

# CONTRIBUTION OF ARCHBISHOP VOLODYMYR STERNYUK TO THE EVOLUTION OF THE UNDERGROUND UKRAINIAN GREEK CATHOLIC CHURCH

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**Abstract:** *This article analyses Archbishop Volodymyr Sternyuk's role in the history of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (UGCC). It explores the scientific and spiritual development of Volodymyr Sternyuk and his contacts with prominent personalities during his time as Church leader when the Church itself was abolished by the Soviet authorities. It examines his methods of pastoral and administrative work in the time when UGCC was restricted. The essay illustrates the interconnection of religious and national factors in Volodymyr Sternyuk's life. Research is based on interviews of parishioners and clergy close to Volodymyr Sternyuk as well as his own recollections.*

**Keywords:** *Archbishop, Volodymyr Sternyuk, Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, underground Church, religious persecution, prison.*

**Rezumat:** *Contribuția arhiepiscopului Volodymyr Sternyuk la dezvoltarea Bisericii Greco-Catolice Ucrainene din catacombe. În acest articol este analizată importanța Arhiepiscopului Volodymyr Sternyuk pentru istoria Bisericii Greco-Catolice Ucrainene (BGCU) din catacombe. Este analizată formarea spirituală și științifică a lui Volodymyr Sternyuk, legăturile sale cu diverse persoane ce au avut un rol decisiv în vremea sa, în cadrul bisericii "lichidate" de către puterea sovietică. Articolul pune în evidență metodele pastorale-sufletești și ale serviciilor administrative, pe care le folosea Arhiepiscopul Volodymyr Sternyuk în condițiile interzicerii activității BGCU. Este urmărită corelația factorului religios-național în viața lui Volodymyr Sternyuk. Acest material se bazează în principal pe interviuri prelucrate ale persoanelor apropiate de Arhiepiscop, al locțiitorului BGCU, ale unor mireni și clerici și pe memoriile acestuia.*

**Résumé:** *La contribution de l'archevêque Volodymyr Sternyuk au développement de l'Eglise grecque catholique clandestine d'Ukraine. Dans l'article il a été analysé le rôle de l'archevêque Volodymyr Sternyuk dans l'histoire de l'Eglise grecque catholique d'Ukraine clandestine. Il a été étudié la formation scientifique et spirituelle de Volodymyr Sternyuk, ses relations avec les personnes qui ont été déterminantes pendant la période de sa direction de l'Eglise "supprimée" par les autorités soviétiques. Il a été étudié les méthodes de l'activité pastorale et administrative qu'il a utilisées dans les conditions de*

*l'interdiction de l'Eglise grecque catholique d'Ukraine. Il a été observé la corrélation des facteurs religieux et national dans la vie de Volodymyr Sterniuk. Le matériel est basé sur le traitement des interviews des personnes laïques et du clergé proche du locum tenens de l'Eglise grecque catholique d'Ukraine ainsi que des mémoires de Volodymyr Sterniuk.*

## INTRODUCTION

The Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church is the world's largest Eastern Catholic Church. It plays a significant role in inter-church relations and the socio-political life of Ukraine. Since its establishment in 1596, the UGCC has been closely connected with the development of national spirit, patriotism and the consolidation of the Ukrainian nation. It is an important element in the relationship between the Catholic Church, the Constantinople Orthodox Church and the Russian Orthodox Church. This is the status and significance which the UGCC acquired in 28 years following some 44 years of 'underground' existence.

After it was banned by the State authorities in 1946, the UGCC survived in the catacombs owing to Patriarch Josyf Slipy, Bishop Vasyl Velychkovsky and Archbishop Volodymyr Sterniuk, as well as the priesthood and parishioners of the small religious community. Josyf Slipy and Vasyl Velychkovsky were imprisoned and forbidden to stay in the USSR after their discharge; thus Volodymyr Sterniuk's leadership of the Ukrainian Underground Church was the most lasting. From 1964 he, as the Auxiliary Bishop, helped V. Velychkovsky to run the Church; from 1972 until 30 March 1991 he performed the responsibilities of acting Head of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church. It was Volodymyr Sterniuk who facilitated the process of the UGCC's legitimisation in 1989. He issued the authority to run the UGCC to Metropolitan Myroslav Lybachivsky, while remaining the Pontifical Primate.<sup>1</sup>

## ISSUES AND SOURCES

Archbishop Volodymyr Sterniuk is a symbol of the underground UGCC. However, there has been little research into the personality of one who was such a key figure in the movement. Studying his activities will contribute greatly to revealing the development of the world's greatest persecuted Church of 20th

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<sup>1</sup> 29 вересня – 19-а річниця відходу у вічність Митрополита Володимира Стернюка [29th of September - the 19th anniversary of the passage to eternity of the metropolitan Volodymyr Sterniuk], <http://sobor-svyura.lviv.ua/12-lyutoho-%E2%80%95-den-urodyn-mytropolyta-volodymyra-sternyuka/> (Accessed on 25.11.2017).

century. The research into Volodymyr Sternyuk's life reveals the truth about this outstanding personality who, while being persecuted for his faith, still kept the UGCC alive, led it from the catacombs, fostered people's devotion to their religion and promoted the Ukrainian national identity.

Analysing Volodymyr Sternyuk's leadership of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church is important to identify the key problems between the UGCC and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, which had been established on the basis of the Ukrainian exarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church, thus being beneficial to the ecumenical movement. Taking into account the global significance to the world community of the issues related to freedom of consciousness and faith, as well as the church-state relationship, it is very important to study the experience of Volodymyr Sternyuk's clerical management and the interconnection of Church and State power under conditions of religious persecution.

The author of the paper concentrates on the study of Volodymyr Sternyuk's activities, aiming to define his role in the history of Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church. It will enable the expansion of the issues raised in ecumenical, cultural and socio-political dimensions. Even today, a vast number of Soviet documents relating to Volodymyr Sternyuk are still inaccessible to researchers, which makes it difficult to study his activities. Oral history is the principal source for studying the development of the underground UGCC and Volodymyr Sternyuk's role in it. The most informative evidence has been provided by those closest to him – priests and bishops consecrated by him, stories of parishioners and monks to whom he delegated certain responsibilities, colleagues and people with whom he served terms of imprisonment. Therefore, the author used principally documents from the Archives of the Institute of Church History of the Ukrainian Catholic University.

As there has been little research into Volodymyr Sternyuk's life, papers and books dedicated to the underground period of the UGCC are of great value. Among them, it is worthy to note essays by authors such as Brett R. McCaw, T. Bublyk, S. Hurkina, A. Halemba and the books *Metropolitan Volodymyr: the 85th anniversary of birth and the 60th anniversary of pastorate of the Auxiliary Bishop of the Head Archbishop of Lviv Metropolitan Volodymyr Sternyuk*, *History of Religion in Ukraine: in 10 volumes. Vol. 4, Catholicism*. A significant role in the research belongs to the book *Passion and Resurrection – Greek Catholic Church in Soviet Ukraine 1939-1989* by Serge Keleher, which reveals many facts relating to the period of the underground UGCC. Its author, Serge Keleher, witnessed some of the events.

### **THE VOLODYMYR STERNYUK'S FAMILY AND CAREER**

Volodymyr Sternyuk was born 12 February 1907 in Pustomyty, Lviv Region,

and died 29 September 1997. He is buried in St. George's Cathedral crypt, Lviv. He was brought up in religious and patriotic spirit. His father, Volodymyr Sternyuk (1870 – 1930), was a priest in Pustomyty (near Lviv) and Dean of Schyrets. His father's brothers, Petro (1880 – 1936) and Myron (1888 – 1977), as well as the future Archbishop's brother, Ostap (Yevstahy) (1909 – 1993, political prisoner), were Greek Catholic priests.<sup>2</sup> His mother, Yevhenia Konovalets (1873 – 1930), came from a clerical family.

Through family ties, Volodymyr was close to well-known representatives of the Ukrainian intelligentsia. His father's brother, Ivan Sternyuk, married Emilia Krushelnytska, a sister of the world renowned singer, Solomia Krushelnytska. His mother was an aunt of a famous political and military figure, Yevhen Konovalets (1891 – 1938), of the Ukrainian Military Organisation and the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists. The sisters of Acting Head of the UGCC, Orysa (Iryna) (1911 – 1987) and Oksana (1898 – 1960), the wife of professor Severyn Levytsky, Chief Ataman of Ukrainian Plast (Scouts), Head of Chief Plast Team, emigrated to the West.

Volodymyr studied in a state school in Pustomyty (where he completed two years) and the Lviv Academic Gymnasium; he was a member of Plast<sup>3</sup> – Ukraine's National Scout Organisation. On completing the fourth year in the gymnasium in 1921, Volodymyr Sternyuk moved to Belgium under the guardianship of the Redemptorists<sup>4</sup>. He continued his education in Essen (Belgian province of Antwerp) and in 1925 entered the Monastery of Redemptorists. On 21 September 1926, he took his first vows and began studying in the seminary. He studied at the Universities of Beauplateau and Leuven. He took his eternal vows in Beauplateau on 21 September 1929.<sup>5</sup>

On 19 June 1931, in Leuven (Belgium), Volodymyr Sternyuk took priestly

<sup>2</sup> В. В. Гаюк, М. О. Гуменний, М. М. Омельчук, І. М. Петрів, *Митрополит Володимир: до 85-річчя від дня народження і 60-річчя пастирської діяльності Архієпископа Містоблюстителя Верховного Архієпископа Львова Митрополита Володимира Стернюка* [Metropolitan Vladimir: at the 85th anniversary of the birth and 60 years of pastoral activity of the Archbishop Vicar of the Supreme Archbishop of Lviv, to the Metropolitan Volodymyr Sterniuk], Львів, Логос, 1991, p. 4.

<sup>3</sup> *Interview with Fr. V. Sterniuk*, Archive of the Institute of Church History (AICH) of Ukrainian Catholic University (UCU), no. 1664, p. 6.

<sup>4</sup> Redemptorist – a member of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, a Catholic order devoted to the education of the poor (<https://www.thefreedictionary.com/Redemptorist>).

<sup>5</sup> *Велет Підпільної Української Греко-Католицької Церкви* [The titan of the Ukrainian Greco-Catholic clandestine church], <http://www.cssr.lviv.ua/news/?article=2075> (Accessed on 25.11. 2017).

vows from the apostolic Exarch for Ukrainians in Canada, Vasyl Ladyka. On the initiative of the UGCC's Metropolitan, Andrey Sheptytsky, Volodymyr Sterniuk returned to Ukraine in summer 1932.<sup>6</sup> He performed missionary work, holy services and duties in Kovel, as well as in Ivano-Frankivsk and Ternopil, under the guidance of Mykolay Charnetsky, Blessed Holy Martyr of the UGCC. Since 1942, he stayed in Lviv in the monastery of St. Klymentiy, Rite of the Holiest Deliverer (C.Ss.R.) in 56 Zyblykevych Street, (currently I. Franko Street); he was a Counsellor and Secretary to the Vice-Archegumen, a Belgian, Jozef de Vocht (1881 – 1956).<sup>7</sup> On 20 March 1946, the Bolsheviks closed the monastery and the Redemptorists were taken to Holosko (together with the Redemptorists from Ternopil, Stanislaviv and Zboiyska).

### VOLODYMYR STERNIUK'S IMPRISONMENT

During the time of UGCC's persecution, Volodymyr Sterniuk became a library assistant at the Lviv State Ivan Franko University, having been recommended by a professor of this University.<sup>8</sup> He performed his pastoral duties unobtrusively. On 18 June 1947, Volodymyr Sterniuk was arrested in the library and accused of collaboration with Ukrainian nationalists. He was subjected to interrogation with torture at night. After one particular beating, Fr. Volodymyr could not return independently to his cell; he was carried there, thrown to the floor and was made to stand in cold water, while water dripped onto his head.

At first Volodymyr Sterniuk was accused of receiving confessions from the Ukrainian Insurgent Army's underground soldiers.<sup>9</sup> Then another accusation followed - he was instrumental in procuring documents for the permission to leave the USSR for Lyuba Voznyak-Lemyk,<sup>10</sup> wife of Mykola Lemyk who, in 1933, told the world about holodomor (starvation) in Ukraine. Lyuba Voznyak-Lemyk was a sister of Vasyl Bandera's wife, who was a Stepan Bandera's brother. Fr. Volodymyr Sterniuk was accused of collaboration with underground nationalists and was ordered to reveal information about the Head of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army, Roman Shukhevych.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> 29 вересня – 19-а річниця відходу у вічність...

<sup>7</sup> О. Шейко, *Слідами сповідника віри Володимира Стернюка* [Through the words of the witness of the faith Volodymyr Sterniuk], <http://www.hroniky.com/news/view/8454-slidamy-spovidnyka-viry-volodymyra-sterniuka> (Accessed on 25.11. 2017).

<sup>8</sup> *Interview with Fr. V. Sterniuk...*, no. 934, p. 2.

<sup>9</sup> В. В. Гаюк et al., *Митрополит Володимир...*, p. 13.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>11</sup> *Interview with Fr. V. Sterniuk...*, no. 934, p. 6.

Volodymyr Sterniyuk was requested to renounce Catholicism and adopt the Russian Orthodox Church. "They knew that I would never deny my faith. They asked if I knew Kostelnyk. I said that I didn't know him. So I denied it. They suggested that I should go to him and betray my faith, like he betrayed his faith."<sup>12</sup> At USSR KGB emergency meeting, according to Article 5.33 of the Criminal Code of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, he was sentenced to 5 years hard labour in Yertsevo prison, Arkhangelsk region of Russia. While serving his sentence, he worked cutting trees in the forest and later, owing to the assistance of a doctor co-prisoner, he became a sanitary attendant for prisoners. Despite provocations and denouncements during his imprisonment, he secretly held Holy Liturgies and performed sacraments. In particular, he received the confession of a prisoner who was expecting capital punishment. The sacrament of confession was carried out in a whisper while they were lying on a bunk.

On 13 June 1952, Volodymyr Sterniyuk was discharged. He returned to Pustomyty; however, because of his conviction, he could not find any work. Later he was employed at the Lviv City Greenery Trust and as an accountant in Sknyliv.<sup>13</sup> From 1955, he worked as an ambulance service attendant. Through his friend, a doctor from the East, he started studying as a doctor's assistant at the Correspondence Department of Medical College No 1, 70 P. Doroshenko Street. After his graduation in 1959, he worked as a doctor's assistant until retirement in 1967. He combined his work with pastoral duties.

### **VOLODYMYR STERNIYUK AS A UGCC BISHOP**

The Head of the UGCC, Josyf Slipy, was arrested by NKVD (The People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs) on 11 April 1945; he spent 18 years in prison. In a short period of time, other Bishops were arrested, thus the Church remained without guidance. "In the face of torture and death, not one Ukrainian Greek Catholic Bishop renounced his loyalties to the Holy See nor signed into the state-imposed Orthodoxy".<sup>14</sup> UGCC clergy and parishioners were persecuted.

Between 1945–1989, "twenty bishops were secretly consecrated (five of them were regarded as "titular bishops," who would start their episcopal duty only

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<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 934, p. 4

<sup>13</sup> B. В. Гаюк et al., *Митрополит Володимир...*, p. 19.

<sup>14</sup> B. R. McCaw, *Pro Deo et Patria: The Greek Catholic Church and Ukrainian National Life – Past and Present*, in "University of St. Thomas Journal of Law and Public Policy", Vol. 9, no. 1 (2014), p. 103.

in case of an arrest or death of an acting bishop). Almost all of them received a full seminary education in the 1930s and early 1940s (with the exception of five younger bishops), eleven of them belonged to religious orders (four to the Basilians (OSBM), five to the Redemptorists (CSsR), and two belonged to the Studites). All of the underground bishops were persecuted by the Soviet authorities. Moreover, seven of them of the pre-war generation (with the exception of Pavlo Vasylyk) were in Soviet prisons and labour camps during Stalin's regime in 1940–50s and five of them were arrested and sentenced a second time in late 1950s–1960s.<sup>15</sup> In 1946 the Soviet authorities organised a pseudo-council at which they announced the 'reunification' of Greek Catholics of the Galician Metropolia with the Russian Orthodox Church, effectively banning the UGCC. The cathedrals and property of the latter were handed over to the Russian Orthodox Church.

In 1950s the Greek Catholic clergy began to return from imprisonment. In 1963 Pope John XXIII addressed the General Secretary of the USSR, Nykyta Khrushchov, requesting the release of Patriarch Josyf Slipy so he could participate in the Second Vatican Council. The American President, J. F. Kennedy, also requested his release. The Patriarch was released but he was forbidden to stay in the Soviet Union. Thus before his departure to Rome, Josyf Slipy sent a telegram to the Redemptorist Fr. Vasyl Velychkovsky (1903 – 1973, who had been freed in 1955), in which he asked him to come immediately to Moscow. During his three day stay in the capital, on 4 February he consecrated Velychkovsky as Lutsk Bishop and Titular Archbishop of the Greek Catholic Church in Ukraine.<sup>16</sup>

On 2 July 1964, Volodymyr Sternyuk was secretly ordained by Vasyl Velychkovsky as a Peremyshl-Sambir Bishop and was appointed as his assistant. In January 1969, Blessed Holy Martyr Vasyl Velychkovsky was arrested for the second time, and after his release in 1972, he was exiled from the USSR.<sup>17</sup> Volodymyr Sternyuk then assumed the leadership of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church. Until Cardinal Myroslav Ivan Lyubachivsky's (who was Josyf Slipy's successor on the Metropolitan Throne) returned to Ukraine on 30 March 1991, V. Sternyuk was acting Head of the UGCC.

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<sup>15</sup> S. Hurkina, *The Response of Ukrainian Greek-Catholics to the Soviet State's Liquidation and Persecution of their Church: 1945-1989*, in "Occasional Papers on Religion in Eastern Europe", Vol. 34, no. 4 (2014), p. 7.

<sup>16</sup> Блаженний Священномученик Василь Величковський [The humble holy martyr Basil Velicicovschi], in <http://www.cssr.lviv.ua/saints/vasyl-velychkovskyy/> (Accessed on 25.11.2017).

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

In Volodymyr Sterniuk's accommodation in 30/19 Chkalov Street<sup>18</sup> (today Tuhan-Baranovsky Street), a communal flat with shared facilities, the principal issues of the UGCC life were decided. His room served as a Metropolitan's Hall. It was searched more than once. For fear of eavesdropping, V. Sterniuk carried on some of his conversations in writing, immediately destroying the notes.

Volodymyr Sterniuk was spied upon, there were searches, confiscations, interrogations and warnings.<sup>19</sup> In particular, the consecration which he carried out on 9 May in Rudno near Lviv was discovered: "The sacrament was interrupted by security officers who filmed the event in order to blackmail the Bishop. This attempt at blackmail was not successful, and the film was not shown to the public, as it was 1986 – the 40th anniversary of Lviv pseudo-council. By making this video public, the Soviet authorities would have admitted their defeat, because it was considered that there were no notorious Uniats, but suddenly there was a consecration proving that there were still priests and bishops of a non-existent Church."<sup>20</sup>

Within the underground UGCC there were disagreements concerning ritual issues and the patriarchate, as there was a lack of experienced clergy and education in seminaries was not systematic. The clergy and parishioners were divided into two groups– those who supported change and their opponents. Bishop Volodymyr Sterniuk and Vasyl Velychkovsky belonged to the first group. Fr. Dorotey, OSBM, pointed out that owing to them Greek Catholic clergymen received information about the course of the Second Vatican Council: "Bishop Sterniuk and Bishop Velychkovsky have extensive information. They actively introduced Eastern liturgical changes in the Lviv Region. At once there appeared some kind of division among priests."<sup>21</sup>

## RUNNING THE UNDERGROUND CHURCH

During its underground existence, the key objective of the Ukrainian Greek

<sup>18</sup> А. Колодний, П. Яроцький (eds.), *Історія релігії в Україні у 10-ти томах, Т. 4. Католицизм* [The history of religion in Ukraine in 10 Volumes, vol. 4, Catholicism], Київ, Світ знань, 2001, p. 492.

<sup>19</sup> В. В. Гаюк et al., *Митрополит Володимир...*, p. 28.

<sup>20</sup> Н. Поліщук, *Interview with Fr. Т. Вубльк "Мені не потрібні отці, я не маю храмів. Мені потрібні мученики! До 110-ліття від дня народження Володимира Стернюка"* [I do not need Fathers, I have no cathedrals. I need martyrs! To the 110<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Volodymyr Sterniuk], <http://www.xic.com.ua/z-zhyttja/11-intervju/432-2017-02-11-15-50-40> (Accessed on 25.11.2017).

<sup>21</sup> *Interview with D. Shymchiiy (Fr. Dorotey, OSBM)*, AICH of UCU, no. 1644 (Buchach, 18 July 1999), p. 9.

Catholic Church was to preserve the Church hierarchy, which enabled the Church to exist. "The important land-marks of religious identification (as Catholics) for the underground believers were the underground priests, who were seen as those who remained faithful to the Vatican despite all diversity."<sup>22</sup> As the UGCC had no churches, priests held Divine Liturgical services, carried out sacraments, provided education of seminarists and catechism in private houses of trusted followers.

One of Archbishop Volodymyr Sterniyuk's priorities was training future priests and assisting their further development. He revived the Andriy Pervozvanny Fraternity of Priests and amended its regulations regarding the conditions of pastoral care in the underground.<sup>23</sup> In 1990, it was mainly Archbishop Volodymyr who distributed religious literature which came from abroad,<sup>24</sup> but it was often confiscated. "The Roman Catholic Bishop Joseph Stimfle of Augsburg visited Metropolitan Volodymyr in September and gave him a hundred Catholic Bibles (in Russian); within minutes of the German bishop's departure two Soviet officials came to the Metropolitan's room and demanded that His Beatitude hand over the Bibles legally, and possession of Bibles in the USSR was not a crime."<sup>25</sup>

As there were no seminaries, the training of seminarists was executed by individual priests. In Lviv, in particular, Fr. K. Panas taught history of the Church.<sup>26</sup> Seminar groups were created. One of the most numerous was the group of Vasyl Semenyuk (currently Archbishop and Metropolitan of Ternopil-Zboriv of the UGCC), who was appointed by Archbishop Volodymyr as Rector of the underground Holy Spirit Seminary in 1975. Tuition lasted 6-8 years. As there were no text-books in Ukrainian, Volodymyr Sterniyuk made translations from French and Latin. However, the first written copy of the text-book in moral Theology was burned by a seminarist under threat of being arrested; the second one was confiscated by KGB officers during their search and only the third one was copied.

Volodymyr Sterniyuk conducted the examination of candidates to the clergy and recommended priests for their pastoral work. The candidate had to be at least 24 years old before he could be consecrated but, owing to the conditions of the

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<sup>22</sup> A. Halemba, *Negotiating Marian Apparitions: The Politics of Religion in Transcarpathian Ukraine*, Budapest & New York, Central European University Press, 2015, p. 263.

<sup>23</sup> *Interview with Fr. I. Halimurka and Fr. B. Smuck*, AICH of UCU, no. 2209 (Sambir, 14 September 2001), pp. 2, 7.

<sup>24</sup> *Interview with Y. Zubrytskyy*, AICH of UCU, no. 1021-23 (Lviv, 28 February 1996).

<sup>25</sup> S. Keleher, *Passion and Resurrection – Greek Catholic Church in Soviet Ukraine 1939–1989*, Lviv, Stauropegion, 1993, p. 123.

<sup>26</sup> *Interview with Fr. P. Mendelyuk*, AICH of UCU, P-1-1-1115 (Lviv-Kryvchyci, 21 December 1999), p. 18.

underground Church, there were some exceptions. Consecration took place in the presence of witnesses, so that they could confirm the act of sacrament.<sup>27</sup> Following the instruction of the Patriarch Josyf Slipy, Volodymyr Sterniyuk kept no register of priests thus avoiding any possible discovery by the political authorities.

Consecrations of new bishops and priests were held in secret. Archbishop Volodymyr did not allow them to speak about it even to their relatives, except to their wives. The latter were asked for their permission for the consecration, because if the secret were revealed, the whole family could be arrested. Later on, recollections were held for them. "The way of consecrating Uniat Cult ministers and activists has been destroyed... The act of training of future consecration becomes actual after a priest starts his role. Thus, in 1986 Bishop V. Sterniyuk (Lviv) secretly consecrated four persons from Ivano-Frankivsk Region."<sup>28</sup>

Before consecration, Archbishop Volodymyr personally examined the applicants. The priests, consecrated by him, noted that he was demanding. "There were cases when the Bishop postponed consecration of a particular candidate for a year, setting him the task of improving his academic standard. Sometimes, in the underground, a candidate's education was of no great importance, but Archbishop Volodymyr treated it as essential. He did not allow everyone to participate actively in work, instead he formed a reserve group in case one of the existing underground priests who were being monitored by security officials were imprisoned."<sup>29</sup> Archbishop Volodymyr gave great consideration to Ordination. Fr. Bohdan Smuk recalls that before his priestly consecrations in 1970, Archbishop Volodymyr said that he did not need priests, because he did not have cathedrals. "I need martyrs! If you want to die for Christ and the Church, I'll take you!" During his service in the underground Fr. Bohdan Smuk looked after 150 parishes.<sup>30</sup>

In spite of the Archbishop being demanding in religious and organisational

<sup>27</sup> А. Колодний, П. Яроцький (eds.), *op. cit.*, p. 505.

<sup>28</sup> *Постанова Ради у Справах Релігій при Раді Міністрів УРСР "Про роботу по подоланню проявів уніатства в Івано-Франківській області"* [The council decision on religious matters of the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Ukraine "On the activity of removing the Uniatism's manifestations in the Ivano-Frankivsk region](26 May 1987), Державний архів Тернопільської області, no. 3241, оп. 2, спр. 125, pp. 42–45.

<sup>29</sup> Н. Поліщук, *Interview with Fr. T. Vybyk...*

<sup>30</sup> "Висвячений на мучеництво". *У часи підпілля о. Богдан Смуk опікувався 150 парафіями* [„Anointed for martyrdom". During the clandestine period, Father Bogdan Smuka took care of 150 parishes], in <http://archive.catholicnews.org.ua/visvyachenii-na-muchenitstvo-u-chasi-pidpillya-o-bogdan-smuk#point> (Accessed on 25.11.2017).

issues, his contemporaries characterised him as a sociable, kind, open and caring man. He united people around Christ by his charisma. He used to say, especially to priests, that a Christian should be joyful.<sup>31</sup> In the community of clergy he was called “Father”, and addressed “Tatunyu” (Ukr. Daddy). The Archbishop helped those who needed it, frequently visiting the laity and parishes.

In 1990, Volodymyr Sterniuk restored the Holy Spirit Seminary of Lviv, which had been abolished by the Soviet authorities in 1945. During September-October, theological studies took place in the Cathedral of Transfiguration, then in half-ruined premises of a holiday camp “Hrenada” in Rudno, near Lviv. The first appointed rector was Bishop Philemon Kurchaba. As he could not fulfil his duties owing to poor health, the Archbishop appointed Volodymyr Chuchman to the position of Rector of the Holy Spirit Seminary of Lviv; he organised intensive training for a group of future priests.<sup>32</sup>

Volodymyr Sterniuk took care of Greek Catholic communities not just in Western Ukraine. For example, he delegated a Studite, Fr. Sebastian Dmytrukh, to carry out pastoral services in Kyiv. Fr. Sebastian’s monthly trips to Kyiv took place between 1985 and 1990, when Archbishop Volodymyr allowed him to reveal his identity to a local underground priest, Valeriy Shkarubsky. The Archbishop also took care of the Greek Catholic community of the town Prokopyevsk, Kemerovo Region of Russia: after priestly consecration on 28 August 1983, Fr. Yaroslav Spodar, C.Ss.R., began pastoral services for local Ukrainians. On the initiative of Volodymyr Sterniuk, until 1990 he visited him with annual reports and brought word of pastoral service in Siberia.<sup>33</sup> He was also addressed by people from Belarus, the Baltic coast and overseas diaspora. Bishop Isidore of Toronto carried out an historic Divine Liturgy with Metropolitan Volodymyr in Lviv on 21 September 1988 – the feast of the Nativity of the Mother of God.<sup>34</sup> At the end of 80s he consecrated into the priesthood married candidates from the USA and Canada, because the local bishops had no authority to do it.<sup>35</sup> In 1991, while on a visit to the United States of America and Canada, he met representatives of different confessions and political parties and he gave interviews.

In the process of organisation of Church life, Archbishop Volodymyr did not

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<sup>31</sup> *Interview with O. Krypyakevych*, AICH of UCU, no. 2467–70 (Lviv, 21 January 2003).

<sup>32</sup> *Interview with Fr. V. Chuchman*, AICH of UCU, no. 1930–31 (Lviv, 23 August 2000).

<sup>33</sup> *Володимир Стернюк: служіння в підпіллі* [Volodymyr Sterniuk: serving in clandestinity], <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lHoUB4AYFxU> (Accessed on 25.11.2017).

<sup>34</sup> S. Keleher, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

<sup>35</sup> *Володимир Стернюк: служіння в підпіллі...*

pay much attention to the formation of structures. In spite of obstacles to the centralised running of the Church, he was assisted by trusted people – clergy and laity – in developing communications. In particular, if it were not possible for the local clergy to solve some issues, an individual was elected who met the Archbishop; following this, his answer concerning ritual, moral or some other issue was passed to others. Owing to the lack of coordination outside Lviv, priests requested that Volodymyr Sterniyuk appoint Deans. As he did not have sufficient information about the clergy, he gave them the following answer: “I ask you to come together, to have a meeting and choose the Dean yourselves; the minutes of the meeting and recommendations of at least two priests should be sent to me.”<sup>36</sup> Fr. Yaroslav Chukhniy stated that there were no official positions, only counsellors: “He sought advice from different people, then he gave his opinion. His consultants never met together as a single group.”<sup>37</sup> The first person nominated for the position of His Grace, the Archbishop’s Secretary was Fr. Roman Shafran. This appointment came into effect after the St. George’s Greek Catholic Cathedral in Lviv was handed over to Greek Catholics on 19 August 1990.<sup>38</sup> As he required assistance in running the Church and preserving the apostolic heritage at the age of 78, Volodymyr Sterniyuk began apostolic consecrations. On 23 January 1985 the first to be given Ordination by Volodymyr Sterniyuk was a Redemptorist Protohegumen, Philymon Kurchaba. Earlier, he had been proposed to obtain the Archbishop’s consecration by Vasyl Velychkovsky.<sup>39</sup> On 30 September 1986 Yulian Voronovsky, M.S.U., hegumen of the Studite monastery, was ordained as an Auxiliary Bishop of Lviv Archeparchy by Archbishop Volodymyr Sterniyuk. On 11 October 1986 Fr. Sabryha was also consecrated to the Episcopate, however both he and Yulian Voronovsky were forbidden to reveal these Ordinations. The two Bishops began their service after the exit of the UGCC from underground in 1989.<sup>40</sup>

Expansion of the laity movement was an important issue in Volodymyr Sterniyuk’s activities. He used every opportunity to meet people. He could, for example, visit a Ukrainian music concert in the Philharmonic Society wearing his “vyshyvanka” (Ukrainian national embroidered shirt). He collaborated with

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<sup>36</sup> *Interview with Fr. I. Hovhera*, AICH of UCU, no. 2137 (Dobryany, Lviv oblast, 28 April 2001), p. 17.

<sup>37</sup> *Interview with Fr. Y. Chukhniy*, AICH of UCU, no. 1 (Lviv, 09 May 2000), p. 2.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> *Interview with Bishop Ph. Kurchaba*, C.S.S.R., AICH of UCU, no. 1, sprava 142 (Lviv, 2–3 June 1993), pp. 30, 49.

<sup>40</sup> *Interview with Bishop M. Sabryha*, C.S.S.R., AICH of UCU, no. 1, sprava 321 (Ternopil, 30 March 1994), pp. 31, 47.

contemporary Lviv intelligentsia. He was an honorary member of Lviv Medical Community. He treated the young with special piety and took an active part in the revival of the Christian youth movement. In particular, he gave his blessing to "Plast" activities of the "Kyiv Griffons" group. At his blessing, a delegation of three people came to Lviv from Kyiv. On 6 May 1990 for the first time since the revival of the Ukrainian State, the Plast swore an oath in Bykivni (now part of Kyiv).<sup>41</sup> On 12 August 1990, Volodymyr Sterniuk took part in the first oath of allegiance of a revived Plast in Lviv which was held in Shevchenko Grove and delivered Holy Liturgy there.<sup>42</sup> The Archbishop blessed the 25th congress of "The Ukrainian Youth to Christ" which was held on 8 September 1990 after a break of fifty seven years. He greeted the audience and conveyed an address from Pope John Paul II and Myroslav Ivan Lyubachivsky. Forty thousand young people<sup>43</sup> took part in a symbolic march from St. George's Cathedral to the Druzhba stadium (now called Ukraine stadium).

The Church authorities and parishioners actively revived the UGCC. In the course of its legalization, Archbishop Volodymyr Sterniuk closely cooperated with public figures and politicians, defending the concept of an apolitical faith. In particular, he refused to give his blessing to setting up a Christian Democratic Party.<sup>44</sup> At the end of 1980s, he attempted to solve the issue of legalization of the UGCC in the Supreme Council of the USSR,<sup>45</sup> he organised trips of envoys to Moscow, delegating Bishop Philymon Kurchaba.<sup>46</sup> On 25-26 June 1990, an Extraordinary Synod of the UGCC was held in Rome, the first after the abolition of the Greek Catholic Church in 1946 in which all Bishops of the UGCC from Ukraine and abroad participated. Archbishop Volodymyr analysed the state of the Church at the time of its exit from the underground. The following information was made public: "The Church was served by an Archbishop and six Bishops (three more

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<sup>41</sup> А. Євтушенко, *Історія становлення Пласту в Києві* [The history of the formation of Plast in Kiev], <http://kyiv.plast.org.ua/new/plsen-volodymyr-skorobsky-hm-qistorija-stanovlennja-plastu-v-kyjeviq/> (Accessed on 25.11.2017).

<sup>42</sup> М. Дяків, *Знайдено архівне відео про відродження Пласту у 1990 році* [An archive video about the Plast resurgence in 1990 was found], <http://www.plast.org.ua/news?newsid=9896> (Accessed on 25.11.2017).

<sup>43</sup> Х. Кутнів, *Історія* [History], <http://umh.org.ua/ua/events/82> (Accessed on 25.11.2017).

<sup>44</sup> *Interview with O. Kruyakevych*, AICH of UCU, no. 2467-70 (Lviv, 21 January 2003).

<sup>45</sup> В. Пащенко, *Греко-католики в Україні: від 40-х років XX століття до наших днів* [Greek Catholics in Ukraine: from the 1940s of 20<sup>th</sup> century until nowadays], Полтава, Видавництво Полтавського педагогічного університету, 2002, p. 489.

<sup>46</sup> *Interview with Bishop I. Marhitych*, AICH of UCU, no. 1911-14 (Selo Borzhavske, Zakarpatska oblast, 03 August 2000), p. 39.

Bishops worked on the territory of Mukachiv diocese), 456 priests, 258 of which came from the Russian Orthodox Church. There were about 1.5-1.8 million parishioners. Over 100 churches were registered, though 803 churches were actually functioning."<sup>47</sup> 14 points were discussed which had been promulgated by the UGCC Bishops on 22 March 1990. At the Synod, Archbishop Volodymyr Sterniuk's activities in the time of the underground Church were acknowledged.

## CONCLUSIONS

At the time of his priesthood, Redemptorist monk Volodymyr Sterniuk fulfilled missions in the towns of Western Ukraine. One year after the abolition of the UGCC, he was imprisoned for 5 years for collaboration with Ukrainian nationalists. He did not join the Russian Orthodox Church. During his imprisonment, he secretly carried out spiritual services and performed sacraments risking his safety more than once. After his release, he worked in secular establishments and secretly performed his pastoral service. As Auxiliary Bishop he helped Archbishop Vasyl Velychkovsky. Volodymyr Sterniuk was acting Head of the UGCC in Ukraine prior to Cardinal Myroslav Ivan Lyubachivsky's return to his country.

In spite of persecution, being spied upon and interrogated, he preserved the apostolic inheritance in the UGCC. He actively collaborated with parishioners, in particular, concerning the development of inter-church communication. He took part in cultural and socio-political events, including those for the young, which facilitated closer relations with laymen and fulfilled their religious requirements. He implemented decisions of the Second Vatican Council.

Archbishop Volodymyr coordinated the activities of bishops and priests; paid particular attention to educating seminarists and personally examined them. After the UGCC exit from the underground, he revived the seminary. He maintained ties with the UGCC communities outside Galicia and the USSR, in particular in Canada and USA. Volodymyr Sterniuk's activities were apolitical. He was a steady, consistent strategist. Together with the clergy and laymen, he contributed to the UGCC's exit from the underground.

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<sup>47</sup> *Українська Греко-Католицька Церква. Історія (кінець 80-х років XX століття – до наших днів)* [The Ukrainian Greco-Catholic Church. History (end of the 80's of the 20<sup>th</sup> century until nowadays)], [https://risu.org.ua/ua/index/reference/major\\_religions/45455/](https://risu.org.ua/ua/index/reference/major_religions/45455/) (Accessed on 25.11.2017).