumenical Council reveals, the bishop “*is responsible to look after all that work which is his with all due diligence.*” Therefore, “***for the reason of unbounded inactivity a bishop may be released from his responsibilities.***”

If a bishop were to commit a grave sin, the Council of Bishops to which he belongs would alone reprimand him (Apostolic Canon 74). Even a patriarch may not censure a bishop independent of the Patriarchal Council of Bishops. If the episcopal council is not unanimous in its decision, they call upon the hierarchs of other Churches, and with them make a ruling on the actions of the bishop in question.

Throughout the ages, founded upon the Scriptures, the Canons and Holy Tradition have established all episcopal authority. This authority may be divided into the following categories: 1. teaching authority; 2. priestly (*sacramental – ed.*) authority; 3. legislative authority, and 4. administrative authority.

1. The highest episcopal authority is his **teaching authority**. This is his first and most important responsibility. The 19th Canon of the 6th Ecumenical Council (and the 58th Apostolic Canon) states that “*every day, and especially on Sundays, the bishop must teach all clergy and laity the way of piety.*” This imperative to teach is clearly given to the bishop by the Apostle Paul in his first letter to Timothy: “*A bishop then must be... able to teach*”(3:2); he must be “*blameless*”(3:2 – see also Titus 1:8), that is he must be a man of deep wisdom. These episcopal obligations are more firmly repeated in St. Paul letter to Titus: “*(the bishop must hold) fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict*” (1:9).

Thus, the most important work of the bishop is that of teaching, and this is why in Ukraine the practice arose of selecting only those of high academic degree for episcopal office, and who were well grounded in their studies. In this we see that our hierarchy in fact created our culture, our literature, etc., since the Church is the first creator of culture for a nation. A bishop without the necessary higher education cannot fulfill his responsibilities.

The bishop teaches, first of all, in his cathedral, and then – to the extent that he is able – in all the churches of his diocese. Upon the hierarch alone is the authority to teach been placed, and because he imparts this authority to the priests in his diocese he must also look after their education. Likewise, the bishop alone is empowered to teach religion in all the schools of his diocese, and this right he passes on to his priests and to lay teachers, who should receive from him his written blessing to teach. The priest alone does not have the right to appoint religious education teachers without the blessing of his bishop.

A bishop must always work on self-improvement, on his continuing studies, that he may rightly declare the Word of Truth, especially in his cathedral. However, as a human being, a bishop may make a mistake. To guard against this, we find a decree from the the 6th Ecumenical Council that a bishop must adhere to the Holy Scriptures, “*and not*

depart from the precepts and traditions of the God-bearing Fathers.” That is, a bishop must maintain the teachings of the Church Fathers: “And when a bishop studies the Word of Scriptures, let his teachings not be contrary to that which was taught by the illuminaries and teachers of the Church in their works,” so that “through lack of understanding he does not adhere to that which is in error.”

The Orthodox Church always encourages her faithful to read the Holy Scriptures, and has never, and will never, never forbid this. However, it is very difficult to understand the true meaning of the Scriptures, and not all people interpret them correctly. This is why the Church has always charged the bishops with the explanation of the Scriptures; this is both their responsibility and their right.

Similarly the final interpretation of the Holy Canons is the prerogative of the bishops. In difficult situations that touch upon canon law, it is left to the hierarchy to clarify the situation and decided upon how to proceed.

When the bishop appropriately carries out his first and highest responsibility to teach his diocese, clergy and laity, this yields good fruit and he acquires his due authority and honor. Conversely, when a bishop neglects his responsibilities, his diocese falls into disarray and he loses his authority. Through his good teaching, the bishop builds up all, both clergy and laity, toward an exemplary and honorable life.

2. Great also is the **sacramental authority** of a bishop in the Church. He is responsible for organizing the responsible celebration of the divine services throughout the diocese under his care. The bishop delegates this authority to his clergy; he assigns them to the parishes of the diocese, and they celebrate the divine services in his name, commemorating him publicly in their prayers. (In Ukraine, up to the end of the 18th century, it was the practice that clergy would commemorate only their diocesan bishop during services, and bishop alone would commemorate the Metropolitan.) A priest has no authority to celebrate the divine services without the approval of his bishop.

Furthermore, every bishop looks after the correct celebration of the services according to the rubrics, so that in no circumstance they would be truncated.

The mystery of holy orders – this great and profound ordinance of our faith – is presided over by a bishop only (never by a priest); only the bishop ordains priests and deacons. Together with other hierarchs, a bishop has the right to consecrate bishops;

priests do not, nor have they ever, had the authority to consecrate bishops. To break this precept is to break a great and holy dogma of our Faith, which is to say it is to sin against the Holy Spirit.

Only bishops consecrate anteminsia and holy chrism, without which a Church cannot exist. Only the bishop may be seated on the High Place behind the holy altar table – **every church must have this seat at the high place**, and this seat must be given the highest honour even when the bishop is absent. Any church that does not have a throne at the high place is not a complete church.

As previously stated, during the divine services the bishop represents the Apostles and Christ Himself, and for this reason in church the bishop is due the highest honour and authority.

Upon entering a church the bishop should be greeted by the parish clergy and altar servers, in proper vestments, with the ringing of the church bells. And on a feast day, the bishop is welcomed into the church “with great glory”: all the clergy go to meet him at his residence, either alone or with the laity, and with the chanting of the Troparia and the ringing of the church bells, he is lead in liturgical procession to the church. In the same ceremonial manner, “with great glory”, is the bishop led back to his residence after the service.

When a bishop celebrates the Divine Liturgy, he alone stands before the holy altar table, with concelebrating priests standing to the right and left of the altar. Moreover the priests and deacons intone their parts of the service only with the blessing of the bishop, bowing to him before they start and after they complete a proclamation.

During a service, a bishop is censed in a special way, “thrice by thrice” (three times three times), immediately after censing the altar and iconostas.

When something is given to, or taken from, the bishop (for example, the censer, of “dikiri” and “trikiri”), or when he anoints the faithful with holy oil or gives them the cross to kiss, according to the ancient practice his hand is kissed as well. With this kiss we understand that we are no simply kissing a person, but one who represents Christ in the Church.

As a rule, in church the faithful are always to stand. Only the bishop may sit at appointed times.

During services, a bishop stands to pray on the “*orlets*” – a circular rug with the image of an eagle flying high in the air above a city. The orlets is a sign of the bishop’s prayer ascending the heights to the throne of God. It also symbolizes the heights of spiritual truth that a bishop’s preaching must achieve.

During the Divine Liturgy, at the Small Entrance, the bishop is reverently taken into the altar at the hands of the serving priests (this practice was halted by Czar Peter I, because he was angry that in the Church the bishop a higher honour than the Czar). In this same manner the bishop was also brought to the High Place, and was lead throughout the service.

In the presence of a bishop, a priest does not take Holy Communion by his own hands. Priests are given Communion by the bishop, just as Christ at the Mystical Supper gave communion the apostles.

There are many other examples that clearly underscore the singular honour given to a bishop during the divine services. All of these are based on the fact that when he serves, the bishop does not only represent the apostles, but – according to the teaching of St. Ignatius of Antioch – he also represents Christ the Saviour. In this way, the honour given to the bishop is not directed at his person, but is a reflection of the honour given to Christ and His apostles. This is the belief of the Orthodox Faith, and it is one of the foundational truths of the symbolism in our liturgical theology. One who does not accept this belief, is not truly an Orthodox Christian.

The rank of the bishop has great honour-this fact was a characteristic of Church life in Ukraine throughout her history. The 19th century scholar A. Ruschynsky shows that, in Ukraine there was a festive atmosphere whenever the bishop would be among his people. When bishops traveled, they would go with an assemblage of faithful, including their hierarchical entourage and a great number of pilgrims. Disrespect to a bishop is of Muscovite origin, and is not Ukrainian.

The granting of clergy awards is the singular authority of the bishop - and he grants such awards for diligent service to the Church. From ancient times up to the end of the 18th century, there were few awards for clergy, the highest being the title of "Protopop", who had the responsibility of supervising larger districts within the diocese. There were also appointments for clergy in the bishop's cathedral as hierarchical advisers,

who later were formed into Consistory officers. All of the various clerical awards that have appeared in recent times are of Russian origin, originating with the decree of Czar Paul I, December 18, 1794. The establishment of these awards is decidedly not of Ukrainian origin, and has led to ruin in the Church.

3. In the Church, the bishop also possesses a legislative authority. In Church, matters situations often arise that are not addressed by the Holy Canons, and upon which the bishop alone may make decisions. At times there are also situations involving people which require the circumvention of Canons; for example, a wedding during a fasting period, etc. The bishop alone (never a priest) has authority to make such a decision.

Normally, a bishop is aided in such decision making by the entire Council of Bishops, which together addresses such matters. This is carried out on the basis of St. Paul teaching: "of necessity there is a change of the law" [Hebrews 7:12]. Again, though, the right to make such exceptions is in the hands of the bishop alone, and never a priest.

4. The administrative authority of a bishop in ecclesiastical matters within his diocese is also great, as he directs all such matters. He assigns and releases priests from their pastoral ministries throughout his diocese. He conducts a canonical visitation of each church in the diocese at least once per year. To the bishop is given juridical authority in Church matters. He calls diocesan assemblies, presiding over them, and enacting their decisions in the life of the diocese. (Note: In Ukrainian, Metropolitan Ilarion uses the word "sobor" for "diocesan assemblies"-editor).

The bishop delegates his administrative authority to a Spiritual Consistory, which functions with the bishop in an advisory and supportive capacity. In Ukraine Consistories were introduced by the Russian Czar Peter I, who wanted to use them, based on a Protestant model, to limit the authority of bishops; however, he was not successful in this attempt. Working in these Consistories was a lay secretary who was assigned by the state's secular overseer (Oberprokurator) of the Moscow Patriarchate. This secretary was to keep watch over the bishop. But this position was ineffective and fell away, as the authority of the episcopacy is eternal, for the Church is eternal.

It is clear that in all his administrative service the bishop is obliged to be a father to the clergy and laity under his care, just as the Founder of our Church was a father to His disciples. The 27th Apostolic Canon states that in no circumstance may a bishop use

physical force against someone, even in self-defense. In general he must never embitter or embarrass someone, nor may he censure someone without a valid reason. He must lead all to reason through words of good counsel.

The Apostle Peter thus teaches his followers concerns this topic: "Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock." [1 Peter 5:2-3]

However, in his work, especially in teaching and administration, the bishop must function in a firm and authoritative manner, so that he does not scatter his sheep. The Apostle Paul himself speaks of this: "What do you want? Shall I come to you with a rod, or in love and a spirit of gentleness." [1 Cor. 4:21] and "Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest may also fear." [1 Tim. 5:20]

The 38th Apostolic Canon gives the bishop authority also over all material matters: "Let the bishop oversee all Church goods, and let him take charge of them, in the same way God would have control of them."

Here, then, is the authority of the bishop - an authority of extraordinary breadth, and of even greater responsibility, for which the bishop will give an answer before our Lord Himself. For the realization of this authority the bishop often calls upon informed advisors, with whom he works for the glory of God, and for the wellbeing of the people.