

## *Office of Missions and Education of the UOCC*

*What a Successful Parish of the UOCC needs:*

*In order for a parish, consisting of a minimum of 150 families, to be successful, it must have the following programs.*

*Parishes with less than 150 families should have the same programs on a smaller scale.*

### **1. Altar Boys**

Every priest should be surrounded by no less than twelve altar boys from age 7 and older. The priest must organize informative meetings and seminars for the altar boys every month and instruct them accordingly. It is mainly from the altar boys that we foster future clergymen for our Church.

### **2. Choirs**

It would be ideal if every community could have a choir, however it is important to have a Cantor(s) who can sing simple Ukrainian melodies at a low pitch so that the people and choir can sing together.

### **3. Liturgical Books**

There should be copies of the Divine Liturgy in Ukrainian and English (or French in Quebec) in every pew for the faithful to follow during the Divine Liturgy.

### **4. Bookstore**

Every community should operate a small bookstore from which the faithful can purchase spiritually beneficial books such as the Holy Bible, Divine Liturgy, Catechism and lives of the Saints etc. These books should be available in Ukrainian and English.

### **5. RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

Every community must have a Church School in which catechetical instruction is given to children from Kindergarten to Grade 8. It is very important to have well-prepared Church School teachers to teach catechism. Catechetical and Bible Study classes should be organized for teenagers and adults. Special attention should be given to the catechetical instruction of youth between the ages of 14 and 25. Catechism should also be taught via mass media. Proper instruction is the basis for the religious education of our children.

## **6. SISTERHOOD**

Every community must have a parish sisterhood, UWAC Branch, or other woman's organization with membership consisting of all ladies, married and single, that are in the community. In addition to supporting their parish, their philanthropic work should embrace all Orthodox as well as Non-Orthodox individuals and philanthropic institutions within their city or community.

## **7. SUMMER CAMPS**

A summer camp for youth must be supported by the parish. If there is no camp near you, think about creating a 'day-camp'. A youth summer camp with the proper spiritual program has tremendous results in the spiritual lives of our youth.

## **8. SPIRITUAL RETREATS**

Every community should have at least two spiritual retreats for the youth, as well as retreats for adults. These retreats should take place during the fasting period of Christmas and Great Lent. If it is difficult to organize a retreat for several days then a one day retreat will suffice. These retreats should begin with a Divine Liturgy with everyone participating in the Divine Liturgy and receiving Holy Communion. Spiritual presentations and discussions should follow.

## **9. MISSIONS**

Every community should have a mission committee. This committee should follow the goals and objectives of the Mission Department of our UOCC.

## **10. VISITATION TO PRISONS, HOSPITALS, ELDERLY HOMES**

Oftentimes, it is impossible for a priest to visit all of the aforementioned institutions. Every Parish should have a benevolent committee conducting visits to various institutions. Committee members must be properly and adequately instructed by the priest. Their work is beneficial for the individuals they are visiting and edifying for the visitors.

## **11. USE OF THE MASS MEDIA**

Sermons from the pulpit must primarily be catechetical, but the pulpit is not sufficient to teach catechism to all the people. In order to teach religion to all the people to strengthen their faith, and subsequently, to bring them back to the church, proper use of all mass media is required.

## **12. SPIRITUAL PILGRIMAGES**

Spiritual pilgrimages are very beneficial for the faithful. We have priests who organize them successfully. These spiritual pilgrimages should include the following places: the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the Holy Land, Ukraine, parishes in Canada celebrating their Feast Day, and other spiritual centres, etc. These trips must be well-organized and enriched with pedagogical and spiritual materials and programs.

## **13. SPECIAL DIVINE LITURGIES AND OTHER SERVICES**

Divine Liturgies must be offered every year for the Church School pupils in order for them to participate in the sacrament of Holy Communion. Other special Divine Liturgies should be celebrated for the participation of God-parents and God-children, and memorial services should be offered for all the members of the community who have fallen asleep in the Lord. Vesper Services should be celebrated every Saturday, and once a week an Akathist or Moleben' Service should be celebrated as well.

## **14. MARRIAGE PREPARATION SEMINARS**

Certain communities have marriage preparation seminars which are very beneficial for engaged couples. These seminars must be offered in every parish, especially for interfaith marriages.

## **EPILOGUE**

The aforementioned programs must serve as a mirror where the community will be seeing itself, and realizing how successful or unsuccessful it is. Needless to say, these programs cannot be successful if one person, namely the priest, is expected to do all the work.

It is the duty of the priest and the Parish or District Council to organize their volunteers and co-workers, so that the aforementioned programs will materialize. Most of our communities have done very well with the hardware (building projects). They need to use their energy and talents for the software (spiritual programs). The software makes a community vital and vivifying. It must be emphasized that these programs require financial assistance. The material goods of the community, when used for spiritual programs, transform into spiritual goods.

-adapted from the Greek Archdiocese